

Life News



April
2015

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Life Newsbytes

Scientists from the University of Pittsburgh report progress in harvesting stem cells from extracted teeth to restore sight from corneal blindness. Experiments on mice have shown that adult stem cells harvested from wisdom teeth extracted during routine dental procedures could be used to repair corneal scarring, a common form of blindness. Corneal disease is typically treated with donor corneas using grafts that are often rejected because they are not the patient's own tissue. The current corneal rejection rate stands at about 38% after ten years ... In a study published in *STEM CELLS Translational Medicine*, the University of Pittsburgh team found dental pulp stem cells can differentiate into various other cells which have a similarity to cornea tissue—thus inducing them to become corneal cells. Experimentation results showed positive results after the mice were injected with the dental adult stem cell-generated corneal cells. After weeks, the corneas were clear and showed no signs of rejection. (*The Guardian*, 2/17/15; *CLife News*, 2/25/15)

Speaking Up For Life

“We must help the weak first by repenting of our selfishness. We must help the weak by speaking for the defenseless—the unborn child, the infirm widow ... We must help the weak by supporting the local crisis pregnancy center. We must help the weak by forgiving their sins as we wish to be forgiven. We must help the weak by welcoming the difficult, the different, the strange, the abused, the lonely into our churches.” *Rev. Christopher Esget, pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Virginia*

“Death is not our friend who frees us to be with Jesus. The defeat of death—our enemy—does so! (1 Corinthians 15:26) Death does not carry us into eternity. Christ and His victory over death carry us into eternity. “When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54).” *Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, executive director of Lutherans For Life*

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2015 LFL National Conference
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Petersburg, Kentucky

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The Speck and the Spectacle by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

We did it to compromise. After our golden retriever died, I wanted another golden. Dear wife, RoxAnne, wanted an inside “lap dog” that would not shed. We compromised with a golden-doodle, a cross between a standard poodle and a golden retriever, a hybrid that is supposed to shed less or not at all. Both his parents were relatively small for their breed, and we picked the second smallest puppy in the litter. Chew-E is now two years old and about six inches taller than either parent, the biggest dog we have ever owned who sheds like crazy!

At this stage of the game, it is too late to return him for a refund, plus he is quite adorable. However, we quickly discovered that we should not have named him after the the wild-haired Wookiee from *Star Wars*, Chewbacca (Chew-E). We should have named him Houdini after the great magician. He can disappear in an instant, in the blink of an eye or the turn of a head. You can be looking right at him, avert your gaze for a second, and when you turn back, vanished! You call him and there he is right behind you, “smiling” and eagerly wagging his bushy (and shedding) tail!

Oh, how our expectations and reality can differ. A lot of that seemed to be happening on the first Easter. Mary and the women went to Jesus’ grave expecting to deal with a large stone to move; they found it rolled away. They expected to see a dead Jesus; they saw an angel. They expected bad news; they received Good News—“**He has risen; he is not here**” (Mark 16:6b). They had seen Jesus die. They had seen Jesus dead. They had seen Him buried. Now He had vanished!

No, wait! There He is talking to Mary in the garden. There He is appearing to His cringing disciples. There He is making breakfast by the sea. There He is in front of “more than five hundred brothers” (1 Corinthians 15:6a). There He is ascending into heaven to the right hand of the Father.

The Resurrection of our Lord brings hope regardless of whether our expectations translate into reality or not. We may expect Jesus to bring us prosperity or good health or an end to strife. Then we lose our job or hear the dreaded diagnosis or receive the divorce papers. It’s like Jesus vanished from our lives.

No, wait! There He is in tap water in a font. There He is in bread and wine on an altar. There He is in eleven-point font on a page. There He is in our fellow Christian serving us in our need. There He is in the vulnerable and weak whom we serve.

The reality of a risen Savior from sin and death is the only sure and certain hope when our expectations are shattered by the realities of a sin-broken world. Never forget that at LFL we connect this message of the living Jesus to such realities. Nothing else works or lasts. We want people to see their value based upon the reality of what God has done for them in this living Savior. We want people to base their hope upon the certainty of this reality.

“**But go, tell ...**” (Mark 16:7). Tell the children about the living Jesus who loves them and makes every human life special. Tell the young people that they are special and, with the Spirit of the Living Christ dwelling within them, they can make good and decent decisions. Tell the pregnant teen Jesus loves her and her baby and will forgive and strengthen and bring good. Tell the desperately ill that Jesus who died and rose for them will not forsake them. Tell the dying that as long as God gives life, He gives it meaning and purpose and hope, and when death comes, His victory over death makes it the gate to eternal life.



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