



# *Thoughts on the Journey*

*Suanne Gettings – Pastoral Associate – April 5, 2020*

Nature often mirrors the spiritual dimension of our lives. Sometimes, by stepping outside of ourselves and observing nature, it can shed some light on the complex mysteries that are part of the human condition.

Long before the time of Christ, Egyptians and Greeks saw the similarity between the butterfly's cocoon and the cloth wrappings of their mummies. They would place golden butterflies in their tombs to symbolize immortality, new life, and the resurrection. But before we get to the 'new life' and resurrection stage of the butterfly, we don't want to miss the all important stage of 'struggle' that leads to new life.

Years ago, one of my sisters went through a rehabilitation program for narcotics addiction at Hazelden in Minnesota. I attended the family portion of the program and during my stay, I heard the butterfly story:

*A man found a cocoon of a butterfly and kept it. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched butterfly inside the cocoon for several hours as it struggled to squeeze its body through the tiny hole. Then it stopped as if it couldn't go further. So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bits of the cocoon. The butterfly emerged easily, but it had a swollen body and shriveled wings. The man continued to watch it expecting that at any minute the wings would enlarge and expand enough to support the body: neither happened. In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its short life crawling around. It was never able to fly.*

The butterfly needed the struggle in order to pump body fluid and hemolymph (insect blood) through the wings to expand them.

It's been a challenging Lent which is like a chrysalis state of sorts. Like the pupa, this is the transformation stage which tissues are broken down and the butterfly structures are formed. For we Christians, it's a time of transformation when we break down the parts of ourselves that are not of God and restructure our thinking. It's a time to renew our spirit within. It is through the struggle, the prayer, the fasting, the almsgiving, and acceptance of suffering that we pump new life into the wings of our faith so that we can be lifted from our darkness and rise to the joy of the Resurrection. It is in the struggle that we prepare ourselves for new life.

We have arrived at the last week of Lent. It's Palm Sunday which celebrates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem for the last week of his earthly life. It also marks the beginning of Holy Week which is observed with special solemnity as a time of devotion to the Passion of our Lord.

Throughout our lives, most of us have not experienced a time when we have not had access to the sacraments and rituals that mark this holy time of year. However, this year will be different because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 1970, singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell released her song *Big Yellow Taxi*. The refrain from that song goes, "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone..." These words ring true during these days of quarantine and social distancing that prohibits us from gathering as a community. We're feeling the sting of *longing* – longing for Christ's grace present in the sacraments. Let's not waste this time of suffering that strengthens our desire to be with Christ. Take advantage of this time of struggle to renew our life of faith. Walk the road to Calvary with Jesus in heart, mind, and soul this week, trusting that Christ is with us as we move toward Easter joy.