

## CHRIST IS RISEN! EASTER, 2024

Easter Sunday is such a celebratory time! Throughout Lent we have attempted to pray, fast, treat others kindly, and make ourselves and our world a better place. Whenever I get to Easter, I have a tendency to feel like I just crossed the finish line. But then I take some time to think about what I learned and what is different because of my Lenten work.

Each year before Ash Wednesday, I determine what I will do for Lent, I have done this since I was young when I focused on giving up something I loved. As I got older and particularly after I was married and had children, I began to focus on what I could do differently. In the beginning, I was okay with maybe one thing – I will not scream at my children. I will be calm and firm. Since I realized early on, I was not too successful with this, I began to write down when I lost my temper. That helped me see what I was doing and possibly why. But it led me to another place. I needed to do a better job taking responsibility for my actions and asking for God's help when I was ready to fly off the handle.

Over the years I learned about me and during prayer, realized some not-so-wonderful things about myself. At first it was difficult but as time went on and I grew older, it became grist for the mill, and I began to anticipate Lent positively and think about what I learned throughout the year. I would like to briefly share some of those things with you.

I am a perfectionist. It doesn't matter where it came from, I realize it gets in the way of good relationships and leads to animosity – often with people I care deeply about. It also challenges my expectations of others because I want them to be perfectionists too. I can be incredibly judgmental. I have worked for many years trying to reserve my opinion of things until I have pondered them – both in thought and in prayer. I have a terrible temper. It doesn't get out much, but when it does, it can be scary. Over the years I have learned that when I am angry, I need to step back and use words to solve problems rather than try to ignore them until I burst. I am a sensitive person and I'm aware of when I hurt someone's feelings or speak harshly. I try to rectify this as soon as I can but sometimes, I'm not the best at it.

Those are a few of the things I have learned about myself during my past Lents. BUT I have also learned other things. I have seen a goodness in myself that I wasn't always aware was there. I have a wonderful sense of humor. I am a strong woman. I have encountered some tough things in my life, but it has been a really long time since I have felt alone – God is always with me. The last eight years have been challenging, but I look at them now and realize that what I learned in the first part of my life equipped me to deal with the second part. Most importantly, I am grateful! No matter what happens, I have learned to find the lesson and grow with it. Believe me, there are times when that can make me really unsettled.

All in all, I have decided that I am okay with who I am even with all the snags and glitches. I truly believe God does not make junk so that makes me okay. However, it does mean I have to work hard on the model God made because I'm not sure it will ever be complete until She and I meet. In the meantime, I find it refreshing to look at myself as a fallible human being. I am so grateful for this church and for the people in it; and I have learned that I really like children – probably better than adults but time will tell. We have a great gift in this parish, and we are growing together. I have taken a risk sharing some of myself but it feels good. Thank you for being my church family! Happy Easter!!!! *"The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation." Psalm 118; 14*

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