

Sisters and Brothers, may the fortitude of Christ be with you.

Our Community Gathering - The coordinators are discussing our first face-to-face meeting and are hopeful that it will be soon. If you willing to help enable it, please contact your Area Coordinator or reply to this email.

Safe Environment - Our safe environment training is available online this year. As an alternative of training in your parish you can watch the video and complete the questionnaire on the safe environment page of our website using the Annual Recertification link in the Covenant Life section.

Covenant Life - If you have not participated in an online event for your Area, please join in. Please contact your Area Coordinator if you need information or assistance. Please also contact them if you have any needs or have a spiritual gift to share. Please donate online at www.GodsDelight.org or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, Tx 75222 as we are dependent on your generosity for our ongoing financial needs.

Reflection - Laurie, Brenda, Larry, and I had the privilege of a weekend with Fr. Jerome Early at the Marylake Carmelite retreat center outside Little Rock Arkansas. It was a blessed time, so today I would like to share a few points from Fr. Jerome's homily. He explained that we can meet God in three settings: the desert, the garden, and the mountain. It was interesting for me to contemplate this point. I could recall times when in the desert, dark night type times, I had encountered the Lord mostly when I realized that the only way forward was to give up, stop trying so hard, and let Him show me the way forward.

I also recalled times in the garden when everything seemed so wonderful. A particular experience was from two years ago when Laurie and I had the privilege of visiting the Holy Land. I recall the stark contrast of the Wadi David garden area after having spent hours walking the in desert that day. I realized the joy David must have felt in writing the psalms after living in the dry desert and then experiencing the beauty of God's creation in the gardens and lush areas of the promised land.

Father spent most of his homily on encountering God on the mountain, building on the message from the first reading. He pointed out that this encounter with our Lord came after detachment. We do not set out to climb a mountain without first letting go of all that is unnecessary. So too in our spiritual life we must carefully examine all the things we hold onto to ensure that each aid our spiritual journey. He warned of pain and suffering in climbing a mountain and this year has provided more than our normal share of challenges and difficulties - but here too we find victories in surrender.

The key point that he made was the joy following the struggle. I recalled my own exaltation after hiking a day on a mountain climb and taking off the backpack. The first steps after lightening the load...it is as if you were floating. This is the promise our Lord has for each of us if we will deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him. What jubilant joy awaits!

Let us pray: "Heavenly Father, my deepest desire is to know You more and more every day. I am sorry for the times I have failed You but desire today to begin again to love and serve You. I seek You in the desert, the times when You seem so distant, refresh me. I seek You in the garden, the times where Your presence is obvious and visible. And Father, I commit to seeking You in the journey up the mountain. I set aside all that holds me back, accept the challenges of life, and rededicate myself to persevering until I reach the top of the mountain and meet You face to face. Give me the fortitude to always seek and trust You. Allow me to love You and love everyone I encounter with Your joy. Amen"

God bless,
David