



Reflection Booklet

Reflections Curated by the Values in Action Team

Updated November 2021

Fight the Good Fight

Submitted by Chad Aduddell
Market Chief Executive Officer, CHI St. Vincent

It seems like it was just yesterday that I penned the opening comments for the 2020 Reflection Booklet. It reminds me of a saying from my 2nd grade Sunday School teacher many years ago, “the days are long but the years are short.” A strange observation, two things that seem so different can both be true.

A year ago, we were in the early stages of COVID and didn’t know much. Today, we have learned a lot, and yet the more we learn the more it feels like we still don’t understand this pandemic. What I do know, is that our team, our nurses, techs, support staff and physicians have answered the call for the past 18 months. We show up day after day, surge after surge, and provide compassionate care to all who come to our doors. We have also learned that this race against the pandemic is not a sprint, but a marathon. At the beginning, there was a lot of support from outside of the hospital and health care delivery system. Those days are a distant memory, and now we must find resilience elsewhere as we endure some of our darkest hours.

In Luke, Chapter 17, Jesus is asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come. He responds, “behold, the kingdom of God is within you”. Now, we look within, and we call upon our faith, our mission and one another to find the resilience to continue our journey. My prayer for each of us is that we will be able to look back and say, “I have fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith.” 2 Timothy 4:7

May God Bless CHI St. Vincent and all who carry her mission forward!

The Heart of Prayer

Anonymous Submission

If you are like me, you get all kinds of requests from people who are asking for prayers. Usually it's for a health crisis or new diagnosis or loss of a job. Typically the prayer requests come from Facebook friends or people we know and like who are asking for help. And so we offer a prayer on their behalf, or at least respond with the praying hands emoticon (I'm not sure that counts for a prayer, but it is a gesture from the heart, right?).

The Bible gives all kinds of examples where the early church prayed for one another. But the final test of compassionate prayer goes beyond prayers for people who are fellow Christians, members of the community or friends and relatives. Jesus says, "I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Even in the depth of his agony on the cross, Jesus prays for those who are killing him. "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing."

Here is the heart of the discipline of prayer. Prayer allows us to touch the center of our hearts by praying not only for those who love us or for whom we love, but also for those who hate us. To do this we have to be willing to make our enemies part of ourselves and convert our feelings for them first of all in our own hearts.

We've all seen that angry patient, that mean spirited neighbor or relative, that coworker or leader whose attitude is negative and they have no problem expressing their feelings or dominating the situation, but do we pray for them? Yes, we care for them, but do we pray? Do we seek to forgive so that our compassionate prayers are genuine?

I challenge you today to make a list of your "enemies" and start forgiving them. Then pray for them. Let's see what God can do through these prayers, not only to others but to ourselves. True forgiveness is freeing and healing. It might not change them, but it can free us from the bondage of negativity so that we can truly love one another as Christ loves us.

Prayer

Teach me to broaden my scope of prayer, Holy God, to see my enemies through your eyes. It is when I genuinely find a way to forgive, that I can deepen my relationship with You and find true peace within myself. Amen

A Prayer For Self Care

Submitted by Kathleen McNespey
Executive Assistant, Health System Office, CHI St. Vincent

Proverbs 16:9: A person plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps

“Lord, I have too much to do,
But it’s all important.
Help me to set priorities
So that I don’t feel lost
In the pace and the pressure.
Give me the wisdom and energy
To accomplish what’s necessary
Without wasting time or effort.
And help me make the best use
Of my day,
Remembering that time
Is a precious gift
From You.”
--- Author unknown

If you are a support person to a unit, several units or to multiple executives, you have to juggle the ‘drop everything’ important, high priority items plus the ‘must do’ daily routine items for everyone you’re responsible for. This can get stressful very quickly. When this happens, you have to stop, take a calming breath and be quiet, even if only for a minute, to regain your balance. This prayer has always helped me, and I pray it will help you.

Time Well Spent

Kim Ferguson

Director of Pharmacy, CHI St. Vincent

He slumped over his desk in weariness. His face looked like the cracked leather of his old chair. Some 51,000 boys had been slaughtered on a battlefield, and as an afterthought, he was asked to conclude the memorial service with a few words to the fallen. So he labored deep into the night for something better than pious platitudes from a worn-out politician. But inspiration didn't come easily.

The next morning he caught his train for the grueling journey to the battlefield. The main eulogy was to be delivered by Edward Everett, America's greatest orator. No one ever wanted to follow Everett. The weary, secondary speaker felt that the words he had scratched out were unworthy of this hallowed occasion.

Everett's speech to the crowd of 10,000 lasted 2 hours, making it the longest speech in US history. When he finished, the applause was thunderous. The next speaker, the "afterthought," got up to deliver his remarks. His speech lasted only 2 minutes, and when he finished, he was greeted with deathly silence. His heart sank. But to his surprise, applause began to ripple across the fields, growing into a deafening ovation. His 2-minute speech is now hailed as the greatest speech in American history. The speaker was President Abraham Lincoln, and his speech is known as The Gettysburg Address.

Two minutes is not a long time. It may be the amount of time you spend with a patient while starting an IV or drawing blood. Maybe it's the amount of time you took to show someone where to go or explain what is happening with their loved one or encouraging a struggling coworker.

Your 2 minutes probably won't change history the way Abraham Lincoln's did, but it could change just one life for the better and isn't that 2 minutes well spent? So what impact will you choose to make today with your 2 minutes?

Prayer

We never know what people are struggling with, O God. Help me to realize that what I say and do is a part of excellence. Taking time for others, using compassionate words, spoken with genuine sincerity, can be the very thing someone needs to hear. Amen

A Prayer For Those Affected By The Coronavirus (based on Psalm 91)

Submitted by Fr. Harvey
Priest Chaplain, CHI SVI

I am confident, O God, that Your presence will protect Your people in every dangerous situation.

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shade of the Almighty, say to the LORD, "My refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust."

For You will rescue me from the fowler's snare, from the destroying plague, You will shelter me with Your pinions, and under Your wings I may take refuge; Your faithfulness is a protecting shield.

I shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that roams in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon.

Though a thousand fall at my side, ten thousand at my right hand, near me it shall not come.

Because I have the LORD for my refuge and have made the Most High my stronghold,

No evil shall befall me,
no affliction come near my tent.
For the LORD commands His angels with regard to me, to guard me wherever I go.
With their hands they shall support me.

Because I cling to the LORD, He will deliver me; because the LORD knows my name, He will set me on high.

I will call upon the LORD, and He will answer; The LORD will be with me in distress; He will deliver me and give me honor. With length of days the LORD will satisfy me, and fill me with His saving power.

I pray for everyone who is presently suffering due to exposure to the Coronavirus. I pray for everyone around the world who is working to contain the Coronavirus. I pray for all who have died from this virus and for all families who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

I pray especially for our community to be safe as experts around the world seek solutions to this current crisis.

O God, I believe in Your word that there is nothing impossible for You. Therefore I am confident that Your presence will protect Your people in every dangerous situation.

I make this prayer in the powerful name of Jesus who is our present help in this time of need.
Amen.

Taking Time for the Important...

Responding to the Urgent

Submitted by Rose Poag
Chaplain, CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs

One day a woman approached Jesus and his disciples, desperate for help. Jesus was in Gentile territory when she came upon him. He was actually on a mission to Gentile people. The woman came pleading for help and asked Jesus to have mercy upon her.

We all face hardships in this life, and sometimes, we feel our faith is weak. Maybe we believe God is not hearing our prayers, or perhaps He is silent.

She went on to tell Jesus her daughter was suffering from demon possession. At first Jesus didn't answer the lady. The disciples assumed he was done with her and asked Jesus to "send her away." They were insensitive to her cry for help.

There are people who come into our lives sometime who seem very "needy." How do we treat them?

Someone once said, "some talk to you in their free time, and some free their time to talk to you...learn the difference."

This woman was persistent. In Matthew 15:24 Jesus tells the woman he was sent only to help God's lost sheep...the people of Israel. What Jesus was doing was telling this woman that Jews were to have the first opportunity to accept him as the Messiah because God wanted them to present the message of salvation to the rest of the world.

This woman loved her daughter. And she loved God. She worshipped Jesus. How many of us would have been offended?

She loved her daughter and proved by her actions that she would do anything in her power to see her daughter healed. Jesus then says to her, "Dear woman...your faith is great. Your request is granted."

God is still wanting to touch and change the lives of people.

This woman brought her brokenness...
She brought her pain and suffering...
She brought what she had to Jesus...
She left with her daughter healed.

Jesus took time to pull away from his busy schedule to pray and talk with his Father. He took time for the important so he could respond to the urgent.

Our patients and families come to us oftentimes when things seem urgent...

A new health diagnosis
A terminal illness
A heart attack
A death

Whatever the situation in our lives, let us remember to take time to care for ourselves with self-care. To take time for those whom we love so when life happens, we, too, can make time for the urgent because we have taken time for the important.

Why Am I A Nurse?

Submitted by Melissa Owen, RN
SICU CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs

Why am I a nurse? This is a question that I have been asked many times in the past when people ask what I do. They ask me how I can work in such a tough environment. I am a nurse because I love taking care of people and hopefully will be able to save their life. Patients come to the intensive care unit very sick or injured, and it is rewarding to see these patients come back and thank us for our care. Many times we do not get to see them again. As a nurse we deal with tragedy, but we also help heal people so they can go back to their families.

A Nurse's Prayer

Let me dedicate my life today
To the care of those
Who come my way.

Let me touch each one
With healing hand
And the gentle art
For which I stand.

And then tonight
When day is done
O let me rest in peace
If I help just one.

Courage in Uncertainty

Submitted by Bryan Williams, DNP MBA RN NE-BC

Former Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive, CHI St. Vincent

The Bible tells us of others who faced scary, uncertain periods of time (persecution, plagues and floods). This year we find ourselves dealing with our own set of challenging times, namely, a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and national racial injustice. The great news is the Bible also guides us in our behaviors and our approach to dealing with fear and uncertainty. I believe that if you wait for that perfect moment to make your grand contribution to help mankind on a gigantic scale, then you may miss hundreds of opportunities to help your brothers and sisters defeat these evils together. We have numerous opportunities to restore someone's faith by an encouraging smile (at the moment they need it), provide someone hope by delivering bad news with compassion (even when you don't have the "extra" time), displaying love by showing gratitude for someone's effort (even when it was unsuccessful). I continuously re-commit to looking for these opportunities with a relentless vigilance in the hope that I can do my small part to help someone else do something grand.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Now may the LORD of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The LORD be with all of you.

1 Corinthians 13

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for always being available to me and always trying to guide me. I know I often do not hear You because I become distracted and miss the opportunity to demonstrate compassion. I ask You to sharpen my eyes and mind to sense every opportunity to do my work in Your image. In the Lord's name, I pray. Amen.

What is Teamwork?

Bubba Arnold, PharmD, MHSA
President, Morrilton

Ephesians 4:16: He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

WHAT IS TEAMWORK? Teamwork occurs when people are united in action and in passion for a common cause. Their shared goal is so strong that it removes hostilities, puts away disagreements and gives previously divided people a reason to take their place alongside each other. When this occurs, different gifts, talents and anointings become connected together, and the result is an amazing river of divine power that achieves the supernatural and accomplishes the impossible. (Rick Renner Ministries)

There is nothing more important in healthcare than working well as a team for the good of our patients. When we come together, God uses our different gifts and talents to care for the patients He has entrusted to us. As Renner stated, it is when we put aside what divides us to work alongside one another with a patient-centered focus that results in excellent healthcare.

Prayer

Thank You Father, that You have placed me in my right place at CHI St. Vincent so every part can work effectually. Regardless of my assignment, I yield myself to You and ask You to reveal to me my function according to Your design and where I fit for the healing and safety of our patients and hospital function. I ask that You equip me by Your grace to maintain the commitment to stay there, to provide all the mobility and support I can to fulfill our mission. When I give my best to my work, I will see a supernatural release of the Holy Spirit's energy to accomplish what I could never do on my own. Amen.

Give Thanks and Appreciation

Robert E. Musser, PhD, BCCC
PRN Chaplain, Chaplaincy Services, CHI St. Vincent

Do we say “thank you” enough? Or perhaps we say “thank you” too much, too glibly and too easily. For instance, when the waiter brings water and napkins for services we pay for. When our partner does not turn off the TV and the bedroom light and we sarcastically say: “Well, once again, thay-ank you.” Should it have been better left unsaid? Are there some days when it is harder to be thankful? On a pleasant sunny day in Paris is it easier to be thankful? Or is it harder to be thankful on a bleak hospital day in Little Rock?

And yet, as we’ve heard, it is important for our own well-being that we carry the attitude of gratitude. Look close about you this day. There are nurses, doctors, other family, your beloved patient, even the barely-to-be-tolerated coworker, who could use your thankfulness. How often it is those very people who most irritate and challenge us, can become the occasion for our greatest growth. Have you thanked them? Some of us forget to pay attention to self care. Have you thanked yourself for your goodnesses? So say thank you. Live thank you. See the benefits that call forth your gratitude and speak forth, live forth, a life of gratitude.

In the late 1800s, a 20-year-old Swedish hymn writer, August L. Storm, wrote a list of things for which he was thankful. Twenty or more items he enumerated, and from them a marvelous poem developed. He wrote,

*Thanks to God for my Redeemer,
Thanks for all Thou dost provide!
Thanks for times now but a memory,
Thanks for Jesus by my side!
Thanks for pleasant, balmy springtime,
Thanks for dark and stormy fall!
Thanks for tears by now forgotten,
Thanks for peace within my soul!*

*Thanks for prayers that Thou hast answered,
Thanks for what Thou dost deny!
Thanks for storms that I have weathered,
Thanks for all Thou dost supply!*

*Thanks for pain, and thanks for pleasure,
Thanks for comfort in despair!
Thanks for grace that none can measure,
Thanks for love beyond compare!*

*Thanks for roses by the wayside,
Thanks for thorns their stems contain!
Thanks for home and thanks for fireside,
Thanks for hope, that sweet refrain!
Thanks for joy and thanks for sorrow,
Thanks for heav'nly peace with Thee!
Thanks for hope in the tomorrow,
Thanks through all eternity!*

What would you add to your list? For what are you thankful?

Prayer

Please calm me today. So many things are out of my control, and I need your love to soothe me and calm me. Assist me to be thankful and to say thank you this day for the goodnesses around me. Work good to me, to those I love, indeed to all your beloved creatures. Thanks be to God. Amen.

The Sacredness of Our Hands

Cindy Goza, M.Div., B.C.C.
Team Leader, Chaplaincy Services, North

***“There was a woman there who for eighteen years had been possessed by a spirit which drained her strength. She was badly stooped - quite incapable of standing erect. When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said, ‘Woman, you are free of your infirmity. He laid his hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight and began thanking God.’
(Luke 13:11-13)***

I visited a new hair salon and when the employee shampooed my hair, it was the most soothing and healing moment I’ve experienced in a long time. She did not scrub, she *massaged* my hair, my scalp and my neck. Although I only spent 3 minutes with her, I felt the deepest connection and felt so cared for, all because of the way she used her hands. I decided the haircut would wait. I just wanted to keep getting my hair washed!

There is healing through touch, and once again this became very clear to me as I observed a new strategy for responding to a code involving a person who is excessively upset or angry. Normally the response team involved security who would take the lead in trying to de-escalate the situation. They often used intimidation and sometimes physical restraint to safely contain and remove a threat. In the new approach, a team from the Psych unit came to the code. They chose a completely different approach. Instead of forcing compliance, they listened and let her vent. Eventually, they slowly sat on the bed, and used their hands to touch and soothe the patient. They combed her hair, stroked and calmly patted her arm. Instead of “strong arming” her, they took a compassionate, calm approach and the situation deescalated. It was almost magical to see.

I think there is sacredness to our hands that we should give thought to. Look at your hands now. Think of the oldest hands that you have held, the wisdom they held. Think of the youngest hands - a newborns hands, a child’s hands that reaches up in trust. Think of the hands of a patient who could not speak for his or herself and how their hands lay helpless in the hospital bed.

Now if you are comfortable shake or hold the hand of your coworker beside you. Try and express your gratitude, that you care, simply by the way you apply pressure to their hand.

If you haven’t done so, release the hand you were holding. Now imagine that you are holding God’s hand. What is it like to work side-by-side, hand-in-hand with Him? Jesus laid hands on the poor, the sick and the vulnerable. He uses ***our hands*** to do His work and ministry today.

Prayer

Compassion is a holy gift, O God. May we feel your deepest blessing through the work of our hands. Empower us to separate our feelings from the intensity of others so that we can be a calming and soothing presence. Use us to bring healing to all the people we touch. Bless our gifts as we continue to become all you created us to be in your Divine Image, now and always. Amen.

How Very Good

Robert E. Musser, PhD, BCCC
PRN Chaplain, Chaplaincy Services, CHI St. Vincent

“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!” That thought is from Psalm 133 in the Hebrew collection of religious songs that expressed their heartfelt desires, sometimes their deepest groanings for life to be better, to be as good as possible. “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!” This morning, when I walked into our chaplaincy services offices, the phone almost immediately rang, and I was asked to come visit a patient. When I got there he wanted me to pray for him, and I asked if there was anything else, in addition to his health, that he would want me to mention in prayer. He asked for prayer for unity in this world. It’s far too divided between nations, between differing political parties, between different media voices. Our nation is divided, our state is divided, our villages and towns are divided, and even our families are too often divided, aren’t they? We ourselves may be fractured within as we hear different voices and opinions pulling us this way and then that and sometimes in opposite directions at the same time. We are not unified, but it would be so very good if we could live together in unity. I am reminded that at the end of the creation account in Genesis 1, this same description is used. At that point, God looked at everything that had been made, and God said, “Look, it is very good.”

So how do we live together in unity? What makes for unity? It is not sameness. I heard someone once observe that God must like diversity. Some are born tall, others short. Some can run fast, and lift heavy loads; others not so much. Some are brilliant, some intelligent, some just ordinary thinkers, some struggle to keep up with book smarts. Some are women, some are men, some don’t have their identity neatly figured out. Our skin color ranges all across the board from albinos who really are as white as can be to light-skinned Caucasians to swarthy Mediterraneans and Native American peoples to Asians and Latinos to those who are almost the darkest black. How very good it would be if we could live together in unity—not in sameness, but in unity.

I am a great believer that we ought to be very practical here. We cannot do everything to make this entire world a place of very good unity, but we can do our part in our corner of this very good creation. And furthermore, we might especially emphasize three aspects of our human interactions. Let us think very good thoughts, and look for the benefit in others. If we can think it, we also ought to say it. “Henry, you are very good at . . .” “Maria, I like the way you . . .” “Chan, you have such a nice smile and engaging personality.” “Linda, you are a good strong worker all day long.” “Shanika, you have such a very good talent at painting.” Let us speak to each other the words that make for unity. And then, let us act toward unity. Include those who tend to be left out. Do something kind and beneficial for another person. Make a special effort to include those whom it is hardest for us to love.

Let us work toward this very good end, shall we? “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!”

Morning Prayer

Father William Carpenter

Chaplain, Chaplaincy Services, CHI St. Vincent Infirmiry

Loving Father, in this moment we pause to offer thanks for the women and men who serve here this day; to thank you for the opportunity to be instruments of healing and comfort in the lives of fellow pilgrims; to thank you for the blessing of service and care; bless our staff with wisdom in choosing; grace in serving; grant healing peace to our patients in their journey; we offer our prayer through your Son, who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

Happy Birthday, John Bosco

Robert E. Musser, PhD, BCCC
PRN Chaplain, Chaplaincy Services, CHI St. Vincent

On January 31, the Roman Catholic Church remembers the birthday of one of its saints. On January 31, 1888, 133 years ago, John Bosco died. In the Christian faith, the day that a person dies is in some ways their birthday into paradise. In 1934, 46 years after his death, the Catholic Church recognized that he was a saint, so he is known as Saint John Bosco. He was an Italian, born into a working class farming family. When he was born the Napoleonic wars had recently ended, and Europe was ravaged with post-war devastation. There was also a drought and a famine in Italy at the time of his birth. It was a grueling reality in which to grow up. His father died when he was two, and John and his two brothers were raised in a single-parent family. Despite their meager existence his mother saw to their religious education, their worship with their local community, and she even helped out the homeless who were more destitute than they were.

When he was nine years old he had the first of several vivid dreams that he regarded as guidance for his life. Not long after that, he saw a circus troupe performing, and he became enthralled by their ability to capture the attention of the crowd. He realized that their attention-getting methods could be used to get people's attention for the things of God. He began to entertain kids in the street and to repeat the homilies or sermons he himself had heard from the priest in the church. As he continued this kind of ministry, he understood that he was being called by God to become a priest. To be a priest, however, John required an education, something he lacked because of poverty. He found a priest who began to teach him and who gave him a few books. But one of John's older brothers was angry at this disloyalty to the family. I imagine that the brother realized how desperately they needed every available hand to operate the meager farm. The brother reportedly whipped John saying he's "a farmer like us!"

John was undeterred on his path and left home at the age of 12 to hire himself out as a farm laborer and seek his path toward becoming a priest. It was hard finding work, but he finally got a job in a vineyard, laboring there for two years before he met another priest, Father Joseph Cafasso, who helped John Bosco to prepare for seminary education. John Cafasso ministered to prisoners in jail and to those condemned to death. After 6 years of study at the seminary in 1841 John became Father John Bosco, a Catholic priest.

Father John was first assigned to Turin, a city with slums and widespread poverty. He worked primarily with the children of the poor in Turin and became especially sensitive to the number of young men imprisoned in the jails. He ministered in the streets, using his circus training to gain the attention of the people and then sharing the message for the day. He and his mother began to locate places to live for many of the homeless children

of Turin. He also negotiated better working conditions, more livable wages, and time off for feast days. Perhaps remembering his own story, Father John encouraged those young men he thought suitable for the priesthood, teaching them the catechism and helping them prepare for ordination. As with many who desire to do good, Father John Bosco was not universally liked. Some disliked his use of “tricks” in his presentation. Some opposed anything that would increase the wellbeing of workers. After he was understood by the Roman Catholic Church to be a saint, he was identified as the patron saint of apprentices, editors and publishers, schoolchildren, magicians, and juvenile delinquents.

What do you think about him? Are you irritated by him? Do you identify with him in any way? Are you in one of these categories for whom he is patron saint? I have been a schoolchild; I’ve edited and published some in my past; I’ve done apprentice kind of learning. Many of us at the hospital have. In those ways I’m drawn to him.

The more I’ve lived my own life of faith, the more I’m convinced that the life of faith is best understood in its stories. I find a few important lessons from this story of St. John Bosco:

- Even saints are not always liked or understood or treated well by their family and neighbors.
- We all rely on the assistance of others—in his case: his mother, priests, seminary instructors—who in our case?
- Dreams are important—of course we need wisdom to interpret them well, but dreams are important throughout our lives.
- Learn—in school, on the streets, on the job, keep learning.
- Keep working for things to be right.

So, I want to close by saying Happy Birthday Saint John Bosco. Remember us as we seek to apprentice ourselves to God, as we rewrite and edit our stories, as we work your deep magic in this world, as we study our elementary lessons, as we correct our youthful wrongdoings.

Resilience: Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-7)

Submitted by Michael W. Millard, M.Div HEC-C
Market Director of Mission Integration, CHI St. Vincent

[Jesus said,] "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him."

For my part:

The Years of Pandemic. The COVID-19 Era. The Lost Years. However posterity chooses to label the last 12-24 months, all of us who lived through it can almost certainly agree that it was tumultuous and tragic. We have together suffered a variety of losses: routine, security, livelihood, connection with friends and family. We have experienced and continue to experience the grief of losing family, friends, coworkers and patients due to this disease. This loss and grief is real and will be with us all for the rest of our lives.

It is appropriate to take time to remember those who have died and those who continue to suffer. It is appropriate to take time to honor those who have given so much of themselves throughout this pandemic to care for others. It is appropriate to take time to regret the loss of stability and routine.

This reflection is written during the week following Easter, the greatest celebration of life and renewal in Christendom. We celebrate Christ's death, resurrection and ascension into Heaven during these weeks; not merely a commemorative but more importantly as an event in which we actively participate. Jesus walked out of the tomb so that our relationship with God our Father can be healed: so that we can be made whole. Those who proclaim a faith in that resurrection are transformed. That does not mean that our past ceases to inform who we are. It means that we now live our lives free from fear of the sting of death and full of hope.

We now live in a new normal; a world shaped by COVID-19 but informed by the Easter message. Fear becomes hope. Doubt gives way to faith. In Christ, we are called to be resilient and to follow him and to be an instrument of healing.

Going forward, we draw strength from our Father who created us, Christ who saves us and the Holy Spirit who inspires us. We strive boldly forward according to God's call upon our lives, and confident in Christ's love and mercy.

Now, for your part:

To Know and to be Known

Robert E. Musser, PhD, BCCC
PRN Chaplain, Chaplaincy Services, CHI St. Vincent

So what happens at the end of it all? What do you think?

Is our life, is the history of the earth, our Milky Way, the entire universe, like a movie that will end up answering all our questions, tying up all the loose ends of the story accompanied by a Grammy-winning song as the credits roll. Somewhere way down there in that endless list will be my character, Chaplain Bob Musser played by Bob Musser. Or will the end be like a season-ending TV cliffhanger before a new season in the Fall? Most of the same old characters again, there are a few new faces. Some show up again after we thought they were long gone a few seasons ago. Is this a story that replays our lives over and over again time after time? Do we all just go away, never to be seen again or heard from again? All we are is dust in the wind, is that it? Are we transported in some form to some paradise better than anything we can imagine—no more tears, no more suffering, evil removed, only good? If we are headed for some heaven, what might that be like; what do you think?

As I think about heaven and what might happen at the end of it all, I'll have to say I don't know. We don't really know, do we? I do like the imagery the Bible uses to talk about that experience. It is like a garden, a great wonderful garden with fruit trees with all kinds of juicy food alongside this wonderful river of paradise. Heaven is like being at a huge concert with humans and other beings singing loud exuberant songs with shouts of happiness and joy. Sounds kind of like a better version of those huge rock concerts. Heaven is said to be like living in a magnificent holy city. But a city unlike those on earth, at the center of this city is not the police station—thank God. At the center is neither the courthouse nor the city jail, again thank God. There is not the forlorn shelter for the down and out. At the center of this city is the choir loft and the sanctuary and the temple of God, thank God! Heaven is like a huge celebration dinner says the Bible, and I love that imagery. I hope we all see each other there some day, and I expect to be table-hopping, sometimes at my family table, sometimes with old friends I knew long ago, sometimes with some I never met in this life whose book or life was influential on me. Maybe I'll stop by your table for a bit if you don't mind, would that be OK?

But we really don't know, do we? In 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote a short little sentence about this same topic. "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." (1 Corinthians 13:12).

It's fun to think about what heaven might be like. Rowing a boat down that great river of life, running full out down those golden streets playing tag with our friends. Sitting out on the porch on our mansion with our close friends, swapping stories, waving to the neighbors, just relaxing.

But a lot of that is just guesswork, and doesn't have a lot to do with here and now does it. But whatever else happens at the end—we will know and we will be known. And that's something I can work on now. In fact, here at St. Vincent is a good place to work on those two tasks. How well do you know yourself? How well are you known by the others who matter? Let's start working on those two tasks. I'm going to try to do that myself. I want to figure me out a bit better, and I want the people who know me best to know me even better. Let's get ready for the days ahead, shall we? Let's strive to know better and to be better known.

Prayer

God, whom we shall one day see directly and not just dimly and in part, know us fully. Help us to discover ourselves, to know ourselves more fully and more accurately. Help us to ready ourselves for full life with you and with all your followers. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A Grieving Mother...

Submitted by Rose Poag
Chaplain, CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs

This story is told in Luke 7: 11-17. One day, Jesus approached the town gate, and a dead person was being carried out. This person happened to have been a young man, the only son of his mother. In that day and time, the support of women generally fell upon the men in the family. This woman was a widow. Therefore, she was facing not only the death of her dear son, but the reality of not being able to make a living.

Can you imagine the grief and fear she was feeling as she watched the funeral procession of her only son? What a blur that day must have been.

However, our Lord saw her that day. And he comes close to where she is, and says, "Don't cry." He was moved by her grief. He felt it. He cared about what she was going through and was moved with compassion.

Someone has said, "Often times, we don't hate people, we just ignore them." Sometimes, we don't see people.

Jesus didn't stop at just seeing this woman, and showing her compassion, he did something amazing and life changing...He walked up to the coffin, and those carrying it, stood still, and He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" And, the young man sat up and began to talk.

Can you imagine how that crowd reacted to what had happened before their eyes? How wonderful for that mom to see her son raised from the dead and hear his voice again!

Jesus still walks among people today. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. He is with us through the darkest times in our lives, when we feel we can no longer go on. He sees every tear drop. He walks among men and women through us. We get to be His hands, His feet and His voice.

Never underestimate the power of seeing others through the eyes of God. We are called to be His light in a dark world that needs to know God's love and mercy and compassion through us!

Today, may the light of God shine where He has placed us in this awesome ministry, as we make a difference in the corner of the world we have been called to serve. May Christ in us live today, so someone will know Christ came their way!

The Importance of Presence...

Submitted by Michael W. Millard, M.Div HEC-C
Market Director of Mission Integration, CHI St. Vincent, Arkansas

...an EVS tech returns to a patient's room to tell them about the weather outside.

...a nurse pulls up a chair in the middle of an empty ICU room and holds the hands of a woman as she weeps for her dying husband.

...a patient care tech dances at the bedside because the patient is getting better.

...a volunteer offers a box of tissue to a family nervously awaiting news of a loved one's surgery.

...a physician waits for the news to sink in.

...a screener joyfully welcomes visitors to our ministry.

...a building full of people pause for a prayer on the intercom.

We are more than just caregivers. We are bearers of God's presence to the world.

Remember

Robert E. Musser, PhD, BCCC

PRN Chaplain, Chaplaincy Services, CHI St. Vincent Health System

A Philosopher by the name of George Santayana famously said, “Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it.” An educator many years ago in England observed, “People more often need to be reminded than instructed.” The Bible, too, speaks a lot about remembering and forgetting. People pray to God that He will forget their failures and wrongdoings, and we can understand that. Who wants to be remembered for the worst of their behaviors? Sometimes it is painful to remember our past. Others may have hurt us deeply, and we may have hurt others in ways we now regret. Who wants to remember the bad things of life?

And yet the Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian Old Testament and the New Testament remind us to remember some things. “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” When praying I have developed my usual pattern of first thanking God for goodnesses in the past—remember God’s benefits to us. Do you have some good memories?

I remember a wonderful lilac bush grown big enough to be a small arbor. When it was time to bloom it wafted its beautiful scent. In the hot summer, it created a cool oasis beneath its shadowed branches.

I remember the wonderful taste of fresh sweet corn eaten straight off the cob or the slobbery sweet juiciness of a ripe peach.

I remember the special friendship of teenage friends; we’ve gone our own ways now, but they added to my life in immeasurable ways. It’s good to remember them.

The Bible also reminds us to remember some not-so-pleasant pasts. “Remember Lot’s wife,” cautions a writer centuries after her story. When you are running away from destruction and terror, running toward escape, do not try to turn back. Keep moving ahead. Perhaps some of us are on that kind of road today. We need to put the past in the past and move forward toward better days. Perhaps some of us are not at home today—this seems like a foreign place to us. Jeremiah instructs us, “Remember the Lord in a distant land, and call to mind Jerusalem.” When our lives go sour, when we wind up far from where we want to be, far from where we feel at home, remember the God who is here with us now, and remember our city of peace in the past, our Jerusalem, our place of worship. Perhaps this new place that feels so un-home-like can become for us a Synagogue, a church home, a house of God for our dreams while on our journey. From the beginning of the Jewish

faith story it was so—“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy,” one of the 10 commandments taught people of faith.

It is important to remember. The Bible calls upon us to remember the good and the bad. To remember our own triumphs and our failures. The times we got it right and the times we did not. We are to remember those who helped us along the way and to remember those who did not. If we do not remember, we are likely not to recognize help when it comes to us in the present, and not to recognize dangerous people when we meet them in the present. As some wise teacher pointed out, to remember is to re-member our story. We put it back together again. As you remember, make it a story that means something significant for yourself and for those in your life. Re-member a story that recognizes God’s benefits and one that helps us to live today and tomorrow in a more healthy way than we lived yesterday.

Prayer

**God,
Who remembers His relationship with humans forever,
who remembers mercy even in handing out justice,
we remember and are thankful for Your benefits.**

**To You we pray in our need, remember us today.
Assist us as we re-member our past, putting together again
the parts of our story to give meaning and goodness and hope.**

**For this we pray;
hear our prayer, oh God.**

Amen.

A Life of Service

Written by Max Lucado, Submitted by Jenny Bowe, MSN RN RNC
Clinical Director/Surgical Stepdown/Medical/Surgical/Ortho/OP Infusion, CHI St. Vincent

***We are many, but in Christ we are all one body.
Each one is a part of that body.
Romans 12:5***

God has enlisted us in His navy and placed us on His ship.
The boat has one purpose - to carry us safely to the other shore.

This is no cruise ship; it's a battleship.
We aren't called to a life of leisure; we are called to a life of service.
Each of us has a different task.

Some, concerned with those who are drowning, are snatching people from the water.
Others are occupied with the enemy, so they man the cannons of prayer and worship.
Still others devote themselves to the crew, feeding and training the crew members.

Though different, we are all the same.
Each can tell of a personal encounter with the Captain, for each has received a personal call.....

We each followed Him across the gangplank of his grace onto the same boat.
There is one Captain and one destination.
Though the battle is fierce, the boat is safe, for our Captain is God.

The ship will not sink.
For that, there is no concern.

A Lenten Meditation

Robert E. Musser, PhD, BCCC
PRN Chaplain, Chaplaincy Services, CHI St. Vincent

This is a time in the Christian year that is called Lent. It is a time of preparation for Easter when Christians remember the last days that Jesus the Christ walked the earth. A lot happened on Holy Week, and it all led to Jesus being put to death on a cross. He was buried, and on Sunday morning it was discovered that he had risen from death to a new life. So, how do we get ready for that Holy Week of remembrance? There is a 40 day period that begins with Ash Wednesday—Ash Wednesday is March 2 in 2022. Holy Week begins on April 10, and Easter Sunday is April 17 in 2022. What do we do during Lent—exactly how do we get ready for Easter?

We keep on living as usual. We do the usual things. We eat, we work, we sleep, we read, watch TV, play cards or dominoes. We live our lives much like God's people did during the Exodus. In this central part of the Bible, God's people were on a long journey, and it did not always go well. I'm guessing that our lives do not always go well either. They got hungry on this trip; they got thirsty on this trip. Sometimes they thought maybe they just should have stayed home. That had been a pretty miserable home, but at least they had some simple foods to eat. They got bit by snakes while on this journey; they themselves went outside the bounds of what they were supposed to do. They didn't make as much progress on the trip as they should have—they fell a bit short. They were beset by deep-seated anger; they disobeyed clear instructions. They complained about all of this. They got sick because of their own bad behavior. They were nearly dead at times. There was darkness and secret-keeping about bad things in their lives. Some journey, huh? Is our journey during Lent anything like that? Lent is a time to own up to all of this misery in our lives. It's not been a good year, this last one, nor the one before, either. For me, I'm going to try to take an honest moral inventory this Lent. What have I been doing that I ought not? What have I not been doing that I ought to do? Where have I not done enough? Where have I gone off-track? Where have I just stubbornly disobeyed rules that I know are good for me? How can I be healthier than I am? Can I work at being less angry? How can I be more open and en-lightened? These are good questions to ask ourselves, and to start to answer honestly.

There is hope: in the midst of all this trouble and difficulty on the journey, the Bible brings good news: God loves God's people even when they are in the midst of these troubles. In fact, the Easter message is that God loved so much that God gave His only Son, Jesus. And we all owe God a big "Thank You!" The writer of Psalm 107 says, "Let those rescued by God thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for His wonderful works to humankind. And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of His deeds with songs of joy."

Take some time today and tell God thank you. Can we do that?

Submitted by Carla Lewis
Case Management Assistant, CHI St. Vincent Infirmiry

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.
Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Written by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Submitted by Sonja McDaniel, LPN
Payor Specialist, CHI St. Vincent North

“Faith is taking the first step, even if you don’t see the whole stair case.”

Written by Dr. Tony Evans, Submitted by Albertina Gilmore
Arrhythmia Tech, CHI St. Vincent Heart Clinic Arkansas - Kanis

“Grace is when you walk out on God but He won’t let you go.”

Written by Siobhan Shaw | www.geckoandfly.com, Submitted by Darla Hebda
HR Specialist, CHI St. Vincent Little Rock Diagnostic Clinic

“The Easter egg symbolizes our ability to break out of the hardened, protective shell we’ve surrounded ourselves with that limits our thoughts and beliefs. As we break open our hearts and minds, we discover a transformation to new, life-enhancing thoughts and beliefs.”

Healthcare Minister's Prayer

Submitted by Rob Loudermilk

Service Excellence Coordinator, CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs

*Then the King will say to those on his right, Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."
Matthew 25:34-40 ESV*

The Healthcare Minister's Prayer

Our Father and Our God, we pray that as we expend our strength in this healing ministry, we are ever mindful that each patient is an opportunity to minister to You. To meet the needs of those who hunger and thirst for understanding, to hold close those longing to feel the touch of human kindness, to be as welcoming to those in our care as we are welcoming of Your presence, to cover them with empathy when they have been laid bare by circumstances and visit them with compassion as they face the uncertainty of disease. Father God, let us see You in each face, represent You in each interaction and model You in each relationship. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Written by Unknown Author, Submitted by Tracy Bays
Manager, Environmental Services, CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs

Lord, we lift our hearts to You.

As the dawn breaks, may we carry the unity we share into every moment knowing that we are one with the risen Christ.

Lord, we lift our eyes to You. As the sun rises, may this moment stay with us, reminding us to look for the beautiful colors of promise in Your word.

Lord, we lift our prayers to You. As the dew air falls, may we breathe this morning in and know that like the earth, You sustain us, keep us and work within us always.

And so, we lift our voices to You. We celebrate the greatest day in History, when Jesus rose from death, defeated darkness and bathed the world in stunning resurrection light. May we ever live to praise You!

AMEN

Your Letter

Submitted by Victoria Cathey, BSN, AA, RN
3N Nurse Manager, CHI St. Vincent Infirmiry

***Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.
2 Corinthians 3:2***

An epistle is a letter or message. During the last couple years and throughout the pandemic, people have looked at us from all angles. They saw us as frontline workers, leaders and superheroes, fighting on the frontline against Covid-19 for their safety, their family and their livelihood. They have seen us fighting major infections and viruses while helping them to heal numerous times. Some of us were the first thing they saw when they were born. Some of us were the last thing they saw before the eyes of God. Some of us were the only encouragement and support families and patients had during troubled times. We are often put in positions where people are going to look to us just to know everything is okay. They need us to help them feel some type of security in knowing we have everything under control.

Although we know perfect peace comes from above, they read our body language, our facial expressions and how we speak about what is and what has happened. They watch to see if we are still wearing masks. They watch for our warming and friendly smiles. They look to us as a sense of guidance.

A patient once said that despite everything she was going through, seeing smiling faces walk into her room and our positivity kept her going throughout her struggle. We gave her strength and peace that everything would be okay. She said she knew that God answered her prayers by sending us her way. We are in a ministry that lives day in and day out. No matter where you go, people are reading you and living through you. They listen to the media. They see the news. But most of all, they see us. We are walking, talking, faith inspiring, God-sent letters.

So, today I ask, "What are they reading in you?"

Mission

As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.

Vision

A healthier future for all - inspired by faith, driven by innovation and powered by our humanity.

Values

Compassion

Care with listening, empathy and love.
Accompany and comfort those in need of healing.

Inclusion

Celebrate each person's gifts and voice.
Respect the dignity of all.

Integrity

Inspire trust through honesty.
Demonstrate courage in the face of inequity.

Excellence

Serve with fullest passion, creativity and stewardship.
Exceed expectations of others and ourselves.

Collaboration

Commit to the power of working together.
Build and nurture meaningful relationships.



Special Thanks: Trisha Nicholas, Cindy Goza, Kathy McNespey, Juanita Carr, Adam Jarrett, John Hopkins, Brent Reichenbach, Teresa Osburn, Sarah Lehr, Diana Denning, Michael Millard, and all those who contributed their prayers and reflections to this book.