

St. Paul's
PRINTER

◆ FALL 2007 ◆

One Woman's Creed

I believe in God -
Creator of the Universe,
Dwelling forever
beyond time
and space.

I believe in
Jesus Christ
Who came to
live amongst us
And let us know
what God is like.



I believe in the Holy Spirit
Sent by God through Jesus
To be our guide and comforter.

Therefore, I believe in Love -
In hope, compassion, joy and faith,
Forgiveness and eternal life.

Frances Somerville
June 5, 1916 - August 16, 2007

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To Love and Serve



Living the Christian Life isn't Rocket Science. Jesus sums it up when he tells us to Love God with all our being and our neighbors as ourselves. In another part of his gospel he points to specific actions: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoners - in other words, serve those who suffer. Our service flows from our love.

My community base is St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral San Diego. Daily I see this idea of love and service translated from theory to actions. It changes lives. In another part of our fall issue of St. Paul's Printer, our Dean, Scott Richardson writes about what happens when God's grace (love) meets a human need in community. (See page 5.)

Every time we receive Holy Communion, at the end of the service, we pray together that God would "Send us now into the world in peace and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart." Each of us must think through what it means to love and serve.

We all know about the troubles our church is going through today. I have no doubt about a positive outcome for the Episcopal Church, but in the meantime we have to dig deep into our resources and help finance the church's ministry. Some people, as an act of resistance, stop supporting their parish, diocese and national church. That means the rest of us have the opportunity to step up to the plate and, as Jesus said, "walk the second mile." Wonderful things happen when we do. The kingdom of God comes a little closer to our hearts. Last year the chapter of the Cathedral, on which both Barnabas and I serve as elected diocesan representatives, took a leap of faith and took on the full ministry to Dorcas House, a foster home for up to fifty children in Tijuana, Mexico. Our outreach also extends to the Uptown Faith Community Services ministry, which during the first six months of 2007 helped 7,559 cases of mostly homeless individuals and families at its storefront office in our area. The base of our church's support is the parish or mission.

The Rev. Dr. Alla Bozarth sets the Thanksgiving theme by reminding us how many Americans saved postwar Europe from starvation by financially supporting the purchase of food for the Friendship Train. Can we do less to meet the needs of our churches? Giving is a way to love and serve God with gladness and singleness of heart.

Andrew Rank ♦

The Friendship Train

by *Alla Bozarth*

It's better to be kind than clever. It's better to be both than critical and cruel. The controlling forces of history forget this in the flames and famine of war.

We who did not live through it cannot imagine World War II, yet some keep trying. Some, like myself, have been psychically saturated by stories and images of the war. More than six decades have passed, and my mind is immersed ever more deeply in its mystery - the most intense human evil imaginable is the backdrop for the most impressive human goodness, selfless courage and generosity.

Naively, I thought that when the war was over, rebuilding began and life became more or less normal again right away. But two years afterwards, by which time I had been born, Europe was still under siege of starvation, barely living on rationed goods. Heavy spring floods followed by summer drought destroyed the harvest of autumn, and the prolonged emotional trauma that went on for years before and after the war made the land and the people vulnerable to disease.

Meanwhile, in America, a man named Drew Pearson started the idea of a Friendship Train of food for Europe that began its mission in Hollywood, organized by a committee chaired by Harry M. Warner of Warner Brothers ~~ At first, eight cars linked together to travel across the continent, gathering offerings of food donated by farmers, shopkeepers, corporations, manu-

facturers and individuals ~~ and the train would add on boxcars full of goods until, by the time it got to port, it would have nearly 300 cars filled with staggering amounts of wheat, rice, dried milk and beans, and more. In every village, whistle stop and city from Bakersfield, Fresno and Stockton to Las Vegas, Laramie, North Platt and Grand Isle, to Omaha, Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids, Ames and Chicago ~~ where it arrived eighty-two cars long ~~ the Friendship Train was greeted by dozens, hundreds or thousands of women, children and men, offering cartons of oatmeal from home, or wheat in sacks from the back of a prospector's mule. An Italian community loaded hundreds of pounds of spaghetti for Italy. An American Lakota Indian chief gave beautiful, nutritious maize.

Two working symbols of American spirit met in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania ~~ the Freedom Train, traveling west to the country's people with stories of our heritage, stood side by side at the station with the Friendship Train that had forged east with its cargo of goodwill.

The people of Harrisburg added nine cars before sending the train on to Philadelphia. In the shadow of Independence Hall, 22 carloads of wheat were dropped to be milled before rolling on to the port, but Philadelphia added 22 new cars of its own. Through snows of late autumn the train speeded across the nation so its contribution could arrive in Europe

before Christmas. New York State made its own gifts through the night as the second section of the train raced through, Buffalo and Western New York adding 10 cars, Albany, 8 more. Hurrying down along the Hudson River to New York City's train yards, the train was welcomed by 100,000 cheering people lining the streets of lower Manhattan, with eight trucks representing the eight major commodities of the cargo symbolizing New York's own gift of nearly forty boxcars. Thousands of schoolchildren at City Hall cheered the 3,000 mile transcontinental journey, to which children across the country had contributed generously, in increasing the original 8 food cars in Los Angeles to nearly 270, with more gifts still coming in. The final ceremonies were at New York Harbor, where two railroad barges bearing 33 symbolic carloads of food circled the Statue of Liberty.

In Philadelphia, the freighter, American Leader, was rechristened The Friendship. Columnist and originator of the idea, Drew Pearson, watched the first of multiple shipments set out for

New York where its cargo increased to 8 million pounds ~~ the first of 4 freighters needed to carry more than 500 carloads of food destined to cross the Atlantic for the people of France who had given our country the Statue of Liberty, and the people of Italy whose forebear, Christopher Columbus, had strayed beyond the edge of known worlds and brought the first Europeans here.

Convoys of food passed through the Arch of Triumph in the same tracks as Napoleon's and Hitler's armies had made when they seized the city of Paris.

As trucks were loaded with the ship's goods in Naples, two thousand Italian orphans waved Welcome banners, grinning out of haggard faces and deep, bereft eyes, and cheered on the work of friendship across the seas.

The Rev. Dr. Alla Renee Bozarth is an Author, Therapist, and Episcopal Priest who lives in Sandy Oregon. Alla's books and cards can be viewed and ordered at www.allaboazarth.com following the link to www.lifelines.us ◆



In the dark days following the end of World War II, Europe was starving. Organized by columnist Drew Pearson, eventually Americans donated 8 million pounds of food. More than 500 carloads crossed the Atlantic.

Community, Coherence and Comfort

by Scott Richardson

I've lately been thinking about why people come to church and, I'd like to suggest this theory: people come seeking community, coherence, or comfort - or perhaps all three. Here are three vignettes about anonymous people who, in their own unique way, make the point.

Community: A single, middle-aged, extroverted woman realizes that most of her relationships are with people who don't hold strong spiritual values or, if they do, never discuss them. She's been to more parties than she can count, lives in one of the faster lanes, and slowly comes to admit that she isn't fulfilled. She needs a different community: she longs to be with people who give of themselves, people who care more about other people than income or fashion, people who are inclusive, malleable, justice-oriented, and compassionate. She's neither a radical nor a fundamentalist in her spiritual views and she deeply values historic traditions and roots. Most of all, she yearns to be with folks who value her, who understand she has holy attributes to offer, and who will help her help others. She discovers all that at Saint Paul's. Since becoming a member, she's moved to the center of our life and serves in ministries of hospitality;

**Key point:
the stream
of seekers is,
in fact,
a torrent,
a mighty river.**

greeting, receiving, inviting, making connections. What a gift!

Coherence: A young man grows up in a home where church participation isn't a normal part of life. He initially has a negative impression of church-folks and then, as he matures, a growing curiosity. He recognizes the institutional and intellectual heft of the church and, beneath that, holds the age-old question about life - is this all there is? He graduates from college, attends law school, passes the bar, sets up practice, and realizes that he's not entirely content. His uneasiness lasts for some time, years, in fact. He knows that something needs to change but doesn't know what to do. He speaks to a lot of people about this but

isn't ready to commit. Things shift suddenly when he moves deeply into a relationship and discovers he doesn't have the inner resources or life-experience to support this union. He thinks back through his family history and realizes that his grandparents were the most successful couple he can identify and he further recalls that they were avid church-goers. He and his partner decide to give it a try - after a couple of false starts they arrive at Saint Paul's and have been here for the past five years. Both are very active in our

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Frances Somerville

by Peter Elliott

Luke 24: 11 “But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.”

A verse like this one could really get Frances Somerville going. That it's the male apostles who do not believe the women who had witnessed the empty tomb would be enough to begin an analysis of gender roles within the Christian community and the devaluing of women in the history of the church. And even more than that, the phrase “an idle tale” could well spring Frances into a short lecture on how the myths that surround the Judaic Christian story have been promulgated as fact by some, leading too many to dismiss the legitimate claims and goodness of spirituality. Frances loved listening to Bishop John Spong deconstruct the fairy tales of the Bible and then put them back together in a way that invited intelligent faith in the divine. Her strong intellect could not tolerate the idle tales that some used to justify their attitudes of discrimination and oppression. Frances did not park her brain at the church door; rather she brought her best thinking into her participation in the life of the church and encouraged others to do the same. Hers was a life of commitment to Christ and the church. When Christine and Jack Spong wrote to the Somerville's they invariably addressed the envelope to the Most Reverend David Somerville and the Even More Reverend Frances Somerville.

Today we thank God for her life and gather to pray her safely home.

While there are many things that come to mind about Frances today, her writing is, I think, her greatest legacy. Frances was a musician, a singer in her younger years and she had a great interest in words. This combination of music and words found expression in her poetry and we have several examples of it in today's service: the poem A Prism, her rendition of the Lord's Prayer, and her affirmation of faith which she called One Woman's Creed. David recalls that it was Madeline L'Engle who asked Frances to “write me a creed I can say.” Frances kept this commission in mind for many weeks, and one day, while she and David were on the bus on their way to Tai Chi, he noticed that Frances was writing on a pad of paper. Later Frances explained that it came to her all at once, completely formed, and she only revised the text slightly from her notes on that bus ride. It's a five-line poem, like the prism poem and Yabban Yaman. With an economy of words she has left us a testament to one woman's faith. Now there are many serious Christians who don't like it at all, who think it's too shallow; but my experience at the Cathedral is that whenever we sing it to Rupert Lang's haunting music, many people say to me, that's a creed

I can believe. Since learning of Frances' death, I've been meditating on her words, and want to look at them with you now.

I believe in God - creator of the universe, dwelling for ever beyond time and space.

This first sentence is clearly written with her friend Madeline in mind; because Madeline's fiction invites us into the wrinkles of time in an imaginative way that takes seriously the idea that time itself is a dimension. Frances's words affirming God as creator and dwelling in eternity beyond time and space are words well suited for minds that have been shaped by the discoveries of quantum physics and imaginations formed by pictures of the earth from space.

I believe in Jesus Christ who came to live among us and let us see what God is like.

In this second sentence Frances gives us both a low and a high Christology simultaneously. Like the gospel of John, where Jesus is described as "God pitching his tent among us," Frances sees in Jesus what Bishop John Robinson referred to as the human face of God. Yet the homely phrase, "came to live among us" allows Jesus to be fully human and one with all of us as we struggle with the challenges of human life.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, sent from God through Jesus to be our guide and comforter.

The Cappadocian Fathers would be delighted to read this: that the Spirit of God proceeds from the Father through the Son. Frances uses the adjectives 'guide and comforter' to describe this Holy Spirit of God, from the older translations of John's gospel where

Story continued on page 12



Frs. Andrew and Barnabas visited their friend the Most Rev. T.D. Somerville, just a week before Fran's death. Three weeks later their good friend Madeline L' Engle died. The author based one of her characters on David Somerville.

October 1957

by Andrew Rank

Fifty years ago this October, I was a part time janitor at St. Luke the Physician Episcopal Church in Gresham, Oregon. As a student at the University of Portland, I had to have a part time job to pay my college expenses. One lovely Saturday afternoon the rector of St. Luke's, Rene Bozarth, asked me if I wanted to take a drive with him to the little town of Sandy, Oregon, twelve miles east, where he had several parish calls. My work was completed, and anyone who knows that part of Oregon knows the beauty of the countryside, especially in the fall.

After several stops to see parishioners, we drove down "Revenue Road," named for one of the pioneer families who settled in the area, and turned right onto "Scenic Drive" on the Sandy Bluff. The Sandy Bluff looks down on one of the most beautiful views of the Oregon countryside. The Sandy River winds its way six hundred feet below from its origin on the Sandy glacier on Mt. Hood, to the Columbia River sixty miles away, one of the shortest but most scenic rivers in the United States.

What brought us to this spot was the shell of a building. It was to have been a World War II Veteran's Memorial Hospital. At the time there was no medical facility between eastern Oregon and Providence Hospital in east Portland. Anyone in a ski accident on Mt. Hood or a logging mishap in the

Mt. Hood National Forest or in an auto accident on U.S. Highway 26 had a long ambulance ride on a two lane highway before reaching the nearest emergency room. In the early 1950s several Sandy area citizens bought land on the bluff with a spectacular view of Mt. St. Helen, Lake Roslyn and Mt. Hood to the east for a community hospital. People donated time, talent and treasure to see it constructed. By 1957, funds no longer existed to complete the structure. The building sat empty, finished to the point that included exterior walls, interior framing, a roof and a brick façade on the front two sides.

We parked the car, walked up the gravel drive and in the front door. There was a partially finished stairway to a second floor and from the windowless frame at the end of a hallway we looked at the northern view. It was spectacular. Behind the building was land that ran to the edge of the bluff, now overtaken with wild blackberry bushes. Beyond we could see Mt. St. Helen's, and to the east, Mt. Hood. Above the palisades of the Sandy River were flat farmland, and a ways beyond, Lake Roslyn, part of the Mt. Hood power and reservoir system serving Portland.

Fr. Rene, who ten months later would begin the Society of St. Paul at his parish in Gresham said, "Wouldn't this make a wonderful retreat center? Suppose there was a monastery here and brothers worked to complete the building. This is a holy place."

Years later I thought of Ezekiel's question, "Can these dry bones live?" Indeed, they can and did.

In 1963 the Society of St. Paul moved its monastery from Gresham, Oregon to the resurrected memorial hospital site in Sandy where we opened our second Oregon nursing home under the patronage of St. Jude, who shares a feast day on the calendar with St. Simon on October 27. On the first floor was a 63 bed nursing home and medical clinic that served the needs of the mountain community. On the second floor were the brother's quarters. Connecting the monastery and nursing work was the chapel at the east end of the building. Behind the high marble altar was a twenty by forty foot clear glass triptych framing Mt. Hood. On the center beams

of the window was a near life size carving of Christ done by one of Oberammergau players.

The fenced, spacious gardens outside preserved the panoramic views of the famous Sandy River Valley through which hearty pioneers came to settle in Oregon. In the center courtyard of the garden was an outdoor altar where several members of the community over the years made their life vows, heard by our bishop Visitor.

As Fr. Rene and I stood in the unfinished hallway that October day in 1957 gazing out in silence on the pastoral scene of God's creation, I thought I heard the sound of a monastery bell in the distance, somewhere calling brothers to prayer. ♦



Intended as a war memorial hospital, work stopped on the building in the 1950s. The Society of St. Paul acquired the property in 1962 and a year later opened St. Jude's Home and Mt. Resurrection Monastery. Today the building is the home of Mt. Hood Hospice.

life and even more committed to Christ and to one another now. Life in Christ has given our friend other tools, as well - an increased ability to understand and interpret his world and a personal sense of identity, vocation, and mission. What a gift!

Comfort: A woman and two friends are eating lunch up the street. A baby near them begins to choke on a morsel; things look very scary for a moment before the crisis is handled. As they walk down Fifth Avenue they see the sign that indicates the church is open for visitors. Disturbed by the scene at the restaurant, they enter and are warmly greeted by one of our docents. The two friends engage the friendly docent in conversation but the woman in question, an artist, drifts off to look at the stained glass windows. She is, in her own words, “immediately cloaked by the Holy Spirit”, overwhelmed with a keen sense of God’s nearness and her father’s presence. Her father had passed away four months before; she was with him in his last days and cherished the chance to love and nurse him as he left this world. He was himself an active churchman and always encouraged her to find a spiritual community of her own. All of that comes flooding back as she stands in the empty church. She resolves to return. She comes back on Sunday and finds people who share her values and gracefully allow her to be here on her own terms - no coercion, no hustle, no manipulation - just enough space to hold her feelings reverently and just enough love to know she’s safe. She makes an appointment with one of our clergy and tells her story; it’s received with respect and affection. Later, on

Mother’s Day, the priest notes the tear in her eye and knows she’s feeling the loss of both her father and her mother (her mother passed away seven years ago). They have a fleeting pastoral conversation on the patio and, again, she understands she isn’t alone - she’s supported as she takes all the time she needs to grieve. She comes back the next day for the noon Eucharist and weeps through the entire service. Embarrassed by this, she tries apologizing to the celebrant afterwards and is gently assured, “If you can’t cry here, where can you?” Life is now turning for her; she has found her way into several ministries and has come to deeply value her new friends and her renewed faith. She began here seeking comfort, she discovered community, and life now feels more coherent, more together, than it has in some time. What a gift!

God acts with power in bringing about the creation, brings peace in the reconciling love of Christ, and unleashes joy through the coming of the Holy Spirit. The church, when faithful, offers these same gifts to those who seek them. Key point: the stream of seekers is, in fact, a torrent, a mighty river. Saint Augustine once wrote, “Lord, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” Our neighbors, whether they know it or not, are homesick for God (to steal a phrase from a wise monk). They long for community, they yearn for coherence, they dearly hope to both receive and offer comfort. And, good news - all things are possible for them because God has given us everything we need to fulfill their need: power to

bring good things to life; peace in the mercy of Christ; joy in Spirit-led love. As we offer these treasures freely and faithfully other people take notice and want what we have. Be pleased to offer it, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Very Rev. Scott Richardson is Dean of Saint Paul's Cathedral in San Diego, CA, where he is a member of the Standing Committee. Dean Richardson is also active in Peace and Justice issues affecting the Southwest. ♦



The Very Rev. Scott Richardson, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral is often sought out by San Diego print and television media for interviews on church matters and peace and justice issues in San Diego.

What's age got to do with it?

Ted Williams, at age 42, slammed a home run in his last official time at bat.

Mickey Mantle, age 20, hit 23 home runs his first full year in the major leagues.

Golda Meir was 71 when she became prime minister of Israel.

William Pitt II was 24 when he became prime minister of Great Britain.

George Bernard Shaw was 94 when one of his plays was first produced.

Mozart was just 7 when his first composition was published.

Now, how about this? Benjamin Franklin was a newspaper columnist at 16 and a framer of the United States Constitution when he was 81. You're never too young or too old if you've got talent. Let's recognize that age has little to do with ability.

-United Technologies Corporation

Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the Comforter who will guide us into all truth.

The fifth line of her poem continues with the word “Therefore”: a “therefore” worthy of St. Paul, whose epistles all have a moment where his argument shifts with a grand “therefore.” It is, as Bishop Jim Cruickshank says, where theology becomes ethics and Frances gives us words that describe an ethic or a way of life.

Therefore

*I believe in love, in hope,
compassion, joy and faith, and
forgiveness and eternal life.*

And with those last words, “eternal life” we’re back at the beginning of her creed, with the creator God dwelling forever beyond time and space.

Love, hope, compassion, joy and faith: these words describe a Christian life; they describe Frances’s life. She was a lover - her devotion to David was strong and lovely and she was his great companion and friend. Hope: Frances imagined that the church and the world could change for the better and she never let go of her hope for justice and peace. Compassion: how many of us have received a phone call or a note from Frances when our lives have had difficult times. JOY: there’s that wonderful famous picture of David and Fran that the *Province* newspaper ran, with the two of them smiling at each other,

with laughing eyes. Faith: this parish of St. Catherine’s has been her spiritual home for so many years, and it is the community that Frances values: the connection with others beyond our own spheres of interest - and as we hang in together in the life of Christian community we discover faith not as a possession but as a great gift from God that keeps us connected to each other and to one who is beyond time and space.

One woman’s creed: what a gift she has given us today and to those who read, say and sing these words in the future. Her belief in eternal life gives us great comfort today because though her earthly life has ended, her life in the spirit of God continues where she continues to live in the power of God’s love.

Her last few years were most difficult. Who knows into what deep recesses of being her intellect disappeared, and, although always able to pull herself together in social situations, and become, as David puts it, “the Queen of the Ball,” Frances gradually retreated into silence and mercifully, after a series of small strokes, died peacefully August 16, 2007. Her rector, Christine, was with David, Monica and Jan Morris when Frances died and Jan described how gently and peacefully Frances slipped away from us into God’s eternity. Into that eternity, that “eternal summer” we now entrust her, confident that a woman who was able to articulate such a simple but profound faith will find

a home in God's eternity. Thanks be to God for the life and ministry of Frances Somerville.

The Very Rev. Peter Elliott is Dean of Christ the King Anglican Cathedral in Vancouver, BC

Frances Somerville was born June 5, 1916 and died on August 16, 2007.

She was the wife of long-time Society of St. Paul friend and mentor, the Most Rev. David T. Somerville, retired archbishop and Metropolitan of British Columbia. Andrew and Barnabas visited the Somervilles just a week before Fran died. May she rest in peace and rise in glory. ♦



"I Sing a Song of the Saints of God."

One of the favorite hymns children sang in the parochial school that the Society of St. Paul ran in the 1960s at St. Luke the Physician Episcopal Church started with the words, "I sing a song of the saints of God, patient and brave and true." The line ended with "and I mean to be one too." In the Church Hymnal version of the easy to sing hymn there was the phrase, "You could meet them in shops or at tea." In America we would probably say stores for shops and coffee for tea, but it doesn't rhyme.

The text was written by an English woman, Lesbia Scott, who was born in 1898 and died in 1927. She had three children and likely wrote it for them, just as the author of the "Night Before Christmas" wrote the poem for his daughter. John Henry Hopkins put Lesbia's words to music.

Her message is clear: anyone can be a saint. You can, I can, but hidden in the text is the implication that we will strive toward holiness. The world would be a better place if we all practiced the golden rule. Do I always "mean to be one too?"

Saints come in all sizes and colors. Many are living today. Some are faithful parishioners who stick with the church through good times and bad, practice the virtue of charity and put helping others at the top of the list. Many live by a simple rule of life which can be reduced to a few words: Worship weekly, Pray daily, Learn constantly, Serve joyously, and Give generously.

There are great living saints like Desmond Tutu, who was instrumental, along with Nelson Mandela, in ending Apartheid in South Africa. Another was the Franciscan Priest, Mychal F. Judge, beloved chaplain to firefighters in New York and one of the first to die in the 9/11 tragedy. But most saints are just plain folks like you and me, and that's the way it should be. ♦

Saints and Seasons

by Louise Buck

Lord, Open our lips. And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

So begins Morning Prayer every day, decade after decade, century after century. “Open our lips and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.” Maybe that’s because so often we open our mouth and what comes out is not praise but our own plans or complaints, “if only, what if” . . . So it’s good to be reminded each morning, right off the bat, that this is the purpose of our lips: to sing God’s praise. I am not at the center; God is. I am not my own; I belong to Another. But God’s story is bigger than just me, than just humankind; all of creation; stars and angels, brooks and trees, waves and waterfalls, “the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns and the planets in their courses”, and all the varied creatures great and small, join the hymn of praise.

This great cosmic chorus is what November is all about if we have ears to hear. It’s the month that starts with All Saints Day: “And when the strife is fierce, the war-fare long, steals on the ear the distant triumph song, and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong, Alleluia, Alleluia” (Hymn 287). It’s also the month of Thanksgiving and our celebration of the natural abundance of the season. And it culminates with the joyous and triumphant celebration that brings the liturgical year to its completion. The Feast of Christ the King always

seems to flash with gold and trumpets before subsiding into the winter nights of silent Advent waiting.

This is also the time of year when the stress and activity level ramp up, when our lists increase and we are inclined to become obsessed with ourselves and our plans and wants and needs. ‘We don’t have time’ we complain. All the more reason to turn to

the quiet discipline of the centuries old Daily Office and let steal on the ear that distant triumph song. Thus, each morning we are reminded to start with thanksgiving. For all God has done but also for all that God IS; “for all your

goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made . . . for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all for the inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.” And this daily remembrance of the “inestimable love’ of God brings Morning Prayer to a close - during the days of my childhood, today and since the very first American Book of Common Prayer. Every day, decade after decade, century after century we join the hymn of praise.

Lord, Open our lips, and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Louise Buck is a member of St. David’s Episcopal Church in San Diego who writes a monthly reflection in her parish newsletter. ♦

Each morning
we are
reminded to
start with
Thanksgiving.

Lifting the Curtain

One of the last Gospel readings we hear in the Sunday Liturgy just before we end our church year and prepare for Advent is about the future. It is about life, death and resurrection. Jesus says in response to the loaded question the Sadducees asked that there is resurrection and life after death. Then he lifts the curtain and gives us a brief peek about how it will be. “The men and women of this world marry; but those who have been judged worthy of a place in the other world and the resurrection of the dead do not marry and are not subject to death anymore.”

He tells us about the “other world” and the “resurrection.” There is no doubt in his mind about this. God gave man eternal life or immortality and in Jesus’ resurrection. Our Lord says in that state the nature of our relationships will be different. The focal point will not be each other but God.

Our eternal life is already in progress, it doesn’t start sometime later when we die. Eternal life is now. Death is now. Resurrection is now. They happen in major and minor ways in our lives today. In our spiritual journey it is important that we know, “To what am I dying today? What realities are being born in me this morning? Is Christ near me today?”

In the liturgy, just after the consecration of the bread and wine, we proclaim the *Mysterium Fidei*, the great mystery of faith: Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again.

I recall a line from a lovely little book titled “O Ye Jigs and Juleps.” It is a journal by a little girl growing up in the south about 85 years ago. She said, “One day we will die and once dead we get eternal life whether we want it or not.” There is no going back. All life with its myriad little deaths, births and resurrections is a preparation for the great journey.

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

What does this mean? It means we do not have to be afraid anymore. We can face each experience of death in our lives, small or great, with the sure confidence of Job who said, “I know that my redeemer lives and that he will rise and I shall perceive my witness at my side, even God himself, whom I shall see with my own eyes.”

Andrew Rank ♦





“November is the month that contains the most American of all holidays: Thanksgiving. We Americans invented Thanksgiving, and this is not surprising because of all the nations in the world, we have the most to be thankful for. We have freedom in a magnificent land that stretches from sea to shining sea. We have

science, we have medicine, we have rich farmlands and soaring skyscrapers and great cathedrals and quiet churches. If you are an American, you have every right to be proud and grateful. And there’s one thing more you should be thankful for: You should be thankful for you. If you are precious in God’s eyes - and you most certainly are - then be grateful for the life God has given you and the constant blessings which are yours.”

- *Excerpt from ‘Be Thankful for You’ by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale*

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