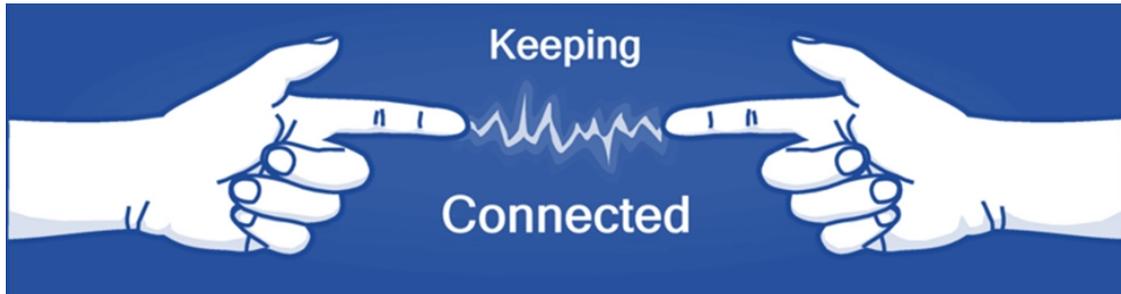


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For October 18 2020

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**A Message from Rev. Jonathon
An Unlikely Miracle - Part 2**

This is Part 2 of what will be a three-part newsletter article on Jesus's healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17: 11-19), which was our Gospel reading for Thanksgiving Sunday.

Last week, I explained how the Samaritans were rejected by the Jewish people as not authentic followers of God because they were the descendents of those who had intermarried outside of their religion.

But the man who received healing from Jesus in this story was not only a Samaritan, he was also a leper. and lepers were another group of people considered outcasts in Jesus's time.

In biblical times there were no effective treatments for leprosy and no known cause. Depending on the type of leprosy a person had, they might experience nerve damage, loss of sensation, skin discolouration, hair loss, muscle wasting, secondary infections, and the loss of fingers and toes. Because there was no effective treatment,



leprosy was a chronic condition that often lead to death.

For millennia, leprosy was viewed as a punishment from God for sin. Given the fact that medical knowledge was limited, and given the fact that leprosy was a terrible degenerative disease which caused pain, disfigurement, disability, and ultimately death, we can understand why people might have thought that way.

Interestingly, while people in biblical times viewed leprosy as a punishment from God, there was also an understanding that leprosy could be contagious. Basic public health measures such as isolating the sick person were used to help contain the disease. The Old Testament law specified that a leper must remain at least 4 cubits away from other people. One cubit equals 18 inches, so 4 cubits equals 6 feet - the exact same distance that modern medicine is using to help contain the coronavirus! So in the Bible we can read about the original form of physical distancing, practised thousands of years ago.

In addition to staying at least six feet away from other people, lepers were also required to leave their families and live separately, outside of populated areas. They were not permitted to enter villages, towns, or cities. They were therefore excluded from worshipping at the Temple or in synagogues, or from going to most markets. Because leprosy was feared, lepers were feared and shunned. There was no distinction made between the disease and the person afflicted with the disease. Being a leper was truly a life of isolation and exclusion.

It wasn't until 1873 that a Norwegian doctor discovered that leprosy was caused by a bacteria, and it wasn't until the second half of the twentieth century that effective antibiotic treatments for leprosy were developed. In fact, as recently as the 1980s there were millions of new cases of leprosy every year around the world. Today the annual number of new cases of leprosy globally is around 200,000, with around 200 of those cases being in the United States.

Modern medical experts examining biblical accounts of leprosy believe it was actually an umbrella term covering many diseases including leprosy, but also including many more common and less serious skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, vitiligo, impetigo, ringworm, and scabies. This helps to explain why some cases of leprosy described in the Bible appear to have subsided or been cured. There was actually an elaborate religious ritual that a person would have to go through in order to prove that that they had been cured.

Leprosy was a feared disease and lepers were completely excluded from society. Now that we have explored the historical context of Samaritans and leprosy, in my newsletter article next week I will examine the dynamics involved in this healing miracle.

NEWS

The Food Bank is Still Happening

Each Tuesday afternoon St. Paul's operates a satellite location of the Lanark County Food Bank from office space. Volunteers at the food bank warehouse in Carleton Place receive orders and organize food into customized bags of groceries for each household. These are delivered to St. Paul's.

Clients can then either pick up the food in person or it can be delivered to their homes if they are without transportation. We also provide food for a number of clients living in Pakenham and other areas outside of Almonte thanks to a sub-location at Stonebridge Haven..

Since the beginning of the pandemic in March, Rev. Jonathon has been looking after food bank operations at St. Paul's. This was one of the few in-person activities which were permitted to continue when our church and the rest of society was on lockdown in the spring. The accompanying photograph shows food bank orders waiting to be picked up by clients last week. As you can see there is enough food to cover almost the entire office floor!



If you would like to make a donation to the food bank, you can drop off non-perishable food items in our donation basket at the back of the church on Sunday mornings. You can also make a financial donation to the food bank, either online on their website (lanarkcountyfoodbank.ca), or through your regular offering to St. Paul's, either by cheque or electronically through our web site "Donations" page. (simply specify how much you would like to donate and that you would like it to go to the food bank).

Special thanks to Rev. Jonathon who has been single-handedly providing service every week as all the other volunteers are in higher risk groups. And to Claire Marson who hosts the Pakenham sub-location at Stonebridge Haven.



The Office Phone is Working Now!

FROM THE DIOCESE

We are all invited to participate in **Building a Community of Hope**, a Virtual Fundraiser and Silent Auction for the Community Ministries of Ottawa on October 15 from 12:30 – 1:15 pm.

The event features the Community Ministries: Centre 454, Cornerstone Housing for Women, Ottawa Pastoral Counselling Centre, St Luke's Table and The Well. A panel of experts, moderated by the Rt. Rev. Shane Parker, will answer questions about how these social service agencies are responding to Covid-19 to take care of the people who are most at risk – people suffering from food insecurity, homelessness and mental health challenges. Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health for Ottawa Public Health, will share a special message.

Details of this virtual event are available [HERE](#).



Movie Review: "The Two Popes"

From Rev. Jonathon

If you haven't already seen it, I highly recommend watching the movie "The Two Popes". Released in 2019, and available to stream for a limited time on Netflix, this movie centres around the unlikely friendship formed between Pope Benedict XVI (played by Anthony Hopkins) and Pope Francis (played by Jonathan Pryce).

Inspired by true events, the movie is set mainly in Italy at Vatican City and the Pope's summer residence. Although it focuses on the time period in 2013 leading up to the transition between Benedict and Francis, there are many flashbacks to Francis' earlier life exploring his call to the priesthood in the 1950s and his time as the leader of the Jesuits in Argentina during the 1970s and 1980s. At this time the country was being ruled by a right-wing military dictatorship. There was widespread political upheaval, oppression, and violence, leading to the deaths of up to 30,000 Argentinians.

It is well-known that Benedict and Francis represent two very different theological positions within the Church. This is not surprising, given that the two individuals come from different countries, lived through different experiences, and have consequently developed very different outlooks on the world. The movie highlights how those differences and an initial mutual dislike of each other are overcome through spending time together and getting to know each other. Each person begins to appreciate the position of the other through dialogue and fellowship.

The movie also explores two very controversial issues facing the Church today. The question of if and how the Church should change and adapt in response to changes in

society is explored. And the issue of sexual abuse within the Church by clergy and how the Church and its leaders responded to it is also explored.

Apart from being interesting from a theological and ecclesiological perspective, the movie also helps to put a human face on two very public figures. It reminds us that every human being is complex and multi-faceted, and that the image we see of people in the media often only reflects one side of those people. This movie helps us to see the more personal and private side of these two Popes. Rather than just seeing Benedict and Francis (the names they took when they became Popes), we see them as Joseph and Jorge (their original names). By seeing their very real personal struggles and shortcomings, we realize that even the most powerful leaders in the church are just like us. They struggle with their faith, they make mistakes, and they need God's grace and forgiveness.

You do not need a Netflix subscription to watch the movie. Netflix is offering a number of movies and television shows for free this month. Simply go to: netflix.com/ca/watch-free and scroll down to find The Two Popes.

Food for Thought

An Agreed-upon Delusion. Daily Mediation from Tuesday, Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM (*Center for Action and Contemplation, October 13, 2020*)

The world (or “system” as we use the word now) is a hiding place for unconsciousness or “deadness” in the words of Paul. Both Thomas Aquinas and C. S. Lewis taught that the triumph of evil depends entirely on disguise. [1] [2] Our egos must see it as some form of goodness and virtue so that we can buy into it.

[READ MORE...](#)

READINGS FOR THIS SUNDAY

Pentecost 20

Click on a reading to see the text from the
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) on the Bible Gateway

- First reading: [Exodus 33:12-23](#)
 - Psalm: [Psalm 99](#)
 - Second reading: [1 Thessalonians 1:1-10](#)
 - Gospel: [Matthew 22:15-22](#)
-



Your prayers are requested for our leaders at every level as they grapple with decisions related to keeping us and our hospitals safe from the resurgence of covid-19.

In the World. Pray for the Episcopal Church and for the Most Rev'd Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church of the United States. Pray for the Vidas Mission in Ayacucho, Peru, Pastors Max and Raquel Candia.

In Canada. Pray for Bishop Lynne McNaughton, the clergy and people of the Diocese of Kootenay.

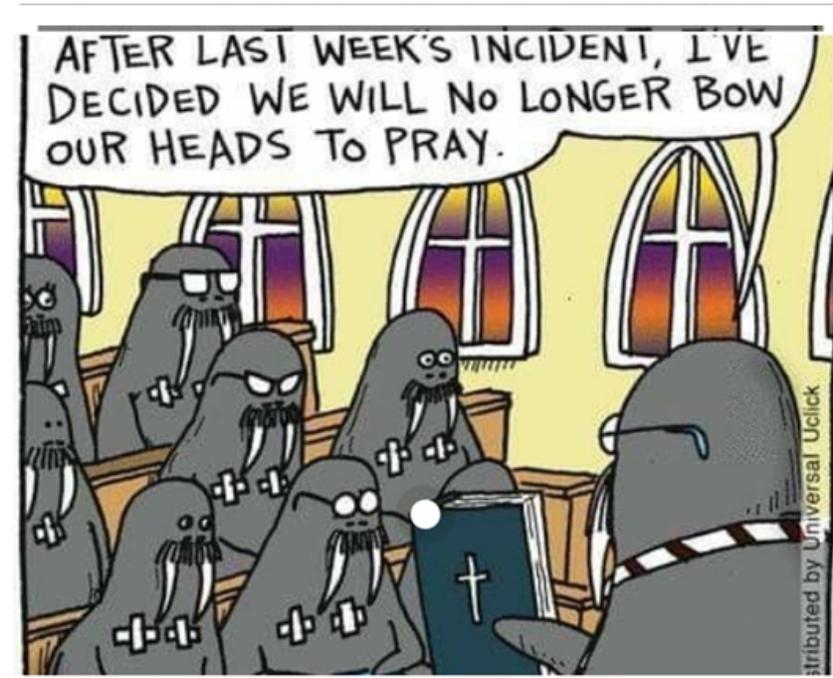
In our Diocese. Pray for the Rt. Rev. Shane Parker, our bishop and Michael Bird, our assisting bishop; for our upcoming Diocesan Synod (October 24, 2020); for our Diocesan Conference and Events Coordinator, and Social Media Coordinator Heidi Fawcett; and, for all retired clergy of the Diocese of Ottawa.

In Our Community. We ask God's blessing on local faith communities and on their ministries and, we pray for the people and leaders of this town of Almonte and the surrounding communities that the Lord will help us contribute to its well-being. We pray for leaders, staff volunteers and clients of our local hospice initiative, Home Hospice North Lanark.

In Our Parish. We pray for Jonathon, our priest, for ourselves and for each other. We hold before God the members of Parish Council and their deliberations as they meet this Wednesday evening.

We ask for God's blessing on our members Sarah and Timothy Barraclough, Robert and Vicki Bassett, Bertha Basurto, Brenda Beaubien and Lynda Bennett.

We remember our neighbors, especially Assad, Alsit, Lana and Elias.



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