

Audio sermons: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/caboose-ministriesaudiopodcast/id506049887mt=2>

YouTube Channel for Time Machine Dramas & Sermons: “Michael Robert Guertin”

***NOTE:** *Via Dolorosa* signups via www.immanuelchurch.us website have begun!
ALREADY OVER 900 SIGNED UP! See attached flyer for details!

April 2019

“MY OWN PERSONAL ‘VIA DOLOROSA’-on THE IDES OF MARCH!”



Dear ***Friends & Family,***

[3/15] I noticed when I typed the date just now of this writing that it is the “Ides of March”, that fateful day when **Julius Caesar** was assassinated in **44 B.C.** in the Roman senate by dozens of conspirators. I mention this as a curious coincidence given the title of the article above. I just noticed another curious & somewhat funny additional coincidence-I returned a bit ago from an acupuncture appointment! As painful as my acupuncture may have been, it pales in significance to Caesar’s “acupuncture”! 😞 Why acupuncture? In early February I had my right hip replaced, three days after ministering at a youth retreat. I had repeatedly seen that the average time for hip replacement patients to basically recuperate was 4-6 weeks. Well, here I am in my 8th week & my pain in some areas is as severe as the day after surgery! I had purposely scheduled the surgery to be well-ahead of ***Via***

Dolorosa setup & performance season. However, as I approach the precipice of Via setup, which in itself takes two weeks, I find it impossible at this point to even consider beginning. In my desperation to be healed & ready, I have used holistic remedies, therapy, various pain & inflammation medicines, & icing. All of these have done very little to alleviate my pain so far. Yes-I'm discouraged-& frightened. I have spent countless nights awake in the middle of the night praying, entreating the Lord, quoting Scripture in my head & heart, crying, etc. *[See progress report below]

"THE WAY OF SORROWS"



Via Dolorosa is Latin for “the way of sorrows”. And it has become exactly that for me this year. This is to be my **16th** year of portraying **Pontius Pilate** for this, our church’s biggest annual production [It will be my **36th** year of portraying the Roman procurator overall]. I have often likened Via to an “aircraft carrier” that pulls into our church every year. A carrier in the sense of its size, scope, number of church personnel involved, weeks of setup, extent of outreach to the community, etc. Every year it is an absolute labor of love. It is one of the most precious outlets provided by our Lord for me to release His gifts, creativity [acting, costume & prop construction, setup & décor, etc.], & motivations in me. I “live” in Via for weeks

before, during, & after Via! It takes me weeks afterwards to “detox” from it, as I “get in the zone” & enter into the location, era, & the person of Rome I am portraying. Along with summer camps, Via is my favorite event of the year.

“A TYRANT WITH A SHEPHERD’S HEART?”



By far, one of the most important & most favorite duties of mine in my Via leadership role is pastoring the church personnel who are under my Via “sectors” [**Roman courtyard, Herod’s Palace, Claudia’s Quarters, The Fortress Antonia, The Roman Dungeon, & Path to Calvary**]. They range in age from children to senior citizens. I not only train & costume them but encourage & challenge them each year for the monumental task we have in dramatically bringing the gospel to the throngs. I love loving on the cast, praying for them, etc. So, even though I play one of the “**Villains of Via**” as I call them, vis, **Pilate, Caiaphas, & Herod**, every year I see our Lord’s shepherd’s heart swell within me in a most significant way. Hence, I cannot convey the ache, discouragement, & despair I have been feeling that I might not be a part this year. I have been

entreating the Lord, “Can I have just one more year, Lord? At the least? Just one more?”. I honestly don’t know His will at this point. I have written re: Via over the many years re: my fleshly struggles doing my role re: pride, conceit, self-centeredness, etc. I cannot count how many episodes I have performed after which I have had to ask the Lord to forgive me for having impure motives for doing so. So, I couldn’t blame Him a bit if He deems fit my time is done. [This reminds me in years gone by when I would drum either for a worship team or for my son Caleb in ***The Caleb Guertin Band***, that I would place a railroad spike with red paint on the tip [to simulate Jesus’ blood] on my bass drum. When I would start to get proud & conceited while playing I would try to look at the spike & remember Him Whose glory I was supposed to be playing for!]. I’m sad to say too many times during Via I have acted for my own glory & accolades instead of His. May He have mercy. Speaking of wanting to impress others, this year I have invited so many folks who have never been & who are coming. Hence, I see in my heart of hearts the desire to “impress”. O God-deliver me! 😞 And yet, & yet-I so very much want to do it. There are those who have challenged me, that perhaps it’s time to let it go. I know. I know. I’ve wondered that too. As I’ve lain in my bed at night, I have ached re: this, wanting so much to hold onto this “Isaac”. And yet, yes, I know-in the bottom of my heart, no matter how very badly I want to do it? What is the most important thing I should desire? To see the biggest smile on the face of my God. As much as I enjoy it, would it make *HIM* happier if I didn’t do it? No matter how much joy, fulfillment, & pleasure it brings to me, if it saddens HIM more if I do it, it can’t be the best. IF it is His will I not do it, of course, when one is dealing with an omniscient, all-wise, & *loving-to- the-point-of-death-by-crucifixion* God, how could I possibly do it? Is this fire that burns for Via my own fleshly zeal? Or is it His Spirit’s working in me to will & to do of His good pleasure, despite the

physical odds right now? I honestly don't know dear friends. I hope so much it's the latter.

[3/27] "WEED WHACKING"



Since my last writing I have definitely seen our Lord working His will into my life re: Via. I have been a creature of distraction as long as I can remember. It's a constant battle to keep focused-for anything! I have found while working from my home these past 19+ years one of the greatest challenges for me in doing so is "laying & staying" before the Lord in His precious Word. As I strove to do so last Saturday, I intentionally put my cell phone in another bedroom. Virtually everything I do on my phone is ministry related unless I'm just loving on family & friends via it. While laying on my bed with my Bible opened before me, I strove to keep my mind & heart in it. As always, even without my phone, all kinds of good & noble & necessary things to do came to my mind. As they did, I felt the impulse to get up & do them & get them accomplished. And yet, what came to mind was one of my own sermons from decades ago from the parable of the Sower. The thorny soil allowed the seed & its plants to grow, *but*, the thorns grew up with them. And sooner or later the thorns won out over the plants. As I would close the sermon, I

would challenge & pray for those in attendance who believed themselves to be the thorny soil. I would ask the Lord to help them whack the weeds in their hearts which choke out the desires for Him.

“THE BEATEN PATH”



I've told my hearers in this sermon there is a similar principle in seeking the Lord. Between you & His presence & blessing is a path that is always strewn with thorns-thorns of *other desires* which seek to attach themselves to you, to catch you, & hold you back. With weed-whacker in hand, the more you traverse this path to the Lord & His Word, the more beaten down that path becomes, the more cutback the weeds become from this path, & the easier it gets. This trial with becoming "immobilized" by my hip surgery & its resultant complications has re-taught me this.

"THE FIRE & THE KNIFE"



In my desperate attempts to be healed, I have sought the Lord more fervently than I already do. Both my own heart & others have suggested that perhaps it's time to lay Via Dolorosa & my other usual venues of ministry down. O God-as I shared above, it is so very hard as what I do & "how" I do it are such absolute delights in life to me. In my ponderings before the Lord re: this, how could one not consider Job & Abraham. Through trials exponentially more severe than mine, Job was reminded re: his countless blessings, "the Lord gives & the Lord takes away-blessed be the Name of the Lord." [Job 1:21]. If we only serve God when His blessings abound, then what the Devil said to the Lord is right: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" [Job 1:9]. Genuine worship occurs when you're left with nothing but God. And you worship Him solely for Who He is, & not for what He gives to or does for you. That's a place in God that only He can bring you to. If the Church were to be there, I believe revival would be unavoidable. But for now? We're left with many weak, struggling, worldly-minded Christians that our faithful Lord continues to refine & conform to the image of His Son. Bless His Name. The Fire & the Knife, Michael? Yes. In times like this how can Abraham not come into view. He had fire in one hand & a knife in the other when God told him to take his son,

his only son, & sacrifice him to the Lord on a mountain that God would show him [Gen.22:2]. That is the key, Beloved. When you lay before the Lord what matters to you most-to His will-& His alone, i.e., when you're ready to take the knife & slay that which is most precious to you, then, & only then, will you truly carry the fire of God in the other hand. Surrender in God's kingdom is the exact opposite of the world's. In the latter, when you surrender-you *lose*. In God's kingdom, when you surrender to Him-all you are, all you have, all you do-even as Jesus did in Gethsemane, you win-& carry the fiery zeal of God in your heart. [Both Samson & Jesus defeated more of their enemies in their "deaths" than in their lives! And so will we]. This has been my battle, Beloved. In the "fight", vis, my will versus God's, I have seen Him burn my vanity & vainglory out of me concerning Via Dolorosa. Unlike the past 15 years, I don't have the desire to watch my Roman & Bible movies, nor listen to my Bible movie soundtracks to prepare. Something is different now. It can only be Him. Cleanse me more, my Lord-so that only You, & You alone, are left, just as when Your Father on the mount of Transfiguration removed Moses & Elijah when Peter was inclined to "worship" them too [Mt. 17:8]. Amen.

"ACUPUNCTURED-IN BODY & SPIRIT"



Earlier today I returned from yet another acupuncture session in my desperate attempts to heal, & heal quickly. While lying on the table face down with needles in my lower back & leg, I overheard two women chatting in the next room. I couldn't help but do so. Both our doors were open, & they were easily heard. I must admit, given what I heard, I was so glad I was "facedown", as I quickly became so grieved for our Father as I did so. Both women [one was a therapist, the other a patient], related how they dated first before moving in with their boyfriends. They both seemed to say that they're trying, hoping, etc. to get their boyfriends to commit to marriage. O God. This is so routine in our culture perhaps some of you reading this are wondering why it "punctured" me so. God calls it fornication. Period. It is a very serious sin in the Scriptures. Paul said all other sins humans commit are "without the body", but fornication is committed *with the body* [I Cor.6:18]. Then, the woman who was a patient said, "I want to have another baby *before* I get married" [emphasis mine] [She already has one]. O God. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. What woman would want to bear a man's child *before* he commits to marry her?? Of course, countless women do that. But I had never heard a woman express that it was *her actual desire* to bear another child before becoming wed to a man she was living with! Then, to add to my deep

grief, the therapist said, “Whatever makes you happy. To each his own.” O God. Such is our society. How can I not be reminded of ancient Israel in the days of the judges? “Everyone did what was right *in their own eyes*.” [Jud.17:6]. These two women were blatantly & nonchalantly breaking God’s Law, & gave absolutely no thought to it. There was absolutely no pricking of conscience [where God’s Law resides in every human due to their being made in His image], nor any shame exuded by either woman. O God-when I ponder what a HIGH OFFENSE it is against God *just to IGNORE HIM*, I tremble with fear. How can ignoring God be such a high offense? As Charles Hodge said, “Because of the infinite dignity of His Person”. And how could I not ponder those poor precious children who were born [& to be conceived?] into this world into this situation. Yes-my back & legs were punctured, but so was my heart-deeply-for our Great God & Savior.

“GOD’S GOT HIS MAN [& WOMAN]”



What brought me some hope & comfort re: this was that my friend & sister in the Lord, who is a doctor of chiropractic & acupuncture, who was treating me, was here at this office. And, it was her first day at this office. I love how our Lord places His servants “where needed most”. Even on this first day of her working

there she recognized the need of the gospel. Remember that, Beloved. He places us where needed most. I pray for myself & you that we'd remember that when in the places He situates us, those fiery trials come. And come they will. But there is Another in the fire with us-Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Note: as of today, March 28th, I wanted to give an update since my first writing above almost two weeks ago. We have seen considerable progress in many areas since then. I have more mobility, strength is increasing in my leg, I have driven for the first time though my time doing so is very limited as my hip starts to throb; I can put my own sock on now on my right foot but at this point cannot yet tie my right shoe; I can walk cane free for a limited time, etc. So yes, we ARE seeing progress! PTL! *The one area that has not improved at all & hurts so acutely we are diligently striving to treat via the surgeon & some new treatments he is prescribing. This problem area is causing severe spasms after I get up from sitting down. A pinched nerve may be coming into play here. May our Lord grant healing in this area a.s.a.p. so as to enable me to more fully serve Him. Amen. Kim & I deeply appreciate those of you whom our Lord has moved to pray for us re: this! Kim & I are fervently seeking the Lord day & night for His healing power to be fully manifested.



**Caboose! Commentary Corner:* [Our daughter Laura once said she'd love to have my old Bibles when I passed for all of the notes I have written in them over the decades. This was quite humbling to say the least, especially coming from one of your own children. Hence, I've decided to post each month random notes/comments from various Bibles I have studied from]: "One of our deepest needs, is to know that we're in need." [6/24/'84] "As far as worship is concerned, God is into sincerity, not style; reverence-not routine & ritual; humility-not hype." [Spring 1996]



Caboose! On the Loose:
****Lookin' out for the little guys...***

Ministry/Events for APRIL & those not listed in last month's newsletter:

April 2: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//Network pastors' mtg.

April 1-20: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: Via Dolorosa setup, performances, & tear down

April 28: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc fundraiser

***Michael is an ordained *Elim Fellowship* itinerant Stateside missionary & is also licensed to preach the gospel by the local church he attends, *Immanuel Church. Caboose!* is also an affiliate ministry of *The Hopewell Network of Churches*. For 14 years he served on various local church staffs as their children's pastor. Since 2000 Kim & he have lived by faith, having no set salary, retirement, etc. to speak of. Yet-this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God's Word & systematic theology, using both drama & visual aids, to all age groups, from children to senior citizens, either separately or combined. To help support this work [any amount no matter how small is greatly appreciated!], please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, c/o 1703 Dalton Rd., Lima, NY 14485, marking it "Preferred-Michael Robert Guertin" or you may click on the link below to give directly. Any sized amount would be greatly appreciated! Thank you! [click here](#)**

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