



# Compassion

Sharing hope...

2019 - Second Quarter

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Facing Death



California



Special Gifts & Memorials

## Old Wounds

Sharing the Word of God with the institutionalized can sometimes take us to unforeseen places, where traumatized souls suffer from old wounds that have never fully healed. Such was the journey I recently found myself embarking upon with some women at the county jail. We were studying the story of Peter as he attempted to do the impossible – walk on water! We were well into the story, imagining the terrifying situation the disciples found themselves in as a violent storm tossed their boat about in the middle of the sea of Galilee. When we got to the part where Peter steps out of the boat to join Jesus on the water, I noticed that Jill, who had been in my group before, was beginning to tear up. I took note of this but went on with the story.

As we talked about how Peter, distracted by the howling wind and violent waves crashing all around him, started to sink, Jill began to sob openly. While I didn't want to embarrass her further, I felt the need to provide an opportunity for her to share with the group whatever was troubling her. When I paused to ask if she had something to share, Jill asked with a trembling voice, "Can I go back to the unit?" "Is there something wrong?" I asked. Struggling to give voice to her misery, Jill answered, "I saw my sister drown when I was five and all this talk of Peter drowning takes me back there. It is just too much!"

I said, "I am so sorry you had to go through that and are now experiencing that grief all over again." And right there and then we prayed; I really had no idea what else to do for Jill, the group, or for myself. So, I asked everyone to pray with me: "God, please be with Jill. She needs you right now. You know what she's been through and the pain she continues to bear. Wrap her up in your love, hold her close in her grief, and walk with her through

this healing process as she continues to grieve the loss of her sister...." When we finished praying, Jill decided to stay for the remainder of the lesson.

Afterwards, Jill came up to talk. "I'm sorry," she said. "I tried really hard to make it through and not disturb the group." I told her that I was sorry that Peter's story opened an old wound, but

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NEWS

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## Old Wounds

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I'm glad that God could hold on to her as she relived that painful memory.

Many of the women in jail are there because they are addicts. And, many of them are addicts because they have been trying to find an escape from things in their life or personal baggage from their past. Since these forms of escape are not available to them in jail, they are plunged head-long into what they were trying to escape or avoid – whether that's guilt and regret, fear and worry, or in this case, grief from losing a sister. Bible stories can sometimes trigger thoughts and emotions they were trying to escape from, but perhaps, that is just part of God's plan. Now, in that vulnerable place, instead of running away through drugs or drinking, they can run into the loving arms of Jesus, where they can find true help and healing.



by Chaplain  
Sarah Guenther



## Facing Death

*"On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, 'While the child was still living, we spoke to David, but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate.'" David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead." 2 Samuel 12:18-19*

Many people are afraid to use the words, "dying" and "death." Instead they talk about "passing on" or "no longer with us." Such was the case with Alma in the hospital. She was very elderly and sick. The doctor told the family and me that Alma would not live through the night. The family insisted that neither I, nor the doctor, should tell Alma that she was dying.

For me, it was a difficult devotion to have without relaying a message of what was really happening. The family tiptoed around the room to be with Alma and whispered amongst themselves.

The next day, the doctor, family, and I were surprised to see Alma sitting up and talking. She had a sudden burst of energy but still was on the road to death. After the family left for lunch, Alma took my hand and asked me if she was dying. I answered, "Yes."

She then told me that she figured out what was really going on by the way the family was acting and whispering around her. They did not want to talk about her dying. As her chaplain, we were able to review the saving work and death of Jesus for sinners. Great comfort and relief came to her. She would share her faith and comfort with them when they returned.

Facing death, really turned out to be a blessing for everyone – for Alma, her family and for everyone that attended the funeral and heard the pastor speak about Alma's trust in the LORD at the time of her death. Denying the reality of death had fostered confusion and hurt, while facing death head on brought comfort, as we shared together the hope and comfort of Jesus' saving love when they needed it most.

Thank you, for enabling us to be with people like Alma and her family during this bittersweet time of their lives. Your partnership in this ministry makes it possible for us to share the hope that we have in Jesus Christ during these difficult times of life.



by Chaplain Kenneth Wenzel

# California Recovery

And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." So, the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only (1 Sm 7:3-4).

A while back, during our addiction recovery group, Ginger brought up the term "California recovery." She explained, "That's where you quit using drugs and alcohol, except for pot." It's probably a cheap shot at the people on the west coast, but still you can probably picture it happening there: "My name is Joe. I am an alcoholic. I haven't had a drink in six months, and *dude, it's got me, like, totally stressed. Let's go fire up a couple fat ones.*"

I heard about it again at the annual Alcoholism Awareness retreat. Nathan was telling the story of his recovery from alcoholism and said, "The first counselor I had told me, 'My wife and I smoke pot to relax, and I don't think that would be a problem for you.' Then, my probation officer told me pretty much the same thing; she said, 'You'll have to give us a urine specimen every week to see if you've been drinking, but if marijuana shows up, 'I'll let that slide.'"

Apparently, "California recovery" can happen right in the heart of Wisconsin!

Fortunately, Nathan didn't listen to his counselor or his parole officer. He listened to God, as God urged Nathan to trust Him with his will and his life and not to trust himself to a drug.

Nathan, and all other addicts trying to start a new life, are faced with the same temptation the people of Israel faced when they started their new life in the promised land. They prayed to the Lord for help, but they hedged their bets by throwing in a few prayers and sacrifices to the local deities like Baal and Ashtoreth.

You can just imagine some of the Israelites saying, "Sure, I trust God and all that, but just to be on the safe side...."

But Nathan and the rest of the people I get to deal with, as they learn what Christian recovery is all about, are giving up their safety nets and side bets and turning it all over to God. It's not easy dealing with your feelings without the aid of a mood-altering drug when that's how you're used to handling emotions.

There's an old saying in addiction recovery circles: "Does recovery make you feel better? Sure. You feel anger better, you feel sadness better, you feel depression better...."

That's a scary proposition for an addict. It's a joy seeing people like Nathan and Ginger resist the temptation to entrust those feelings to a bottle or a pipe, and instead, entrust them to the God who says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28).

What a privilege it is sharing the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ!



by Chaplain Philip Merten

*"I will  
give you  
rest"*





Sharing hope...  
with those who need it most!

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## OUR MISSION

*“To provide  
direction, comfort  
and hope by sharing  
God and His love  
with individuals  
(and their families)  
who are, or have been,  
in an institution.”*

## Special Gifts & Memorials 1/19/2019 to 4/24/2019

### IN CELEBRATION OF

**Arlie Hahn's 100th Birthday**  
Mrs. Jane Cleven  
**Rev David Tetzlaff's Born into  
Heaven Anniversary!**  
Mrs. Geraldine Babinec  
**George Witte's 100th Birthday**  
Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Schultz  
**Our 63rd Wedding Anniversary**  
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Gebert  
**Easter**  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Boche  
**Minna Liddell's 90th Birthday**  
Mrs. Ruth Rauch

### IN HONOR OF

**Dave Beyer**  
Ms. Betty Bader  
**Delmar & Imogene Hoeffner**  
Mr. & Mrs. Dale Hoefner  
**Lloyd Hoeffner's Birthday**  
Mr. & Mrs. Dale Hoefner  
**Mary Johanknecht**  
Ms. Gail Okeefe

### IN MEMORY OF

**Alfons Woldt**  
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**Char Guzman**  
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Erwin & Lucille Pettmering**  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Hopper  
**Daniel Wolfram**  
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**Darlene Gove-Beyer**  
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**David Knack**  
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**Dean Mahlke**  
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**Dorothy Kraklow**  
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**Douglas Beard**  
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**Edith Stine**  
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**Edward Schneider, My Husband**  
Mrs. Joyce Schneider  
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Mr. James Larkee  
**Elmer, Effie & Lillian Zimmerman**  
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**Evelyn H Braun**  
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**Gert Duerr**  
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**Rev. William Staab**  
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**God's Gracious Blessings  
and Mercy**  
Mrs. Ardith Foelske  
**New Mercies Every Morning**  
Mrs. Carol Berner  
**Our 10 Grandchildren**  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Blauvelt  
**David Beyer's Kindness**  
Mr. John Englesby  
**Birthday Blessings**  
Mrs. Dolores Lindner

**God's Richest Blessings**  
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**Gregory Pankow, My Friend**  
Mr. Larry Quentin  
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Mr. & Mrs. John Bieberitz  
**John Martin Steinke, PhD.**  
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Mr. Leonard Cox  
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to the US**  
Mr. & Mrs. Steve A. Ahrens  
**Jesus**  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Young  
**Pastor Philip Henselin**  
Mr. Steven Nelson  
**Our 63rd Wedding  
Anniversary**  
Rev. & Mrs. Raymond Cox  
**Countless Blessings**  
Ms. Sue Miller