I Am Resurrection and the Life.

(Jn. 11: 25a)
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"If you can't go to the desert,
be sure that the desert will come to you." (Carlo Carretto)

The desert is not geography but it is a spiritual experience of intimacy with God by praying, fasting, alms-giving, forgiving, and loving. So often we get caught up in the busyness of life, works and responsibilities or live out our spiritual life as routine or ritual. As we are approaching closer to the Holy week, may we take time and be with Jesus in our heart, inviting Jesus to walk with us on our daily Calvary, and through Him, with Him, in Him we will share His Resurrection.

This month we hosted The Ecumenical Celebration of the Word, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2005 and World Day for Consecrated Life in Fruit Hill. Noah Merrill and Fr. Joseph R. Paquette gave excellent reflections based on the Word of God. May their words continue echoing in our hearts as we live out our call as Christians and consecrated people.

Wishing you a solitude moment with Jesus Christ in your hearts, that you may be filled with joyful hope this Easter.

Nga Le, fmm

(Carlo Carretto is one of many modern-day people who have felt a calling to live a life of contemplation in the desert)

Please remember in your prayers
Our sick sisters, relatives and friends:

Our deceased sisters, relatives and friends:

A. Amaldas, Flavia Mariapragasam's uncle.
Annette Ricci, Mary Ricci's sister. Mary is one of our volunteers.
Carmen Martinez, Rosie Barbosa' mother.
Michael Reddy, brother of Kay Reddy who is an FMM friend.

New address of Jackie La Vie, fmm
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The international code for Indonesia is 62

Excerpts from Provincial notes

Jackie Lavie arrived in Bogor. Cristina Sanchez arrived in Santiago to be with her mother and will return at the end of April.
Phi Uong returned from Vietnam.

The new community in Brighton will begin very soon.

Urgent prayers are requested for the sale of the two properties: Cambridge and Pawtucket.

Letters from our friends:

At Norfolk Prison, Massachusetts. In the Catholic Community, there is a Dominican Third Order Chapter. As they pray the Divine Office daily, they are in need of Red Office Books. The Pawtucket Community gave 9 books to them and the following is a thank you letter from one of the men. If there is ever a community that has extra books and would like to donate them, you can let me know. Thanks very much.

Mary Beth, fmm
Dear Sisters

Thank you for the gifts of the Divine Office books that you so generously gave to our community. Be reassured that they will be put to good use by the members of our Dominican Third Order, as we recite our daily office when we gather together in community, and when we pray in private. We know that we are being given books that have been blessed by the devout recitation of the office by members of your community; we cannot help in feeling a bond with you sisters and we hope and pray that the aura of holiness that accompany these books will come to rest upon us who will continue to use them and treasure them. May God bless you and be with you and answer all the petitions you put before him through Jesus and the intercession of Mother Mary and all the Saints.

In unity and prayer,
Frank DiBenedetto

Dear Sr. Joyce,

My family and I were deeply distressed to learn of the death of our friend, Sr. Cecile Dumas, F.M.M.

I have known Sr. Cecile for about 20 years and each Wednesday she and Sr. Mary Ellen McCarthy would join my late uncle John Duffy and I in the recitation of the Rosary at my uncle’s apartment on East 41st Street, Manhattan. After John died in 1987, we always stayed in touch. The last visit I had with Sr. Cecile was while she was in St. Francis Hospital a few years ago.

Such a life as Sr. Cecile led can only serve as an inspiration to others. I had no idea that she was interned during WWII. I myself served almost 3 years in Vietnam.

I am enclosing a small check to be used at your discretion in memory of Sr. Cecile. I shall miss her very much.

With best wishes for the New Year, I remain.
Yours truly,
Lawrence V. Cullen and family
The Ecumenical Celebration of the Word, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2005, was held in our FMM Chapel on January 30th from 3:00 to 4:30 pm.

The Gospel Choir of Holy Name Parish, Providence, opened with a lovely Prelude and then they led us in the Processional Hymn of "The Church's One Foundation." Sr. Mary Motte gave the Welcome Address and then the Invocation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Gospel Choir led us again in the Litany of Thanksgiving and the Hymn of Praise. The Old Testament was read by a lay woman from the Episcopal Cathedral who then read the Psalm verses with the Choir leading the chorus. The Epistle was read by a priest from St. Lucy's Catholic Church. Noah Merrill from the Friends Service Committee read the Gospel and then gave the Sermon on "Foundations of Sand, Stone and Spirit." He began by talking briefly about the Quakers and then pointing out the important part of the Gospel. We must serve God first and only. We must hear the Word and act on it. We must love justice and love our enemies. Is our house built in sand or stone? Christian Unity must be about hope.

The Prayers of Confession and Pardon were led by an
Evangelical Lutheran woman minister and a United Church of Christ minister. After each prayer a stone was placed at the foot of the Cross in silence by a Baptist woman, a Lutheran man, an Episcopal Rector, and an FMM. After the Prayer for Forgiveness we offered one another a sign of peace.

The Prayers for Christian Unity were said by the Executive Baptist Minister with the sung responses led by the Choir. During this our two Novices collected the offerings for the RI State Council of Churches Homeless Relief Fund and the Interfaith Dire Emergency/ Heating Assistance Fund. The Lord's Prayer was sung followed by the Blessing and "The Prayer of St. Francis" as the Recessional Hymn. The Choir closed with a Postlude "God Be with You," and then we gathered downstairs for refreshments and fellowship. A great day for all!

Excerpts from

LONG ISLAND- Heart hospital under renovation

ByTomochMurakami TSE

St. Francis' $190M expansion, expected to be completed in 2008, will add 85 new beds, and operating suite.

After struggling to find room for patients, St. Francis Hospital in Roslyn is scheduled to add 85 new beds as
part of a $190-million, three-year expansion project that began last week. The acclaimed heart hospital has operated about 10 percent above capacity for years, perhaps in response to increased awareness of cardiac risks and because the growing population it serves is becoming older, hospital administrators said. At the center of the project will be a new, four-story building with a 14-room operating suite. The addition would bring the number of hospital beds to 364 in the intensive and acute care areas.

**St. Antoine Happenings - Joyce Gardella, smm**

On February 3rd, we welcomed the latest of our Sisters to be newcomers to St. Antoine’s, Sr. Hedwig Pawluc arrived around noon time. Previously, in the past few months, we had welcomed Sr. Modesta Byrne in December. Now we have 19 sisters at St. Antoine’s.

The last week of January was devoted to activities to raise funds for the tsunami victims. There was a penny sale, a flea market, a freshly cooked meatball sandwich luncheon, a walkathon and rockathon (the latter being residents who liked to spend time in their rocking chairs could do so with sponsors)! Some of our sisters walked a bit in the corridor to willingly participate in the fund raising. The staff and residents were very enthusiastic about this week of events, especially for this cause.

Another spirit of enthusiasm comes from the attention given to Bishop Gelineau’s Christmas gift from St. Antoine. Bishop Gelineau is the residence’s devoted chaplain and the administration gave him a very cute shitsu dog for Christmas. The dog is named Buddy and Buddy has a
number of "aunts and uncles" among the staff who take turns taking him for walks, letting him visit with residents, give him little treats and letting him run through the main corridors, which he enjoys immensely. There was even an offer to knit him a coat! The Bishop also walks him outdoors even in snowy conditions.

Reflections - World Day of Consecrated Life
Mary Bayer, fmm

On Sunday, February 6th, we were privileged to have here at Holy Family Convent Chapel, the annual celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life. This is a celebration that takes place every year close to the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem forty days after His birth. This feast has always been very meaningful to me ever since my novitiate days, sixty-five years ago. My heart still thrills to hear Simeon's prophecy, "My eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people - a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel."

Father Paquette, the Pastor of St. Theresa's Parish in Pawtucket, spoke eloquently of God's revelation in Jesus and he proclaimed God's Love for each and every person in the room. We have an obligation to know and understand who we are, a child of God, and that we are much loved. My heart responded with a strong and joyous "yes." Father spoke so convincingly, urging us to respond to God's call, to stand up tall and know that we are His beloved children. "You are beautiful and unique and never to be repeated in time." Father spoke of our obligation to respond to God's Love for us by our diligence in prayer and service.

God's Love calls us to prayer - sometimes prolonged, but also in short aspirations of love and praise that pierce the heart of God. God's Love calls us to service - How incomprehensible it is that God should choose to be so close to us and to desire to shower us with His Gifts of Love. This abundant Love brings to us the responsibility of sharing His Love with
others, to be light and joy to them, to understand that many that we meet along our daily way have been hurt by the circumstances of life. God's call asks us to reach out to them and to be the bearers of His Love to them. At times, something as simple as a smile can bring joy and healing to a troubled heart.

This year I will celebrate my 65th year as a Franciscan Missionary of Mary. As I read and reflect on this Gospel passage and am inspired and motivated by Father Paquette's words, I realize anew with gratitude, God's Call and His Promise. I am reminded of my responsibility to spread His message of Love. He has come to be a light for the Gentiles and for the glory of His people Israel. We are His beloved children and we are called to spread His Message of Love and forgiveness.

**World Day for Consecrated Life- February 6, 2005**

**A Consecrated Person - a life joined to the Eucharistic Sacrifice**

*Rose marie Higgins*

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary hosted the World Day for Consecrated Life. Over 100 persons representing twenty one congregations, priests and laity gathered in Lourdes Hall to hear a presentation by Fr. Joseph R. Paquette, pastor of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. He developed this year's theme "A Consecrated Person - a life joined to the Eucharistic Sacrifice." He began by saying that we are consecrated as Jesus' disciples to bring Eucharist everywhere and to everyone. This resonated with our Constitutions number 3 "The mystery of salvation is actualized in the Eucharist; from our Eucharistic celebration and adoration springs the
contemplative and missionary dynamism of our whole life. The Christ whom we contemplate sends us out to our brothers and sisters in whom we discover his hidden presence. And our brothers and sisters send us back to the contemplation of Christ."

Throughout his presentation, Fr. Joe used examples from Scripture as well as examples gleaned from his extensive experience as a pastor, retreat master and spiritual director.

He addressed the practical aspects of our discipleship to be Eucharist for others. He emphasized the need for balance in our ministry. We need to guard against getting stuck in our religious life but rather deepen our love every day.

He went on to develop vital aspects of our life. Self love, not self centeredness or selfishness, was at the top of these aspects. He used quotes from Isaiah 43: "You are mine, I have called you by name . . . I love you." We have to believe that God loves us as we are.

Forgiveness is another vital aspect. In the Gospel of Matthew there are multiple examples of forgiveness. Jesus' last words were, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." We need to live forgiveness in our hearts and not just speak the words. Grudges held take away our spirit, our love and our goodness. It is good to say, "I am sorry"."forgive me"."I made a mistake" and really mean it.

Teamwork as described in Ephesians 4 was the reference used to illustrate this vital aspect. We are called to be the "salt of the earth and a light to the world. We are called to work together, to complement one another in community."
Acceptance was illustrated by the example of the rich young man who could not give up his possessions to follow Jesus. Jesus looked with love as the young man walked away. We are called to accept people and to love them as they are. Only they can change themselves. We do not know where people we live with are coming from—what burdens they may carry.

Sensitivity was witnessed by Jesus when he took the deaf and dumb man away from the crowd so as to heal him. Jesus never claimed that he came to judge the world nor are we in our turn called to be judges of one another.

Openness to change was shown by the Canaanite women changing Jesus’ mind about healing her daughter. She approached Jesus with the kind, loving heart of a mother pleading for her sick daughter. Jesus responded to her plea. Jesus was open to learning from women. So we have something to learn from everyone.

Being approachable is a big part of our ministry. It involves accepting persons as they are and taking the time to really listen. Accepting persons as they are occur over and over in Father Paquette’s presentation.

Sr. Jacqueline Dickey, SUSC, Director of the Office of Religious, explained how the Solemn Vespers of the Feast of the Presentation would proceed.

Bishop Ernest Boland, O.P. presided over the service;

Sr. Rita Theresa Goulet, SUSC was a cross bearer in the Procession;
Sr. Joanne Fahey, CP proclaimed the Gospel;
Fr. Joseph Paquette gave the reflection.

After the Vesper Service all were invited to Lourdes Hall for a luncheon and socialization.

Indonesia - Excerpt from Betty Tjahjana’s letter

This Tsunami (a Japanese word that translates as "harbor waves), was triggered by a vertical disturbance in the ocean, such as an earthquake. The waves spread in all directions, moving as fast as 800 km/h. In the deep ocean the waves may be imperceptible, but they slow down and gain height as they hit shallow water near shore.

There were more than 100 thousand people who died and most of them were Muslims, because Aceh is strictly a special territory of the Muslims. They even call this area the "Veranda of Mecca". There is one catholic church in Aceh. It was also destroyed but the only Catholic priest survives. Some Catholics were among the victims as well. There is also one and the only religious congregation; all the sisters survived.

We are very grateful for the help from many different countries: first and foremost USA, Australia, Japan, Britain, Singapore, France and many other foreign governments. They sent their soldiers, US Navy, volunteers, doctors, other people and donations in forms of money, medicines, clothing, food, etc. It is really God’s will that we are creating an international solidarity; the world has come together to give aid. By and large,
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it has been warmly received. Up until now the relief effort has gone surprisingly smoothl. Some 1,700 soldiers from a score of different national armed forces have joined hands with 2,500 foreign aid workers and volunteers.

However, a combination of nationalism, suspicion of foreigners and the fanatical Muslims and political power may conspire, if not to work against the relief effort, and then perhaps to slow it down. By the "move" of the fanatical Muslim parliamentarians the Indonesian authorities set a March 26 deadline for all foreign troops to leave Indonesia.

Historically, for nearly 30 years, Aceh Province has been wracked by a separatist Insurgency. They call themselves Free Aceh Movement (or G.A.M. its Indonesian Acronym). The foreign military presence has made nationalists extremely nervous. The religious conservatives (Muslims) are extremely concerned that some of the relief groups have a Christian agenda. ...Children who have lost their parents are not allowed to be adopted by any Christian people. (Whereas when East Timor was "destructed" there were many catholic children taken by the Muslims into their Muslim "school" (a kind of Seminary and we believe they became Muslims by now).

You see, we need more of God's help and all prayers that the Indonesian authorities see the sincerity of all foreign aid and that the "money" will not be "taken" (corrupted) by the persons in charge - Indonesia is well known for its corruption. Many Christians - one FMM too, go to Medan (a neighbor city of Aceh) to serve the victims.

Welcome to the Tuesday evening Lenten series here at Holy Name Parish. - Mary Petrosky, FMM

This has been our tradition for some years, where we come together to pray, to break bread together - both physically and spiritually, as well as sharing
faith together as we grow in our understanding of the God Who created us, and of the Son who redeemed us. During this Lenten season it is good to dedicate additional time to look at aspects of our redemption.

The **Faith Formation Committee** has organized these evenings around a theme. Our focus during these 5 Tuesday evenings will be to look at the persons whom Jesus met as He carried his cross through the streets of Jerusalem on his way to Calvary. I suspect that if we listen closely and reflect deeply, we may be able to see ourselves in each one of these familiar people. For truly each of us has been a Mary Magdalene, a Mary, a Peter, a Veronica or perhaps a Judas - at some time in our lives. When we look closely, we may see aspects of ourselves in each one of these personalities - the good and the not so good in each.

As we prepare to celebrate Reconciliation on the fifth Tuesday evening of our Lenten series, beginning now to reflect on familiar personalities may well help us prepare for this sacrament. For the existence of sin in all of humanity is reflected in each of us - as well as the possibility of the existence of any and all goodness and virtue.

We begin this Lenten series looking at the person of Mary Magdalene. Who really was **MARY MAGDALEN**? The current popular novel, **The DaVinci Code**, has brought much interest to and in the person of Mary Magdalene. Dan Brown, the author, bases the theory behind the intrigue in his book that Jesus and Mary Magdalen were lovers and out of their love, children were born. There are descendants alive today of their union. Mr. Brown writes of a conspiracy on the part of the Church to hide this information. Many of you have read the book and are aware that the movie is currently being produced. The book has spawned much controversy and discussion. It has also provided book upon book to point out the errors as well as the possibilities of different facts from those of which we have traditionally held. And for any, and the many, for whom this might be upsetting, we remind ourselves and others, that the **The DaVinci Code** is a work of fiction.
But this also causes us to look more deeply at the person of Mary Magdalene. What have we traditionally believed about Mary Magdalene? Twelve references to Mary Magdalene are contained in the New Testament. Two are found in Luke; Mark - four; Matthew - three; and John has three references where he places Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross with Mary, the mother of Jesus and Mary, the wife of Clopas. John then places Mary Magdalene at the tomb "on the first day of the week", where she finds the tomb empty. He describes Mary's meeting with Jesus, mistaking him for the gardener at first. She is then commissioned to announce the resurrection to the apostles! But this is after Jesus says to her: DO NOT CLING TO Me -- a phrase I want to explore later as I think this is an important message for us during this Lent and into Easter.

What does He mean by this? Are we NOT to cling to Jesus?

Recently, CNN produced a documentary called THE TWO MARYS, the production of which was obviously sparked by the interest in Mary Magdalene as fallout from Dan Brown's book. In this documentary it is mentioned that it wasn't until the time of Pope St. Gregory the Great that Mary Magdalene is first spoken of as a prostitute. Gregory I was Pope from 590 - 604. So for the first 5 centuries after Christ, Mary Magdalene was not looked upon or discussed as a "woman of the night"! (See how easy it is to ruin someone's reputation!)

I volunteered to speak this evening on Mary Magdalene and I have had to do some reflection and personal searching on WHY I so quickly wanted to choose Mary Magdalene as my person of interest. Maybe it has something to do with the feminist agenda of speaking out for the equality of the woman and not always pointing the first finger of blameful seduction at the feminine in any tryst. But probably the major reason I gave myself was that I know that Jesus spoke my name! Remember the scene in John 20:15:

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?"
She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him."

Jesus said to her "Mary."

When Jesus speaks her name, she recognizes Him!
Each of us has been called by name - we are assured of that in Isaiah. "I have called you by name, you are mine."

HAVE we always recognized Jesus' voice in our lives? And IF we heard our name called, did we respond to it? And - HOW - WHAT was the response?

Mary Magdalene teaches us how to respond to that call. But first we have to slow down long enough to hear Jesus speak to us. I often wonder in this modern age of constant noise, constant chatter - (cell phones have changed all of us - sometimes for good - and - at other times - for some more questionable consequences). And we see the hand-carried CD players everywhere - on walkers, runners, passengers on all types of transportation. Can we be silent for any length of time in order to listen to inner voices - not just those carried by the air waves from the big "dishes" on top of our buildings or the CD players, or I-pods?

Lent can be an occasion for us to turn off cell phones from time to time and to learn to be comfortable with silence and maybe even with ourselves. Then we can more easily listen to the God who wants to be heard. He is constantly trying to tell us how much He loves us. We may even miss the beauty of his world by being pre-occupied with using all the modern means of self-chosen/self-inflicted noise. We could choose to sit quietly and reflect on the beauty of God's creation, as well as His presence within us.

Mary Magdalene's life is all about loving and accepting being loved. Accepting love, accepting to be loved, is sometimes more difficult than loving. To accept being loved is to accept to see things through the optic of another and to be willing to the change that may follow from that. The popular song
from JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, "I Don't Know How To Love Him" - reflects a longing to love in a way which the woman Mary Magdalene (depicted as a prostitute) had not known before. When one feels oneself loved, there is a longing to return that love in a manner which is equal to the love which is being offered. To me - this is Mary Magdalene’s message: RETURN LOVE FOR LOVE. How does one return love as God loves??

The well-known Benedictine Sister, Joan Chittister, gives us an insight into a possible answer to this question. In John 20: 17, Jesus says to Mary Magdalene: DO NOT CLING TO ME, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, but go and tell Peter and the others that I have gone before them into Galilee."

Mary Magdalene can express her love for Jesus by speaking out about him. He wants her to witness to his everlasting presence among the cripples and the lepers and the women and the poor. This is what Jesus did and now we are called to do as He did. This is what returning love for love means.

Jesus wants her to be his voice now, to speak truth no one wants to hear, to turn the world upside down with the awareness she knows to be true but that she cannot prove: JESUS LIVES. Again. Yet. Forever. But this time in us. He sends her away from Himself because he wants more than passive belief.

There is a Mary Magdalene in each of us - if we look closely. If Mary Magdalene was a prostitute or not - it makes no difference - Jesus drove 7 demons out of her (Luke 8: 1-3) and she never looked back. From then on she searched to return "love for love". On Easter Sunday morning - outside the tomb, perhaps she understood how she could do that - by doing as Jesus did - reaching out to others and proclaiming all that Jesus taught. But first she was called to be the apostle to the apostles. Imagine - a woman doing that! Imagine, each one of us doing that! Doing as Jesus did, because we accepted His Love and the consequent changes that would mean in our lives. As Fr. Ron ends his homilies: MAY THAT GRACE BE OURS!
Hi everyone, I want to share a little about the Busy Student's Retreat for college students which is given by the Vocation Directors in the Chicago diocese. The students who participate commit themselves to 1 hour a day …to personally reflect and pray with assigned Scripture passages, and then to share their reflections with a spiritual companion. My first one was at the University of Chicago where I had 6 students, (4 young women and 2 young men). The second one was at the IL Institute of Technology (I had 4 students here) and then Loyola University (4 students). The retreat goes from Sunday to Thursday. We have a pizza party (usually the last night) at which time each vocation director shares her/his particular Order's Charism. To be honest with you, in the beginning I was a little nervous. How was I going to reach them? (Two were studying for their PHD!). Then as time went on, I realized it is not "you" but the Lord Who takes over. I was deeply impressed with their openness, their honesty and most of all with their sincere hunger for God. Well you might say, "what about Vocations?" All I can say is that we may not get any (I hope to God we do!), but we try to help the students become more aware of God's Presence in their lives. One young fellow I had is discerning a vocation to the priesthood. Another beautiful experience was with a non-Catholic girl at Loyola who said at the end of the week, "I never thought I could share Scripture one-to-one like this." It is also a way of making ourselves known as FMM's. I leave our brochures and the beautiful prayer cards Sr. Ann Turbini printed at each place. Also we get to know the Campus Ministry Directors and leave them FMM information as well. There are 2, possibly 3 more colleges for this year. It is a wonderful ministry.

Last week Emilie came with me to a Vocation Day at the Rockford, IL. Diocese. There were around 500 high school students. We had a booth for the exhibit. During one session, different religious sat with a small group and spoke to the students and answered their questions about religious life.
Also, Loan came with me to a high school where we, along with a priest, sat with 12 different groups of students throughout the day...we each had our own table (from 8:30 a.m. to 3 P.M.) telling our story and answering questions. The teacher wanted them to be “up, front and personal” with us instead of one general presentation. It was really good. Beatrice Costagliola is presently in Fla. with Pat, Gloria, Virginia and Frances. You will hear from them. Mary Rose continues her work for vocations and Chan is attending a vocation evening in Boston. I will be sending you by mail an article on vocations which I found very helpful as well as the names of those who have recently requested information.

Well, we will continue to "plant the seeds" with your prayers and your help, knowing that it is the Lord of the Harvest Who will cultivate all our little efforts! Thanks for all you are and for your prayers. Much love, Marie.

Memorial Tree Project

At the last meeting of the Provincial Council, Rosemarie Higgins presented a "tree project. Mary and her Council accepted the project. Mary mentioned in her last Notes that you would be hearing more about this project. Enclosed with this issue of Sharings is the information that is on the request letter. Of special note is that the children of the WATCH Program at Cardinal Hayes Home for Children will be doing the memorial plaques.

"We do not realize that the fields and the trees have fought and still fight for their respective places on this map which, by natural right belong entirely to the trees. But what could be more desperate than a journey, mile after mile, without hills, as rough as all those trees, and never know where you are going. But now it is wide open. I do not commit myself, though I am perhaps still on the side of the trees." (Thomas Merton)
There is a wonderful movie called "Afterlife". At the beginning of the movie you see a random assortment of people entering a building and checking in at the reception window - men and women of all ages, young boys and girls. As the movie continues you learn that each of these people has died and for the next week they will review their lives to choose that one memory that they want to take with them to Eternity.

Can you imagine a more impossible task?

These last few weeks Virginia, Rita, Carol, and I have spent time looking back at "Life with Joe" so that we could share some of our memories with you today. But first I want to tell you a little bit about Joe.

Daddy was born 91 years ago in Ocean City, New Jersey. He was the third eldest in a family of 11 children - 8 boys and 3 girls.

He would frequently talk about life on the Jersey farm - how his mother, Virginia, would pickle and can vegetables and cure meats in the smokehouse. How his father, Frank, Sr. would meet the train in Philadelphia and bring home barrels of dry goods, pasta, and beans. This was how they would prepare for the winter ahead.

Another favorite story was how he would trade sandwiches with school friends. In exchange for his eggplant sandwich daddy would get an all American peanut butter and jelly sandwich and enjoy every mouthful.

He served in the military as a staff sergeant from 1942 to 1945 - a very proud time of his life -- during which he completed a course at the Army Air Force Bombardier School and earned the rank of Marksman as well as a Good Conduct Medal.

Daddy, like his brothers, was part of that group recently dubbed "The Greatest Generation" by Tom Brokaw. Truer
In 1947 he married Emily and began a family. Soon there were three little girls racing around a small, 3-room apartment on East 48th Street in Manhattan. Who would have thought such a small space could hold so many wonderful memories?

On Sundays Daddy would try to give mommy a day of rest and take all us kids out for a few hours. During the winter months we would sometimes go to Grand Central Station where there was a movie theater that showed cartoons and newsreels. And during the warmer seasons we would walk to Central Park.

On those days Daddy would attract a crowd around him in the monkey house by getting a chimp to turn somersaults first in one direction and then the other by rotating a peanut through the air.

It was quite a show and we could not have been prouder of how impressed everyone was by this good looking man dressed in his Sunday suit and hat making it all look so effortless.

Daddy was also a trained, skilled watch maker at a time when clocks and watches had "parts", not batteries and worked at the Jaeger Watch Company for 22 years. When the plant closed down he worked several jobs - sometimes 2 and 3 at a time - to make sure we were well provided for. There was no job too big or too small - handyman, waiter," short order cook, and janitor. And his words "Just do your best" were a guiding force for us whether we were talking about school or work.

Retirement was a foreign word to him and he postponed this until he was 80 years old after working 30 years for the Archdiocese of NY. He instilled in all of us his strong work ethic at a very early age and it has served us well throughout the years.

In 1960 Carol was born and by the time she was 9 we had moved to the house in Woodside. Now daddy was able to indulge his other love, nature.

In the apartment our pet options were quite limited - if it
didn't fit in a goldfish bowl, we didn't have it. But now there was a backyard and daddy could plant some vegetables and flowers, and put out food to attract all kinds of birds. He shared his love of animals with Carol, often calling her out to the yard to see an especially pretty bird at the feeder.

Sometimes on weekends Daddy and Carol would go for a car ride and one day they found themselves in a pet store. By the time they left they were the proud owners of 2 baby ducks and 4 baby chicks. Carol didn't ask for them but she was thrilled to have them and I think Daddy was too, proving once again that you can take the boy out of the farm but you can't take the farm out of the boy.

And of course there were the cats. Most recently he had 4 cats that he called Choo-choo because they followed him like train cars behind an engine.

Years later, Joe and Emily's daughters married and the grandchildren came. All those years surrounded by girls served daddy well when he was blessed with 5 grand daughters. Four daughters and five grand daughters - he was in his glory and always found a way to entertain the new little ones including tying peanuts to a tree and telling the girls it was a peanut tree for the squirrels. They had never seen such a tree anywhere else and knew, as we did, that their grandpa Joe - otherwise known as Grandpa Queens - was someone special. There were Father's Day outings to Shea Stadium, and countless unexpected surprises from grandpa.

When the girls got older and went away to college there was an endless stream of Care Packages from their Grandfather. They always knew he was thinking about them and their dorm mates were equally thrilled at the prospect of sharing the goodies.

To all of his 5 grandchildren he gave the same, simple advice he had given to his own children - "Just do your best", words he felt could be understood even by the youngest amongst them. He recently learned that a great grandchild was on the way and the news brought a really big smile to his face. Daddy was a very compassionate, generous, and simple
man. Material things were not important to him and he was even a bit uncomfortable in fancy surroundings. He would probably be terribly embarrassed that we are spending so much time talking about him today.

We are blessed with a life time of memories that we can hold dear. Sharing some of our oldest memories with you is our way of letting daddy know that we Do remember - and will continue to remember - all the wonderful things he did for us and with us, childhood through adulthood. We will remember every lesson; every word of wisdom and bit of advice - every time he came to our house or apartment to help us build something, fix something, move something. He was always there when we needed him.

If he were here right now Dad would probably remark "What can I say". He'd also have a lot to say about why OTB can't make a profit? but that's another story.

Although his stories were priceless and he had a talent for telling a joke, he will probably be most remembered for his generosity of spirit. Dad, you gave us so much and you never stopped giving. You will never be forgotten but will live on through your legacy: your children and grandchildren. And even though the great grandchildren to come will never meet you, they will know you.

And so we say to you "Dad, what more can we say?" Only this...We will love you forever and will never stop missing you.
assisting the Sisters and Residents to Lourdes Hall for a festive afternoon.

The prayer service began with the hymn "God Is Love", which was sung by all present. The service also included a reading from Scripture 1 John 7-19, community prayer and a quiet time, that is a time when everyone wrote the names of their loved ones on a red heart that had previously been put at each table setting. The prayer service then concluded with a prayer recited by all present.

After the prayer service it was time to enjoy all the "goodies" prepared by our kitchen staff. Everyone had a good time and left with a renewed understanding of God's great love for all.
A Prayer - Cardinal John Newman (1801-1890)

Teach me, Lord, to be sweet and gentle in the events of life, in disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the insincerity of those I trusted, in the unfaithfulness of those on whom I relied. Let me put myself aside, to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them.

Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes across my path; let me use it that it may mellow me, not harden and embitter me, that it may make me patient, not irritable, that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, not narrow, haughty or overbearing.

May no one be less good for having come within my influence; no one less pure, less true, less kind, less noble for having been a fellow traveler in our journey toward eternal life.

As I go my rounds from one distraction to another, let me whisper, from time to time, a word of love to you. May my life be lived in the supernatural, full of power for good and strong in its purpose of sanctity.

Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere. Flood my soul with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so completely that my life may be only a radiance of yours. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see me no longer, but only Jesus.

Let me love and praise God, For His simply being.