

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
ПАРАФІЯ НЕПОРОЧНОГО ЗАЧАТТЯ ПРЕЧИСТОЇ ДІВИ МАРІЇ
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**НЕДІЛЯ СИРОПУСНА
19ГО ЛЮТОГО 2023**

**«МИ НЕ ТІЛЬКИ СТРАСНОТЕРПНИЙ НАРОД, МИ – НАРОД ГЕРОІВ
І ПЕРЕМОЖЦІВ», – ГЛАВА УГКЦ ПІД ЧАС ЗУСТРІЧІ ЗІ СТУ-
ДЕНТСЬКОЮ МОЛОДДЮ ПРИКАРПАТТЯ**

У четвер, 16 лютого, Отець і Глава УГКЦ Блаженніший Святослав у межах архипастирського візиту зустрівся зі студентською молоддю Прикарпаття в Університеті Короля Данила в Івано-Франківську. Рішенням вченої ради Блаженнішому Святославу присвоєно звання почесного доктора цього університету.

Предстоятель розповів про виклики війни, перед якими зараз стоїть український народ і молодь.

«Ідеологічним підґрунтям цієї війни є те, що хтось хоче зламати силу закону чи права, громадянського чи міжнародного. Нам хочуть нав'язати сліпу, безглузду і брутальну ідею того, що „закон є у того, хто має силу“. Бачимо, що зараз діється на окупованих територіях. Не можемо не думати про наших вірних у Запоріжжі, Луганщині, Донеччині, Криму й на окупованій Херсонщині», — сказав Глава УГКЦ.

Також він нагадав про подвиг полонених священників, яких нині катують, аби домогтися підтвердження безпідставних звинувачень. Опісля Блаженніший пригадав усім присутнім, що основа будь-якого закону — природне право, яке полягає в тому, що Господь Бог створив людину і дав їй розум та волю, а тому ми всі є носіями раціональної й розумної людської природи, а відповідно можемо творити правове середовище, у якому живемо.

«Гасло, яке веде нас до перемоги, „Вірю у Збройні сили України!“ Та, щоб цю перемогу, яку ми здобудемо, втримати, мусимо сказати собі: „Вірю в українську сім'ю!“ Бо якщо сьогодні молоді дівчата та хлопці не матимуть відваги в Україні закладати сім'ї та тут народжувати дітей, то для кого ми воюємо, в ім'я чого здобуваємо свою незалежність?» — підсумував Предстоятель.

Відтак студенти могли поставити запитання Главі УГКЦ. Відповідаючи на них, Блаженніший Святослав говорив про роль Всеукраїнської ради Церков і релігійних організацій, календарне питання, наступні кроки Української Греко-Католицької Церкви, а також про військове капеланство.

«Всеукраїнська рада Церков є голосом наших парафіян, тобто голосом громадянського суспільства. У тоталітарних країнах такого суспільства немає, бо там усе контролює

(продовження на ст.3)

SUNDAY OF CHEESE-FARE FEBRUARY 19TH, 2023

ПОРЯДОК БОГОСЛУЖЕНЬ (30го січня до 12го лютого, 2023) ORDER OF SERVICES (December 30th to February 12th, 2023)

Понеділок – Mon. 20	8:00 A.M.	ЛІТУРГІЯ НАПЕРЕДОСВЯЧЕНИХ ДАРІВ – LITURGY OF PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY Rev. Mykhailo Kuzma – SUM (UKYA)
	7:00 P.M.	ЧИН ПАСІЇ – PASSION SERVICE
Вівторок – Tues. 21	8:00 A.M.	Sanctification of clergy
Середа – Wed. 22	7:00 P.M.	ЛІТУРГІЯ НАПЕРЕДОСВЯЧЕНИХ ДАРІВ – LITURGY OF PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY Luba Shrodzinska – Luba Lukomskyj
Четвер – Thurs. 23	8:00 A.M.	+Ewhen & Ewhenia Wasiunec – M&K Wasiunec +Rev. Mike Bonner – Luba Lukomskyj
П'ятниця - Fri. 24	6:30 P.M.	СОРОКОУСТИ - SOROKOUSTY
	7:00 P.M.	ЛІТУРГІЯ НАПЕРЕДОСВЯЧЕНИХ ДАРІВ – LITURGY OF PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY Special Intention
Субота – Sat. 25	9:00 A.M.	+Johnny Panko (40 th day) +Rev. Lev Bilos – Luba Lukomskyj Special Intention Sanctification of clergy
Неділя – Sunday 26	8:30 A.M.	for our parishioners
	10:00 A.M.	Anna Kuzma (B-day) - family
	11:30 A.M.	Mothers in Prayer

ВАШ ДАР БОГОВІ ТА ПАРАФІЇ – YOUR GIFT TO GOD & PARISH

12 лютого / February 12th – \$4,408.00

Будівельний Фонд / Building Fund - \$315.00

Кава і вареники / Coffee and Varenyky - \$1,090.00

Donations can be made on the website or by Zelle [email:icukrainianchurchpalatine@gmail.com](mailto:icukrainianchurchpalatine@gmail.com)

ПРОСИМО МОЛИТИСЯ ЗА: о. Андрія Чировського, о. Френка Авант, о. Богдана, о. Михайла Кузьму, Тима Гайдера, Дебі Плішки, Мардж Матвіїв, Любу Чорну, Любу Лукомську, Євгенію Яхнів, Джекі Мишкієвич, Анну Назар, Келвина Макмена, Наталію Лісову, Марію Ступень, Роксолянну Козич, Левка Сенечка, Любу Кузьму, Джим МекМен, Миколу Гнатиско, Анну Черниш і за всіх недужих.

PLEASE PRAY FOR: Fr. Andriy Chirovsky, Fr. Frank Avant, Fr. Bohdan, Fr. Mykhailo Kuzma, Tim Heider, Debbie Plishka, Marge Matviuw, Luba Chorney, Luba Lukomskyj, Betty Jachniw, Jackie Myshkiewicz, Anna Nazar, Calvin McMahon, Nataliya Lisova, Maria Stupen, Roxolana Kozych, Leo Senechko, Luba Kuzma, Jim McMahon, Mykola Hnatysko, Anna Chernysz and all in need of our prayers.

(продовження з ст. 1)

влада», — сказав Глава УГКЦ про Всеукраїнську раду Церков.

Він також додав, що найкращим підсумком поїздки до Ватикану, потужного майданчика міжнародного права, стали слова Папи Франциска: «Я бачу, що більше немає католицької України, православної України, протестантської, юдейської чи мусульманської... Сьогодні всі діти рятують свою маму — Україну».

Патріарх розповів, що напромами, над якими працюватиме Українська Греко-Католицька Церква, є лікування ран війни, фізичних і духовних, підтримка інституту сім'ї, а також допомога внутрішньо переміщеним особам та людям, що покинули межі нашої держави. Він поділився новиною, на яку молодь відреагувала гучними оплесками: 24 лютого, у річницю жакливої повномасштабної війни, у Королівстві Великої Британії і Північної Ірландії за гальнонаціональною хвилиною мовчання вшанують усіх жертв війни в Україні. Нагородили і Блаженнішого Святослава — йому вручили диплом почесного доктора Університету Короля Данила.

«Я хочу посвятити цей почесний докторат українській молоді, бо сьогодні вона на своїх плечах виборює свободу нашої Батьківщини. На плечі молоді упав найважчий тягар війни. Дівчата й хлопці, це для вас!» — подякував Глава УГКЦ.

Департамент інформації УГКЦ

ОГОЛОШЕННЯ

1. Молимося що тижня за духовенство нашої Епархії. В особливий спосіб молимся цього тижня за отця Григорія Зубача.
2. Підтримуйте нашу Єпархію. Зложіть дар на SHARE 2022.
3. Завтра починається Великий Піст. Це день строгого посту. Підчас тижня відправляємо денно Літургію Напередосвячених Дарів. По понеділках Чин Пасії о год. 7 вечір. По п'ятницях Сорокоусти о 6:30. В середу і п'ятницю Літургія Напередосвячених Дарів о 7 вечір.
4. Проведеться мітинг "365 Днів Боротьби за Свободу" після повномасштабного нападу Росії на Україну, що відбудеться в п'ятницю 24 лютого.
6:30 веч. Мітинг перед Собором Свв. Володимира і Ольги в Чікаго
7:30 веч. Панахида в пам'ять полеглих захисників України в Катедральному Соборі Св.Миколая за Учасю владики Венедикта, Кардинала Blase J. Cupic та місцевого духовенства.
5. В наступну неділю в Катедрі Арихиєрейська Свята Літургія з Митполитом Борисом о 11:30. Відтак святко вий бенкет в Культурному Осередку о 2ій год. Просимо зголосіться до бенкету. Хочемо конче мати принаймі один повний стіл наших парафіянів.
6. В наступну неділю о. Ярослав матиме зустріч із батьками дітей котрі приготавляютьсп до першої Сповіді і Першого Торжественного Причастя.
7. Комісія у справах родини і мирян епархії Св. Миколая запрошує всіх взяти участь у черговій зустрічі «Духовні посиденьки» на тему: «Еміграція. Виклики та можливості» яка відбудеться в суботу 18-го березня о 6-ій год., вечора, в церковній залі катедри Св. Миколая.

ANNOUNCEMENT

1. We pray weekly for the priests of our Eparchy. This week let us pray in a special way for Fr. Gregory Zubacz.
2. Support our Eparchy. Donate to SHARE 2022.
3. During the Great Fast we celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts from Monday to Friday. In addition there is a Passion Service on Monday evening at 7PM and Sorokousty services on Fridays at 6:30 P.M.

4. A meeting entitled "365 Days of the Battle for Freedom" will take place on Friday, February 24th beginning with the meeting at 6:30 in front of Sts. Volodymyr and Olha Church followed by a requiem service at 7:30 with Bishop Benedict and Cardina Cupich.
5. Next Sunday there will be a Pontifical Divine Liturgy with our Metropolitan Borys at St. Nicholas Cathedral at 11:30 followed by an banquet at the Cultural Center at 2PM. Please register your presence as we would like to have at least one table of our parishioners attending. All proceeds are earmarked for the renovation of our Cathedral.
6. The Commission of Laity Affairs and Family of St. Nicholas Eparchy invites you all to our next "Spiritual gatherings" meeting named "Emigration. Challenges and possibilities." The meeting will take place on Saturday, March 18 at 6:00pm in St. Nicholas cathedral hall.

Please help us in supporting **Angelina Kasiyan** and her brother **Zahar Kasiyan**, Angelia and Zahar tragically lost both of their parents far too early, and most recently were orphaned when their mother, Nataliya, was tragically hit by a car in Wisconsin in July. She was only 42 years old and such a generous, caring, loving person who brought great joy to everyone in the Ukrainian community and contributed her life immensely to St. Joseph the Betrothed Ukrainian Catholic Church, including organizing and sending supplies and aid to 22 Ukrainian orphanages and multiple nursing homes.



To ease Angelina and Zahar's financial burden, the Park Ridge Newcomers Club will be holding a benefit gala at **6pm on March 4, 2023 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Rosemont**. The event includes Dinner, Drinks, Dancing

and a Silent and Live Auction. Individual tickets can be purchased for \$160 each at: <https://one.bidpal.net/lo123/welcome>. Full and Half Tables are also available for purchase. Cocktail Attire recommended.

If you cannot attend but would like to help out in other ways, any monetary donation is helpful! All proceeds go directly to the kids for food, college, and normal everyday activities- anything we can do to help them live a fruitful life!



Zelle



venmo



<https://one.bidpal.net/lo123/welcome>

MAKE SURE THE 'ROOT' IS RIGHT



Make sure you are attached to the right vine. Simply put: be close to God. Let all spring from Him (this coming Spring, and always).

An author named Max Lucado once pointed this out. "God wants to be as close as a branch is to a vine," he wrote. "One is an extension of the other. It's impossible to tell where one starts and the other ends. The branch isn't connected only at the moment of bearing fruit. The gardener doesn't keep the branches in a box and then, on the day he wants grapes, glue them to the vine. No, the branch constantly wants nutrition from the vine."

He flows into and through us. He lives in us. We are the temples of His Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 6:19*). He heals and feeds. How often do we dwell on that? Would that not bring much discipline — in eating, in drinking, in personal relationships, the idea that our bodies are temples — into our lives?

With discipline comes holiness.

"Remain in Me, and I will remain in you," says (*John 15:4*). "A branch cannot produce fruit alone but must remain in the vine."

Also, the root: God is (or should be) our root. Below is a powerful litany to Him.

See here *Romans* 11:17-21: "If the first fruits are consecrated, so too is the whole mass of dough, and if the root is consecrated, so too are the branches.

"If some of the branches were cut off and you, a branch of the wild olive tree, have been grafted in among the others and have come to share the rich root of the olive, do not boast against the branches. If you do boast, remember that you do not support the root; the root supports you."

We are cut from the branch when?

When we sin. When we are preoccupied with the *world*. When we lack love, which is the definition of Him, which flows from Him always. Too many in religion today approach religion in a worldly legalistic fashion.

Or we are distracted. This too distances us. If you haven't heard the new word "nomophobia," that is the irrational fear of being without a mobile phone. How many today are glued to their devices — cell phones, tablets, iPods, televisions, laptops — instead of Christ?

It used to be just teenagers who one spotted staring at their phones, even in restaurants, even while "visiting."

Now it's everyone.

When we are glued to our cells, we're glued to something that branches from thin air.

Put Jesus right in front of you. Feel His Presence. Hear His sounds. He requires no cell tower. He needs no broadcast booth. He needs no wires to communicate (how tangled in wires we are!).

Ask Him to be right in front and behind and through you every day: our hope, One attachment, our focus, what we stare at, our way of thinking, all the hours of the rest of our lives.

HE IS THE VEIL

Meditation: Jesus, I have noticed that You seem to be less concerned with me. **Yes, My child, I am replacing Myself with your spiritual director** [Father Andrasz]. **He is taking care of you according to My will. Respect his every word as My own. He is the veil behind which I am hiding. Your director and I are one; his words are My words** (*Diary*, 1308).

My Prayer Response: Thank You, Lord Jesus, for explaining to St. Faustina and so to me how You relate to St. Faustina's spiritual director: He is the veil behind which You are hiding; You are one with him; his words are Your words. Please be one with my spiritual director or confessor.

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

Question: since we're naturally drawn to people who love us, why is it so difficult for us to go to God in prayer? Answer: *because we need a fresh revelation of His love for us!* Paul prayed that the Ephesian church would **'be able to take in...the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love' (Ephesians 3:18)**. The word 'extravagant' means going above and beyond all that's expected or deserved. The truth is, God couldn't love you any more than He does right now.

'What's His love like?' you ask. Look at the cross. Had you been the *only* person who ever lived, Jesus would have died just for you.

'What does His love cost?' you ask. Nothing! It comes with no strings attached. You didn't do anything to deserve it, and when you mess up, you don't forfeit it.

'Absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love' (Romans 8:39). Once you accept that, you can acknowledge your weaknesses, seek God's help, grow strong, and use the talents He has given you. When you believe God loves you based on who you are in Christ, you have

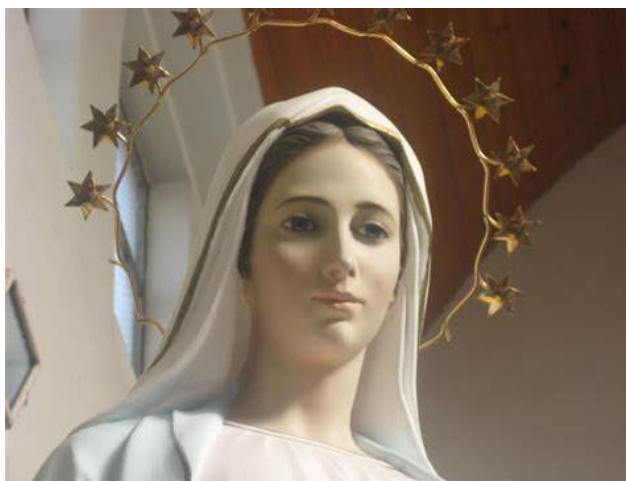
the ultimate self-esteem – born of God’s esteem for you. And since His is the only *‘perfect love’*, it removes your *‘fear’*.

So, what are you afraid of? That you won’t get what you need? That you will lose something you have? John tells us: *‘His perfect love for us eliminates all dread...If we are afraid, it...shows...we are not fully convinced that he really loves us’ (1 John 4:18)*. Ask God to-day for a fresh revelation of His love for you, bearing in mind that what He loves, He prizes, protects, and provides for.

PRAYER Heavenly Father, sometimes it is hard to imagine Your love for me – since no one else can love me like You do. Thank You – in Jesus’ Name, Amen

OUR LADY OF MEDJUGORJE, QUEEN OF PEACE

“Medjugorje is the spiritual center of the world”



Dear Family of Mary!

This is a time in which peace is threatened throughout the world. We feel it in our bones. Our countries seem to have lost their balance, as animosity grows between nations and peoples everywhere. The unrest overwhelms us. But Jesus, our King, is still with us. He is the King of Peace. And He is the source of peace. And so we have great hope, that one day this current state of animosity will be conquered by the Lord of Peace.

Our Lady has called us to peace, over and over in her messages. I found the word peace at least 611 times in her messages. And indeed, Our Lady told us she has come as the Queen of Peace. She brings us

the peace that we so desperately need. And she asks us to give that peace to all we meet.

January 25, 2000 "Dear children! I call you, little children, to pray without ceasing. If you pray, you are closer to God and He will lead you on the way of peace and salvation. That is why I call you today to give peace to others. Only in God is there true peace. Open your hearts and become those who give a gift of peace and others will discover peace in you and through you and in this way you will witness God's peace and love which He gives you. Thank you for having responded to my call."

St. Paul gave a very good recipe for peace in his letter to the Philippians. (I know I just shared this scripture recently, but it is one we need to return to often!):

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand.

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:4-9)

No matter what the world is going through, we must be those who give peace. For that, we need to learn how to think peace and be peace!! Jesus and Mary show us how to think and be peace! With them, we can become those who give peace to others.

In Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

Cathy Nolan

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ПРИГАДУЄМО УСІМ ПАРАФІЯНАМ

Щоб гідно приймати Святі Тайни парафіянин повинен жити за правилами віри та серйозно підготуватися. Добрі (віддані) парафіяни є ті котрі:

- 1 В неділі й свята беруть участь в Святій Літургії
- 2 Жертвують час, таланти і матеріально підтримують парафію
- 3 Записані до парафії
- 4 Знають загальні правди й молитви нашої віри

A REMINDER TO ALL PARISHIONERS

Reception of the Sacraments requires the committed practice of the faith and serious preparation. Committed parishioners are those who:

1. Attend Divine Liturgy on Sunday's and Feast Days
2. Give of their time, talents and financial resources
3. Have enrolled in the parish
4. Know and understand the basic prayer and tenets of our faith

BUILDING FUND – MONTH OF DECEMBER

12/4 -\$3,600.61 (Bi-monthly Collection); \$522.00 (Coffee Hour & Varenyky)
 12/18 - \$4,127.00 (Bi-monthly collection); \$1,066.00 (Coffee Hour & Varenyky)
 12/17 - \$2,575.00 Christmas Bazaar
Total COLLECTED: \$11,890.61
Monthly Mortgage: \$10,757.92
12/30 Quarterly Interest Payment on 101 Michigan Loan: \$6,301.37

Понеділок – Mon. 24	8:00 A.M.	Sanctification of clergy
Вівторок – Tues. 25	8:00 A.M.	Rev. Mykhailo Kuzma (anniv.) – Luba Lukomskyj
Середа – Wed. 26	8:00 A.M.	Special Intention
	7:00 P.M.	LITURGY FOR HEALING – ЛІТУРГІЯ ДЛЯ ЗЦІЛЕННЯ Larysa Das
Четвер – Thurs. 27	7:00 P.M.	Natalia Kilyk (B-day) – Luba Lukomskyj
П'ятниця - Fri. 28	ДЕНЬ МОЛИТВИ – DAY OF PRAYER	
	8:00 A.M.	Special Intention
	7:00 P.M.	Moleben
Субота – Sat. 29	9:00 A.M.	Health of the ill Peace in Ukraine
	Неділя – Sunday 30	8:30 A.M.
	10:00 A.M.	For our parishioners
	11:30 A.M.	+Andrea Andres – Deacon Khomnytsky family Mothers in Prayer

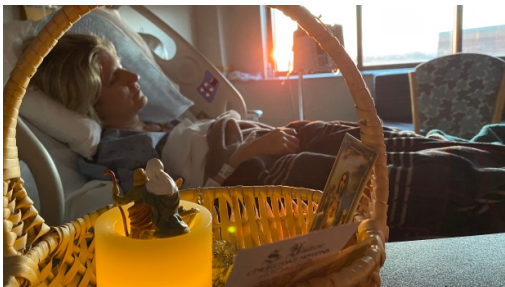
BUILDING FUND – MONTH OF AUGUST

8/7 – \$5,008.00 (Collection); \$577.00 (Coffee Hour)
 8/14 - \$448.00 (Coffee Hour); \$1,875.00 (BF Box)
 8/21 - \$2,984.00(collection); \$929.99(Coffee Hour & Varenyky)
 8/28 - \$347.00 (Coffee Hour & Varenyky)
Total COLLECTED: \$12,168.00; Monthly Mortgage: \$10,757.92

ДОПОМОГА УКРАЇНІ – AID TO UKRAINE

\$20,000 - Aid for the Church in Need - SOS for the faithful in Ukraine (churchinneed.org)
\$15,000 - Fund Zahusty Heroyiv (stjosephukr.com)
\$10,000 - Revived Soldiers Ukraine (rsukraine.org)
\$5,000 - Ukrainian American Coordinating Council (uaccusa.org)
\$5,000 - Purchase a car to deliver Humanitarian Aid
\$1,000 - Misto Dobra (misto-dobra.com)
\$1,000 - Purchase Generators for Field Hospitals in Chernihiv
\$3,000 - to each Territorial Defense Brigade (\$9,000 total)
\$2,000 - Personal Protective Equipment
\$1,000- Purchase a car to deliver Humanitarian Aid
\$500 - dinner plates for field kitchen
\$5,556 - First Aid Kits
\$5,000 - Volunteer to deliver supplies
\$20,000 -Metropolitan Gudziak Archeparchy
\$1,000 - Mudra Pravda-Fond Sheptytskoho
\$4,750 - Clothing & Medical Supplies for wounded Territorial Defense
\$3,000 - CYM World Executive Board Humanitarian Aid Fund
\$5,000 - Fund Zahusty Heroyiv (stjosephukr.com)
\$6,250 - Steel Plates for Bullet Proof Vests (25 sets)
\$114,056 - Total Aid to Ukraine

WHY IS GOD LETTING SO MANY OF US SUFFER?



Courtesy of Tom Hoopes

Tom Hoopes - published on 01/24/22

The crucifix is in the center of human experience, and it transforms everything.

My wife, April, had a stroke that paralyzed her left side and has hospitalized her since December 21, but we will be coming home soon, ready to learn how to live with her new capabilities.

"Do you have any deep thoughts about the meaning of this strange event?" a friend asked. "It seems to me that a shocking number of young and young-ish people are being struck out of the blue with bizarre illnesses and suffering."

I think a few things are going on.

First, I think God is demonstrating the *real* power of prayer.

On Christmas Eve, April and I were alone in the hospital and spoke with a friend on the phone who said, "It's crazy. I can't find a slot to pray for you."

"Find a slot?" What are you talking about?" we asked.

That is when we learned that friends had created an online form and people around the country were praying for April around the clock from Christmas to New Year's. It was an *It's a Wonderful Life* moment and I could only read one or two names at a time to April before being overcome with emotion and she was crying like a baby.

I think it's those prayers that transformed this experience for us and made April such a light to others in the hospital.

She has been telling jokes with everyone who serves her, then helping them figure out who their patron saint is. "Did you know you have someone praying for you all the time in heaven?" she asks. She has passed out stacks of her new favorite prayer, the Litany of Trust from the Sisters of Life, and arranged Masses for people she has just met if she heard someone in their life has died.

Oh, and she got three different medical professionals to commit to the Bible in a Year Podcast.

They say that prayer is meant to change *us*, not God, and I think that's what prayer did here: It super-charged April's evangelizing efforts.

Second, the suffering is meant to humble us. And we need it.

A few weeks into her stroke, April wrote this in her journal:

"A good friend wrote that she couldn't help thinking that this stroke was a really beautiful Christmas gift from God: a chance to really 'be little.'

"I love that so much. And can't stop thinking about it. I know it's true."

April is a mother of nine, a teacher, a lector, a homeschool co-op organizer, a carpool captain, a confirmation catechist, and much more. "People tell me 'How do you do it all?' 'You're so amazing!'" she wrote. "Over time, that sentiment is not good for the soul. For my soul anyway."

"It certainly doesn't foster the kind of posture we all should have before God where he is everything and I am nothing. Where he is so great, and I am so little. So now, post-stroke, as I have to have people help me dress, eat, toilet, etc... I find myself very little. And it is a truly beautiful thing!"

This is the conclusion God wants us to come to from the crosses in our lives — and in the pandemic, he seems to want it on a worldwide scale.

Third, suffering teaches us how to love.

It's funny. This has been a year of much family turmoil and a year when I realized that my children have learned as much from my mistakes as they have from my wisdom as a parent.

But the stroke has improved everybody, reset priorities, taught us how to love, and forced us to discover abilities we didn't think we had.

My children have sacrificed days helping their mom in the hospital. Adult children with children of their own have sacrificed their own Christmases with their families to be with their siblings while April and I were away.

And I had to learn that a husband's real vocation is to love your wife in exactly the way she needs.

Read more: **Why do the innocent suffer? Pope Francis gives this answer**

Fourth, God wants witnesses.

"Is God placing us in places we need to be to bring hope and healing to others?" my friend asked. "It's almost as if God wanted a witness in those places."

I think that's true in two ways: Yes, God wants joyful witnesses to Christ in hospitals — but he also wants us to witness of all the potential for good around us.

In a time of so much anger and hostility, and the politicization of everything, it is very comforting to turn off the media and see real-life health care professionals offering nothing but kindness and care.

The crucifix stands in the center of human experience, transforming everything, and there is no better witness than our joy when we get to participate.

ST. PAUL'S SIMPLE FORMULA FOR PRESERVING UNITY



In the Letter to the Ephesians St. Paul lays out a simple yet powerful guide to preserving unity.

It is a praiseworthy endeavor to strive for unity in our world, but not always easy to accomplish. Unity requires cooperation on both sides and this can be a long and arduous task. St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians lays out a simple, yet profound formula for unity. He describes what is required for unity to be preserved and how to go about maintaining it.

*I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all **humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)***

His words of advice are quite simple, but very difficult to accomplish!

It means that we have to humble ourselves before another and treat others with **gentleness, patience and love**. Too often we don't have one of these key ingredients and each time we let ourselves slip, it threatens that unity.

Above all, we must attach ourselves to Christ and let God unite us together in a bond that nothing can break.

Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love...be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth. (Ephesians 4:15-16, 23)

If we can follow St. Paul's formula, we will be much closer to unity than we could ever be on our own.