

Easter 2020 Children's Message (livestreamed)
April 12, 2020
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Manasquan, NJ

Many things have changed since the last time we saw each other! You haven't been going to school, you haven't been going to Sunday School, you haven't been playing sports with your teams, we weren't together for Good Morning, Good Friday (except for our virtual Way of the Cross), and we haven't been worshiping in person either.

What hasn't changed is God and God's love for us. We still remember how Jesus spread out His arms on the cross and said, "I love you this much!" We **can't** be together in person but we **can** be together on-line, worshiping, praising and thanking God! We can hear again the story of God's love for us, the story that doesn't change.

Something else that hasn't changed is God's gift of spring. We live in this beautiful corner of the world where the flowers are blooming and the trees are blossoming and the birds are singing.

Speaking of the birds: I betcha all of you have seen some of these recently! [Show the robin - make heimsing.] If you who were with me on-line for our Way of the Cross you probably remember the legend I told about how Robin Redbreast got his beautiful coloring. On the first Good Friday, Jesus was carrying His cross through the streets of Jerusalem to Calvary where He was to be crucified. He was in a lot of pain: he had been whipped by the soldiers, and they had placed a crown of thorns on His head. There were little trails of blood running down his forehead where the thorns had broken His skin. A little bird saw his suffering and wanted to help the Lord. So he swooped down and did what he could: he

used his beak to remove one thorn from Jesus' brow. As he did that, one drop of blood fell on his feathered breast. Our Father in Heaven saw the robin's love for His Son (as He always sees ours, too), saw his brave act, and said, "Forever after, your children will have a beautiful red breast, a badge of honor reminding everyone of your kindness to My Son."

There's someone else you may have seen in your garden. [Show the goldfinch; make her sing.] There's another legend about this bird's kindness. The story is that she also saw our Lord's suffering as He carried His cross, and she also tried to remove the thorns that hurt His brow. Our Father in Heaven saw her love and kindness,(as He always sees ours, too), and promised that ever after she would find the softest silk to cushion the nest in which she would lay her eggs and raise her babies. That silk is from the thistle plant whose seeds the goldfinch loves to eat. In the fall the thistle goes to seed and spins a wonderful tail of silk that the goldfinch harvests and saves for the spring nest

I see goldfinches out my church study window, where our friend Flower Girl has planted coneflowers. She loves to garden. There are a lot of things we can't do in these days of quarantine and social distancing, but we can still play in the dirt and make things grow! (Even if you don't have an outdoor garden, you can always have an indoor one ☺.) Let's remember that God loves gardens. Gardens are the place of resurrection. We often kneel when we work in a garden. Kneeling reminds us that everything we do can be a prayer, when we do it with love for the Lord. Happy Easter! Happy spring! Happy, happy everything!!

Pastor Mary