



Compassion

2023 - First Quarter

The God of All Comfort

After the Bible class had ended, I began gathering up my things to leave when the prison's chaplain came out of his office. He motioned me over and asked in a hushed voice, "Would you be willing to talk to the inmate in my office? He just found out that his mother passed away and he's asking to speak with a pastor." "Sure," I responded, and followed him back into his office.

The inmate sat hunched over in a chair with his face buried in his hands. "Andrae, this is Pastor Radsek," the chaplain said and then stepped back out of the room. When I took the chair in front of him, Andrae looked up at me. Immediately, I recognized the pain of grief, sorrow, and loss that was unmistakably etched upon his face. As I held his gaze, I once again recalled the words of Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trouble, so that we can comfort those in

any trouble with the same comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4 EHV).

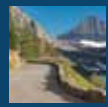
These words of St. Paul really hit home for me when my daughter died over a decade earlier. As the LORD walked with me through that "valley of the shadow of death" where grief and loss overwhelmed my soul, His Word and His promises sustained me. They held together the shattered pieces of my life as I grieved the loss of my daughter. As time passed, Paul's words began to take on new meaning for me, and I realized that the LORD wasn't just comforting me, He was equipping me to share His comfort with other grief-stricken souls. More to the point, the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort" was equipping me to share His comfort with hurting souls like *Andrae*.

"Hello *Andrae*," I said, while taking in the mournful look upon his face. "I am so sorry for your loss." Teary-eyed, he

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Special Gifts & Memorials



You can help!
Please talk with Tammy at 414-259-4376 or tammy.schmidtke@IM.life about how you can reach walled-in souls through your will and other estate plans.

A Message from the Mountaintop

One of the passages I like to share when visiting the institutionalized is Isaiah 2:3:

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. Then he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For from Zion the law will go out, and the Lord's word will go out from Jerusalem.

In Glacier National Park, in western Montana, there is a mountaintop named Heavens Peak. It is visible from the Going-to-the-Sun Road, which cuts through the park. The *Gear Jammers* (tourist bus drivers) and tour guides of the park will often tell tourists a story about this nearly

9,000-foot-high mountain in Glacier. The story goes like this: "Whenever a *Jammer* dies, they climb to the top of Heavens Peak. Once they arrive, St. Peter immediately welcomes them into heaven because they've *scared the devil* out of so many tourists while driving on the fifty-mile-long alpine road."

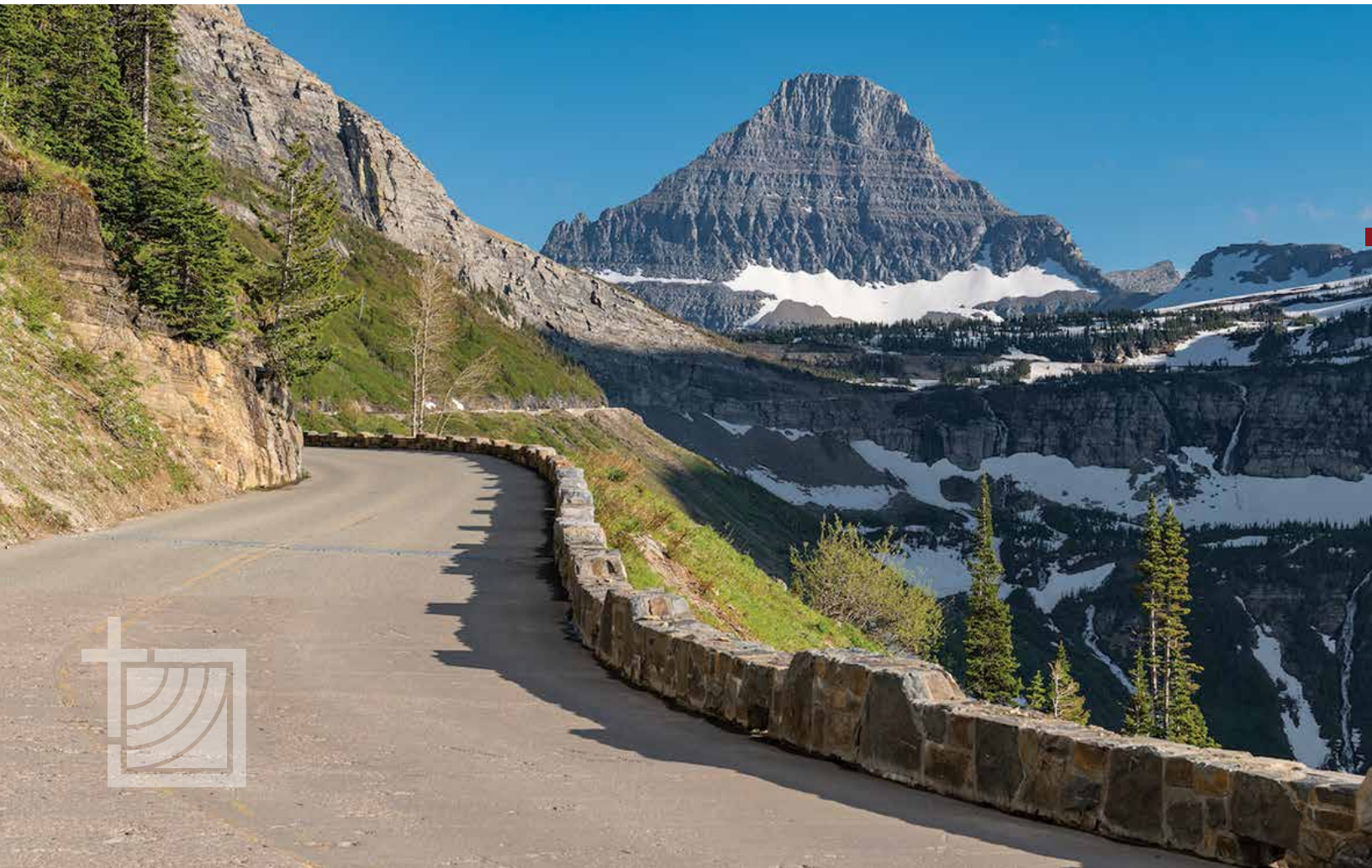
Isaiah's words above share a very different story about a very different mountain. His readers were directed to Mount Zion in Jerusalem, where the temple was located. God's Word promised a coming Messiah who would bring eternal salvation for believers. It would be another 700 years before the Messiah, Jesus, was born. How would eternal salvation

become possible? Not through good works, and certainly not by "scaring the devil out of tourists," but rather eternal forgiveness through faith in Jesus. The Messiah would keep the law perfectly in our place, suffer the punishment we deserve for our sins, and then offer complete forgiveness and the assurance of eternal life in heaven through faith.

Isaiah, writing 2,700 years ago, directs us to the truth of God's Word. The promise, here, is God's message - God's truth: Forgiveness is ours as a free gift, by grace through faith in Jesus, not by works, and not by "scaring the devil" out of people and "earning" God's love and forgiveness!



by Pastor
Robert W. Pasbrig



The Lonely

Are you feeling lonely? One of the emotions that chaplains encounter in all of the institutions they serve is loneliness. People living in institutions are cut off from family and friends. Loved ones often can't visit them because they are behind doors that are locked. Some of these locked doors are physical while others are emotional. What's more, being institutionalized means that you are no longer visible in the lives of others. You cannot attend family gatherings or take part in family traditions and special events. Neighbors no longer "bump into you" in the grocery store or see you walking down the street.

One of the greatest fears that women have in prison is the fear of being forgotten by their loved ones. Mothers aren't there to help their children pick out backpacks when school starts. They miss out on birthdays, weddings, and the births of grandchildren. Life goes on for those on the "outside" and the institutionalized are often left to them-

selves to cope with the grief and loss of missing their loved ones.

Loneliness is difficult and there are no easy answers. The pain of loneliness is real, and it can be quite overwhelming. Offering up explanations or providing possible insights as to why God might allow such loneliness cannot take away the hurt, they may feel. As chaplains, sometimes all we can do is pray with them and encourage them to continue wrestling with God in the midst of their pain and confusion. However, God has a plan in any and every situation. While the devil wants the lonely to get desperate, discouraged, even to give up hope, God knows how to bless the lonely and draw them closer to himself.

Join me in praying for all the lonely wherever they may be:

Lord God, when your children experience the pain of loneliness, help them turn their hurting heart to you.



And when we see people who are suffering from loneliness, help us love them as you do and direct them into your open arms. We know you long to bring us to heaven where there is no more loneliness or pain of any kind. You suffered loss to bring that gift to us, through the sacrifice of your Son. Therefore, when we experience loneliness in our own hearts or witness it in others, assure us of your love and mercy. Keep all the lonely and broken-hearted close to you until we see you face to face. Amen.



by Chaplain
Sarah Guenther

noded his appreciation. Recalling the raw emotions of those early days following the death of my daughter, and the overwhelming desire to hold on to my memories of her, I continued. "Andrae, what's your favorite memory of your mom?" As he pondered my question, a slight grin appeared at the corner of his mouth. After a few moments of thoughtful silence, Andrae began sharing a treasured memory, "My mom was a practical joker...."

Sometimes, the opportunity to *shine the light of Jesus' love* presents itself in rather unique ways. On this particular day, the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort" brought me to a hurting soul so that I might share some of the very words and promises that He had used to comfort me.

Thank you for partnering with us in this ministry. Thank you for helping us *shine the light of Jesus' love* upon hurting souls like Andrae who spend their days and nights *behind walls*.



by Chaplain
Joseph Radsek





Shining the light of Jesus' love
on the walled-in souls of our communities!

Wisconsin Lutheran
Institutional Ministries, Inc.

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OUR MISSION

*To provide
direction, comfort,
and hope by shining
the light of Jesus'
love on the walled-in
souls of our
communities.*



Special Gifts & Memorials 11/29/2022 to 1/18/2023

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**The Birth of Our Savior,
Jesus Christ**
Mrs. Carolyn Reineck
58th Wedding Anniversary
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Gebert
Earl Ewert
Mrs. Lori Collenburg
John Kramer's 50th Birthday
Mr. & Mrs. Allan Kohls
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Mr. & Mrs. Juel Knutson
Our Renewal of Wedding Vows
Mr. & Mrs. Steve A. Ahrens
**Mike & Nancy Mayrhofer's
25th Wedding Anniversary**
Ms. Karen Manthe
**Rev. William Balza's
80th Birthday & 40 Years of
Ministry**
Mr. & Mrs. David Balza

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My Baptism on 12-27-1931
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