



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

March 19, 2023

"After Three Years of COVID"

"He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him." (Luke 10:34)

"The good Samaritan," from the Gospel of Luke, "the beloved physician."

After Three Years of COVID ...

This past week I visited a doctor's office where everyone was wearing masks. I mentioned to the nurses that I was tired of wearing masks and noted that they had probably been wearing masks for three years now! Medical care providers have gone through trying times – above and beyond the call of duty – these past three years because of COVID.

Medical providers have experienced high levels of burnout and mental exhaustion since the start of the pandemic in late 2019/early 2020. Around 18% of healthcare providers are leaving the medical profession entirely. Hospitals and health systems have faced unprecedented financial pressures managing the surge of COVID-19 patients. Medicare providers have been impacted by regulatory changes, including Medicare diabetes prevention programs, opioid treatment programs, and durable medical equipment providers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the health-care sector has lost nearly half a million workers since February 2020.

And yet, many of the health care workers we rely on trudge on! This week I take pause to honor those who stopped to help others suffering along the way to bandage their wounds and take care of them.

Prayer Box

"Dear Lord, we lift to You our concern and thanks for people that have cared for the ill from COVID-19, all healthcare professionals who continue to put themselves at risk as they care for others. We also pray for those who continue to make difficult decisions about public safety. And, we pray for the scientists and researchers who are working to develop treatments and vaccines for the common good. May all their work be successful, and may You give them insight, wisdom, strength, and hope as they work. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Gospel Reading for the week of March 19: Matthew 13:1-23,

"The Parable of the Sower"

The Message of This Reading:

Matthew 13:1-23 is a parable of Jesus about a sower who scatters seed on four different types of soil. The first three types of soil are not good for growing crops, but the fourth type of soil is good and produces a great harvest.

The parable is about the importance of hearing and understanding the word of God (the good seed to be planted) and how it can be hindered by the cares of the world, represented in the parable by the rocky ground, the hungry birds, and the thorn plants that spring up.

Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter and the Easter season. It is a time to reflect on our own lives and how we can grow closer to God. This parable reminds us to prepare our hearts (the good soil) to receive the word of God (the seeds). Lent gives us the chance to remove the rocks and thorns that can hinder our growth and chase away the distractions of the birds to allow the word of God to take root in our hearts.

