

“BRIDGES”



Reflections Easter to Pentecost 2018

The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality
Charleston, West Virginia

April 1, 2018 – Easter Sunday – Alleluia!

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8

As we discuss bridges in these reflections, let us not become too literal. We are not called to design the best, or most beautiful, or longest physical bridges in the world. Nor are we called to comment on the failure of others to build bridges. And we are certainly not called to lament that God appears not to be building the bridges we think we need.

We are called to be doers in the world. In the words of the Book of Common Prayer, found at the conclusion of the Eucharist, we pray “send us now into the world to do the work you have given us to do.” There is an abundance of need for God’s people to address, and we are called to get on with it, not to delay until we get it “just right.” And not to assume someone else will take care of it for us.

We discern what God is calling us to do, mindful that the skills we have been given are to be used in doing that work. God does not necessarily require us to learn new skills to do our work, but he does require us to be aware of and to use those abilities we have.

There is an ad for Credit Suisse which says “Progress is just a word. Until you make it happen.”

So too a bridge. God will provide a way, but it is up to us to cross the bridge. Pray for clarity of vision to meet the challenges before us. We must do something – not just talk about it.



The Rev. Kent Higgins, Charleston, WV
A retired Episcopal priest and former WVIS board member.
revkenthiggins@gmail.com 304-542-4378

April 2, 2018

The Church on Earth

Jesus said to (Mary of Magdala)... go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"¹ Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and what he told her. John 20:17-18

Mary of Magdala was the first person to see the resurrected Jesus. Like the apostles who later encountered him on the road to Emmaus, she did not at first recognize him. When she did, she called out to him as "rabbi" and clung to him. For that period of time, until she found and told the disciples, Mary Magdalene was the church on earth. She was the one person who knew that life is stronger than death, that mercy is the balm for all things and that nothing would ever be the same. She was profoundly trusted as the bridge between the truth of the Resurrection and all of creation.

Prayer Practice:

The church is not meant to be one person. However, sometimes in our lives we can find only a few people who can witness the depths of what is true of ourselves and our society. Reflect on how you can be sure that those who encounter you have encountered the church on earth.

Molly Linehan, MA
Director of Campus Ministry
Charleston Catholic High School
m.linehancchs@gmail.com
440-437-5768

April 3, 2018

*Come Holy Spirit
Enkindle the Fire of Your Love
Transform all that is fearful
Into boldness of heart.
Inspire Your servant with Wonder and Awe
At the Mystery of Your Presence.
Confirm Your friend in Compassion and Forgiveness.
Whisper Discernment in the midst of confusion
Be Wisdom in time of trouble;
Reverence in the face of diversity;
Patience with the unfolding of life
And forever anoint
Your Messenger with Joy.
Amen
Pat Bergen, CSJ*

I was immediately drawn to the photo of this most unusual bridge. The water cascading over the sides, the reflection and refraction of the light in the water, the round rather than straight path. The inner circle within the bridge! Wow. My inner circle around which life flows is stable and quiet and safe now. Having been through my second divorce and learning to navigate alone has been a process. I can't say that I've reached the end, but I can say when I allow myself time to sit and be with God, I am filled with peace.



Prayer Practice: Take 20 minutes a day to quietly sit and think about the choices you make on your journey. Identify the choices that are not bringing you closer to God and let go of them. Be ready for the mystery to blossom within you!

Kathryn M Lester, MBA
WVIS Associate Spiritual Director
[Kml Ester53@yahoo.com](mailto:Kml Lester53@yahoo.com)
304-610-2852

April 4, 2018

*This is the day the LORD has made;
let us be glad and rejoice in it.*

Psalm 118:24

In this Scripture passage from Psalm 118:24, we are reminded of the bridge deck that is built and suspended through our daily actions between the attributes of the bridge pillars of GLADNESS and REJOICING. GLADNESS and REJOICING are the key attributes of our spiritual heart. Our daily actions are the bridge span between these two attributes of GLADNESS and REJOICING.

How do we know if we have a GLAD heart? We look at our daily actions towards others? In word and deed, if we help others GLADLY, then is it safe to assume we have GLADNESS in our heart?

How do we know when our heart REJOICES? If, throughout the day when we acknowledge how the Holy Spirit of the Risen Christ dwelling within us REJOICES as we gladly serve, then is it safe to assume our heart is REJOICING?

Prayer Practice

Prayerfully ponder the following two questions during your personal prayer time today:

- How did I demonstrate GLADNESS today?
- What caused me to REJOICE today?

Bob Harrison, Ph.D.
Associate Spiritual Director
DRBOBWV@AOL.COM

April 5, 2018

The Tolls of Bridge Building

on this bridge, as in life, there are tolls. It costs when you live a life of respect, compassion, and sensitivity. But to trust in that bridge is to trust that eventually people will be able to cross back and forth easily... - James Martin, SJ

The quote above comes from Fr. James Martin's book, Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity. As the title of the book implies, Fr. Martin took a risk for relationships. You may have seen in the news, Fr. Martin has paid a price for his bridge building as well. There has been strong pushback from loud but non-authoritative voices who claim that church unity does not include members of the LGBT community. In an effort to marginalize Fr. Martin the opponents have successfully pressured institutions to cancel his public speaking engagements. Ironically, the work for true unity can come along a road of isolation.

Marginalization of individuals or communities can happen right under our noses without our realizing it. Often, when we are comfortable in a community or setting, we do not realize that others are not so comfortable. Then, the effort to bring others into the setting can challenge our own comfort. We are put in the position of making a choice between our own comfort in this moment and the comfort of all people in a further off time.

We have just passed through Lent, a season in which we remember the suffering and death of Christ. The gravity of Christ's death has been relieved by the joy of the Resurrection. We believe that Christ continues to be a part of the small passions, death and resurrections of our own lives. The choice to forgo our own comfort for the distant hope of greater comfort for all people is one deeply rooted in the Christian message.

Prayer Practice:

Reflect on the tolls that you have had to pay for building bridges. Do you know others who have paid more than you? Are there ways you can share the burden of bridge building?

Molly Linehan, MA
Director of Campus Ministry
Charleston Catholic High School
m.linehancchs@gmail.com
440-437-5768

April 6, 2018

Luke 16:26

I mowed a lot of grass in high school. Almost every day I would walk up to my aunts and mow for a couple of hours. I dreamt of the day she would get a riding mower...she would always buy a self-propelled walk behind mower.

One day, my parents bought a riding mower! On occasion I would get to use it at Aunt Lu's. However, to get it there, I had to drive on the road. All the traffic made this dangerous.

I remember coming home from college and there was a new right of way along the road up to my aunts! Now there was a new way to take the tractor to mow, but there was a small stream. Low and behold my dad built a bridge to get the tractor across!

Dad took the measurements. He laid some strong side supports. Decking went on and the bridge took shape. He even put low sides on the bridge to keep from going off the edge. The moment arrived to travel across the bridge.

The front wheels started across the bridge and the tractor came to a halt. The mower deck was sticking out past the wheels. The sides on the bridge were holding everything back. These were lowered and the tractor was able to cross the bridge and the mowing began.

In our lives our first designs or plans don't always work out. Our humanness can get in the way, tangle us up and we need to step back and re-evaluate the situation.

What a blessing to know that God gets it right the first time. All the time! During this Lenten Season, Jesus is the atonement – “the at-one-ment”- the bridge to God through his life, death and resurrection.

As we journey through this Season, may we remember Jesus our bridge to Almighty God.

Reverend David Lake
WVIS Board Member
(724)864-2235
dslake@hotmail.com