

"When I was a boy, and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say, 'Look for the helpers.

You will always find people who are helping.'

To this day, especially in times of disaster, I remember my mother's words and I am always reminded that there are still so many helpers.

And so, I find hope." *Fred Rogers (Mister Rogers) 1928-2003*

Fred, who was both a licensed psychologist and an ordained Presbyterian minister, would often present this advice as part of a strategy to help children navigate fear and anxiety, and even to cope with death.

Of course, these words speak to all of us, given the present challenges. They also go to the heart of this Sunday's Gospel reading (John 11, 1-45)

Jesus goes to the grave of his friend, Lazarus. Jesus and Lazarus' family are overwhelmed with grief. Jesus weeps.

The situation feels hopeless.

And yet, Jesus brings forth life amidst a situation that seems to be clearly beyond hope.

This story reminds me of an important part of my Christian faith: That even in death there is life.

My death, your death, any death is not the end of our story with God.

God brings life even when what matters most seems to have died.

Most of us learn this in different ways as we go through life; often recognizing it only once "the storm" of our pain has passed.

But there's more to this story:

Notice that Jesus specifically instructs the crowd to *move away the heavy stone and to untie Lazarus*. Jesus enlists the assistance of others.

In order for God's work to be accomplished there must be "helpers."

Every day we are barraged by tragic stories, painful stories and grim statistics. So, in the midst of it all:

Look for the helpers. Every day look for the helpers.

Look for the people who are moving heavy stones; the men and women who in the face of danger and great obstacles are caring for others.

Pray for them. Encourage them. Tell your children and grandchildren about them.

And when it is our turn, pray for the grace to be one of them.

There may be long and challenging days ahead.

Each of us may be asked at some point to "move a heavy stone" that burdens and overwhelms the life of someone we know or even don't know.

The sacrifice we make continues the mission of Jesus. We forge a legacy of faith, hope and love.

We make God's work, our own, for this, our time. Amen.

Although the celebration of public Mass is suspended, the church remains open for quiet prayer and reflection during the day. Please use the parking lot entrance.

If you are aware of a parishioner at risk of extreme isolation and have a concern, please contact Terri King at the rectory at 508-835-3606. All information will be handled confidentially.

Please stay informed by reading the parish bulletin online on the parish website at www.goodcounselma.com

Our parish Facebook page is regularly updated with news, information and reflections: Our Lady of Good Counsel West Boylston If you have not already done so, please consider 'liking' our page.

Please keep our physicians, nurses, health care providers, hospital chaplains, and the most vulnerable in your daily prayers.

And don't forget to "look for the helpers..."

Peace-

Father Steven M. Labaire