

Good News Daily

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Sunday, August 16

Psalm 118 *I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.* (v.17 NRSV)

Nothing feels as cuddly as my grandchild on my lap. Like a sparrow settling into her nest, she rubs her shoulders back and forth across my chest. Her soft hair is fragrant under my chin. She takes a deep sigh. In complete trust, her tiny body relaxes into mine. I breathe her in. Ever so gently, with my left hand, I stroke her shoulder. Absentmindedly, she plays with my right thumb. I hold the future in my arms.

I wonder, when her grandchild crawls unto her lap, will she remember what it was like to lie in mine? Then, it occurs to me I will be gone by then...eventually forgotten...“like vapor in the wind.” It is my mortality, not the future, I hold in my arms. Can I embrace that too, that final gift from God, that ultimate release? Yes, and like my precious grandchild sleeping on my lap, I will relax into God’s loving arms.

2 Samuel 17:1-23; Galatians 3:6-14; John 5:30-47

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Ruvuma – (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Dr Maternus Kapinga
DIOCESAN CYCLE: All Saints, Morton, The Rev Brian Kellington, Priest in Charge, and The Rev Laurie Kellington, Assisting Deacon; Igunga Mission, Tanzania, Rev. Amos Chidemi; The Parish of Jesus the Saviour, Villa El Salvador, Lima, Peru, The Rev. Carlos Quispe, Priest in Charge.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Birthday of William Jones.

Monday, August 17

Acts 22:30—23:11 *That night, the Lord stood near him and said, “Keep up your courage!”* (v.11a)

Courage often comes dressed in precious rags. It sobs when facing death—feels disoriented, isolated, can’t catch its breath. It smiles and jokes around while it waits to lose its breasts; then, counts in milliliters until the drains are pulled from its flat chest. It smiles through chemo orientations while its heart is filled with dread. It lays awake at night worried its husband is so stressed. It sits, and chats, in chemo chairs while “red devils” roam its chest. With sweaty palms, it picks the hair chunks off its bed. It takes its nausea medicine then stares at the thermometer as it feels the fever’s edge. It befriends one met in chemo knowing it will end in death. It smiles calmly into the little, anxious face. It giggles as its chemo mind acts out and then forgets. It learns what really matters. It lets go of the rest. It cherishes each sunrise...each ride to school...each dirty little face. She learns to know, and love, the Presence who is nearer than her breath.

2 Samuel 17:24—18:8; Psalm 106:1-18; Mark 11:12-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Ruwenzori – (Uganda) The Rt Revd Reuben Kisembo

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of the Rev. James O. Cravens, Lincoln.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Birthday of Susan Long & Megan Larson.

Tuesday, August 18

Mark 11: 27—12:12 *“By what authority are you doing these things?”* (v.28a)

It seems to me this is a fair question to ask, “Why try to pattern my life after Jesus’ teachings?” In other words, “What difference does it make in my life?” I mean *really*. Especially on days like today when I don’t feel particularly friendly or peaceful—days when I feel selfish and angry. I know I have a lot for which to be grateful. Frankly, I am not. Where is all this “transformation” I am seeking? In this state of mind, I feel like a fraud. So, I sit in my miserable funk and fester. I ask that question over and over again for days. Slowly, some answers begin to emerge. Grace: where I am accepted for what I can become rather than for what I am. Community: where I experience compassion. Liturgy: sacred time and space where thin places appear. Sacred silence: where I find the freedom that comes in emptiness. Service: where I experience that it is in dying to myself that I find Life. All true, *really*. Jesus got it right.

2 Samuel 18:9-18; Psalms 120, 121, 122, 123; Acts 23:12-24

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Sabah – (South East Asia) The Rt Revd Melter Jiki Tais; The Rt Revd John Yeo, Assistant Bishop of Sabah

DIOCESAN CYCLE: God, fill us with your grace, for the sake of your anointed Son.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Pray for our young members as they return to school this week.

Wednesday, August 19

Mark 12:13-27 *“He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.”* (v.27)

It is early evening at home. She sits beside me on the couch and drapes one leg over mine. I rub her back. She rests her head on mine. “We really love each other don’t we?” “Yes, we really, really do.” I hold her gently. We sigh. I close my eyes and see the girl I fell in love with half century ago...a lifetime has slipped by. It has been mostly ordinary, full of chores, doing the thousand little things that make life fly. It’s had its share of ecstasy, pain, unwavering commitment, and betrayals...large and small. For better, and for worse, “we hung in there” through our dark nights. We bore children, raised them, loved them deeply, saw them off to live their lives. Our love has moved from fascination through passion to an oneness where silence is sublime. So, it seems to me, has been my relationship with God: a walk through life in all its ordinariness, its awesome wonder, its anxious and its joyful times...I have been God’s and God’s been mine.

2 Samuel 18:19-23, Psalm 119:145-176; Acts 23:23-35

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Sabongidda-Ora – (Bendel, Nigeria) The Rt Revd John Akao

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding anniversary of the Rev. Canon Timothy and Mary Hallett, Bloomington, IN; Wedding anniversary of the Rev. Tom and Sue Davis, Salem; Birthday of the Rev. Dr. Arnold R. Hoffman, Glen Carbon.

ST. MATTHEW’S: For those who serve at the Altar.

Thursday, August 20

Acts 24:1-23 *I have a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.* (v.15)

It is autumn. The woods are dancing on the mountains’ backs speckled with bright yellows and hot reds under bright blue skies...like Jackson Pollock paintings that have gone mad. The cool breeze that brushes my cheeks cuts like a knife into my heart. I feel empty: a gnawing in my chest...hollowness in my heart. Life seems pointless, boring, meaningless, and

trite. I don't feel particularly depressed, though I might be. It seems deeper than that, an existential angst. I have no desire to die; in fact, I have no desire at all. I wonder, is life stronger than death? Is good stronger than evil? Is faith stronger than doubt? I long for answers that are written in my life. My soul responds, "Life and Death are precious gifts; Evil and Good are two sides of the same coin; Faith can only exist in the rich soil of Existential Doubt, for where else can Hope and Love thrive?" I am resurrected. Christ lives within me: my hope, my Life.

2 Samuel 19:1-23; Psalms 131, 132, 133; Mark 12:28-34

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Saldanha Bay – (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Raphael Hess

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O God, give us work 'til our life shall end, and give us life 'til our work is done.

ST. MATTHEW'S: For those who seek God and a deeper knowledge of him.

Friday, August 21

Psalm 142 *When my spirit is faint, you know my way.* (v.3)

It's early. The last remnant of the cool night air scampers away from the early morning light as I slip through the chapel door to practice Centering Prayer. Soft chants are gently dancing on the chapel's vaults. Votive flames flicker on icon faces and altar cloths. Golden lights shimmer on the dark brown pew. I settle into its soft cushion and feel its smooth hard wood. Gently, I fill my lungs...exhale...relax. After a while, the music diminishes into silence. Like a rolling ocean wave, a deep and gentle gong crescendos out, then settles back into the silence. I accept its invitation and follow it into physical... emotional... mental silence. Ever so slowly, the chatter in my mind becomes irrelevant then subsides. Flashes of deep and quiet intimacy spring into my consciousness like heat lightning on a moonless night. I am Known. Time stops...the gong signals the end of this very special time. The chants resume their vaulted dance. I rise into the ordinariness of life renewed... refreshed... alive.

2 Samuel 19:24-43; Psalm 140; Acts 24:24—25:12; Mark 12:35-44

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Salisbury – (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam;

Salisbury – Ramsbury – The Rt Revd Edward Condry; Salisbury – Sherborne The Rt Revd Dr Graham Kings

DIOCESAN CYCLE: May we know Lord that your love has forgiven us.

ST. MATTHEW'S: For those in discernment and clerical formation.

Saturday, August 22

Psalm 144 *Blessed be the LORD, my rock...* (v.1a)

The sun has yet to breach the sky. The streets are empty. The city sleeps. Gospel music fills the car. Hopeful, joyous rhythms lift my heart. Golden lights on tall street lamps line up like sentinels in the night. Their golden light shimmers off the trees casting shadows on the grass. It occurs to me...no, I sense...these shining trees are soaked in God. So are the median, the sidewalk, and the weeds squeezing through the cement's cracks...even in the garbage cans. I drive on singing loudly. It feels silly. I don't stop. From the asphalt gliding under me to the photons of a thousand twinkling suns that end their journeys in my eyes...everything around me seems filled with God, pulsing, dancing in the dark. And so am I—along with those I love and those I hate: friend and foe alike—we are all embraced and loved in Christ. It seems to me that God is in all there is; and, all there is—in Christ—is One.

2 Samuel 23:1-17, 13-17; Psalm 137; Acts 25:13-27; Mark 13:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Sambalpur – (North India) The Rt Revd Pinuel Dip
DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Elisabeth, wife of the Rev. Dr. Thomas W. Langford,
Springfield; Birthday of Betsy, wife of the Rev. Harry G. Newman, Bellevue, WA.
ST. MATTHEW'S: That by resting we might be renewed for service in God's sanctuary.

by Nestor de Armas

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