

Jesus cured Peter's mother-in-law and she got up immediately and waited on them. She responded to Jesus with a desire to help and to serve both Jesus and his mission. Four chapters later in Luke's Gospel, we see a similar response. Three women in particular have been cured of evil spirits and infirmities. Like the twelve Apostles, they accompany Jesus as he proclaims the Good News. Through their financial support, they help to provide for the needs of Jesus' ministry.

Susana is only named once in the Gospels. We know very little about her other than that she traveled in good company. Joanna is mentioned here, and her name reappears on Easter morning when she and Mary Magdalene go to the empty tomb and report their discovery to the Apostles. Without the support of Susana, Joana, Mary Magdalene and many others, Jesus would not have had the backing he needed to journey from one town and village to another.

If we take time to count our own blessings, we might think of how Jesus has healed us. Perhaps it was through forgiveness of our sins. Perhaps an answer to a prayer. Or maybe it was a miracle that restored us to full health. Through the words of Scripture and the Sacraments of our Church, the ministry of Jesus continues today. Like Jesus, the church needs the help and support of many to continue his mission. I am grateful for the continued financial support of so many of our parishioners in the local community that have been very generous during this time of pandemic when we have not seen all of our flock.

Jesus journeyed from one town and village to another, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God (Lk 8:1). It has been 18 months since we entered a period of heightened awareness about the coronavirus and the traveling from one town and village to another. While mobility is greater along the road system, many of our rural communities continue to be very cautious about the movement of people in and out of the villages.

We take so many things for granted in life. Everything we have is a gift from God ... the air we breathe, the sun that warms us, the rivers that provide fish, the tundra that offers up its berries each fall. If everything is a gift, then we should look to this pandemic and ask ourselves, how might we thank God for it? We never wish ill or suffering on another, but even amidst struggles and crosses, we can look for God's hand guiding us and helping us.

With the pandemic, I spend less time moving from one place to another ... and more time thinking about God. How is God trying to gently lead me forward in my own ministry so that like Susana, and Joana, and Mary Magdalene, I am a more devoted follower of Jesus? How can I offer more time back to our all-loving God who has given me so much?

"Lord, when your glory appears, my joy will be full" (Ps 17:15b). We all look forward to a time when the pandemic is gone, and we are filled with joy and thanksgiving that it is over. But no one knows the hour nor the day. In the meantime, we need to recognize the glory of the Lord amidst this pandemic with all of its challenges ... and opportunities to draw closer to God.

How has Jesus blessed you? Think about your blessings and your struggles. Like Jesus who opened his arms widely on the cross, love with all of your heart. Surrender yourself into his hands. Let the master potter mold you and shape you so that you may more fully do the will of God with joy and thanksgiving.