



15 FEBRUARY 2018
THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY

Colossians 1:24 “I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. **25** I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, **26** the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. **27** To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**28** It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **29** For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.”

Colossae, a Graeco-Phrygian city in the Roman proconsular of Asia Minor, was one of three cities located in the Lycus Valley. It formed part of an important trade route and became a meeting point between east and west. As far as we know Paul never visited Colossae, and at the time he wrote this letter he had only heard about the church at Colossae (1:4, 9; 2:1).

It seems that a young man from Colossae named Epaphras heard the Gospel from Paul and responded. He was trained by Paul to go back and start a church in his hometown of Colossae (1:7; 4:12). Epaphras travelled to Rome to visit Paul who was under house arrest. Here he brought news from the Colossian church (1:4, 8; 2:5) and remained with Paul in Rome where he was, in a sense, his "fellow prisoner" (Philemon 1:23).

Here is the essence of our Christian faith: we become family to one another. We not only celebrate together in the good times, but we stand with each other in the times of difficulty – and this is embraced with joy: *I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake.*

The First Sunday in Lent

Preparation for Ministry

The Scripture passage for the day is drawn from Reuben Job and Norman Shawchuck, A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and other Servants, (Nashville, The Upper Room 1983), 106.

This reflection is from my own devotional exercises for the day.