

Mission Office, Catholic Diocese of St. Cloud

April 2017

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Our Shared Story

“The shortest distance between strangers and friends is a shared story about our broken places.”

This quote, by author Lisa Jo Baker, has been on my mind a lot this week, as we have had two difficult requests for help at the Mission Office already this week—and it’s only Tuesday! Both men, though different stories, shared their journey of brokenness and disappointment, of fear and loss, of struggle, sorrow and need. And as I wrestle with their stories, I am struck by the fact that *it is Holy Week*.

It got me thinking: is not Holy Week the week of our shared story of *brokenness*? Our common story of betrayal, fear, denial, death, sorrow, disappointment, loss, struggle, need? This is a week we remember our broken places as a Christian people—both past and present.

Though there are *so many* things that I love about Holy Week, without a doubt my consistent favorite is Holy Thursday, specifically the Johannine story of the First Eucharist told through the symbolism of the foot washing. This holds a special place in my heart as I remember my wedding day—on which my husband and I washed one another’s feet after our vows. And each year at our parish’s Holy Thursday liturgy I watch my children now accompany us in this ritual, speaking to me of the ways those promises have expanded. As the water is poured over my feet, I am reminded that this foot-washing did not just happen on one special day nine years ago, nor even once a year during Holy

Week; the water shouts to me that this is something that need happen *each and every day*—by humbling myself, by sacrificing, by recognizing when I am wrong or wrong others. These things I do daily as I live out my vocation as wife and mother.

But, a reminder of my baptism, the water also calls me to live out these promises in a *still broader sense*—by listening to stories of brokenness around me, by not letting social convention or my own fears get in the way of thinking about and serving others, by pushing myself towards that which feels “unclean,” undesirable or uncomfortable to touch in the world. I am called to live out Holy Thursday *each and every day*—by seeing in the disciples my neighbors in need, by seeing in Christ my call, by seeing in the Gospel our shared story of brokenness...but also our shared story of *healing*.

Is this not what this Holy Week is about—what our Eucharistic celebration calls us towards as we go forth each week? Isn’t this what Christ’s death and resurrection means for us? Isn’t this humility which allows us to hear another’s story, and this love which allows us to enter into them as our own, precisely how we will come to know Glory with Christ on Easter morning? Isn’t that shared brokenness, but also that shared offering of healing, wholeness and life, what makes this a Holy Week?

This week is our shared story; and through it, I hope, we can find ourselves only a short distance from GOD, a short distance from strangers and friends alike. Let us be made low, let us rise gloriously!

“If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” (John 13:14-15)



Give it a Try!

Try incorporating these resources and activities into your ministry.



Mission Education Resources:

Join the diocese in two coming events, both filled with important information for living out our ministry and life as Christian disciples. The **Mission Rally** will take place at Holy Cross Priory in Onamia on Thursday, April 20th. Speakers will talk about their various ministries working with “those on the margins,” including stories of both labor and sex trafficking victims, and how we are all called to see those who all too often go unnoticed in our society.

Leadership Day will take place at the Church of St. Joseph in St. Joseph on Thursday, April 27th. Presenter Alejandro Aguilera-Titus will speak on “Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers,” sharing ways we can build our own leadership to better reach out and welcome one

and all in our church! Find out more or register by visiting: mission.stcdio.org

Mission Activity Ideas:

With **Earth Day** coming up, consider seeking out stories of the ways in which creation is in need—water shortages around the world, deforestation in the Amazon, drought in East Africa, rising water in the Pacific Islands, etc. Then plan a simple project to help heal our Earth’s brokenness—raise funds for those without clean water, plant trees in your community, send thank you cards to farmers, walk instead of drive, etc.

Celebrate **World Fair Trade Day** by supporting ethical trade—also a great way to find unique gifts for your 1st Communion, Confirmations, graduations or Spring and Summer weddings! Visit www.serrv.org to get started.

Don't Forget:



Apr 16: Happy Easter!

Apr 20: Mission Rally, Onamia

Apr 22: Earth Day

Apr 27: Leadership Day, St. Joseph

May 1: Taste of St. Cloud, fundraiser for Franciscan Community Volunteers

May 13: World Fair Trade Day

May 14: Happy Mothers Day!