





**BENEDICTION EVERY THURSDAY AT 6:30 P.M.**



**\$225,400.00**

Debt on Fr. Luehrmann Hall.  
St. Mary pays \$2,500.00 per month on the debt, which includes \$500.00 per month paid directly to the principle.



**LAUGHTER IS GOOD**

I don't know why most people think a dog's life is so easy.

Every time I come home from work, I ask my dog how his day went.

He always says, "Rough!"



- February 20
- February 21
- February 22
- February 23
- February 24
- February 25

- Alfredo Brioli, Debbie Dye
- Dean Bissinger
- Sharon Bick, Tara Bloom, Jerry Purdin
- Phil Loudin, James Wueziner
- Riley Gallimore
- Harper Barnett, Kelli Cole, Mary Eldridge



## SERMON FOR SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Once upon a time, there were two neighbors living next to each other. One of them was a retired farmer and another was a scientist. Both of them had planted similar plants in their garden. The farmer was giving a small amount of water to his plants, while the scientist, who read books on gardening, gave a lot of water to his plants. The farmer's plants were simple but looked good. The scientist's plants quickly became fuller and greener. The scientist gloated how his first ever garden was doing so much better than the seasoned farmer.

One day, during the night, there was a heavy rain and a strong wind due to a minor storm. Next morning, both of the neighbors came out to inspect the damage to their garden. The scientist was shocked to see that his plants came off from the roots and were totally destroyed. They lay all over the ground. But, the farmer's plants remained where they were planted. They stood tall and firm.

The scientist went to the retired farmer and asked, "We both grew the same plants together. I actually looked after my plants better than you did yours. I even gave mine more water. Yet my plants got uprooted, while yours didn't. How is that possible?"

The farmer smiled and said, "You gave your plants more water, but because of that they didn't need to work at growing roots to look for water. You made it easy for them. I gave my plants just enough water. I forced their roots to search for more. Because of that, their roots went deeper. The deeper roots grounded my plants to the earth that kept them strong in the face of the storm. That is why they survived."

This story explains why suffering has value. All suffering can produce good. All suffering has a purpose. There is a theological word for the value of suffering. It's called "redemptive suffering." To redeem is to free. Suffering is redemptive because it anchors you to Jesus who can free you from despair, worry, anxiety or fear. Just as the farmer's plants had to sink their roots deeper into the ground to find life-giving water, your sufferings force you to sink your spiritual roots deeper into the ground of faith where you will find Jesus, the spring of life-giving water. The prophet Jeremiah warns us to never turn away from God. If you do that you become a lifeless, barren bush sitting in a lava waste of empty earth. A soul devoid of God is empty.

It's interesting that Jesus never tried to explain why some people are poor, hungry and cry. Jesus explains who they are. They are "Blessed." They are blessed because suffering is the conduit through which God's gifts can flow. The gift of peace in the storm. The gift of hope in the darkness. The gift of love in the struggle. Suffering grounds you in Jesus who always satisfies when you are in need. Material blessings can never fully satisfy. The word bless or blessing is mentioned 112 times in the Bible. None of them refer to material prosperity. Blessing always refers to faith in God during trial. No matter what suffering you face, believe that suffering will be an opportunity for God to satisfy you with His grace. Every gift of God's Kingdom will be yours.

I close with a lyric from Laura Story's Grammy winning song entitled "Blessing." She wrote, "What if your blessings come through rain drops? What if trials of this life — the rain, the storms, the hardest nights — are your mercies (blessings) in disguise?"