

Coop's Scoops #49, June 2, 2020



This Sign sure made me smile! A friend asked me last night if I had been praying for rain, and to please just stop! I actually don't mind rain at all, love to walk in it with or without an umbrella just so long as it is WARM. The rains and temps we've had for the last few days have been downright bone chilling. But, again, Fear Not!, the Weather Channel says there is sunshine and warmth coming soon! I "Noah Guy" there!

News from the Deanery: We held a joint clericus zoom meeting this morning with Thunder Bay Deanery. The two extreme edges of the Diocese were brought together in our two deaneries. It was great for me to see my old colleagues from Thunder Bay! We spoke about what a "Sabbath Rest" for our lay leaders and ourselves would actually "be", and shared news of how we were offering connection to our parishioners in this covid time as well. It was the first time I have actually been able to "enter" the zoom world and see myself on the screen

along with everyone else. That was a good experience. Thanks to Archdeacon Kelly for setting up our deanery with a live link that was easy to access.

Father's Day is coming up this Sunday! I will be doing some work on honouring our dads and gramps and all who do "fathering". If you would like to send me a picture of your father, I'd be happy to put together a montage for the Sunday liturgy and sermon email, and paper personal delivery to the doors of those without internet (many thanks to Peter and to Paul).



The story is told of a lady who was rather old-fashioned, always quite delicate and elegant, especially in her language. She and her husband were planning a week's vacation in Florida, so she wrote to a particular campground asking for a reservation.

She wanted to make sure the campground was fully equipped, but didn't quite know how to ask about the toilet facilities. She just couldn't bring herself to write the word "toilet" in her letter. After much deliberation, she finally came up with the old-fashioned term BATHROOM COMMUNE. But when she wrote that down, she still thought she was being too forward. So she started all over again and rewrote the entire letter referring to the bathroom commode merely as the BC. "Does the campground have its own BC?" is what she actually wrote.

Well, the campground owner wasn't old-fashioned at all, and when he got the letter, he just couldn't figure out what the woman was talking about. That BC business really stumped him.

After worrying about it for awhile, he showed the letter to several campers, but they couldn't imagine what the lady meant either.

So the campground owner, finally coming to the conclusion that the lady must be asking about the local Baptist Church, sat down and wrote the following reply:

Dear Madam: I regret very much the delay in answering your letter, but I now take pleasure in informing you that a BC is located nine miles north of the campground and is capable of seating 250 people at one time. I admit it is quite a distance away, if you are in the habit of going regularly, but no doubt you will be pleased to know that a great number of people take their lunches along and make a day of it. They usually arrive early and stay late. It is such a beautiful facility and the acoustics are marvelous. Even the normal delivery sounds can be heard.

The last time my wife and I went was six years ago, and it was so crowded we had to stand up the whole time we were there. It may interest you to know that right now a supper is planned to raise money to buy more seats. They are going to hold it in the basement of the BC.

I would like to say it pains me very much not to be able to go more regularly, but it surely is no lack of desire on my part. As we grow old, it seems to be more of an effort, particularly in cold weather.

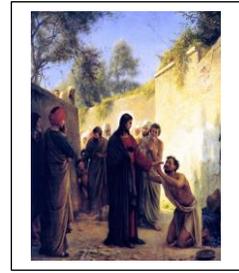
If you do decide to come down to our campground, perhaps I could go with you the first time you go, sit with you, and introduce you to all the other folks.

Remember, this is a friendly community.

Sincerely, Campground Owner



Today's Scripture: Matthew 8: 1-4



When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. ² A man with leprosy^(I)

came and knelt before him^(C) and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. ⁴ Then Jesus said to him, “See that you don’t tell anyone.^(D) But go, show yourself to the priest^(E) and offer the gift Moses commanded,^(E) as a testimony to them.”

Such a tiny little story...four short verses between the wondrous epic Sermon on the Mount, and the nature defying Stilling of the Storm in Matthew's Gospel. This is a short story, but it is by no means “small”. It is a giant of a story.

Jesus has been teaching to multitudes up on a mountain really more like a big hill. They heard the Beatitudes for the first time, the teachings on the Law...and when Jesus decides that “class” is over and goes down the hill, great crowds continue to follow him. That's quite understandable.

“And there was a leper” So.....the leper rang his bell and ran out of range where he should be?..... So....the crowds told the leper to go away, keep away, leaving Jesus and themselves safe? So...the crowds lectured the leper about the law, that he was sinning by even coming close and would be struck dead by God? Well, no, none of the above. The crowd would have gasped with shock and anger because, you see, the leper came right up to Jesus and knelt down before Him, saying “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean” What faith. What courage. What audacity, really! Every eye would be on Jesus....what in the world would He do? Jesus stretched out his arm, covering the little distance left, and touched him, thereby making Himself unclean according the Law, and said “ I do so choose, be made clean”. And he was. Healed. Totally. Then Jesus told him to do something odd....told him not to tell anyone. Why? Thousands of people had just seen it happen, it would be the talk of the town for years! The answer is found in the rest of the sentence: rather go, show yourself to the Priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them”. Jesus did not want this leper to be sidetracked; didn't want him to run off and embrace his wife and kids,

didn't want him getting interviewed by the mob or the Jerusalem Press. All that could wait. It was of greater importance that this former leper go to the Priest, who alone could pronounce health after leprosy, as a sign to that Priest (and all the Priests) that Jesus did heal, and Jesus also did follow the Law and Jesus asked others to do so as well.

Jesus taught the Priests on that day, that although great need and great love sometimes meant the Law would and should be broken; in most times and in most situations it was to be honoured and followed and praised as a gift from God similar to the gift of Jesus' healing. The Law was not "wrong" or "bad", it was the agent of blessing designed by God for the health of the whole nation. Love, however, trumped the Law when necessity, courage, and faith called for love to do so. Love was at the very top of the Law triangle, pointing straight at the heart of God who gave it.

That's a whole lot of learning from four little verses of Scripture! It makes me think of the shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept" – John 11:35. And the next shortest "it is finished" – John 19:30.

In your devotional time today, think about those verses, and the rule of Love. Then ask the Holy Spirit to create a whole new world of inclusion and acceptance and value in your mind, so that this world we inhabit can in fact be changed. Because you are. Because I am. Because we are. Amen. Judie+

Prayer for Today: *Prayer in Time of Isolation*, Written by the Rev. Dr. Kate Sonderegger, Chair of Systematic Theology, Virginia Theological Seminary

Almighty God: Our times are in your hand. We call upon you in this hour of our need, when we are lonely and must stand apart. Be our strength, O Sovereign Lord, our calm in the midst of raging seas, our refuge and our dwelling place. Sanctify to us this time drawn away from others, even as your Son, O Father, drew away to a lonely place for prayer. Deepen our need of you, O Lord, that every breath may be a whisper of the Spirit's prompting, a renewed searching of the deep things of God. Stir up in us the great act of intercession, that we may spend our time apart in prayer for the world you created and sustain. Bless us in our turning toward you, and make us a blessing to those who stand in need of you, the whole fragile earth. All this we ask in the name of the great Physician, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.