



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

2150 Hermitage Lane Mesa, Idaho 83643-5005

Website: www.marymount-hermitage.org

Tel. (208) 256-4354

NEW E-mail: SisterBeverly@marymount-hermitage.org

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DEATH IS REAL

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

Death has touched my life and heart so much in the last three years that I have had to meditate on its reality more often than usual. My Dad died three years ago, my youngest brother, Tom, died two years ago, last year two close friends and Board members died, Bill Bader and Mike Nourse, as well as my mother's oldest brother, my godfather, Uncle Alfonso Echeveste. This year two of my mother's sisters, my Aunts Minnie and Carmen, have died. Now I just received word that one of my oldest friends died on April 12 in Seattle.

Sister Lorraine Marie Schneider was one of my high school teachers. She taught me religion, biology, French and calligraphy. She was moderator of the Sodality of Mary, which gave her the opportunity to mentor me spiritually, the teaching and effects of which have guided me all my life. She was moderator of the high school year book. Since I was on the staff, I learned about fonts, headlines, making columns, page layout, illustrations, captions, graphic design, writing, editing, and all the skills which have enabled me to produce a newsletter for Marymount Hermitage for 40 years. Sister was unfailingly kind, pleasant, gracious and ladylike. I admired her from the moment I first met her.

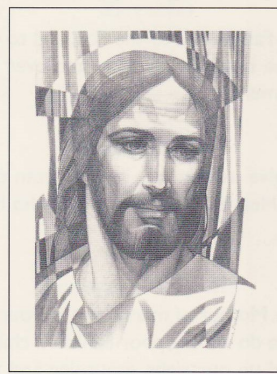
I have so much for which to thank God in the gift that Sister Lorraine Marie was for me. We remained friends for over 60 years. She waited eagerly to read the now monthly newsletters and always commented positively on them. To the very end, when she wrote to me at Christmas for instance, her cursive handwriting was perfect and elegant as always, surprising for someone 98 years old and on hospice! She told me, as usual, how much she loved me and how proud she was of me and my vocation. I miss her very much and cannot stop crying. She leaves a big hole in my heart and life. Yes, death is real indeed.

In our current American culture, death is hard to acknowledge. We do not even use the word. Instead

we are expected to say that someone has "passed". The essential question is: passed from what to what? That is not articulated. We hide from the reality of death because it is difficult and painful. Priests tell me that families are not commonly asking for a funeral Mass for members who die, that they only want burial.

Death is a mystery. What happens after I die? Do I just cease to exist? Is there nothing else? Is there such a thing as judgement, eternal life, heaven and hell? How can one possibly know for sure? These are serious questions. The older we get, the more unavoidable the questions are.

The answer, of course, is faith. If I believe in God, then I look to him for the answer to the question of death and what comes after. We have just completed the liturgical celebration of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter for 2023. It is a yearly meditation on the events of Jesus' life and death and what came afterwards. All the Gospel accounts relate how the reality of the resurrection of Jesus was at first hard to believe for his apostles and disciples. Who rises from the dead, in his physical, but glorified, body by his own power?



So the ultimate question is really: who is Jesus? What is his identity? Is he really who he claimed to be, the Son of God? If so, that has consequences. It means that Jesus the Word was sent by the Father. It means that God has power over life and death, that he has the power to resurrect Jesus and those who believe in him. We are saved by faith in this life. (See Eph. 2:8-9) There is indeed heaven where God the Father, Jesus the Beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit await us to be with them for all eternity. This is the goal for which God created each one of us. We are called to an astonishing destiny!

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DEATH IS REAL (Continued from page 1)

Death is a natural occurrence for a physical body. Plants die. Animals die. We human beings die. But we are body and spirit, and, as such, “made in the image and likeness of God.” (Gen. 1:26) We are meant to live forever with God in heaven. This life is a journey to our true home. Death is only a door. In the prayers of the funeral Mass, we hear “In death, life is changed, not ended.” The greatest realities, even in this earthly life, are invisible. Like love. Like holiness. Like joy. Everything in this visible life points to invisible realities like Love and Grace, Life and unending, perfect Joy.

As Catholics, we believe that at Mass in holy communion we receive and consume the risen body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. Mass is meant to be a reminder and a support for living eternal life now, even before heaven. Jesus said his “kingdom is within us.” (See Lk. 17:21) Eternity is the grace we live in the holiness produced by the Holy Spirit. All this is invisible, but more real than material, visible realities. It is the saints who show that living eternal life and love now is possible: Peter and John, Paul and Stephen, Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

To conclude, let me share the Easter hymn which touches my heart these days:

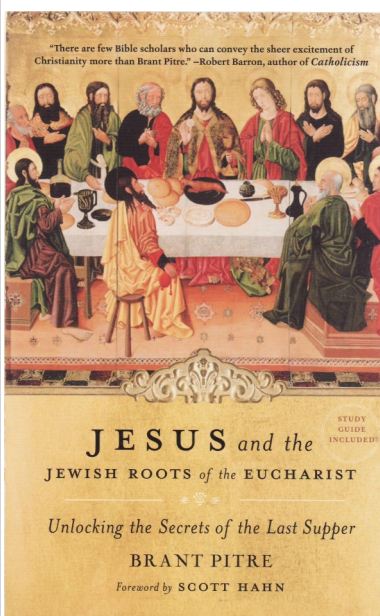
*“Two were bound for Emmaus, disheartened and lost;
all their hope for the future had been nailed to a cross.
Love unknown then walked beside them,
come back from the dead,
and they knew he was risen in the breaking of bread.”*
(Lk. 24:13-35)

COMMUNITY NEWS

Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

TRIDUUM and EASTER 2023: This year Father Bill McCann offered to assist Father Jerry Funke with priestly ministry for the parish of St. Agnes, Weiser, and the mission churches in Cambridge and Council. I spent the Triduum and Easter at a guest house near the Boise Cathedral for a private retreat. I was within walking distance of the daily Masses and services, which was ideal. I only prayed, read abundantly, and made my olive wood beads on cord rosaries for sale. It was a blessed time because I could be totally silent and solitary without the everyday responsibilities of Marymount Hermitage. God was very present to me.

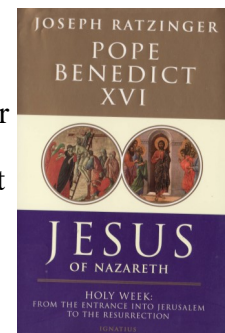
RECOMMENDED READING:



This is the book by Dr. Brant Pitre, which I will use for the two hours of teaching on April 22 at our first Day of Pilgrimage for this year. I am focusing on two chapters: The Manna of the Messiah and The Bread of Presence. It is awesome to see how this biblical scholar can open Old Testament texts and show us how much more deeply are the aspects of our faith relative to the holy Eucharist. Hopefully, this will help all of us

renew our belief in the Real Presence of Jesus and dedication to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Please pray for this group retreat.

Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week from the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection by Joseph Ratzinger was one of the several books I took with me on my retreat. I have read it twice before and it is highlighted throughout from past study, but it was compelling as always. How clearly and simply and deeply our recently deceased Pope Benedict XVI explains the Scripture passages of well-known events. He has the mind of a scholar, the heart of a mystic, and the power of a saint. Highly recommended. This is Volume Two of a set of three books.



If anyone wants to borrow one of these books from the library at Marymount, just let me know.

FLOWER CARDS: I worked on making flower greeting cards during the winter months. On the advice of others, I have decided to raise the price of the cards. Print cards will be \$4 and the real flower cards will be \$8. We originally built our business on getting recycled paper from a printer and envelopes from business throw-aways. But now that I have to purchase quality paper for the cards and envelopes to match, it is time to accept reality. Things cost more.

EASTER GREETINGS: The Lord is risen! May he grant you peace, joy and love from his glorious life.

The MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER is published by Marymount Hermitage, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in the State of Idaho. The Hermit Sisters of Mary are a canonically approved, Catholic community of women hermits, following the Rule of St. Benedict. The newsletter is published each month by the 15th on our website only. The purpose of the newsletter is to share the spirituality and material progress of Marymount Hermitage. Please pray that we may be faithful to our way of life in prayer and penance, solitude and silence for the sake of the Church and the world. Donations are sincerely appreciated and are tax-deductible. Thank you in advance to those who have remembered Marymount Hermitage in their wills. God bless you!