

## Exploring the Real Presence, Part 5

In exploring Catholic belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Deacon Dennis Lambert looked at the Last Supper, when Jesus says to eat the bread and drink the wine “in remembrance of Me.”

During an interview with The Christophers, Deacon Dennis explained, “If you want to dig into anything within the New Testament, you’ve got to look at the Old. That’s what Dr. Brant Pitre teaches. In his book on the Jewish roots of the Eucharist, he talks about the fact that to a first-century Jew, to ‘remember’ something was to make it present again.”

“That’s exactly what we do every Sunday. ‘Do this in remembrance of me,’ doesn’t mean, ‘I remember what Jesus did at the Last Supper.’ No, it means ‘to make present again.’”

Though Deacon Dennis notes that God is truly present everywhere, He exists in a special way in the Eucharist as a conveyor of grace: “Grace is God’s favor, the undeserved help we receive, to hear and to respond to His call, to become adopted sons, partakers in the divine nature and eternal life.”

**This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me. (Luke 22:19)**

*Help me gain wisdom on the Eucharist, Christ.*

## Exploring the Real Presence, Part 6

Deacon Dennis Lambert credits God's grace with getting him through the most challenging time of his life.

During a *Christopher Closeup* interview, he said, "Everyone will hit dark valleys in their life. No one's immune. My wife and I certainly hit one of those, years ago, when my son walked through the pains of addiction. We didn't know if he would make it out.

"He's doing extremely well [now], beyond expectations. I don't see him turning back. But during that time, I needed God's grace. I needed to realize my need for Him, my dependency on Him and grace.

"Again, it was such a big outpouring. But even in the day to day—going to daily Mass as much as I can, adoration and those things—it keeps you grounded and keeps that desire to continue to follow Him burning."

That desire to follow God is what eventually led Deacon Dennis to pursue the diaconate. That part of his story tomorrow.

**From His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. (John 1:16)**

*May I be open to receiving Your grace in good times and bad, Father.*

## Exploring the Real Presence, Part 7

The pain of dealing with his son's addiction planted the seeds for Deacon Dennis Lambert to pursue the diaconate. During a *Christopher Closeup* interview, he recalled, "I felt my whole life that God was calling me to some things...that there was something that He wanted me to do.

"I go back to what I just spoke about my son. God often uses painful times in our lives to speak to us. I came to the realization that at that time, my wife and I had lived such a charmed life. Nothing had seemed to go wrong. As such, I questioned my need for God...It took that period to bring me to my knees to say, 'God, I'm Yours. I need You. This time I'm not just saying words. I'm meaning them.'"

"It was at that time," Deacon Dennis concluded, "that the thought entered into my head, 'What about becoming a deacon?' I'm not going to say God suddenly spoke to me, but I began to discern...I checked it out, went to the first meeting about it, entered into the period of discernment, and here I am. So, God does use dark valleys in our lives, sometimes, for the better."

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil; for You are with me. (Psalm 23:4)**

*Use my dark times to make me a better person,  
Lord.*

## Healing at the Friendship Bench

Mental health concerns are rising throughout the world, and in some countries the need for help is outpacing the number of trained professionals. What to do? One psychiatrist in Zimbabwe, Dixon Chiband, decided to enlist local grandmothers to share their wisdom and a listening ear—not in a counselor’s office, but on a park bench.

The “Friendship Bench” project is embraced by both the grandmother volunteers and those looking for help. Grandmothers offer their experience and perspective, and are encouraged to use local idioms rather than clinical language. Speaking to the *Boston Globe*, one participant said, “The way [my grandmother] talked to me, she removed all the pain I had in my heart...I got the feeling that I was accepted in the community.”

The project has a positive effect on the volunteers as well. The grandmothers feel like they’re part of a movement, and this is an antidote to isolation. Last year, more than 60,000 people in Zimbabwe used the program, promoting more connections and better mental health all around.

**How attractive is wisdom in the aged.  
(Sirach 25:5)**

*When I am hurting, Lord, help me connect  
with wise elders.*

## Everyday Sundae

At Everyday Sundae, proprietor and chef Charles Foreman makes sure every customer walks away with at least two scoops of fresh ice cream—with extra sprinkles of kindness!

In the wake of the pandemic, Foreman—a former corporate chef and graduate of the CIA (Culinary Institute of America)—decided it would be a boon, both to him and his neighborhood, if he opened an ice cream shop. Thus, Everyday Sundae was born.

Located in Petworth, Washington, D.C., an area undergoing multiple changes due to gentrification, Everyday Sundae serves up daily reminders that there will always be ice cream for those who want it.

To that end, Charles never fails to give away a heaping cone or bowl of ice cream to a child he knows can't afford it. Since the shop's opening in 2021, many people have observed this father of two's charitable gesture, and subsequently offered money out of their own pockets to keep "the chain of giving" going. Charles told *Today.com*, "Everyone walks away with a smile. If you can't afford it, and I give you one for free, your smile's even bigger."

**God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)**

*Lord, may I be the reason for someone's smile today.*

## **Missioner Makes a Difference**

Many years ago, The Christophers received a letter from a missionary in Tanzania who told us about the way our “light one candle” philosophy changed his life.

At one time, he didn’t believe that one individual could improve social conditions very much. Then, he began experimenting with a crop called sunnhemp in leprosy villages where he was assigned.

It seems that sunnhemp acts as a fertilizer, makes excellent cattle forage, holds down weeds, loosens the soil for other crops, and prevents erosion.

Over time, the villagers came to have enough food, the children were well-fed, and 50 tons of seed were accumulated so sunnhemp could be introduced into the agricultural system.

Can you change the world? Choose a problem, and start to work at correcting it. That, in itself, could lead to change.

**Let us not grow weary in doing what is right,  
for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not  
give up. (Galatians 6:9)**

*May I take the initiative to build a better,  
kinder world whenever I can, Lord.*

## Leisure Time Thoughts

A number of years ago, Sister Josette Smitielski of Buffalo, New York, compiled some sayings on leisure. Here are a few of them:

- “Leisure is an attitude of the mind, a condition of the soul. It is a form of silence.”
- “Leisure is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude.”
- “Leisure is only possible when a person is at one with self. Self-hate is a deadly trap.”
- “Whenever we refuse to be driven by external and internal pressures, the stage is set for leisure.”

Leisure is the exact opposite of the frantic busyness for its own sake that many suffer from today.

Do yourself a favor: cultivate true leisure, true relaxation, true peace.

**A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh.  
(Proverbs 14:30)**

*Pour a genuine spirit of leisure into my being,  
Prince of Peace.*

## Music on the Inside

While serving time in a New York State correctional facility, Chontay Smith attended church services every Sunday and found himself fascinated by the piano player. “When I would watch his hands,” Smith explained to Ellen Moynihan of New York’s *Daily News*, “I would mimic it in my mind...The language of music started to get more clear to me.”

Smith drew the keys of the piano keyboard on three sheets of paper, taped them all together, and hung them on his cell wall. He then taught himself to play piano as best he could. His abilities have increased since he was released from prison in 2021 and became a mentee in the program Music on the Inside.

Founded in 2016 by Alina Bloomgarden, “the organization pairs recently released or still incarcerated teens and adults with professional musicians.” Bloomgarden said, “People need jobs and housing, but people also need to feel happy and like a human being again.” Smith added, “They’re working with what I have, and they’ve provided me with a hand to pull me up, not push me down. It’s like a family. It’s a very strong community.”

**I was in prison and you visited Me.  
(Matthew 25:36)**

*Jesus, guide prisoners to improve their lives—  
and send them people to help them do so.*



## Teens Earn School Credit for Yard Work

As the school year is winding down every June in Dubuque, Iowa, students at the Alternative Learning Center are given the option to earn physical education credits by doing yard work for the elderly and disabled.

Social studies teacher Tim Hitzler came up with the idea several years ago, and it has grown in popularity. “The students aren’t typically too excited at the beginning, but once they get involved and start doing the yard work, they become more motivated,” he told *KWWL*. “They really like giving back to people and meeting the person.”

The work—which includes “raking leaves, pulling weeds, cutting grass, cleaning gutters”—can be physically exhausting, especially in the heat. But it has also become a way of building community and connecting generations.

Hitzler has even had graduates volunteer to come back and help with the project because they get so much out of it. He told *People.com*, “It’s been amazing, the attention this has gotten. I think it’s because it’s such a simple idea.”

**Sweet is the sleep of laborers. (Ecclesiastes 5:12)**

*May young people learn the value of hard work and helping others, Holy Spirit.*

## God, Family, and the Padres, Part 1

Two things were staples in Marie Coronel's home when she was growing up: Catholicism and rooting for the San Diego Padres. The practice of faith took precedence, however, and served as her foundation through her father's diagnosis with a rare progressive neurological disorder, and her own debilitating injury when a tree fell on her and broke her neck. Marie joined us on *Christopher Closeup* to share her story.

As the daughter of Filipino Americans, Marie grew up in a home where the Catholic faith was as integral to life as eating and drinking. Her father was an usher at their church and a member of the Knights of Columbus and Holy Name Society. He always made sure the family got to Mass on time, and he encouraged his shy daughter to be a lector at her Catholic school's Masses.

Lectoring, combined with the fact that her parents once bought her a toy microphone she could use to interview people, planted the seeds of Marie's career as a TV news reporter.

More tomorrow...

**Keep these words that I am commanding you...  
Recite them to your children.  
(Deuteronomy 6:6-7)**

*Help parents teach their children a humble faith, Creator.*

## God, Family, and the Padres, Part 2

When Marie Coronel left home to attend Cal State Northridge because of their journalism program, it was the first time she was on her own, with the freedom to make her own decisions, including whether or not to attend Mass every week.

During a *Christopher Closeup* interview, she recalled, “Shockingly—I think it was because I was raised in [the faith]—the choice was pretty easy. I knew I had to go. I credit my parents because if they didn’t instill that foundation in me, I don’t know if I would’ve been, as a college kid, 18 years old, spending [my] Sundays at church... And being Filipino has helped in terms of keeping my faith alive.”

Marie’s early days in broadcast news took her far from San Diego. The pay was not great, so she sustained herself on ramen noodles and Padres games. Those days, said Marie, “taught me to rely on my faith...I could remember what my mom told me. Whenever you’re faced with some uncertainty, if you’re worried, just pray. So, that’s what I was able to do.”

More tomorrow...

**Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray. (Proverbs 22:6)**

*Inspire young adults to practice their faith, Messiah.*

## God, Family, and the Padres, Part 3

Marie Coronel eventually landed a job at *ABC 10 News* back in her San Diego hometown. It was a dream come true because she had watched the station with her grandparents growing up, and she felt a connection to it beyond her employment.

Life continued on the upswing when Marie met the man she would marry. But her joy came to be intermingled with sorrow when her father was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy, a neurological disorder that “affects body movements, walking and balance, and eye movement.”

Doctors didn’t think Marie’s father would live to see her wedding, which was just two months away. Mr. Coronel, however, had other plans. She noted, “My dad...he was a fighter, and there was nothing that was going to stop him from being there for his daughter’s wedding...He relied on his faith...After that, they didn’t know if he was going to meet his first grandchild. Eventually, he met all three of his grandsons.”

More tomorrow...

**Do not fear, for I am with you...I will strengthen you, I will help you. (Isaiah 41:10)**

*Jesus, strengthen me in times of illness and distress.*

## God, Family, and the Padres, Part 4

In 2016, while she was out reporting on a major storm for *ABC 10 News*, a tree fell on Marie Coronel and broke her neck. In addition, she miscarried her unborn child.

During an interview on The Christophers' radio show, Marie observed, "I've always been the strong person in our family. I helped my mom take care of my dad. I had my husband and two sons at the time. And now I was the one who could not do anything...Doctors were trying to figure out how to piece me back together."

For some time, Marie couldn't get out of bed, was stuck in a neck brace, and had trouble swallowing anything, even water. Despite feeling devastated, Marie didn't do any fist-shaking at God. Instead, she asked for God's help to find healing.

She explained, "Seeing my mom [gave me strength]. She had to take care of me who was bedbound, and she had to take care of my dad who was bedbound. Yes, she did get frustrated, but she never gave up. She had so much emphasis on her faith that she used that to get her through."

More tomorrow...

**May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times in all ways. (2 Thessalonians 3:16)**

*Send me Your peace in uncertain times, Savior.*

## God, Family, and the Padres, Part 5

One source of comfort and joy for Marie Coronel during her recovery from a broken neck was the love of her two sons. Instead of viewing her neck brace as a negative thing, they thought it made her a superhero, which gave her a more positive view of her own situation.

During a *Christopher Closeup* interview, Marie explained, “With my dad, he couldn’t physically play ball with [my sons], but just sitting next to them, holding their hands, you could see the smile on his face. He was truly happy. For me, it was more like: this is why I have to keep going. These are two young kids, and they deserve to have their mom. That’s why it was joyful to see them. That motivated me to keep going.”

Marie has recovered remarkably well since the accident. She has some mobility limitations in her neck, and she often feels like she has arthritis. But overall, she has resumed living her rich and full life—and she has had a third son as well.

More tomorrow...

**Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord.  
(Psalm 127:3)**

*Send me sources of love and inspiration when  
I am struggling, Messiah.*

## God, Family, and the Padres, Part 6

Like her parents did with her, Marie Coronel is modeling the Catholic faith for her three sons, through going to Mass and praying a family rosary. And, of course, she and her husband are raising their boys to be Padres fans.

Marie said, “When we have our family vacations, we try to plan it around baseball games. The catch is...while we’re there, we’re also going to Mass at a different church. So, as they’re visiting different ballparks, they’re also visiting different churches.”

The one person physically absent from Marie’s life is her dad, who passed away in 2020 after defying the odds for so many years. Yet he remains a presence in her life.

She concluded, “We visit his grave once a week after Mass. That’s what we do as a family... But I find myself talking to him when I’m about to do something that I am not used to doing. Before, [I] would be praying to God, ‘Help me get through this.’ But now there’s another step [where] I’m talking to my dad. So, even though he’s not physically here, he’s still here inside.”

**The Spirit intercedes for the saints.  
(Romans 8:27)**

*Help me keep my departed loved ones alive in my heart until we meet again in heaven, Jesus.*

## A Doggone Unforgettable Birthday

One June weekend in 2023, Doctor Robert Moore, father of three and grandfather of five, had an extra special reason to celebrate. In addition to being Father's Day, it was also his 100th birthday.

Knowing her father to be “an avid dog lover,” one of Moore's daughters, Alison, put out a special request on the *Nextdoor app*, asking people to dress up their furry friends in their finest and parade them in front of their house where her father could see them.

Alison expected maybe 20 to 30 neighborhood dogs and their owners to make an appearance. But as reported by *NBC Bay Area's* Marianne Favro, 10 times that many came, with dogs dressed in costumes ranging from tuxedos to cowboy get-ups. Their owners brought along personalized posters and gifts as well.

Moore, a retired Dean of Science and Applied Arts at San José State University, made sure to pet each dog in thanks. He even recognized their individual breeds. “My father, he was so touched,” Alison said. “It just makes you feel wonderful about your community.”

**Gray hair is a crown of glory. (Proverbs 16:31)**

*Abba, grant blessings and long life to our beloved fathers.*



## A Lover of Telephone Poles

Chances are you don't give much thought to the telephone poles you see when walking around your neighborhood. But 17-year-old Liam Tremain-Woodcock of Stoughton, Wisconsin, can't get enough of them.

The young man, who has autism, has been fascinated by these structures for much of his life. As reported by *WKOW-TV's* Rachael Perry, he often draws pictures of telephone poles and even has a favorite pole, that he named Telly.

Liam's parents reached out to Stoughton Utilities to ask if any of their workers might give Liam a tour of some of their work sites. Line worker Michael Nawrocki and others were happy to help. They reviewed Liam's drawings, gave him a primer on different power poles, and attached a tag to Liam's favorite pole, officially naming it "Telly."

On Facebook, Liam's mom described how much the crew's welcoming attitude meant to her son. Explaining why they did it, Nawrocki said, "If you don't have community, if you don't have family or friends, you don't really have much."

**Whoever welcomes you welcomes Me.  
(Matthew 10:40)**

*Guide me in practicing simple kindnesses that reflect Your welcoming love, Father.*

## Willie Nelson, Believer

Did you know that back in 2006, country music legend Willie Nelson bought a church? He heard that the small Methodist church that he and his sister, Bobbie, attended growing up in Abbott, Texas, might close due to low attendance, so Willie stepped in to save it.

In an article for *AmericaMagazine.org*, Kaya Oakes explores Willie Nelson's expressions of faith. Though he didn't always conform to traditional images of a Christian life, God was never far from Willie's mind.

Oakes observes, "In his 2015 book *It's a Long Story*, Nelson wrote of his Christian faith that 'I was a believer as a kid, just as I am a believer as a man,' and 'I've never doubted the genius of Christ's moral message or the truth of the miracles He performed.'" And when writing a song, Nelson sometimes asks himself, "Am I just a channel chosen by the Holy Spirit to express these feelings?"

A person's faith may not always be obvious, but it is often there, under the surface. Respect God's presence in everyone.

**While the musician was playing, the power of the Lord came on him. (2 Kings 3:15)**

*Help me to see Your presence in myself and others, Lord.*

## Sunrise, Sunset

Whether you live in a city or a rural area, two of the most beautiful times of day come when the sun rises and when it sets. Witnessing the myriad of colors in the sky produced by this daily phenomenon can be awe-inspiring and good for your mental health, says a recent study by British researchers.

It has already been proven that being outside surrounded by nature can boost your spirits. Watching sunrises and sunsets, however, can give you an extra boost. And research reveals that even looking at them on a screen saver or painting can have a positive effect because they produce feelings of awe.

Alex Smalley, the study's lead author, told the *Washington Post* that feelings of awe are known to "improve mood, increase positive emotions and decrease stress."

Why? He explained, "We have, as Western populations, become very disconnected from the natural world. When you see something vast and overwhelming or something that produces this feeling of awe, your own problems can feel diminished and so you don't worry so much about them."

**The heavens are telling the glory of God.  
(Psalm 19:1)**

*Open my eyes to the beauty of Your creation,  
Abba.*

## Tips for Successful Marriages

Divorce garners much attention. But the fact is that many people remain happily married for 40 or more years. Researchers have investigated how they do it and come up with a list of these bits of wisdom:

- Cope with problems as they arise—and work together for a solution.
- Communicate well.
- Be optimistic about the ability to sustain a commitment.
- Have a strong faith in God.
- Develop a spirit of sharing, both in terms of household work and outside interests.
- Be determined to stay faithful to each other.

**Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.  
(1 Corinthians 13:7)**

*May married couples grow in selfless love, Lord, and give them the strength to be faithful and committed to each other.*

## Boy's Firefighter Wish Comes True

Many little boys dream of becoming a firefighter, but nine-year-old Antonio Garcia-Cardozo was able to live out his dream thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. "I told my mom that one day I wanted to be a firefighter...and I'm a firefighter," Antonio told *ABC News*.

This young boy has faced his own set of challenges, battling a life-threatening illness. So, in partnership with Make-A-Wish, 100 firefighters from Monroe Township, New Jersey, helped him achieve his goal.

Antonio joined in their morning routine and took part in a simulated selfless act, rescuing a damsel in distress from a burning building. "Everybody was just so honored to have this kid here," Captain Bart Rutherford said.

The day concluded with an official swearing-in ceremony, where Antonio received his very own shield. Captain Rutherford added, "He's part of our family now."

**These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown. (Genesis 6:4)**

*Lord, bring moments of joy and healing to all children facing health struggles.*

## Mind What Matters, Part 1

Elizabeth Humphreys was first introduced to caregiving at age 10 when her brother, Michael, and her mother, Madelyn, were both diagnosed with different forms of cancer a few days apart. While Madelyn survived breast cancer, Michael succumbed to Hodgkin's lymphoma.

When Elizabeth was 27, she noticed changes in her mother's behavior that included excessive drinking of alcohol, loss of empathy, and an inability to stay on topic when having a discussion.

It took about three years before Madelyn was officially diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Even then, Elizabeth couldn't accept the reality of the situation, partially because she didn't want to. She believed that some combination of diet, supplements, and exercise could turn things around for her mom.

Because Madelyn was high functioning for a long time, Elizabeth lived in denial during that period. But when reality hit, it hit hard. It also planted the seed that would lead Elizabeth to help other families like hers.

**The human spirit will endure sickness; but a broken spirit—who can bear? (Proverbs 18:14)**

*Bolster my spirit during health struggles,  
Father.*

## Mind What Matters, Part 2

Alzheimer's and dementia are often portrayed as memory diseases, but there is more to them than that. The patient can also suffer from hallucinations, agitation, illogical anger, and an inability to grasp the most basic forms of reason.

Elizabeth Humphreys faced this situation with her mother Madelyn's Alzheimer's, all while also being a young wife and mother. As a result, she felt traumatized in both her regular life and her spiritual life.

During a *Christopher Closeup* interview, Elizabeth explained, "I couldn't make sense of the fact that...[my mom] had survived breast cancer. She had survived the loss of her child...And that this was going to be the way she went out. Alzheimer's, of all things, it's the most degrading disease...I was so angry with God, so I didn't lean on Him at all."

That was how Elizabeth lived for nearly six years. Finally, she hit rock bottom mentally and emotionally, admitting, "I need help. I can't keep doing this by myself." That help came through a person, perhaps sent by the God at whom she was angry.

**I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. (2 Kings 20:5)**

*Rescue me when I feel despair, Savior.*

## Mind What Matters, Part 3

Elizabeth Humphreys contacted the Nashville chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, hoping they could help her. She was connected with a young woman named Kelsey, whom she met for coffee. After Elizabeth shared her story, Kelsey invited her to be Co-Chair of their Young Professionals Board.

Initially, Elizabeth felt reluctant because she had two little kids and her mother to care for. But Kelsey responded, "Liz, you're so angry at this disease and what it's done to your mom and you. Really angry people make great fundraisers."

Elizabeth agreed to give it a try. She soon thrived at the job, becoming a prolific fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Association. Beyond that, she found healing because she felt she was part of a movement that was bigger than herself, a movement which brought support to the six million people in the U.S. who suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia and their 11 million caregivers.

Elizabeth's efforts became so successful that she felt called to do even more to help caregivers. That's when she created her own nonprofit, Mind What Matters.

**In all toil there is profit. (Proverbs 14:23)**

*Guide me towards meaningful work that helps others, Lord.*



## Mind What Matters, Part 4

In founding her own nonprofit, called Mind What Matters, Elizabeth Humphreys had two main goals. First, to share videos and podcasts that help people improve their brain health and diminish their chances of developing dementia.

Most importantly, however, Mind What Matters financially assists caregivers for dementia patients in their difficult work. In essence, 95 percent of the money raised is sent out in caregiving grants to people who apply through their website, *WeAreMindWhatMatters.org*.

In some cases, the grant money goes toward hiring a professional aide to provide a few hours of respite care so a caregiver can get some time to themselves. Other requests include: “Help me pay my mom’s medical bills,” and “Help me buy the medicine that controls her anxiety and her aggression so that she quits trying to hit me in the evenings.”

Grant recipients are appreciative for whatever Mind What Matters sends them, and Elizabeth acknowledges that giving money to the needy is “what Jesus called us to do.”

**Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.  
(Proverbs 3:27)**

*Give caregivers the support they need, Messiah.*

## Mind What Matters, Part 5

Elizabeth Humphreys' relationship with God has improved since she began her work helping dementia caregivers like herself. During an interview with The Christophers' Tony Rossi, she reflected, "It must have been God's hand in some capacity [that] did pull me back in...I know that He has His hand, not just on me, but on my mother as well."

"I still don't understand...But I do know that He's working somehow through all of this. Maybe it will be me copping to how dark of a valley I was in that resonates with one person out there who is feeling that way right now. Maybe it stimulates them making the first step in trying to find healing and hope."

Though Elizabeth seems to have achieved a sense of peace about her situation, she defines it as something else, noting, "I think it is acceptance of the tremendous sorrow that accompanies life. I think this is where faith comes in. This is where if you don't have it...the darkness can eat you. But to the extent you give [your suffering] over, [you can] say, 'I'm never going to understand this, God. I just know that I trust You, and I know that no matter what, You'll carry me through it.'"

**I will trust, and will not be afraid. (Isaiah 12:2)**

*Increase my trust in You, Holy Trinity.*

## Mind What Matters, Part 6

One thing that helped Elizabeth Humphreys deal with her mother Madelyn's Alzheimer's was a speech Madelyn had written years ago for an American Cancer Society fundraiser, shortly after her son died. "She found herself at a museum in Connecticut...staring at a picture of Mary holding Jesus lifeless in her arms," Elizabeth recalled on *Christopher Closeup*.

Madelyn wrote, "I was drawn to Mary's face and then to her eyes, which looked out at me with the unmistakable anguish of fresh grief. And as my gaze met hers, I felt a rush of recognition and comfort. I knew this pain. I began for the first time to understand my son's death...as a universal event which could therefore be communicated and shared with others."

"In sharing our experiences and connecting with others," Madelyn continued, "we're able to attach meaning and find a level of insight not otherwise available to us. And this is how we survive the most difficult of tragedies in life's hardships. We find the strength to move beyond them with community."

**Since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:11)**

*May I seek—and offer to others—the healing power of community, Jesus.*

## Mind What Matters, Part 7

After 12 years of caring for her mother herself, Elizabeth Humphreys needed to move her to a nursing home. It was a difficult choice, but she has discovered wisdom along the way that allows her to move forward towards the light.

Elizabeth concluded, “First and foremost, I found God again. And now...I let the darkness move through me...whereas before, it would be a really horrific sad moment. My mom’s case this last year has been traumatic. Her mental health has been really bad, along with the Alzheimer’s.”

“Now, I think, either through God’s grace or enough time and healing, or both...I’ve given myself permission to feel it all, as hard as it is. And if I have to break down and cry, or if I have to weep, I do that and I let it pass.”

“I think only because I’m finally not her everyday [caregiver] that I’ve been able to do that. But I’ve been given this period of time, 12 months now, where she’s not been in my house every single day. I think I’ve finally started to heal.”

**O Lord my God, I cried to You for help, and You have healed me. (Psalm 30:2)**

*Heal my spiritual and emotional wounds,  
Savior.*

## Celebrating 100 Days in Hospital NICU

Due to medical problems brought on by her premature birth at 28 weeks gestation, baby Everly Staup had already spent three months in the NICU at Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health in Indianapolis, Indiana. Her parents, Lindsay and Tyler, were determined to make the best of a tough situation and celebrate Everly's 100-day milestone.

Donned in a glittery golden crown with an oversized "100" on it, Everly looked like a princess for her celebration on June 29, 2022. The NICU's healthcare workers joined in the fun to make the occasion extra joyful.

Lindsay told *Good Morning America*, "I'm so proud of [Everly]. She is literally a light to the world. She's a huge miracle, and she has faced so many obstacles, and she always comes out better in the end. We're just so proud of her, and she's helped us become better people...She has shown us that good things can come out of bad situations."

**The people rejoiced greatly and celebrated that day as a day of great gladness.**

**(1 Maccabees 7:48)**

*Merciful Lord, please watch over all babies in the NICU and their families.*

## Trees and More

It's common knowledge that trees benefit us in many ways: providing shade, cooling neighborhoods, improving our mental outlook.

Trees can be particularly precious for city dwellers who don't live near public parks or community gardens.

Columbia University researchers have now found that urban greenery plays an underappreciated role in absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide. They learned that "the trees, shrubs, flowers, herbs, and grasses in New York's five boroughs collectively absorb more than 40 percent of the city's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions," notes *Columbia Magazine*.

"We already knew that street trees had this good benefit of cooling and providing shade," said the lead researcher. "That they're also inhaling enormous amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> is an added bonus."

**Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy.  
(Psalm 96:12)**

*Dear God, strengthen our resolve to care for the wonderful beauties of nature that You have given us.*