

May 1, 2015

*Dear Friends & Family,*

**VIA DOLOROSA 12 [2015] IN THE RECORD BOOK**



[4/9] It's hard to believe another Via Dolorosa season has ended. We room captains start meeting for it in January. Countless hours are involved re: planning, texting, emailing, phone calls, packing & loading props & costumes, setup of rooms & hallways, recruiting, scheduling, orienting & training of actors, etc. Then comes opening night. This year we did five nights for the first time. Via's inaugural year in 2004 only encompassed 1! Our first night however was for cast only. I myself performed in about 100 episodes, as I continue the drama from 1 room to the next, a.k.a., from **The Fortress Antonia** into the **Roman Dungeon**. As soon as the last group leaves our area on the last night [Good Friday; it's always the heaviest night re: crowd volume] we immediately start a rapid & rampant tear-down, as the church needs to be put back to normal as much as possible in time for **Easter Sunday**! I left after midnight, but was back at church the next morning by 10 a.m. to continue tearing down & packing up. It takes all day. At the end of the day, I haul my truck & van load [see attached pics] of costumes, props, & Via miscellaneous back to our backyard shed & basement. Pastor told me that we broke an attendance record this year, w/ almost 1,200 guests walking through it. Based on his very rough estimate from **Good Friday's** crowd, he surmised possibly 40% of our guests this year had never been through! One of the most noticeable & precious aspects of Via this year to me was the various ethnic groups that came through: **African American, Chinese, Hispanic, & Indian** for the first time.

## THE WEeping PROCURATOR



Though they frequent Via every year, another noticeable constituency this season were the frail, elderly, & wheelchair-consigned who came through. As I sat in my little cubicle as **Pilate**, hiding until I had to come out for my episodes, I saw these precious people, despite the great inconvenience to them, hobble through our **dark Roman** Sector hallway to experience the event. Here I, one of the notorious **Villians of Via** [along w/**Caiaphas** & **Herod**], sat there & wept.

## CLOAK & DAGGER



As far as spiritual warfare goes with Via, this year was no different. Every year it's the same: horrific warfare in the midst of the scurrying & frenzy of Via setup, prep & performance. This was on top of a debilitating flu/sinus infection that left me seeing double for 5-6 days, not to mention carrying with it almost every flu symptom in the

book! I truly feared I would not be able to participate for the 1<sup>st</sup> time & devised a Plan B for my two rooms re: Pilate's replacements. Instead of going down to church each day to do much-needed setup, I laid in bed, texting & emailing crucial Via info to cast members, with one eye closed. With these physical maladies plaguing me, I also incurred an open wound at the outset of Via week. An unexpected attack left me wounded-deeply. I told no one-not even Kim. I told a fellow cast member only this-that I had a fiery dart in an open wound. He understood. It felt as if Pilate's own small dagger was dangling all week from his side. As undesirable & painful as this was [Via is draining in every way-spiritually, emotionally, physically], the Lord chose not to heal me, even as I entreated & cried out to Him during the day & in the middle of the night throughout the week. Welcome to the ministry. I suppose if Via is not true ministry things such as this would *not* happen! It was only on Good Friday afternoon, as I was walking through the parking lot to enter the building to prepare for the evening, that our gracious Lord provided a kind & tender breakthrough. His touch was a much-needed holy adrenaline to complete the event.

### WORTH IT ALL



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As is the case every year during Via, we get feedback from various guests who have gone through. Given the huge workload & battles we face to put it on, these make it so worth it: [different comments separated by an \*]"Very well done & moving Via Dolorosa. . . the acting is su-perb...you feel like you're actually there when the event was happening." \*Its very powerful; you can definitely see the work. That was very, very well done. Quality. Passion. It was all there. The way the crowd control went no hitches. Absolutely terrific. It was professionally done. Does anyone have theater training? It was that well done. \*A testimony from my daughter...she has students from China & Poland. Just want you to know Via has touched Poland & China. These students are High school students. They came last night for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. The Polish student...was so impressed.

She could not believe all the... work we put into [it] & have to dismantle...The acting, [she] said, she has seen...in Poland, but not this magnitude. [She] is Catholic, she wants to come back to visit us. She took communion & gave an offering...Poland has come to us...[she] will broadcast what she saw to all her family in Poland...she has a very large family \* [my other daughter's] visitors were touched. The boy friend of [my other daughter's] classmate, was in tears at the end. \*I have been to Via three years in a row now & you have done a consistently awesome job every time, bless God \*Superb job!!!!!!! Best ever!!! \*I received a wonderful praise report from two black gentleman I invited to Via...they were probably the only two that came through in suit and tie. They looked really sharp & in speaking with them, they said that that is a very southern thing to dress very well when invited somewhere. One gentleman, the taller of the two is in his 70s, & the other I believe is in his 50s or 60s. When I saw them the other day they raved about Via. The older gentleman said he has seen a lot in his day but he has seen nothing like Via. They both agreed it was amazing; it was well executed; there were no lags in time in moving people from room to room; they enjoyed the set up, the cast, & every aspect...they said that it even smelled like it should have because they both have been overseas & it smelled just like it did when they were there... \* [from the eye Dr. who treated me for double-vision who came to Via himself! He said it was amazing: I sent one of my co-workers to see your show & she was also blown away with the experience. I really enjoyed my-self... \* [From a pastor in MD who brought 14 from his church]: I appreciated Via & the participation of so many in conveying the message of the cross. We were blessed, Praise God! \* [From the pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, aka, Chris McGarvey, who attended Via last year re: some of his church folks coming this year]: *"I heard one story from a family from Bethel who took a Chinese student who's living with them (& attending our kids' school). She was really moved. Couldn't talk the whole way home. Praise God!"* **Each year at Via, in the Calvary station, visitors, after witnessing a reenactment of Jesus' sufferings for human sin, are invited to write down on a small piece of paper the sin they're struggling with the most. Then, they stick this paper onto one of the 3 nails in the cross. The following are some of the sins guests listed & wanted forgiveness & help for: porn, cursing, lust, alcoholism, adultery, selfishness, unkindness, anxiety, critical spirit, abortion, drug abuse, hurting others, disobedience, anger & rage, stealing, gossip, premarital sex, cheating on spouse, & doubt.**

## VISION 4 THE YOUNG



Two deaths hit me close to home in the past month. One was a young man who was like a son/nephew to me. He was a close friend of [our youngest son Caleb](#) when we lived in OH. He called me Uncle Guerty. He had been emailing me repeatedly in the past few months various & sundry theological questions. Then, all of the sudden, his emails stopped & his last Facebook post to me was a question re: my using horses in my dramas at camp. I was notified by a friend of his death last week. He was **30**. He died from a diabetes-induced heart attack. We are stunned by young, early deaths, as it is human nature to presume, if only unconsciously, that we'll all live into our 80's. We have been given no such guarantee. Every day is a precious, greatly-undeserved gift from the Lord. This young man, by the Lord's kind grace, must have been, at his relatively tender age, learning to number his days. Hence, his fresh, consistent, in-depth searching & delving into God's Word. I've pondered much, being in my **30<sup>th</sup> year** of working with **children & youth**, that before they & I realize it, these precious young souls, if allowed by God, will be young adults, married with children, middle-aged, seniors, then potentially confined to wheelchairs before the end comes. I often view children from the cradle to the grave. One must, if one would be effective in ministering to them. This is why my time with the young in God's Word & presence is so very crucial. If we don't reach them when they're young, the potential to reach them statistically drops drastically & exponentially.

## A LITTLE GIRL-AT 88.

To teach children to number their days in order to become wise, I've often asked them to consider very aged women: keeled over, frail, wrinkled, unsightly, etc.-all which can be

frightening to a small child. I then tell them that those same women, at one time, were *just like them!* These aged ladies once wore bright, fluffy dresses & patent leather shoes & skipped down the sidewalk. When they were young, *they* looked at old women just like these kids now do. The tidal wave of **Adam's sin** crashed upon the human race, reducing all humans, who live long enough, to such a tragic appearance. At one time, these frail females, now unseemly to look at, were smooth-skinned, dimpled, carefree, & full of smiles. But then-the evil days come, as Ecclesiastes 12 says. The two little girls in the attached picture taken several decades ago are relatives of mine. The one on the left had been in the hospital recently. She was 88. One of my siblings sent me a picture of her in the hospital. Unbeknownst & unexpected to her, the hospital staff, her family, & the person who took the picture, this would be her last day on **Earth**. The picture was taken in the morning. She died that afternoon. When I was sent the image, I was immediately struck by the expression on her face. In it, this 88 year-old woman is looking up in child-like expression, as if she were asking the hospital staff to help her & calm her "little-girl" fears. O God. It is one of the saddest pictures I have ever seen. Through the years at family parties & gatherings, I have been with this woman-in the good days-when she was young, when her family was around her, when times were happy. To one degree or other, we are all still children deep down inside. I have often likened myself to a little boy stuck inside a man's body, who very much wants to remain a little boy. This is one of many reasons I work with children. I try to reach the child while he/she is still young-& tender. No matter how educated, sophisticated, & experienced we become, **the evil days** also come, when our hearts will say, I have no delight in them. Hence, it's so crucial to give the young the knowledge of the Lord *now*. Jesus' sobering & poignant words teach us: The whole world [the vast majority, that is-the many, as Jesus put it in Mt.7] is going to **hell**, Judgment Day is coming, & *the gospel* must be preached. What are you doing with *your* life? May our gracious God enable us not to waste it. O Father, may it be so, for Your glory & Jesus' Name's sake.

### [ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH-RATHER, BELOW](#)



[4/30] I returned home yesterday afternoon from a 6-day ministry trip to VA, where I preached 3X at a church on Sunday & ministered at their Christian school chapel on Tuesday, ages 5 years old up to-8<sup>th</sup> grade. For the particular message I was doing, unlike most, I was seated at the back of the sanctuary, awaiting my cue to enter. I proceed up the center aisle holding a baby Jesus doll, accompanied by a German rendition of Silent Night from *The Nativity Story* [2005] soundtrack. As I sat there, out of sight of the students, as I always do, I was surrend-ering my heart & the service to the Lord's great grace, entreating Him for His anointing & ability & that Jesus would be O, so clearly seen. The children were singing, led by a very anointed brother, a.k.a., Cornelius Cross. I sat in my chair & wept as I listened.

When they responded to the altar call, there were children of all races: Asian, Hispanic, Caucasian, African American, Filipino, etc...& all ages-from the very young to the oldest 8<sup>th</sup> graders. As is always the case with me, the message was not kiddy-kiddy. It dealt with idolatry-it is rampant in the world & rampant in The Church-even among children-& more often than not they learn it from their parents! Yet-the Lord sweetly brought it home to these precious young. I've often said that there is no place in Christendom that I would rather be than at the altar with a broken kid or teenager {& of course, adults!}. May it continue. Amen.

### **CABOOSE! On The Loose:**



#### **Ministry/events for May & those not listed in last month's newsletter:**

**April 12: IC, Wilmington, DE: Warehouse youth group: worship leader**

**April 22: IC, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David: worship leader**

**May 2: St. Peter's Celestine Catholic Grade School reunion: Cherry Hill, NJ**

**May 13: Our Home: IC Young Adults' Group**

**May 17: Hockessin Community Evangelical Chinese Church: Sun. a.m. service**

**May 20: New Covenant Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area credential holders' mtg.**

**May 21: Faith Baptist Church, Newark, DE: EMF local pastors' mtg.**

**May 22: Benjamin Shute [former kids' church boy & camper!] wedding**

**May 24: Immanuel Christian Fellowship, Manheim, PA: Sun. a.m. service**

**May 30,31: Going Away events for our daughter, son-in-law, & family as they move long-term to Costa Rica next month for missions' work.**

\*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, please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, c/o 1703 Dalton Rd., Lima, NY 14485, marking it "Preferred-Michael Robert Guertin". If your church would be interested in ministry by Michael, please feel free to contact us. [www.cabooseministries.org](http://www.cabooseministries.org)  
Facebook: Michael Guerty Guertin

\*Note: Should you so desire to help Kim & me continue to serve the Lord in our multi-age group itinerant ministry work, you can donate directly to [Elim Fellowship](#) via the link below. Thank you so much.

<https://public.serviceu.com/Account/FormLogin?returnUrl=%2FGivingForm%2F2456%2F%3FOrgKey%3D84a38252-67fa-4a84-8b29-fe85dda4f600%26SGUID%3De0e4f069-1d41-4387-940a-6077c4d7d2f8%26RN%3D1671378921&orgkey=84a38252-67fa-4a84-8b29-fe85dda4f600&SGUID=e0e4f069-1d41-4387-940a-6077c4d7d2f8&RN=1671378921>





