

THE FOURTH DAY

The FOURTH Day is a Regional Cursillo Publication for the Diocese of NC

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Quarterly

Cursillo NC#109 (August 6-9th) is regrettably postponed due to Covid-19. Please look for further notices and updates. Inquiries can be directed to toni.routt@gmail.com or your parish.

CONTENTS

- 1: Open Letter from 109
- 2: Bishop Curry's Words
- 3: God in Troubled Times
- 4: Ultreya ZOOM Meeting
- 5: Testimony
- 6: Announcements
- 7: Donations

Be still and that know I am God

Psalms 46:10

From NC#109 Weekend Leader

DeColores Fourth Day!

I have been coming to you this winter and spring urging you all to listen for God's call to serve and approach potential Pilgrims. Now when we should be starting formation and finalizing plans for the August weekend, we have heard God say, "Not yet!". NC Cursillo #109 will happen, just not in August of 2020. In God's perfect time, we will host #109. We move into 2021 with the team two-thirds in place. Once we learn how to operate in this new social dynamic within our church buildings, then we will explore how to host a Cursillo weekend within the new guidelines while losing none of the spiritual depth we all experienced at our weekend.

When the first Pilgrims long ago in Spain were facing challenges, they cried, "Onward! Ultreya!"

Let that be our cry as we move forward in this Covid-19 world.

Ultreya!!!

Toni Routt
Weekend Leader
NC#109

Open the eyes of my heart Lord....

Prayer Matters: Words from Bishop Curry

Prayer matters. It's not magic, but it makes a difference. There's a prayer in the prayer book that I thought you might like. It's a prayer for in times of sickness, for use by the sick person, but maybe it's a prayer that can apply to us all.

This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever shall be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. If I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words and give me the spirit of Jesus.

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer. God love you. God bless you and may God hold you and this whole world, the entire human family and the whole of creation in those almighty hands of love.



Where Is God in a Pandemic? The best answer is: We don't know. But even non-Christians may find understanding in the life of Jesus.

By James Martin from NY Times

Last summer I underwent radiation treatment. And every time I passed through the doorway marked "Radiation Oncology," my heart seemed to skip a beat. While I was in little danger (my tumor was benign, and, yes, one sometimes needs radiation for that), I daily met people who were close to death.

Every weekday for six weeks I would hail a cab and say, "68th and York, please." Once there, I would stop into a nearby church to pray. Afterward, walking to my appointment in a neighborhood jammed with hospitals, I passed cancer patients who had lost their hair, exhausted elderly men and women in wheelchairs pushed by home health care aids, and those who had just emerged from surgery. But on the same sidewalks were busy doctors, smiling nurses and eager interns, and many others in apparently perfect health.



One day it dawned on me: We're all going to 68th and York, though we all have different times for our appointments.

In just the past few weeks, millions have started to fear that they are moving to their appointment with terrifying speed, thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic. The sheer horror of this fast-moving infection is coupled with the almost physical shock from its sudden onset. As a priest, I've heard an avalanche of feelings in the last month: panic, fear, anger, sadness, confusion and despair. More and more I feel like I'm living in a horror movie, but the kind that I instinctively turn off because it's too disturbing. And even the most religious people ask me: Why is this happening? And: Where is God in all of this?

The question is essentially the same that people ask when a hurricane wipes out hundreds of lives or when a single child dies from cancer. It is called the "problem of suffering," "the mystery of evil" or the "theodicy," and it's a question that saints and theologians have grappled with for millennia. The question of "natural" suffering (from illnesses or natural disasters) differs from that of "moral evil" (in which suffering flows from the actions of individuals — think Hitler and Stalin). But leaving aside theological distinctions, the question now consumes the minds of millions of believers, who quail at steadily rising death tolls, struggle with stories of physicians forced to triage patients and recoil at photos of rows of coffins: Why?

Over the centuries, many answers have been offered about natural suffering, all of them wanting in some way. The most common is that suffering is a test. Suffering tests our faith and strengthens it: "My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance," says the Letter of James in the New Testament. But while explaining suffering as a test may

help in minor trials (patience being tested by an annoying person) it fails in the most painful human experiences. Does God send cancer to "test" a young child? Yes, the child's parents may learn something about perseverance or faith, but that approach can make God out to be a monster.

So does the argument that suffering is a punishment for sins, a still common approach among some believers (who usually say that God punishes people or groups that they themselves disapprove of). But Jesus himself rejects that approach when he meets a man who is blind, in a story recounted in the Gospel of John: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," says Jesus. This is Jesus's definitive rejection of the image of the monstrous Father. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus responds to the story of a stone tower that fell and crushed a crowd of people: "Do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you."

The overall confusion for believers is encapsulated in what is called the "inconsistent triad," which can be summarized as follows: God is all powerful, therefore God can prevent suffering. But God does not prevent suffering. Therefore, God is either not all powerful or not all loving. In the end, the most honest answer to the question of why the Covid-19 virus is killing thousands of people, why infectious diseases ravage humanity and why there is suffering at all is: We don't know. For me, this is the most honest and accurate answer. One could also suggest how viruses are part of the natural world and in some way contribute to life, but this approach fails abjectly when speaking to someone who has lost a friend or loved one. An important question for the believer in times of suffering is this: Can you believe in a God that you don't understand?

But if the mystery of suffering is unanswerable, where can the believer go in times like this? For the Christian and perhaps even for others the answer is Jesus.

Christians believe that Jesus is fully divine and fully human. Yet we sometimes overlook the second part. Jesus of Nazareth was born into a world of illness. In her book "Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit," about daily life in first-century Galilee, Jodi Magness, a scholar of early Judaism, calls the milieu in which Jesus lived "filthy, malodorous and unhealthy." John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, scholars of the historical background of Jesus, sum up these conditions in a sobering sentence in "Excavating Jesus": "A case of the flu, a bad cold, or an abscessed tooth could kill." This was Jesus's world.

Moreover, in his public ministry, Jesus continually sought out those who were sick. Most of his miracles were healings from illnesses and disabilities: debilitating skin conditions (under the rubric of "leprosy"), epilepsy, a woman's "flow of blood," a withered hand, "dropsy," blindness, deafness, paralysis. In these frightening times, Christians may find comfort in knowing that when they pray to Jesus, they are praying to someone who understands them not only because he is divine and knows all things, but because he is human and experienced all things.

But those who are not Christian can also see him as a model for care of the sick. Needless to say, when caring for someone with coronavirus, one should take the necessary precautions in order not to pass on the infection. But for Jesus, the sick or dying person was not the "other," not one to be blamed, but our brother and sister. When Jesus saw a person in need, the Gospels tell us that his heart was

“moved with pity.” He is a model for how we are to care during this crisis: with hearts moved by pity. Whenever I prayed in that church near 68th and York, I would pause before a statue of Jesus, his arms outstretched, his heart exposed. Just a plaster statue, it wasn’t great art, but it was meaningful to me. I don’t understand why people are dying, but I can follow the person who gives me a pattern for life.

James Martin is a Jesuit priest, editor at large of America magazine, consultant to the Vatican’s Dicastery for Communication and the author of “Jesus: A Pilgrimage.”



Ultreyas

Blessings at this unusual time. Technology has a way for us to continue to be connected even when we are forced to live with the virus, social distancing, and stay at home orders. The Triad Ultreya will continue to meet on Zoom from 5:15 until 7:30 PM on 06/14/2020. A Zoom invitation to join the meeting is set out below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89962068560?pwd=eVINZXRZQVN2V1pxUG9nQzh6d1FXdz09>

Meeting ID: 899 6206 8560

Password: 177944

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,89962068560#,1#,177944# US (Chicago)

+19294362866,,89962068560#,1#,177944# US (New York)

Dial by your location

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+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 899 6206 8560

Password: 177944

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89962068560?pwd=eVINZXRZQVN2V1pxUG9nQzh6d1FXdz09>

Please feel free to have a snack or a meal during the meeting. If you know of someone who you would like to attend, then feel free to forward the invitation to them by email.

Our schedule will be:

5:15 - 5:30 Log in and Welcome

5:30 - 6:15 Break out into groups of 4 for Reunion Group Meetings.

6:25 - 6:55 Speaker - Mute microphones at home.

7:00 - 7:15 Clergy Response

7:15 - 7:30 Music Postlude and closing Prayer

Thank you, Pat MacGregor

If there are floating reunion groups out there that are meeting and we would love to hear from you to share your progress. Email us and don't forget your church name, address and zip code.

Announcements

Secretariat Members Needed

Volunteer are needed to help lead our NC Cursillo movement. Contact the current secretariat to learn more.

Need More Information?

To find out more about attending a three-day weekend or sponsoring a participant, contact NorthCarolinaCursillo@gmail.com

Secretariat meetings

The Secretariat makes plans and carries out activities for the ministry in this Diocese. Meetings usually run from 10 a.m. until 2 or 2:30 p.m. Meetings occur on the third Saturday of every other month and vary by location. Cursillistas are encouraged to attend; the meetings are open to the public. Contact NorthCarolinaCursillo@gmail.com for further information

How to Make a Donation

Please prayerfully consider a contribution in support of NC Episcopal Cursillo. Any amount can be given.

Cursillo is supported by contributions from people like you. You may give in three ways:

The Harold Elsner Fund is set aside for scholarships for the 3-day weekend and can be used for candidates or team members.

The Merry Walker Clergy Fund supports clergy who act as weekend Spiritual Directors. Often, clergy must pay for the weekend without parish support and even pay for a supply priest.

The General Fund supports the overall expenses of Cursillo, mailings and newsletter production, this web site, supplies for the weekend and so forth.

Please consider offering a donation by sending your check to Episcopal Cursillo 200 W Morgan St #300 Raleigh NC 27601

Testimony from Patrick MacGregor

Because of recent events. I was reorganizing a great deal of debris in my office and I came across the Palanka that I received at Cursillo number 107 when I was a pilgrim. Memories of that time came flooding back. Looking back, while experiencing the present, and while worrying about the future it is nice to have these memories of what seems like a much more peaceful time. After looking over all the cards, crosses, and well wishes I came to the bottom of the bag. There I found a smooth, polished, white stone which had a hand painted message. It simply said "Peace." With all the worry and stress of our current life God seemed to be saying "Be still and know that I am God." After saying some prayers I felt called to to write the attached document. Together this email and its attachment encompass what Cursillo means to me. **It is a little island of peace amid the ocean of chaos.** It is a peace which passes all understanding. I hope that you will share this with the Cursillo community in whatever way you can.

God bless you, Pat

LIFE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE CORONA VIRUS

In early February we began to hear about some disease in China that the CDC was worried about. We were told it was highly infectious and highly contagious. Over time it was given a name, the Corona Virus. We were told it was a bad case of the flu. The virus itself is a cousin of the common cold. At that time in early February life was marching on as usual. It was not clear then whether we had anything to worry about. I felt secure in the fact that I had my flu shot.

As February progressed, we were told that the virus had begun to travel. At the same time however, we were also told that this was a democratic hoax. It was unclear whether this was something to worry about. Then we were told that someone in Washington State had contracted the disease. Soon more and more cases were popping up.

We were told that the disease was easily transmitted from one person to another. We were also told that there was something called community outbreak. It was explained that the disease was popping up in areas where they could not find any evidence that it was transmitted from anyone who was previously infected. The disease broke out in a community with no apparent history of transmission from someone else. It was then that I began to realize that my life was changing. How much it would change was still unclear.

As February progressed, we began to hear that in Washington state, especially Seattle, in Northern California, especially the San Francisco Bay area, and finally in New York, especially New York City the disease was becoming more prevalent. There were even some cases in Washington DC. Then we were told there was a case here in North Carolina. It became clear that we may have something to worry about.

By the third week in February we were told that the virus was everywhere. Our government seemed to be responding to this fact in an irrational, unscientific, and nonsensical way. People at the top of governments around the world found themselves at risk for infection.

Schools were closed. Wake Forest University and Appalachian State University have closed their face-to-face classes and moved everything online. All the Washington DC area Episcopal churches including the national Cathedral were closed. Now even St. Clements was closed for a period of two weeks. Last Sunday we experienced online church with a virtual Eucharist.

23 states including North Carolina have declared a state of emergency. Professional and collegiate sports of all kinds have been canceled. We have no idea of the coming strain that is going to be put on our economy and our society. With all of this we are left in a state of uncertainty. The stock market has plunged by thousands of points. It leaves all of us with the day to day decisions about what we can do to protect ourselves, what we can do to protect our families, and what we can do to find a way to contribute to our country coming through this present darkness intact.

We do not understand at this point the second and third order challenges we are headed into. We are nowhere near the peak of the curve of the infection rate which means billions of dollars of damage to our economy. Small businesses, many of them struggling to survive, may fail in coming months. Small churches, many of them struggling to survive, may fail in coming months. It all depends on what we do now.

This is the time we should be pulling together and not tearing apart. This is the time we should be extending grace, support, and help. Just because our leaders are failing doesn't mean that we as a people should fail each other. We all need to rise to the occasion to support each other with grace, support, and love. Loving each other is what Bishop Curry advocates for us to do.

The most effective tool we have in our efforts to accomplish all these goals is our ability to pray. We need to pray for ourselves. We need to pray for our communities. We need to pray for our churches. We need

to pray for our leaders. We need to pray for our country. We need to pray for the world.

We need to pray when we get up in the morning. We need to pray when we go to bed at night. We need to pray before we eat a meal. We need to pray while doing our work. In our spare time that is when we need to pray also. Most of all we need to pray ourselves through the end of this present darkness.

We need to pray when we are together. We need to pray when we are apart. Most of all we need to pray in loving communion with our Lord for the health and wellbeing of everyone.

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Let us pray

Be of good courage, Be not afraid

For the Lord thy God is with thee

Wherever thou goest

Father Creator, Brother Savior, Spirit of Life, Be with me, Be for me, Be before me

Be with me, Be in me, Be within me, Be with me, Be before me, Be within me, Be through me for others

Be in me, I in thee, They in us

Be whole, Be holy, Be wholly *His*

Amen

Presiding Bishop's Weekly Invitation

April 20, 2020] As we learn how to adjust our lives given the reality of the coronavirus and the request to do our part to slow its spread by practicing social distancing, I invite you to join me each week to take a moment to cultivate a 'habit of grace.' A [new meditation will be posted on Mondays](#) through May/June. These meditations can be watched at any time by clicking [here](#).

