I have a favorite Rosary I like to pray with. Yesterday, when I grabbed the crucifix to begin, I noticed that the corpus (body of Christ) had fallen off. In its’ place, I saw only the outline of glue where his body had been. I smiled to myself……. of course He wasn’t dead on the cross! HE’S ALIVE!

Our Protestant brothers and sisters worship in a church without crucifixes. Their idea is that the sacrifice of Christ, made once for all, was a singular event; unrepeatable; never again to be made by Christ; we are to live forever in the experience of the resurrection. All of this is true. The one thing dramatically missing from their narrative is that He commanded the apostles to re-enact that sacrifice, in an un-bloody way, until He comes again in glory. At every Mass, we stand at the foot of the cross with Mary, John, and Mary Magdalene, and experience the redeeming act of Christ’s passion and death. Jesus wants us there. He wants us experiencing it. It wasn’t just a gift for the ones living in that day. He wants all people, until the end of time, sprinkled with the blood flowing from His pierced hands, feet, and side. Since the Triduum (Holy Thursday through the Easter Vigil) is ONE liturgy, we are brought with Him to all of those critical events of His last days at every Mass. We are there at the table of the last Supper when He, himself, places His body into our hands to consume (the priest stands in the person of Christ). We are there walking with Him along the Via Dolorosa; there standing under the cross with our Mother; there at the tomb when He rises. We are transported through time. It’s UNBELIEVABLE. Time travel at it’s finest. That’s why missing Mass, for Catholics, is a serious thing. It’s not an overbearing, legalistic mandate. Jesus knows we need to be there with him through it all, and then be fed by Him weekly, at least, so that we never forget. The Israelites so easily forgot. We easily forget too…….and then we slip away from Him.

I’ve been praying for many sick and dying children, young adults, and older people lately. For so long, I feared death. I feared illness. I feared accidents that would take my loved ones away. Every time I would hear of another diagnosis, I would worry that it might happen to me or someone I loved. Then, I read this verse: ““Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin.” (1Corinthians 15:54-56), and I had a paradigm shift. We journey through this life working to rid ourselves of sin, through our own effort and the sacramental life of the church, so that when death comes there is nothing to fear. He has passed through first. He has removed the penalty of sin with its accompanying sting. He told his apostles and followers over and over again – Do Not Be Afraid. Do Not Be Afraid. Do Not Be Afraid.

If you suffer with anxiety, depression, fear of death or illness, the Divine Physician is waiting for you. He does not want you to be afraid. This is the year of St. Joseph. Ask Him to take you to Jesus, and be healed.