

Are We Doing God's Will?

My wife has been diagnosed with a brain tumor in the area of her inner ear. The good news is that it is benign, so once removed; it's not going to pop up somewhere else in her body like a malignant cancer might. The biggest risks are damage done or complications due to the brain surgery itself. We are quite well and at peace and yet we definitely have use for your prayerful intercession. We are also grateful for the inspiration we've received from those we have come to know and love in this parish, which have endured far more with heroic faith and holy patience.

Times like these provide an opportunity to meditate on the deeper meaning of things. So often the most important questions seem almost unfathomable. Why do bad things happen to those who try to do good? How can a loving God permit evil?

My personal favorite is: if Jesus suffered and died in atonement for the sins of all, why do we continue to suffer and die? This is indeed a mystery. Clearly there is more at work here than simply Him paying the price of admission and we getting the pass. There is no justice in that. There is no mercy in that either because if that is all it was; we would be left no better after than before.

The secret is in the nature of Grace. The word grace itself literally means gift. Gifts are not earned. They are given freely and yet they still must be received. Further, we are not simply intended to receive God's love we are intended to live in it. This requires that we step out of ourselves and love in return. This is how the gift "Grace" is received. This is how we are not left as we were but are entirely made new. In this we are not merely ransomed, we are redeemed and justified also.

So what is the context of suffering in the Christian life? What is the cause of our peace, joy and gratitude in the midst of grave danger, pain and uncertainty? We pray daily in the Lord's Prayer that His Kingdom come and His will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Knowing that His resurrected body is in Heaven, it is His mystical body, the Church, in whom

we are members, through which He continues to carry out His Kingdom and His will on Earth. We are keenly aware of what He did with His physical body in love to redeem the world. He preached, healed, forgave and served but above all He willingly sacrificed His body in atonement for the sins of those whom he names as His own.

This is the purpose of His mystical body, the Church, also.

St Paul wrote "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal 2:20 and "Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the Church." Col 1:24.

Without question, he was saying that Jesus' earthly mission of salvation is perpetuated through the members of His mystical body, the Church, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." He also distinguishes between "the flesh" and "His body, which is the Church." In the flesh, we both sin and suffer. In the body, Jesus through our participation heals, atones and forgives. It is our part to live in the body by faith and not in the flesh, to take up our cross and to follow Him.

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23.

In this way, our suffering... our cross is not just the experience of degeneration of the flesh due to sin. It is actually taken up in Christ, "for the sake of his body, which is the Church." This is what gives life to our faith and meaning to our life, to do His will. It has value and power. This just makes sense. If failing to love through sin has the power to bring suffering and death then loving in Jesus surely has the power to bring healing and life.

Lord, if it is Your Holy will to make of us but a single drop of your most precious blood in order to make Your love present for the salvation of those whom You have entrusted to us, we rejoice. We entrust everything to you. We are Your people, Lord. We have sinned against You. We repent on behalf of ourselves and all whom you have entrusted to

us. We lovingly offer ourselves in atonement that Your mercy and Your love may be made manifest in our midst. May Your salvation be upon us Your people. Free us from all that separates us from You. Let none be lost, not one. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Your brother in Christ,

Jeff LaSart

Bulletin Contribution Report

You may have noticed some Category changes in the weekly collection report in the bulletin. These changes should help clarify how your contributions are spent.

Budgeted Operating Income

The income we need to pay the anticipated bills just as your own budget

Other Non Budgeted Income

The income we receive that we expect to spend sometime in the future. This is something like a saving account set aside for a future major expense such as a vacation or maybe a new car.

Non-Parish Collections

The money you contribute to various non parish charities such as last week's Holy Father/Peter's Pence collection.

Needed per week to meet budget

During May and June, Msgr. David and the Finance Council closely reviewed our income and expenses for the past year and identified what expenses we expect to see during the next fiscal year which began on July 1. This information was translated into our operating budget for the year. The budget provides us with a measuring tool that is reviewed each month to help keep our financial house in order. Our annual budget for this fiscal year requires an average weekly contribution of \$4625 to cover our reoccurring operating expenses.

Finance Reports

We completed our fiscal year on June 30. Attached are a condensed balance sheet and a revenue and expense report that compare this past year to the previous. Also attached are the Cemetery Balance and Revenue and Expense reports.

You continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to your financial stewardship. Because of this, we were able to accomplish much this year. Some highlights follow. Please contact Al Jacobson with questions. 847-5510

Thank you

Balance Sheet

- General checking is behind last year's balance by about 1.75%.
- The building fund is also slightly less, but we were able to meet our monthly payment as well as pay off an additional \$14,000 in principal reducing our overall building loan debt by \$29,000 last year.
- We have almost enough money to pay off the third and last phase of the storm window project when it is completed in the near future.
- The window restoration project continues with 2 windows completed and 2 more to be started this week. The balance of \$69,000 in checking represents approximately \$62,000 donated for sponsored windows and an additional \$7,000 for no specific window. There are still several windows awaiting a sponsor.

Revenue and Expense

- Revenue
 - Revenue is significantly less than the FY 14. This is in large part due to the completion of the steeple fund drive and many of the building fund pledges being completed in FY14.
- Expense
 - Compensation expense increased this year as a result of including all payroll taxes as expense. Previously some were handled as a liability and thus were not shown here.

- The church facilities expense is substantially less due to the elimination or reduction of expenses due to completion of the steeple and significant progress on the storm window project. Some of This reduction was offset by the installation of LED lights in the church.