

NEWSLETTER – WINTER EDITION 2021



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From the President's Laptop

Winter, 2021

It's an ill wind that blows no good.

or

Behind every cloud, there is a silver lining.

Why the hackneyed sayings? For the past nine months we have been hearing phrases that we never knew before March. Now they are sounding rather shopworn. Yet, old phrases have their value. Such as the ones above, or some of the recent ones that remind us of practices that are good for the preservation of health at any time.

So “wash your hands” for twenty seconds after you go to the washroom, when you come in from outside, before you eat, just like my mom used to tell me. That simple act of hygiene, known for centuries, has done now what it did during the SARS epidemic, resulted in a marked drop in the number of flu cases. If we did this throughout the year, every year, we would overall be healthier. We did not seem to learn after the SARS epidemic, maybe we will learn this time and some good will be blown our way.

Another silver lining? Due to circumstances beyond our control, it was decided to have our first every virtual annual general meeting and had the best attendance in a number of years, and from across the country at that, including our newest board member, Ian Stewart. Welcome aboard, Ian! (We thank Cliff Pyle for his many years of service, first as president and later as a Board Member at Large). Although I, for one, missed seeing everyone in person, we definitely want to look at ensuring that folks can also virtually attend our future AGMs.

Another old phrase that is worth repeating: “Life is sacred from the womb to the tomb.” No matter what laws governments pass, we continue to share this message in love. Our goal is not to beat people up with our arguments, but to let them know that God the Son entered the womb of the Virgin Mary out of love for them. He died on the cross to forgive their sins. He rose again to show us

that He is God who does not abandon us, but lives to walk with us and carry us through all the tough times of life. May the ever renewed celebration of the birth of Jesus, hearten us with the joy of life from the moment of conception until the moment that our Lord chooses to call us home.

May God bless and keep you all in 2021 and the adventures in the witness for life that God has laid out before us.

Yours in Christ, Rev. Richard Juritsch

FROM THE PASTORAL ADVISOR'S DESK

Prayerfully Patient Joy

How do we begin to make sense of all that has been happening around us (and to us) as of late? Should we live in anger over all the good that has been taken away or fear over all the bad that might yet be? Of course not! Instead of living our lives based on what ISN'T, God calls us to stand firmly upon what actually IS.

Like the Joy we have in the Hope of what is ours right now in Jesus Christ. A joy that sees us patiently through all the tribulations of life in a world full of what-might-have-beens and what-could-still-be's. A joy that doesn't erase the hardships of life in a broken world, but instead redefines that hardship into something else entirely ... like a chance to pray to God. To begin to see life not through the eyes of what we want or don't want, but by God's gracious and loving perspective.

We continue working our way through Paul's 3-fold guide to living a god-pleasing Christian Life in any reality:

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. [Romans 12:12]

2. Be patient in tribulation!

The reality of sufferings

Unlike some, we Christians are not all that surprised by suffering. Disappointed? Yes. Surprised? No. Life is not always fair. Nor do we spend our time looking for others to blame. The amount of surprise people feel in the face of suffering, and the amount of work they do to blame it all on someone else (or everyone else) is directly related to a person's understanding of sin. Particularly our own. Fairness and justice have little to do with it.

Suffering exists because evil exists. And evil exists in my heart. That doesn't mean that I am responsible for every bad thing that happens in this world or even in my own life. But I am not innocent either. This world is broken by sin ... sin of which I am guilty. So I may get sick or develop cancer or get in an accident directly in part because of my decisions and actions. But then again, maybe not. Will it make me feel better to rail against God's fairness and sense of justice? Will it keep bad

things from happening to me again?

The need for patience

As long as we live in this sin-shattered world, in bodies bent and twisted by the ravages of iniquity, in relationships fraught with misunderstanding, jealousy, and frustrations; suffering will be a part of our day-to-day life. When a society believes that killing is compassion and protecting life is enslaving women there is no quick and easy answer. What we need is not a quick fix like a new law, or a helpful brochure. We need patience. In Hebrew the word patience is literally “long-suffering”! But who has the time for that? Not many, judging by the nightly news. Patience is not something any of us gravitates to on our own. It is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit granted as God’s Word works in our hearts and strengthened in the practice of prayer. Patience comes from Christ and points us back to Christ!

God’s answer to our suffering

Whether it is our society’s disregard for innocent life; or just your own medical issues; unfair media coverage; or just another family squabble; God has given us an answer for the reality of our suffering. The Cross of Jesus Christ! There God did not pretend that suffering isn’t real, or that it should remain someone else’s problem. There God Himself in human flesh and blood took our sin and suffered it to death and the grave.

In the cross of Christ God promises us that while sin and suffering will continue to badger us in this life, it will NOT ever have the final word. Not even in the lives tragically cut short for other’s convenience. That final word is, instead, the Word made flesh! Further to that very point God promises that even in the suffering we must face ALL things work for good to those who belong to Him in Christ Jesus. That means the times of suffering too. In this present world of ours NO one suffers just to suffer. Always when sin brings about suffering, God takes that suffering and uses it to do something important, lasting and holy! In righteous suffering we conquer alongside Christ in His love that overcomes. And if all this is not enough to help us remain patient in our tribulations we have the promise that one day soon enough patience will no longer be needed. Long-suffering does not mean forever-suffering. One day He will return and make all things right once again. Suffering and tribulation will cease and with it so will our need to endure it!

For Reflection:

- Defending life is the right thing to do. So why do we so often suffer for it? It doesn’t seem fair does it? What makes these feelings even worse for you? But why shouldn’t we suffer? Why shouldn’t we want to suffer for the sake of others?
- How does seeing suffering through the lens of the Cross change the way you think about suffering? How can your suffering be a good thing ... for you? ... for others?
- How has prayer taught you patience? How long are you willing to wait to hear God’s answer for your suffering? For this world’s suffering? Why won’t most people take God’s “No” as an answer to their prayer?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, guard and keep us from the assaults of the devil, the deception of the world, and the desires of our sinful nature. Protect us that we may not be deceived or misled by lies about You, be overcome by despair of Your mercy, or be seduced into a way of life that leads only to death. Shield us by Your grace and strengthen us by Your Word and Spirit that we may withstand every attack and finally win the victory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

[Luke 2:21]

Sated by fine holiday feasting, and full of good will the heart often turns at this time of year to feelings of peace on earth. Maybe they are world-changing ideals we have in mind: We resolve that this year will be the year we finally solidify that elusive peace process in the middle east. This year the global community will finally make concrete strides against violent extremism. This year we will finally begin to make some meaningful headway in the turning of hearts and minds to the sanctity of all human life, from the youngest to the oldest.

Or maybe our ideals are much more personal in size and scope: This year I will finally get past my history with that particular person and heal that long broken relationship. Yet changing the world, or just myself ... well it never really seems to happen. That sought after peace seems to flee ever farther away with each passing year.

In fact, there is little or no peace to be seen, but bloodshed is seen everywhere. And it is always the weak and vulnerable who suffer the most where peace cannot be found. They are the first casualties in war, they are the payment a selfish and decadent society demand. They are the ready victims of our lack of care and empathy. It is somehow always the blood of the very youngest or the oldest or the most in need that this world cries out for in its demands for that all-too-elusive peace.

The calendar year begins with bloodshed for us Christians too. There it is on January 1st, every single year. The day of the naming and circumcision of our Lord. Perhaps it is only a little blood, but a significant shedding of blood none-the-less. Before anything else happens for us in the New Year, Jesus is named and circumcised. He bears the name Jesus, as the angel insisted, because He will save His people from their sins. And how will He do that? Through the shedding of blood! But no one else will shed this blood. It will be His own blood.

And while the circumcision itself may seem like such an inconsequential spilling of Jesus' blood it is the first blood He will spill of so much more to come. The first of many personal sacrifices to ultimately buy us back from our blood guilt. This little bit of blood from the infant Jesus marks His resolution to stand fully in our place and be counted among us. It is His first infant steps toward fulfilling all of the law on our behalf. A journey that will lead us through the seasons of this coming year all the way to His cross and beyond. For only His resolve for peace is strong enough to see it finally fulfilled, no matter what the price in blood to Himself.

For where there will be peace first there must be blood. His holy, innocent blood. But make no mistake, for while He is innocent, He is neither weak nor vulnerable. This blood-letting is willingly shed for those of us who cannot find peace on our own so that in His blood, and His blood alone, true peace may come to this world and our hearts. May that peace give us the courage to likewise make every sacrifice necessary to be those who help to bring His peace to this world around us and the many hurting lives we will touch this year.

Rev. Ken Maher, Pastoral Adviser

Newborn Twin Saves His Brother's Life With a Hug

 lifenews.com/2019/12/13/newborn-twin-saves-his-brothers-life-with-a-hug/

Twins Dylan and Deiniol Zimunya were born at just 25 weeks gestation. The boys weighed in at a mere 2 lbs and 1 lb 9 oz at birth. Their arrival came unexpectedly after their mother, Hannah, went into labor prematurely and gave birth two days later in the hospital. The boys were initially together in a neonatal intensive care unit in Bolton, England, but later Dylan was transferred to another facility 60 miles away near the family's home in Wrexham.

The boys' mother, who also has three other children with her husband Xavi, told the BBC, "We were expecting the boys to be born early with them being twins, but I don't think anyone expects or can prepare themselves to go through that... The whole experience was terrifying."

The terror continued. Without his big brother, Deiniol's condition began to deteriorate, and 14 weeks after his birth, Deiniol's doctors believed he would not survive. Deiniol still required 100% oxygen support and was not improving. Dylan was brought to Deiniol, to say goodbye to his twin.

When the boys were placed next to each other, Dylan cuddled his brother. The BBC reports, "The twins spent just five minutes together in the incubator having a cuddle, but hours later Deiniol's condition had stabilised, and his oxygen support was reduced to 50%."

Their mother says, "It was incredible. Somehow Dylan, by just being there, managed to help Deiniol — he made him better. I wasn't expecting that at all, and neither were the nurses and doctors."

When Dylan left, Deiniol's condition again began to deteriorate. His oxygen level was increased, and once again his medical team feared for his life. The nurses suggested bringing his brother back, and the results were immediate. Hannah told the BBC, "Within two days Deiniol was taken off his ventilator completely. It really was a miracle... He saved his life with a cuddle. It was brilliant to watch, and it showed all of us that they should never have been separated."

Current medical research is inconclusive about the benefits of treating premature twins together



or separately. However, there are several personal stories like the Zimunya's that show how powerful and life-saving the connection of twins can be. The power of the bonds twins sometimes have at birth reveals the extent of development that takes place in the womb. In a culture poisoned by abortion, many people mistakenly believe that Life begins at birth. With these amazing stories of twins, we have further confirmation that their precious lives began in every way in the womb.

For Deiniol, his family believes his brother truly saved his life. The pair remained in the

hospital for an additional two months, and after another three months in the hospital, Deiniol was finally able to come home. In October, the twins celebrated their first birthday. Their mother says, "I can't explain how happy I am both boys have celebrated their first birthdays, because there was a time where we didn't know if both of them would get the chance to."

Deiniol still requires oxygen until his lungs mature, but the boys are otherwise happy and healthy at home with their older brother and two older sisters. In addition to the incredible stories of twins comforting each other at birth and demonstrating a clear bond outside the womb, ultrasounds show that twins in the womb deliberately communicate with each other, even long before birth at just 14- to 18-weeks' gestation. Hopefully, stories like Dylan and Deiniol's will prompt further research into the potentially life-saving bond that twins share, and how best to address the needs of babies in the womb and after birth.

LifeNews Note: This originally appeared at Texas Right to Life.



Lutheran Foundation Canada

REFLECTING GOD'S GRACE

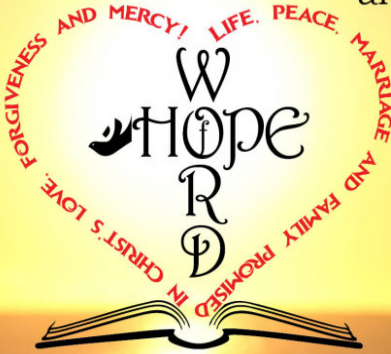
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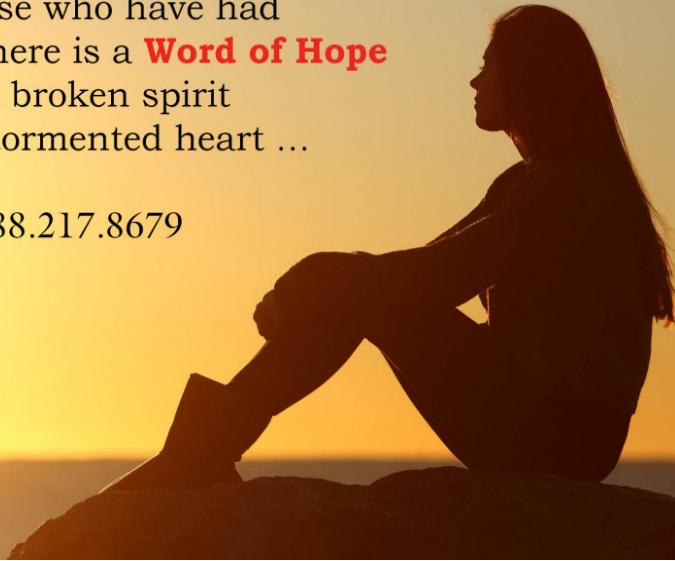
“God is not just our God or the God of just our people or just our nation or our congregation or our denomination or our demographic category or our tribe or our ethnicity or our language. There is no justice if it’s just about just us. No, God is the God of all time and all space and all people. In Christ, all things hang together. Step into your new year with this fresh recognition that the Holy Spirit wants to fill every nook and cranny of your life until you overflow with God’s everlasting love for everybody.”
Pastor John Nunes on The Lutheran Hour – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org

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For those who have had
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Eight Objectives of the LFL-C are:

1. To provide an organization through which Lutheran Christians can unite to share dialogue and give common witness within the Church and society to their concern for the value and dignity of all human life;
2. To strengthen the existing common bond of concern by bringing Lutherans of like mind into contact with one another;
3. To gather and share pertinent information with its membership and develop strategies for witness and response;
4. To develop and distribute educational materials based upon the Word of God;
5. To identify resource people who can write and speak on behalf of the organization;
6. To monitor public and private action in order to enhance the right to life;
7. To respond to and co-operate with other groups in society who share similar concerns; and
8. To examine and correct popular but misleading stereotypes regarding pro-life advocacy.

To contact LFL-C please email us at:
info@lutheransforlife-canada.ca

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