

IMMANUEL MONTHLY

February 1, 2012



The three "Gesima" Sundays begin the Lenten Preparation for Easter.

LENT

From Pastor's Desk Lent and the "Gesima" Season

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

The Liturgical preparation for Easter takes place through 3 periods or steps: The first is the "-gesimas". These three Sundays before Lent constitute catechesis in the Grace of God in which that grace is examined from three perspectives:

SEPTUAGESIMA (meaning "about 70 days")—Grace is undeserved.

The Collect for this Sunday implores God to graciously hear us, who are justly punished for our sin, so that we may be delivered by God's goodness. The goodness of God is emphasized in the parable (Matt 20:1-16), where all the laborers receive the reward because of the goodness of the landowner. So

we too, receive the reward of eternal life, because God is good, and Another has borne the heat and burden of the day for us that we might have it.

SEXAGESIMA (meaning "about 60 days")—Grace is passively received.

In the Collect, we pray to the God who sees that we put not our trust in anything we do, but mercifully defends us by His power. In the parable of the sower, the seed of God's Word is passively received in good and noble hearts.

QUINQUAGESIMA (meaning "about 50 days")—Grace is not easily understood.

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In the Gospel, Jesus predicts His passion and the disciples “understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” (Luke 18:34).

The three “Gesima” Sundays begin the Lenten Preparation for Easter. They take on the character of Lent, but mildly. The color becomes violet, the color of Lent. The “Alleluias” are dropped. Pictures and Crosses remain unveiled. Flowers may adorn the chancel. In the Gesimas, this provides a gradual progression of liturgical removals as we approach Passiontide.

The second step or stage of Lent begins on **ASH WEDNESDAY**. This second stage ends when the week of Laetare (Lent 4) is completed. In addition to the omissions and changes that began in the “Gesimas,” flowers no longer normally adorn the chancel. During these four Sundays, the focus is on temptation and faith, and the Christian’s struggle:

On **INVOCAVIT** Sunday (Lent 1) the Lord is tested in the Wilderness.

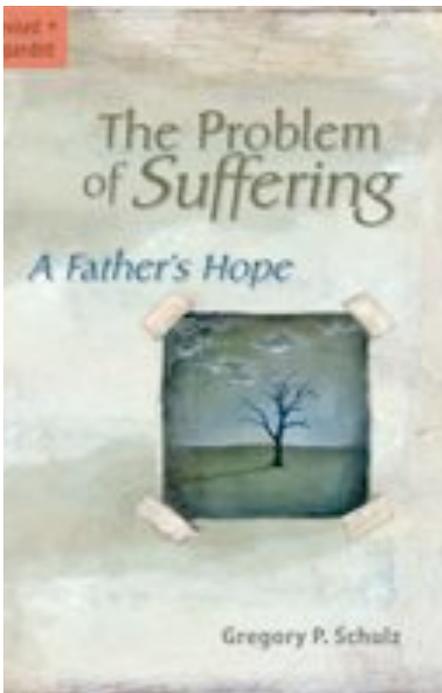
On **REMINISCERE** Sunday (Lent 2), the faith of the Canaanite woman is tested.

On **OCULI** Sunday (Lent 3), the people tempt our Lord to show them a sign from heaven.

LAETARE Sunday (Lent 4) is “refreshment” Sunday, and the colors of the vestments and paraments change from Violet to Rose to signify this.

The final stage is **PASSIONTIDE**, which begins with **JUDICA** Sunday (Passion Sunday, Lent 5), and extends through Holy Week and the Triduum (“three holy days”—which includes Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday). Now the focus is expressly on our Lord’s passion. The liturgy is spoken and the crucifix and crosses are veiled on Judica Sunday to emphasize the intense passion which our Lord endured. This intensity builds until we finally arrive at the empty tomb. In this way, we as the body of Christ, follow in His footsteps and live as our Lord lived, died, and lived once again. Joyous Lent to you all.

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The Book of the Month The Problem of Suffering: A Father's Hope

The Problem of Suffering is a superb resource to share and use with anyone suffering any form of loss. It is honest, straightforward, expressive, evocative of much reflection and insight, and linked closely to the suffering Savior. Author Gregory Schulz speaks as a Christian father, sharing the very personal, difficult struggle of dealing with years of pain, suffering, and questions. As he shares his struggle, he bares his soul with a jarring honesty seldom heard in the church. His words ring true to anyone who’s suffering of body or spirit.

Also included is an epilogue of prayers and poems written by sufferers.

From the Foreword

Pain and suffering come in different sizes and intensities for different people, but they come inevitably to us all. A lot of ink has been spilled over the centuries on the so-called “problem of evil,” but there’s not much help in that. Anyone who has personally experienced the mind-numbing and gut-wrenching impact of suffering, pain, or loss can tell you the last thing anyone needs in the midst of that mess is intellectual reflection and explanation. What you need is the honest truth. And such honesty is rarely pleasant

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From the President Why Malaria?

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

Luther taught that the eternal God became flesh in Jesus for us, and that we in turn “take on the flesh” of our neighbor by helping in times of need. Luther’s writings are shot through with references to caring for the widow, the orphan and the needy. So Luther preached: “A ‘bishop’ [i.e., the chief pastor of a city, in this case Luther’s Wittenberg] is an official of God who should have ministers. He should distribute the divine goods—namely, the Gospel. The deacons, however, that is the ministers, shall have the registry of the poor so they can be cared for” (Weimar Edition, vol. 12, p. 694).

Dr. Walther was adamant: “Although a preacher above all has concern for the spiritual needs of the members of his congregation, concern for their physical well-being, particularly the needs of the poor, the sick, the widows, the orphans, the infirm, the destitute, the aged and so on is within the scope of the duties of his office. Galatians 2:9-10; Acts 6:1ff.; 11:30; 12:25; 24:17; Romans 12:8, 13; James 1:27; 1 Timothy 5:10; 1



Walther is saying here that the pastor has a responsibility to make sure the congregation has an organized way to see to it that people in need receive attention

Thessalonians 4:11-12” (At Home in the House of My Fathers, CPH, 2011, p. 164). Walther is saying here that the pastor has a responsibility to make sure the congregation has an organized way to see to it that people in need receive attention.

Read the passages quoted by Dr. Walther above, and you’ll note that several refer to Paul’s “great collection” for the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 89). Paul spent a decade

raising funds from his mission congregations for the needs of Christians hundreds of miles away, people they did not know personally. Why would the apostle do this? The answer is very simple: Jesus. Jesus had compassion on the needy. In fact, in the Gospels, Jesus never turns them down. Jesus cares for body and soul.

There are a million excuses not to do this, but quite simply, the greatest eras of the Church’s

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missionary growth have also been great eras of the Church caring for the immigrant, the needy, the orphan and widow, as they were invited into and lived in her midst. Most of the “issues” preventing care evaporate when we realize that love for the neighbor happens especially in a community of believers.

Why malaria? Why Africa? The LCMS is involved in the Lutheran Malaria Initiative along with Lutheran World Relief (not to be confused with our own LCMS World Relief and Human Care) and the United Nations Foundation for the following reasons.

- Nearly a million people a year are still dying of malaria, mostly in Africa.
- Malaria is preventable and treatable.
- Malaria kills mostly young children and women.
- The UN Foundation (not the U.N.!) sought out an agency with the capacity to make a huge impact on malaria in Africa. After sifting through 200 organizations, they settled on Lutheran World Relief.
 - Together, the LCMS and LWR have a U.S. constituency with the capacity to deliver, most significantly, to the Lutheran brothers and sisters “at the last mile” in remote places in Africa where malaria kills.
 - When Lutherans help and are helped, they share Christ.
 - We are fully engaged right now, fighting malaria with education, prevention and treatment.

There are thousands of African Lutherans (who know the same Small Catechism that you do) suffering and also assisting at the last mile. There are 18 million African Lutherans. We have growing relationships with perhaps half of them! This is the right moment. This is the right thing to do.

All of our talk of orthodoxy finally rings hollow if we have no love for our neighbor. Love for neighbor without solid doctrine quickly floats away from the Church and Christ. But solid teaching and rigorous love now that’s a winning combo (1 John 2:3).

God help us!

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There are a million excuses not to do this, but quite simply, the greatest eras of the Church’s missionary growth have also been great eras of the Church caring for the immigrant, the needy, the orphan and widow, as they were invited into and lived in her midst. Most of the “issues” preventing care evaporate when we realize that love for the neighbor happens especially in a community of believers.

Education Corner

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna!

By Rebekah Curtis

We all love having kids in church! Their bright faces and sweet voices show us how beautifully the family of God grows. And then the crying starts.

Suddenly, a mom is embarrassed. The people in the next pew are annoyed. The ushers in back get antsy. The pastor can't very well stop mid-Collect to help. What's a congregation to do? Here are some ideas for everyone involved.

For Parents

Church requires planning just like any other family activity. If you have a baby or very young children, come equipped with special, quiet church toys to hold your little ones' attention during the months when the service itself won't. Make arrangements with a church friend beforehand for care of older children left in the pew if you have to take out a baby or toddler.

If your child becomes noisy and cannot be quieted quickly and sufficiently, take her out. Remember that people with hearing loss cannot distinguish between background noise and your pastor's voice, so it's important that there be as little "noise pollution" as possible in church.

If you have to leave with your child and miss Confession and Absolution, the sermon, or Holy

Communion, ask your pastor to catch you up after the service or sometime during the week.

For Pastors

Give your ushers clear instructions on how to assist a parent with a noisy child. Tell them when to approach parents who do not take out a noisy child, and where they should be directed. Remind them to be polite and patient, even though noisy children aren't.

Put a regular announcement in your bulletin letting parents know that you don't want them to miss anything. Tell them you will be glad to meet with them at another time if they are gone during Absolution or Communion, and where copies or recordings of your sermon are available.

If you notice a parent leaving with a child during the service, seek her out afterward to schedule a make-up session for whatever she missed.

Offer temporary shut-in status to new mothers until they are able to attend services again. This is especially helpful if a mother has had a Cesarean section, for parents of multiples, or if a baby is born during cold and flu season and has a doctor's order against public appearances.





Keep in mind that parents work extra hard to get every-one to church on Sunday. No one is more unhappy about a noisy kid in church than the parent responsible for him. When a noisy child isn't being removed promptly enough for your tastes, take the opportunity to exercise Christian charity, pray for them right there and remember how very much those parents want to be there, as indicated by the fact that they're there with kids at all. The children will sing their praises, the simplest and the best, if we teach them how together.

Encourage parents to bring children of all ages to the Divine Service and demonstrate to parishioners how infants and children are to be welcomed there (Mark 10:13–16).

For Ushers

Ask your pastor how he wants you to assist families with noisy children in church.

If your church has a nursery, be available to help parents who want to use it find their way there. Not all parents want to take children to toy-filled nurseries because they can serve as incentives for toddlers and preschoolers to misbehave. If parents of a noisy child do not want to use the nursery, direct them to whatever other space is available.

Exercise discretion as to which children are truly disruptive and which are making a joyful noise unto the Lord. Crying bothers everyone, but most people don't mind a baby who does some quiet chirping in church.

For Parishioners without Children

When you see a parent in trouble, offer to help with older children, carry a diaper bag, clean up a mess, or do whatever needs to be done.

If you're so inclined, offer to assist more formally by sitting with or near a large or single-parent family regularly.

If you are a church assistant for a family, you will help most by teaching children how to behave well in church: Help them stand, kneel, look up hymns, fold their hands, make the sign of the cross, sing, and generally learn the

congregation's part. The more children are actively involved in the service, the more they understand that the gift of forgiveness we receive in church is for them too (and the fewer tricks parents have to bring along!).

Ask the parents before offering a snack, toy, or other diversion to a child.

Demonstrate good behavior in church. That two-year-old who likes to turn around and watch you will learn to sing if she sees you and everyone else singing just like her dad is. Make silly faces with her after the benediction, when it's fine for her to laugh as loudly as she wants!

For Everyone

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God's Gift of Forgiveness

The theme of this year's Lenten Midweek Sermon Series is *God's Gift of Forgiveness*, especially as we find this forgiveness in the seven penitential psalms and in the practice of Confession and Absolution. The sermons and devotions in this series expound on the nature of sin as seen in the psalms, the devastating effects it has on the soul and the conscience, and what we receive through God's gift of the forgiveness of sins in our Lord Jesus Christ. Each sermon also includes a portion of the Small Catechism for meditation and connection to the larger life of the Church.

ASH WEDNESDAY, 22 FEB 2012

Psalm 6 "Save Me Because of Your Unfailing Love"

Catechism: What does such baptizing with water indicate?

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1, 29 FEB 2012

Psalm 32 "Hiding from God or Hiding in God?"

Catechism: What is the Office of the Keys? Where is this written?

MIDWEEK OF LENT 2, 7 MAR 2012

Psalm 51 "Against You and For Me"

Catechism: What is confession?

Guest Preacher: Rev. Jacob Sutton, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Terre Haute, IN.

MIDWEEK OF LENT 3, 14 MAR 2012

Psalm 102 "But You, O Lord, Are Enthroned Forever"

Catechism: What sins should we confess?

Guest Preacher: Rev. Ryan Fehrmann, Grace Lutheran Church, Paris, IL.

MIDWEEK OF LENT 4, 21 MAR 2012

Psalm 38 "Make Haste to Help Me"

Catechism: What do you believe according to these words?

MIDWEEK OF LENT 5, 28 MAR 2012

Psalm 143 "Teach Me to Do Your Will, For You Are My God"

Catechism: Which [sins] are these?

Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters List

5 Feb	Donna & Gunnar Campbell – West Jim Dyer – East
12 Feb	Joan Vukelich – West Laverl Byers - East
19 Feb	Becky Kappes – West Tim & Teri Pollock – East
26 Feb	Harold & Irene Wattjes – West Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
4 Mar	Jim Dyer – West Joan Vukelich – East
11 Mar	Laverl Byers – West Becky Kappes – East
18 Mar	Tim & Teri Pollock – West Harold & Irene Wattjes – East
25 Mar	Donna & Gunnar Campbell – West Jim Dyer – East

Coffee Committee

Feb	Laverl Byers
Mar	Janet Stumeier
Apr	NEED VOLUNTEERS
May	Arleigh & Mary Jane Jones
Jun	Pastor & Lauren Braaten
Jul	Ruth Sims
Aug	Josh & Jaimee Whitson

Sep	NEED VOLUNTEERS
Oct	NEED VOLUNTEERS
Nov	Jerry & Joyce Alexander
Dec	NEED VOLUNTEERS

Altar Committee

5 Feb	Tammy Kresin
12 Feb	Tammy Kresin
19 Feb	Holly Wikoff
22 Feb	Holly Wikoff
26 Feb	Holly Wikoff
4 Mar	Theresa Fields
11 Mar	Theresa Fields
18 Mar	Theresa Fields
25 Mar	Sharon Allen

Elder On Duty – Communion

5 Feb	Josh Whitson
12 Feb	Greg Nau
19 Feb	Greg Nau
22 Feb	Greg Nau
26 Feb	Geof Danielson
4 Mar	Geof Danielson
11 Mar	Geof Danielson
18 Mar	Jack Appleby
25 Mar	Jack Appleby

ATTENDANCE			OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
1 Jan		23	\$2,044.41	\$0.00	\$0.00
8 Jan	18	67	\$10,269.55	\$0.00	\$182.00
15 Jan	21	82	\$3,626.00	\$700.00	\$25.00
21 Jan	19	74	\$1,893.65	\$0.00	\$0.00
29 Jan	20	78	\$2,267.20	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	78	324	\$20,100.81	\$700.00	\$207.00
Total	402		\$20,100.81	\$700.00	\$207.00

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Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.