

**Pastoral Reflection**  
**August 21, 2022**  
**21<sup>st</sup> Sunday, Ordinary Time**

In the Letter to the Hebrews this weekend it says: "Strengthen your drooping hands and weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be disjointed but healed." I always cringed when I see an athlete whose ankle or knee undergo trauma by being crushed or disjointed. I also cringe now as our society and our institutional church seem to be going lame. In the face of all the acrimony and polarization there are many "drooping souls and weak hearts". What seems to matter is who can yell the loudest, whether it makes sense or not. It is blatantly obvious that healing is needed but "the how" alludes me. The other day when I received the Sacrament of Reconciliation the confessor invited me to meditate on Mary at the foot of the cross as I faced a "cross" in my life. As I have re-iterated often, "Pain that is not transformed is transmitted" (R. Rohr). As I see so many yelling and screaming in our society and our church, I can't help but see great personal pain. I just received a searing e-mail from an irate Catholic as he excoriated the Archbishop over the "All Things New" project - so much pain all over the message! So many hearts seem "disjointed" and healing doesn't happen overnight. Mary did not berate nor curse the executioners. Instead she "strengthened her drooping hands" by holding the tortured body of her son. She "strengthened her weak knees" by accompanying her son's body to the tomb.

I pray that we may "get a grip" and hold onto those in pain of heart.. And I pray that we walk to and through the tombs of life. As the Alleluia Verse says: "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to God except through me"

Be safe and be blessed,  
Fr. Jack (he/him)