



Our Lady of Purgatory

Maronite Catholic Church



February 25-26, 2023

HEALING OF THE LEPER

YOU WILL NOT FIND HIM BUT HE WILL FIND YOU

Fr. John Powell, a professor at Loyola University in Chicago, writes about a student in his Theology of Faith class named Tommy:

Some twelve years ago, I stood watching my university students file into the classroom for our first session in the Theology of Faith. That was the day I first saw Tommy. He was combing his long flaxen hair, which hung six inches below his shoulders.

It was the first time I had ever seen a boy with hair that long. I guess it was just coming into fashion then. I know in my mind that it isn't what's on your head but what's in it that counts, but on that day. I was unprepared and my emotions flipped. I immediately filed Tommy under "S" for strange... Very strange.

Tommy turned out to be the "atheist in residence" in my Theology of Faith course.

He constantly objected to, smirked at, or whined about the possibility of an unconditionally loving Father/God. We lived with each other in relative peace for one semester, although I admit he was for me at times a serious pain in the back pew. When he came up at the end of the course to turn in his final exam, he asked in a cynical tone, "Do you think I'll ever find God?" I decided instantly on a little shock therapy. "No!" I said very emphatically. "Why not," he responded, "I thought that was the product you were pushing."

I let him get five steps from the classroom door and then I called out, "Tommy! I don't think you'll ever find Him, but I am absolutely certain that He will find you!" He shrugged a little and left my class and my life.

I felt slightly disappointed at the thought

that he had missed my clever line – "He will find you!" At least I thought it was clever.

Later I heard that Tommy had graduated, and I was duly grateful.

Then a sad report came. I heard that Tommy had terminal cancer.

Before I could search him out, he came to see me.

When he walked into my office, his body was very badly wasted and the long hair had all fallen out as a result of chemotherapy. But his eyes were bright and his voice was firm, for the first time, I believe.

"Tommy, I've thought about you so often; I hear you are sick," I blurted out.

"Oh, yes, very sick. I have cancer in both lungs. It's a matter of weeks."

"Can you talk about it, Tom?" I asked.

"Sure, what would you like to know?" he replied.

"What's it like to be only twenty-four and dying?"

"Well, it could be worse. "Like what?"

"Well, like being fifty and having no values or ideals, like being fifty and thinking that booze, seducing women, and making money are the real biggies in life." I began to look through my mental file cabinet under "S" where I had filed Tommy as strange. (It seems as though everybody I try to reject by classification, God sends back into my life to educate me.)

"But what I really came to see you about," Tom said, "is something you said to me on the last day of class." (He remembered!) He continued, "I asked you if you thought I would ever find God and you said, 'No!' which surprised me.

Then you said, 'But He will find you.' I thought about that a lot, even though my search for God was hardly intense at that time. (My clever line. He thought about

that a lot!)

"But when the doctors removed a lump from my groin and told me that it was malignant, that's when I got serious about locating God. And when the malignancy spread into my vital organs, I really began banging bloody fists against the bronze doors of heaven.

"But God did not come out. In fact, nothing happened. Did you ever try anything for a long time with great effort and with no success?"

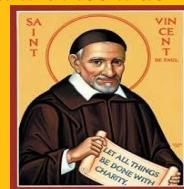
"You get psychologically glutted, fed up with trying. And then you quit. Well, one day I woke up, and instead of throwing a few more futile appeals over that high brick wall to a God who may be or may not be there, I just quit. I decided that I didn't really care about God, about an afterlife, or anything like that. I decided to spend what time I had left doing something more profitable. I thought about you and your class, and I remembered something else you had said: 'The essential sadness is to go through life without loving.'

"But it would be almost equally sad to go through life and leave this world without ever telling those you loved that you had

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Extend your mercy towards others, so that there can be no one in need whom you meet without helping. For what hope is there for us if God should withdraw His Mercy from us?"

Saint Vincent de Paul



Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor | Rev. Mr. Jean Mattar, Deacon

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OFFICE HOURS: The Church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

loved them. So, I began with the hardest one, my Dad. He was reading the newspaper when I approached him. 'Dad.'

'Yes, what?' he asked without lowering the newspaper. "Dad, I would like to talk with you". 'Well, talk'. 'I mean. It's really important.'

"The newspaper came down three slow inches. 'What is it?'

'Dad, I love you, I just wanted you to know that.' Tom smiled at me and said it with obvious satisfaction, as though he felt a warm and secret joy flowing inside of him." The newspaper fluttered to the floor. Then my father did two things I could never remember him ever doing before. He cried, and he hugged me.

"We talked all night, even though he had to go to work the next morning.

"It felt so good to be close to my father, to see his tears, to feel his hug, to hear him say that he loved me.

"It was easier with my mother and little brother. They cried with me, too, and we hugged each other and started saying real nice things to each other. We shared the things we had been keeping secret for so many years.

"I was only sorry about one thing – that I had waited so long. Here I was, just beginning to open up to all the people I had actually been close to.

"Then, one day I turned around and God was there.

"He didn't come to me when I pleaded with Him. I guess I was like an animal trainer holding out a hoop, 'C'mon, jump through. C'mon, I'll give you three days, three weeks.'

"Apparently God does things in His own way and at His own hour.

"But the important thing is that He was there. He found me! You were right. He found me even after I stopped looking for Him."

"Tommy," I practically gasped, "I think you are saying something very important and much more universal than you realize. To me, at least, you are saying that the surest way to find God is not to make Him a private possession, a problem solver, or an instant consolation in time of need, but rather by opening to love.

"You know, the Apostle John said that.

He said: 'God is love, and anyone who lives in love is living with God and God is living in him.

"Tom, could I ask you a favor? You know, when I had you in class you were a real

pain. But (laughingly) you can make it all up to me now. Would you come into my present Theology of Faith course and tell them what you have just told me? If I told them the same thing it wouldn't be half as effective as if you were to tell it."

"Oooh... I was ready for you, but I don't know if I'm ready for your class."

"Tom, think about it. If and when you are ready, give me a call."

In a few days Tom called, said he was ready for the class, that he wanted to do that for God and for me.

So, we scheduled a date.

However, he never made it. He had another appointment, far more important than the one with me and my class.

Of course, his life was not really ended by his death, only changed.

He made the great step from faith into vision. He found a life far more beautiful than the eye of man has ever seen or the ear of man has ever heard or the mind of man has ever imagined.

Before he died, we talked one last time.

"I'm not going to make it to your class," he said.

"I know, Tom."

"Will you tell them for me? Will you ... tell the whole world for me?"

"I will, Tom. I'll tell them. I'll do my best."

So, to all of you who have been kind enough to read this simple story about God's love, thank you for listening.

And to you, Tommy, somewhere in the sunlit, verdant hills of heaven—I told them, Tommy, as best I could.

If this story means anything to you, please pass it on to a friend or two.

It is a true story and is not enhanced for publicity purposes.

With thanks,

Rev. John Powell, Professor,

LoyolaUniversity, Chicago

<https://stories4homilies.wordpress.com/2013/02/22/you-will-not-find-him-but-he-will-find-you/>

ALLAH YERHAMMO

Our deepest condolences go to Michael and Joan Thomas Mello and their family for the passing of Michael's father Arnoldo, who passed away this past week. May Almighty God welcome him into His kingdom and may his soul rest in peace. Allah yerhammo.

We also extend our condolences to Barry Roderick and his family for the passing of his father Leo Broderick, who passed away last week. May Almighty God welcome Leo into His kingdom and may his soul rest in peace. Allah yerhammo.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

I would like to thank those who have contributed to the Capital Campaign which will assist in moving our treasures and remodel the Church to suit our needs. The following pledges have been received.



UPDATE ON THE MOVE TO OLOF

I am happy to inform our community that a closing date has been set for the purchase of Our Lady of Fatima. Our closing date will be on the Feast of Saint John Maron, March 2, 2023. We will continue to celebrate Liturgies at our present location until all the work has been completed at the new facility. It is anticipated that the work will take between 2-3 months to complete which would take us to June of 2023. We are waiting for the final construction estimates to send to the Eparchy. Once a construction company is agreed upon, we will begin the necessary renovations to the church and rectory. Our Capital Campaign is still in progress.

There will be more details coming in the near future which will be relayed to you. When any new developments are received, they will be directed to you immediately. We continue to pray for a seamless and smooth transition and we ask the intercession of Our Lady of Purgatory and Our Lady of Fatima to continue to lift our prayers to Almighty God that we may always give Him glory. God bless this community during this transition and always.

WELCOME BABY RAFKA

Congratulations to Jean and Genevieve Chedid on the birth of their baby girl Rafka. We ask Almighty God to bless this family and baby Rafka and keep her safe and close to His heart always. Congratulations to Josephine Chedid, the proud grandmother and to all the Chedid family. Mabrook!

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, February 25, @ 4:30 PM, (Feast of Pope Saint Felix II). Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Shirley Roy requested by Joann David. May her soul rest in peace.

Sunday, February 26, @ 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saint Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria). Remember Me in Your kingdom Liturgy. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of John Thomas requested by Hayatt Thomas and family. May his soul rest in peace.

Monday, February 27, @ 9:00 AM. (Feast of Saint Thalaleus, Disciple of Saint Maron). Maronite Sisters of Christ the Light convent.

Tuesday, February 28, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saints Koura and Marana, Disciples of Saint Maron).

Wednesday, March 1, @ 6:00 PM, (Feast of saint Domnina, Disciples of Saint Maron).

Thursday, March 2, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint John Maron).

Friday, March 3, @ 7:00 PM, Benediction/ Station of the Cross. (Feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church, Feast of Saint Katharine Drexel).

Saturday, March 4, @ 4:30 PM, (Feast of Saint Paul and His Sister, Saint Juliana). Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Amy Cabral requested by Lou and Smitty Cabral. May her soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for all the souls in Purgatory requested by Sean, Marie and Keira McLaughlin. May all the souls in Purgatory rest in peace.

Sunday, March 5, @ 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saint Albert the Great). Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Bobby Thomas requested by family. May his soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Florence Dyer requested by family (FM). May his soul rest in peace.

LECTORS FOR FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 25,

Rachael Higgins

Intercessions: Anna & Helen Higgins

Sunday, February 26,

Mae Dickinson / Gaby Baroody

FINANCE COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Jimmy Kalife, Wassim Chedid, Rose Dupre, Rana Choubah, Nigel Hitchings, and Joseph Barckett.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Fadi Bark, Johnny Kalife, Vicki Thomas Marini, Jacques Barbour.

SAINT JOSEPH SODALITY COMMUNION BRUNCH

Please join the members of the St. Joseph Sodality for a Communion Brunch on March 5, 2023 at White's of Westport at Noon as they thank the outgoing Sodality Officers for their service during the past three years and congratulate the incoming Sodality Officers who will give of their time and talents to lead the Sodality during the upcoming three years. As you know White's is well known for their brunches, the price per person is \$ 35.00. If you plan on attending, please contact **Jacques Barbour** at: (508) 725-6705 or by e-mail at jpbtherapy@hotmail.com.

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE BURNS FOR....

This week the sanctuary candle burns for a special intention requested by Joann David. Anyone who would like to offer the sanctuary candle for a loved one or special intention, this will be offered each week. An offering of a \$10.00 donation is appreciated.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Efrangieh Daou, Lisa Mello-Frost, Reggie Thomas, Peter Helmer, Renee Helmer, Natalya Sarkis, Octavia David, Jacob Rego, Amal Assaf, Denise Magaletta, Fernanda Thomas, Angela Scorza-Anderson, Theresa John, Laurette Bou Ramia, Annie Peter, Jeannie Francis, Mariam David, Norma Thomas, Zita Drouin, Lucienne Rodrigues, Edmond Salameh, Ed Da Rocha, and Alice Daher. If anyone is missing from this list, please contact the Church office.

WINE AND HOST OFFERINGS

The altar bread and wine for the month of February is offered in memory of George and Mary Saba and in memory of Steven Espindola requested by Annemarie Espindola. May Their souls rest in peace.

LECTORS FOR MARCH

Saturday, March 4,

Annemarie Espindola

Intercessions: Eric Tavares

Sunday, March 5,

Ann Dupre/Gaby Baroody

Saturday, March 11,

Mae Dickinson

Intercessions: Eric Tavares

Sunday, March 12 ,

John Barbour/ Halim Choubah

Saturday, March 18,

Rachael Higgins

Intercessions: Helen & Anna Higgins

Sunday, March 19,

Rana Choubah/ Jano Baroody

Saturday, March 25,

Smitty Cabral

Intercessions: Eric Tavares

Sunday, March 26,

Mae Dickinson/ Hiba Chdid

WEEK OF FEBRUARY

18-19,2023

Sunday Collection	\$	876.00
Coffee Hour	\$	52.00
Lebanese Market	\$	30.00
Candles	\$	50.00
Total	\$	1,008.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY BY SENDING IN YOUR WEEKLY COLLECTIONS VIA MAIL. THIS HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL FOR THE CHURCH. GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

ST. GEORGE MARONITE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SATURDAY MARCH 18

6:30PM

Superstar

Rami Badr

St. Joseph 74th Annual Hafli

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Joseph & Marie Kenyon

Eternally in our hearts and in our thoughts. We miss seeing your face, hearing your voice, seeing your smile and hearing your laugh. We cherish the day we will join you in GOD's Heavenly Kingdom. We Love you and miss you even more with each passing day.

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