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Although sharing much common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry, often Mary and Bob find themselves approaching ministerial concerns from different angles... *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives and provide food for thought.

## These Days of Lenten Journey

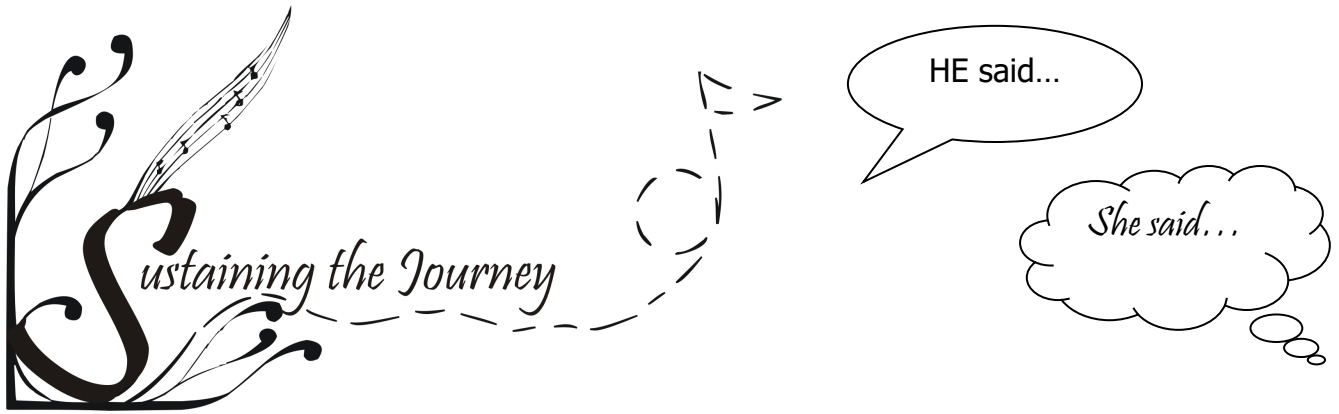
### *Bob's Perspective:*

It always amazes me to see how scriptures written 2000 years ago can still be so pertinent. In the last three years (since we last heard the readings of Cycle B) much has happened in our lives and in society. Many of our personal and societal values have been obscured and sometimes destroyed by more worldly views and ideals. So many times in this Lenten scriptural cycle, we will hear phrases like “now is the time,” and “the kingdom of God is at hand.” We see numerous examples of God’s Covenant of Love, actively working throughout history and still here with us today. These are not contemplative ideas, rather, they are calls to action. We have journeyed to a place where we are now called to act upon what we value as Americans, as Christians, and as members of the Catholic Church.

A few weeks ago I met with our Art and Environment/Liturgy Committee to begin planning and preparing for the season of Lent. As a Parish Community, we are very fortunate to have a number of very talented people, offering their skills in the many areas that it takes to produce inspiring and interesting liturgical environments season after season.

I’m recalling one such meeting which took place some years back. It began by the members first reflecting on the scripture readings (especially the Gospels) that were to be proclaimed that year - Cycle B. A wonderful reflection was given by Nancy Bialkowski, a beloved member of our group who passed away a few years ago, which sums up this season of Lent so well that I would like to share part of it with you:

These days of Lenten journey have come upon us again. Together as a parish community we are called to get back to basics, acknowledge our sinfulness and gather as a people to walk the path to the Cross and its ultimate end of Easter. The readings of Mark emphasize the Cross, its journey, struggles, and triumph.



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We serve him [Jesus] and follow him on the journey to the Cross and beyond - to the empty tomb, the symbol of the resurrected Christ who triumphed over the grave. The Cross, once a symbol of pain, has become a sign of victory for our God.

Nancy hit the ball right out of the park! Christ's journey was not an easy one – he took many unpopular stands. Many of his closest friends deserted him – but he stood up for what was right, no matter the cost. As we are faced with so many pressures in our society (allowing our rights and moral standards to slowly blur, fade and disintegrate) do we have the strength and the fortitude to stand up and follow what we believe?

Together, let's pray, pay attention to the message of this Lenten Season, and take it to heart.

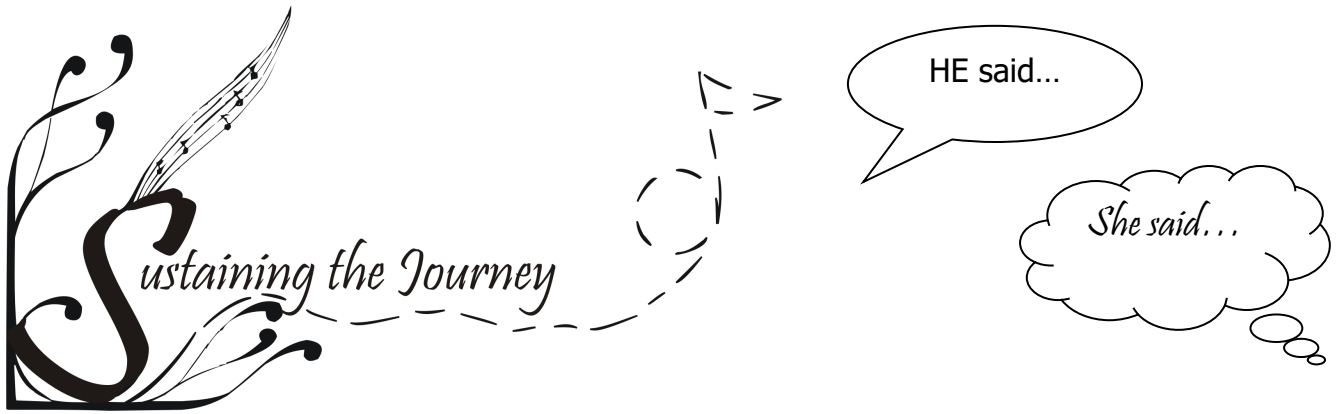
*Mary's Perspective:*

I have written before...everyone has stuff. There is no perfect family. We all have darkness and brokenness in our lives. The "stuff" is different for everyone, but I don't know anyone who hasn't experienced struggles in their lives. A couple weeks ago, a priest friend reminded me that Jesus came to love us – even in the dark parts.

You don't call the dishwasher repairman when the dishwasher is working just fine. A doctor doesn't say, "bring me your healthy ones..." Jesus came to the sinner, to bring light to the darkness and to heal the brokenness.

I used to think of Lent as a very private time. To me, Lent was a time where I reflected on my own darkness, and tried to make changes. As my faith journey has unfolded, I find now that Lent has become a time for me to learn more. I desire to understand these Scriptures more. I want to know this Jesus who walked the difficult journey with strength and fortitude.

Bob and I have both learned over the years the value of having a support system, especially through the dark times. When I am hurting, my first tendency is to push everyone away; to find solitude. A dear friend once told me, "when the road is hard – when you are struggling and hurting – don't push me away. Embrace me. Let me share the burden with you." I have replayed those words in my head over and over.



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In these next six weeks, we will reflect on Jesus' journey to the Cross. If he really came to bring light to the darkness, we would do well to stop pushing and start embracing. Hand your burdens over to the Lord and allow healing to wash over you. Learn, pray, and take heart.