

Dear Friends,

Years ago when our daughter Meg was applying to enter a teaching program, she had to demonstrate instructional prowess by designing a lesson for third graders. She came up with a lesson about homophones – those pairs or sets of words that sound alike, but are spelled differently. Meg’s lesson included construction paper signs glued on sticks that read: *their, there, and they’re*.

Recently, I’ve been thinking about the pair of homophones: *holy and wholly*. Here we are in the middle of Holy Week, a week of great biblical, spiritual, and liturgical meaning for Christians. Holy Week reminds us to be wholly God’s.

There’s an 19th century hymn that is often sung during Holy Week. It mentions Calvary, the place where Jesus was crucified, and it begins: “My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine! Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away, O let me from this day be wholly thine!”

So, how do we become ***wholly thine***, that is, how do we become ***wholly God’s***? Prayer, meditation, worship, Bible study, reading spiritual books, following Jesus’ teachings, loving God and neighbor, and engaging in mission outreach all come to mind as we strive to be wholly God’s. But in the end, according to Thomas Merton, it’s about ***desiring to please God***. Merton was a Trappist monk, prolific writer, and theologian. His prayer, published in 1958, continues to be prayed by people around the world:

*My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.*

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,

*though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.*

*I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

In the midst of life’s uncertainties, we need to let go of fear and trust God always as Merton writes. We need to believe that God will never leave us to face our perils alone. May this Easter be a time when we renew our desire to please God. May this Easter be a time when we realize that we are wholly God’s. Blessings to you this Easter.

Yours in the name of the Crucified and Risen Christ,
Jane

P.S. Maundy Thursday is on April 1 and we are offering an online, live-streamed service from the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. Whether you watch the service live or recorded later on, it will be available here at the church's YouTube channel. The Order of Worship is found at the channel by clicking on "Show More." The Maundy Thursday service includes the Sacrament of Holy Communion as we remember Jesus' last supper with his disciples in the upper room. Please provide your own elements for the bread and the juice as you watch the service. Kasha Breau and Nancy Johnson are playing a piano and bell piece titled, "What Wondrous Love Is This." Deacons Victor Bonanno, Phyllis Clark, Beau Doherty, and Nancy Johnson will read scriptures that depict Jesus' rejection and death and they will also extinguish candles to signify the darkness of these sorrowful events. The readings will be interspersed with Kasha playing the hymn, "Were You There?"

On Easter Sunday, there are two worship services. At 6:15 a.m. we will gather in-person in the backfield of the church at the gazebo for a Sunrise Service. Feel free to bring a chair, stand, or remain in your car for this informal service. Masks are required and social distancing will be observed. The Easter Sunday virtual service, recorded from the sanctuary, will be offered online via YouTube.