

## *Good News Daily*

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### **Sunday, December 10**

Luke 1:57-68 *All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.* (v.66 NASB)

All parents wonder this: "What will my child turn out to be?" It's an awesome idea to ponder, yet scary if I start down a worry spiral. I certainly want the hand of the Lord with my kids. The best way I have found to address this is to give each child back to the Lord. God created our children (Psalm 139 says he knit them together in the womb); we just have the privilege of raising them.

While I was pregnant with my son, our church assigned a wonderful woman to pray for me and my unborn baby throughout the pregnancy. She prayed not just for physical health but for spiritual and emotional health also. She became a godmother to my son and still prays for him.

A couple of years ago I found a book of prayers for a parent. I pray regularly from it for my children and godchildren. I find peace in knowing that the Lord knows what these children will turn out to be.

Amos 6:1-14; Psalms 148, 149, 150; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Pray for Western North Carolina - (Province IV, The Episcopal Church)  
The Rt Revd José Antonio McLoughlin

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Salem, The Very Rev. Canon David Baumann, Priest in Charge; Muungano Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Samson Yakobo, Vicar; The Mission of Santa Natividad, Yarabamba, Peru, Rev'd Victor Condori, Vicar; Zachary D. Brooks, Jacksonville, Ordination to the Priesthood; Birthday of The Rev. Benjamin D. Hankinson, Jr., Mt. Vernon;

*ST. MATTHEW'S:* Happy Birthday Mary Hunt and Colin Bennett.

### **Monday, December 11**

Amos 7:1-9 *The LORD said to me, "What do you see, Amos?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the LORD said, "Behold I am about to put a plumb line in the midst of My people, Israel. I will spare them no longer."* (v.8)

A plumb line is a simple measuring tool like a pregnancy test. The results of a pregnancy test show that a woman is either pregnant or not. She isn't sort of pregnant or occasionally is pregnant. She is or she isn't.

In the above Scripture God holds a plumb line in the midst of his people judging their sin—which only he has the right to do. The results are the same every time. We are always sinful. We aren't sort of sinful or occasionally sinful. It isn't a degree or a comparison thing. According to Romans 3:23, we have all sinned. We can't judge one another on whose sin is worse than ours or who deserves a greater punishment. All sin is the same in God's eyes. The punishment is the same for everyone, death and eternity separated from God.

Thank goodness the Lord provided a Savior to take on the punishment for our sin. We just have to acknowledge it and ask for forgiveness.

Psalm 25; Revelation 1:1-8; Matthew 22:23-33

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Wiawso - (Ghana, West Africa) The Rt Revd Abraham Ackah

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* O God, this morning I come into the quietness and stillness of your presence to begin the day.

### **Tuesday, December 12**

Amos 7:10-17 *Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, "I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs. But the LORD took me from following the flock and the LORD said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.'"* (vv.14-15)

Amos protested to the priest that he wasn't one of God's employees (a prophet). He was just a regular guy who was tapped by God to do some speaking. God uses ordinary people all the time to glorify Him and further His kingdom. We don't have to be employed by the Church. Having worked in both the secular and Church world, I appreciate the ministry of both.

Looking at the people around me, I see God using business men and women to mentor recent college graduates on how to be a Christian in the workplace. I see the woman who cleans houses praying for the families as she cleans their house. I see the building maintenance man who always has a kind encouraging word to say. Look around your world and ask the Lord to show you the regular folks who are serving and glorifying Him. Then ask how you can do the same.

Psalms 26, 28; Revelation 1:9-16; Matthew 22:34-46

**ANGLICAN CYCLE:** Willochra - (South Australia) The Rt Revd John Stead

**DIOCESAN CYCLE:** O God, free us from all false pride, for we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast.

### **Wednesday, December 13**

Matthew 23:1-12 *Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them."* (vv.1-3)

We are teaching my son how to drive. I have been very aware lately of my own driving. I try not to speed; I try to use my turn signal every time I switch lanes and I definitely don't use my cellphone. I am trying to avoid the concept of "Do as I say, not as I do." I want my son to know that what I am teaching him isn't just optional "good suggestions," it is the safe and smart way to operate a motor vehicle.

Jesus says the scribes and Pharisees are full of "Do as I say, not as I do." Their teachings are wise but they don't obey them. They seem to think their teachings are "good suggestions" but not necessary for men in their positions.

Just as speeding and texting while driving can have adverse effect, so can being hypocritical about Biblical teaching. It is obvious to my kids when I speed or text and drive, just as the Pharisees' behavior was obvious to Jesus. Both are bad ideas.

Amos 8:1-14; Psalm 38; Revelation 1:7—2:7

**ANGLICAN CYCLE:** Windward Islands - (West Indies) The Rt Revd Calvert Friday

**DIOCESAN CYCLE:** Matthew C. Dallman, Pekin, and John David Richmond, Bartonville, Ordination to the Priesthood.

### **Thursday, December 14**

Revelation 2:8-17 *"Fear nothing in the things you're about to suffer—but stay on guard! Fear nothing! The Devil is about to throw you in jail for a time of testing—ten days. It won't last forever. "Don't quit, even if it costs you your life. Stay there believing. I have a Life-Crown sized and ready for you."* (v.10 The Message)

This Scripture is about suffering for your faith. That isn't a concept we are closely familiar with in this country. I've heard of missionaries going covertly into Laos and China, but it's still difficult to relate to.

After some research about modern-day martyrs, I found this story about the Zirve Publishing Massacre. In 2007 there was an attack on Easter Sunday during a tiny worship service held at the Zirve Publishing house in Malatya, Turkey. Soon after the service started, 5 men attacked 3 Christian men including the church's pastor. The attackers tortured their victims and recorded it on their cell phones before killing them. The victims all worked at the Bible publishing house and one had played Jesus in a

theater production that aired on Turkish TV that same Easter. The attackers admitted the murders were religiously motivated.

It's tragic that these husbands and fathers who loved the Lord and were celebrating his resurrection lost their lives because of it. I am sure there was a Life-Crown sized and ready for them when they arrived in heaven.

Amos 9:1-10; Psalm 37:1-18; Matthew 23:13-26

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Wondurba - (Loryko, Sudan) The Rt Revd Matthew Taban Peter

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Cynthia A. Sever, Alton, Ordination to the Priesthood.

### **Friday, December 15**

Psalm 31 *You have heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help.* (v.22b NIV)

I heard a news story recently of a local young man who committed a crime. I didn't know the family but my daughter did. My heart broke for the mom to see her baby in jail.

Soon after, a new woman came to the Bible study I attend. She had so many questions and was clearly trying to figure out God. She eventually explained that her son was the young man I saw on the news. She was overcome with grief. In the midst of her pain and despair, we all tried to answer her questions about God and share God's love for her. As she and I sat and wept together for a while, I explained that my heart had broken for her when I heard the new story.

She didn't come back to Bible study and I was so afraid that I had offended her in some way. A couple of months later, the woman pulled me aside on my way out of church. She radiated joy. The Lord was obviously carrying her through this time. She thanked me for crying with her and comforting her. My heart filled with joy too. Thank You, Lord, for letting me cry with her.

Haggai 1:1-15; Revelation 2:18-29; Matthew 23:27-39

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Worcester - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd John Inge, Worcester - Dudley - The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Winchester - The Rt Revd Tim Dakin, Winchester - Basingstoke - The Rt Revd David Grant Williams, Winchester - Southampton - The Rt Revd Jonathan Frost

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Lord, help us to live each day with a sense of our true value: our value in your eyes, our Maker and our Redeemer.

### **Saturday, December 16**

Psalm 30 *You did it: you changed wild lament into whirling dance; You ripped off my black mourning band and decked me with wildflowers.* (v.11 The Message)

Changing mourning into celebrating and rubble into beauty, is such a stark contrast that it is only possible through God.

My son is a cellist. On his music stand, there is a photo of a woman from the Kinshasa Symphony Orchestra in Democratic Republic of Congo. She practices her cello everyday outside in a yard next to a dumpster. There is no grass in the tiny yard, only dirt and garbage. Outside the plastic fence are the slums of Kinshasa. There are no cars on the streets, just crowds walking through more dirt and rubbish. The buildings are Quonset huts and there is no beauty there, only squalor and third-world despair. How sweet and comforting her music must sound to the people walking around the streets. Such a stark contrast!

I put the picture on his music stand to remind him of several things: practicing isn't so bad; his life is blessed compared to so many; and most importantly, just as there can be beautiful music in the midst of the ghetto, our God can change our pain and sorrow into laughter and joy.

Haggai 2:1-19; Psalm 32; Revelation 3:1-6; Matthew 24:1-14

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Worcester - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd John Inge, Worcester - Dudley - The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Winchester - The Rt Revd Tim Dakin, Winchester - Basingstoke - The Rt Revd David Grant Williams, Winchester - Southampton - The Rt Revd Jonathan Frost

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Lord, help us to live each day with a sense of our true value: our value in your eyes, our Maker and our Redeemer.

*by Mara McClain*

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***For the St. Matthew's Community, please remember the following in your prayers this week:***

**Pray for** the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Tim H. and family, Greg P., Linda S., Phyllis P., Bill J., Ron G., Bill, Bobbi, Matt, Tori B., Dave M., Bill Mc., Linda T., Dottie T.

**Pray for** the Faithful Departed: Steve, Lewis, Joseph

**Pray for** those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Alicia P., Barb W., Daniel T., and Ken B.

**Pray for:** The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt. Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St. Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the Altar.