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

**May 2019**

**“VIA DOLOROSA ‘16’ NOW IN ‘HIS-STORY’ BOOKS”**



Dear **Friends & Family**,

**[4/23]** I’m in that very bittersweet post-Via season which I encounter every year after Via Dolorosa is over. Yes-for those of you who were following my newsletter last month & the continuing saga if I would even be IN Via this year due to my post-hip surgery & issues of the heart I deal with every year at Via-yes-I was in it! I was very grateful that our gracious Lord allowed me to be in it again, especially when I thought my time was done. This year did not happen though without its other “issues”. Unlike previous years, I did much delegating with the weeks of setup it entails, even directing & helping said setup with my cane! Also, because I’m so prone to vain imaginations & “zoning out” re: my dramatic flair, I didn’t watch many of my Bible movies that I always do before Via for “character prep”. These are annually absolute musts for me: **The Robe** [1953-btw, Kim from time to time while watching The Robe has told me Richard Burton, the main character who plays a Roman tribune reminds her of me. I wish! Dramatically speaking, it’s one of the highest honors my wife has ever given me!], **Salome** [1953], **Quo Vadis** [1951], **King of Kings** [1961], & **The Greatest Story Ever Told** [1965]. While setting up this year I kept my Roman & biblical epic music to a minimum, for the same reason. In the meantime, I had several doctors’ appointments I had to attend to as Kim & I scrambled to get my hip & related issues healed as much as possible before showtime. I was finally able to procure spine injections before Via in the hope that they would reduce the excruciating inexplicable pain I was [& even now] having whenever I stood up from a sitting position. However, I got hit with a 24-hour bug which dumbfoundingly also stirred up latent flu shot/GBS issues like I hadn’t experienced since contracting **Guillain-Barre Syndrome** 2 & ½ years ago! Like back then, my legs became weak, unstable, wobbly, etc. & I began to have double vision again! I couldn’t

believe it. Because of this I had to postpone the spinal injections. It took a few days for these GBS symptoms to wane. Hence, I did Via without them. The first night I endeavored to do all 10 episodes [20 for me as I do double episodes, encompassing the **Fortress Antonia & the Roman Dungeon**] without my cane. I did so but not without great difficulty. More than one person told me they could notice I was in pain & it was obvious I was having trouble walking.

### “MY ‘CANE’ MADE ME ‘ABLE’”



Hence, the next two nights I did use my cane-well, not “my cane”, but a special one Kim bought me at a Goodwill. It was black with an “era” looking handle. I wrapped & sheet metal screwed black leather around the top part of the staff to make it look like a 2000 year-old **Roman** procurator’s cane & it did the trick. More than one person told me it did not detract from **Pilate’s** character portrayal. To “explain the cane”, I added a line to Pilate’s entrance monologue. He enters the **Fortress Antonia** in a rage as the city of Jerusalem has gotten in an uproar due to **Barabbas’** insurrection. The new line the procurator frustratingly yells at his two officers whom he left in charge was, “I was even thrown from my horse!”. It worked. Another major Via challenge this year was the lost of several of our veteran cast who had performed their roles for years. In the light of that & other reasons we reduced the number of nights we performed from the usual 4 to 3. This was a relief to the cast, particularly those who work all day, which of course was the majority of them. While personally I deeply missed doing it 4 nights, I had to agree this was best for the production, the cast, & for me physically! As I always do this time of year, I like to share some feedback we got from those who walked through Via. I apologize ahead of time for those which are self-congratulatory. I copied & pasted them as they were. If you read last month’s newsletter you well know how much our Lord has dealt with me in this area! 😞:

## "AUDIENCE ACCOLADES"



\*"Michael it was my great privilege to witness & participate in the pilgrimage which was last night's Via Crucis. It was a prayerful lead-in to the Easter Triduum which begins for me tonight. Everything about last evening was real, about Jesus & His message. The scenery, props, costuming & visual effects enhanced the production. Every individual was living the journey, not playing a role. Your wife's [Kim] welcome & excited invitation to enter into the spirit was charming. You are a superb actor with perfect diction & a realistic approach to the character of Pontius Pilate. Your portrayal of an apostle at the Last Supper was authentic, too [*I'm not sure what she meant by this. Perhaps she thought I portrayed a double role?*]. Wishing you a Blessed & Happy Easter. You reminded me so much of your Mother last night. She was a beautiful person inside & out. Peace" [a very elderly woman in her 90's? who walked through Via for the 1<sup>st</sup> time.]

\*"Great job Mike, you are quite the actor, I filmed (video) your big Pontius speech, will send you a link when I get organized. We had a great time, very impressed. Happy Easter :-)" [*This was the elderly woman above's son whom I attended Catholic grade school with.*]

\*"Meant to write this last night or even earlier this morning...last night was amazing. I'm so glad we had the chance to experience it. I can't imagine how much work goes into that production each year. Wow. Just wow...that guy playing Pilate was a bit out of control, though. Truthfully, you were amazing. I tried to give you "the eye" on the way out of the first room with you in it, but you were in the zone for sure." [A local high school band teacher who also is involved in his school's musical productions too.]

\*"The cane was a nice touch. My new church friends were very impressed & their hearts touched. One of my [Church's] administration people was with us & raved about you..." [from a friend who has made me many of my weapons & props].

\*"Be encouraged, our brother in Christ! SO many have been & are being blessed by the ministry of Via Dolorosa Praise Jesus!!! Last night I was blessed to see/experience firsthand how our guests are drawing closer into the Lord's Love, Presence, miracle working, prophecy-fulfilling blessings by seeing how our Savior surrendered to the Father & how He suffered on His Via Dolorosa to pay for our sins. So many fellow sojourners were sharing their amazement & appreciation of the portrayal with each other as we walked the way of our Savior Jesus & saw

how He suffered for each of us. All the cast were awesome & so very appreciated by those of us who witnessed Scripture played out so well. It's such a blessing to see each cast member flow with all their hearts as the Holy Spirit leads them. What a blessing!!!" [wife of Roman cast member]

**\*"Mike, I was there this evening with my 12-year old grandson Ryan. We were very impressed with all the performances, of course your performance was outstanding. I was praying for you that your pain would not overwhelm your role. I saw the cane but it was not that noticeable in the overall. Your dialogue was outstanding & very clear. Thank you for faith & drive...you are a great inspiration for all the cast..."** [from a church member who served in the Via cast years ago for years.]

**\*"Hi everyone...wanted to share this with the entire cast...two of my friends in particular said that this was the best Via this far. Everyone else I know that was there also loved it. And those two friends have both seen it several times. Great job, everyone...I did have a chance to go through until the Sanhedrin [scene] & it really was fantastic. So great working with all of you."** [from a major cast member & room captain]

**\*"Hey buddy-I wanted to say thanks for inviting us to Via. The youth group enjoyed it & I pray that it has made a lasting impression on them. Thank you from me-it was top notch."** [kids' pastor of church youth group who came from over an hour away.]

**\*"...people were amazed at how much time, effort & passion we all put in voluntarily for this ministry. They couldn't believe that we do this on top of everything else in our lives. They loved the transformation. I told them we put so much importance on serving & bringing others the truth. One lady I brought said she could have been in the middle east & wouldn't have known the difference...the other church I brought was once again blown away with how well we all did. One girl from my work said she cried in the Last Supper room. Two other women are asking more about Jesus because of this presentation..."** [from one of our cast members]

**\*"Hey there! My daughter, Chrissy, & her husband Adam & a friend of theirs Meg came with me to Friday night's Via. It was so amazing & so powerful, I'm still thinking about it. Thank you so much for the heads up when the tickets were available. I hope your hip is feeling better, that must've been difficult to recover & rehearse at the same time. You were great! All the actors were really terrific! Bravo!!!"** [from the administrator of a prominent high school in the Wilmington area.]

### "FROM ROAMIN' TODDLER TO ROMAN TROOPER"



There have been fewer joys in ministry for me than when I have my "little boys & girls" from kids church decades ago by my side now as adults helping me do the Lord's work. The two biggest ministry venues which have afforded me this immensely rewarding blessing have been Via Dolorosa & summer camps. I could name countless "lil' guys" who have served in Via with me over the many years, in roles such as Roman soldiers, jailors, zealots, & even the Lord Jesus on the cross in our Calvary episode. This year **Jeremy "Jer Bear"** [a name his mother dubbed him with as a child & by which he is affectionately known by both campers & counselors at camp each summer] **Hall**. He sent me a pic recently of him as a child [I'd guess it was about 2 years before I met him] garbed in Christian armor. Next to that pic was one of him this past Via season as one of my Roman Hallway Trooper Sentries. Words cannot describe the joy it brings to me. I feel badly for those of you who receive hard-copy newsletters as you can't see said pics.



### “A ‘MOTHER & CHILD REUNION’”



Speaking of ministry that passes through the generations, I was recently asked by one of our kids' camp campers if I would be her sponsor at her recent baptism at her church in the Reading, PA area [we moved to Wilmington 23 years ago this month from Reading]. It was an almost 3-hour round trip for Kim & me. We could only stay for the baptism, then regrettably, we had to rush right back to our own home church as there was a very pivotal, historical town hall meeting there we felt we couldn't miss concerning the new direction our elders felt to take our church in. The little girl & her parents totally understood. Despite the distance, expense, & pain [yes-sitting has been the most excruciating aspect of the aftermath of my hip replacement!], I wouldn't miss this child's spiritual history for the world. What made this event so doubly-special was that her mother was in kids church with me in Reading & got saved under my preaching in *Caboose!* there decades ago! [I didn't know this until this event!] We were so very glad we went!

## "AN EMG, PILATE, & CALVARY"



In our seemingly never-ending pursuit to discover what the cause is of the dagger-like pain I get every time I get up from a sitting position, I had yet another EMG test this morning. "Electromyography (**EMG**) is a diagnostic procedure to assess the health of muscles and the nerve cells that control them (motor neurons). **EMG** results can reveal nerve dysfunction, muscle dysfunction or problems with nerve-to-muscle signal transmission" [Google Search]. This was my 4<sup>th</sup> EMG since having contracted GBS in October of 2016. My hip surgeon has been perplexed why my severe pain has not subsided since surgery & said that my case was very unusual. Hence, he sent me to a spine doctor who specializes in injections. Before he administered the injections, he wanted yet another EMG test conducted on me. Needless to say, I did not look forward to this, as EMG's are about an hour long & very painful. The administering physician applies either prongs or needles, both of which have strong electric currents running through them. At various intervals he or she sticks the needles in your legs, hip, groin, or back & then applies voltage. Depending on where the needle is applied & how high the voltage is, the pain is often excruciating. Kim & I both wondered why this particular doctor's office was playing 80's-style rock music so loudly in their office. Kim even suggested that I request that it be turned down. But, after having received my EMG, Kim & I realized why

said music was so loud. I wept a number of times through the procedure & cried out too many times to my embarrassment-& that quite loudly! Despite the music playing, I'm sure the other patients in the waiting room down at the end of a very long hall could hear me! The needle pricks & voltage levels I received in this EMG were by far the most severe. I truly felt like I had been tortured. I had showered & put on clean clothes before the appointment but my shorts were sweaty by the time the procedure was done. **"THEY PIERCED MY HANDS & MY FEET"**

While the EMG was going on, I tried to think of Jesus & what He went through for the sins of His people. I thought later of the dramatic irony of it all. Here, just a few days before, in our church's annual *Via Dolorosa* production, I had just portrayed for *64 episodes* over a span of three nights the Roman prefect *Pontius Pilate*. Pilate was the very man who, although he knew Jesus was innocent, condemned Him to the "verberatio", the most severe of the Roman floggings-a scourging so severe that some criminals didn't live through it to be sent to the cross. [According to the theologian D.A. Carson, in comparing Matthew's gospel with John's, comes to the tentative conclusion that Jesus may have been scourged twice-1<sup>st</sup> with the less severe "fustigatio", then later with the verberatio. *Pillar NT Commentary, Gospel of John*]. Pilate, for fear of the Jews, not only sentenced the innocent Nazarene to floggings, but then, ultimately, to the cross-the most ignominious death possible. The prophet David in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, several hundred years before Jesus' crucifixion, would prophesy of the manner of death the Messiah would endure-"the pierced my hands & my feet" [22:16]. "He suffered under Pontius Pilate" [Apostles Creed]. And now, I, who portrayed the man who condemned Jesus to be pierced, was now undergoing my own "piercing". Despite the severe cry-wrenching pain, I felt somewhat ashamed of myself compared to what our Blessed Savior went through for me-but I did learn more appreciation for it, if only a little. And for that I am grateful for the EMG. Kim & I are trusting that the spinal injections will remedy this lingering issue.

### "QUO VADIS, DOMINE'?"



As I wrote above, one of my "must-see" pre-Via Dolorosa movies is "*Quo Vadis*". In Latin it means, "Where are You going, [Lord]?" In the movie the apostle Peter is troubled in his soul as he is leaving Rome for parts beyond, while, unbeknownst to him his fellow brothers & sisters are being slaughtered by the decadent emperor Nero in the arena. It's a very moving scene in



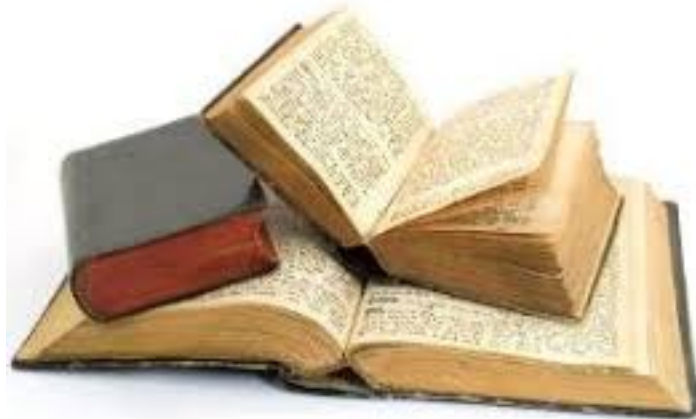
the picture. Peter returns to Rome after the Lord speaks to him, which results in his death, vis, crucifixion upside down, according to tradition. Why do I bring up “Quo Vadis?”. I myself am asking our Lord the same thing right now. “Where are You going, Lord-with me? Since 2016 dear Lord, since the flu shot, & now the hip surgery & its complications & issues, where are You going with me? What are You doing with me? Is life as I have known it, dear Lord, over? Are You finished with Your call on my life? I don’t think so, Precious One. Your fire still burns within me. The lost-& there are so many-still need to be reached. Your people still need to be fed. Someone must look after the young, dear Lord. The devil is going after them, Lord, & You have given me such a burden for them. O dear God, give me my legs back, Great One. ‘How lovely on the mountains are the feet of them who bring good news...’ That’s me, my Lord. You & I have traveled the highways for the past **19 years**. You have gifted me for all ages, Lord. Are You done with me, Father? O Lord! Say it isn’t so! Give me my legs back, dear Lord, & I shall run for You. Amen”.

### “I WANT TO CROSS OVER INTO CAMPGROUND”



I love it when **Easter** is late in April-when the blossoms are budding. I “hate” it when Easter is in early March-cold weather-& no blossoms & the new life they represent. There is only one reason I don’t like Easter coming in late April-the time I have to recuperate from Via Dolorosa & prepare for my 3 summer camps is considerably shortened. [up until this past October it was going to be 4 again but the leadership team of my annual N.Y. camp where I served for the past 8 summers felt to go in another direction. To be honest, I still hope our Lord fills in that newly created gap with another one!]. Hence, this is another reason why I am so anxious to have these health issues remedied. May it be so. I will continue to press forward until our Lord convinces me otherwise. Amen.

*P.S.-in the light of all of the above I have not yet sought open doors to preach but am very anxious to soon re: itinerant ministry, as I’ve been feverishly working on getting my strength back & am still to some degree dependent on a cane. I can drive now but the hip still throbs if I drive too long. My recent injections for pinched nerves in the back showed some promise re: relief! I will get another round of spinal injections this Thursday. Thank you for your continued prayers, love, & support. It always means so much to us but especially at this trying time!*



**\*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 Bibles I have studied from]: "Idle moments can lead to many moments before idols." [MRG 11/17/'02]

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

April 17: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: Via Dolorosa Cast devotion

May 7: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//network pastors' mtg.

May 19: Perkasie, PA: Martin Kolb [former camper, counselor, & tech man] graduation party

May 25: Reading, PA: Patrick Readdy [former camper, counselor, & asst. camp director] wedding



**\*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 gift no matter how small would be greatly appreciated! Thank you! [click here](#)

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