

Thoughts from the LAAMB

In my last Parish I was responsible for a large church in downtown Kitchener. I remember being there in my first year as the Intentional Transitional Priest. Their long time priest had retired and I was called to do some transitional work with them.

In the first month, I was quite busy organizing, planning and educating people about Intentional Transitional Ministry. I often wondered if I was on the right track, especially since I had one more week of training to do and yet, I had already started in this Parish. One morning I received a call that one of the long-standing faithful members of the Anglican Church Woman was in the hospital with a very aggressive cancer.

I went to visit her that afternoon.

When I walked into her hospital room, I watch her slowly lift her head from the bed, almost straining herself. Then she greeted me with this huge smile that made her whole face light up, saying, "GOOD afternoon, Reverend Perry I am so pleased to meet you. I want to welcome you and your family to Kitchener-Waterloo!" And then she went on and on about all the things she heard that I was doing for our church family with regards to Transitional Ministry.

After some thirty minutes or so, I was able to spend some quality time listening to her about the condition of her health. After a prayer, I left the hospital, two hours later.

I was so glad I responded so quickly to visiting Susan in the hospital because she died two weeks later. In organizing her Celebration of Life I couldn't find anyone that wanted to say a few words. I remember telling Lore, my wife, that I was struggling with the words for the homily. Lore, who has always been an inspiration to me, especially in challenging times, simply said, "Why don't you talk about your visit with her in the hospital." "Great idea!", I replied, as I thanked Lore.

I remember saying in the homily, "there was Susan in the hospital bed struggling, suffering with this aggressive cancer and yet for the first thirty minutes she sat up and ministered to me.

As I thought about Good Friday today, Susan came back to mind. She was a very caring person that loved everyone.

For me the Good Friday message is Good because Jesus turned something gone terribly wrong into Good news. Jesus, even when he was on the cross suffering, still ministered to the two men beside him being crucified. Jesus didn't even know these two criminals, yet his last words to them was, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

He reassures them as they hang there slowly dying. He gives them hope through their suffering that they will be in a better place with him after they die.

Good Friday is about the passionate love that Jesus shared with others.

We sometimes wonder through this life-threatening time in our lives why is this all happening?

I don't know why it is happening. But I do remember my grandmother's response to me when I would go to her when I was going through a tough time in my life. She often said to me, 'This too will pass...do what is right...do what is needed...God will be with you!'

Pastor Perry