



# *Leaning Into the Heart of the Holy*

*2016 Lenten Devotions*

**Tuesday**

**February 23, 2016**

*The following story, written by Fred Craddock, was used for part of Sunday night's Lakeside Youth devotion:*

I learned just recently of a case of surgery so extraordinary that I assumed it was a singular case, but the surgeon assured me it was not. Rare, yes, but unique, no.

The story in brief is this: a man in his mid-fifties was rushed to the emergency room of the nearest hospital. He complained of inability to breathe. Examination revealed that the cause of his shortness of breath was a growth, a large growth, on his upper back, between his shoulder blades. The man's mother said she first noticed it when he was a teenager. She repeatedly urged him to have it attended to, but he never did. The growth was small when she first noticed it, and on subsequent occasions she could tell it was growing. Her urgings moved from cosmetic (it was becoming unsightly) to medical (it will put pressure on your heart). When her son became an adult and moved away, she worried but did nothing more. The patient himself gasped to the doctor that the growth had enlarged very gradually and had been accepted as part of his life. He grew unable to imagine himself without it; it became a part of his identity. It caused little or not pain; that is, until recently.

The growth had to be removed; there was no alternative to surgery. A team of surgeons was assembled. They began at 7:00 a.m. and finished at 3:30 p.m. One or two follow-up surgeries might be required, but the patient would live. Barring unexpected complications, he should enjoy a life free of unnecessary weight; a new life, one might say.

How much did the growth weight? Everyone was curious to know. Slightly more than 40 pounds. How in the world was he able to carry it, day and night? Because it grew so slowly. Would it have been fatal if not removed? No question. Was it sent to the lab for analysis? Of course, it always is. What was it? A grudge.

Fred B. Craddock. From "February 2009," *A Taste of Milk & Honey*. The Craddock Center, Inc. 2013. Cherry Log, GA.

## **Prayer:**

God of Love,  
through this Lenten journey,  
purify my desires to serve you.  
Free me from any temptations to judge others,  
to place myself above others.  
Please let me surrender even my impatience  
with others,  
that with your love and your grace,  
I might be less and less absorbed with myself,  
and more and more full of the desire  
to follow you, in laying down my life  
according to your example. Amen.

From *Praying Lent: An Online Ministry of Creighton University*

## **Colossians 3:12-17**

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.