

Good News Daily

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Number 13

Sunday, April 1

John 1:1-18 *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.* (v.5 NRSV)

She is a classy lady...regal, really. She is one of those people you meet and trust... a person who manifests the gentle spirituality that arises out of silence. She carries herself with grace and elegance. That is why it breaks my heart. "We make plans and God laughs," she announced her brain cancer diagnosis to me six weeks ago. A major brain surgery and several bouts of chemo later we chat quietly in the prayer room. A colorful hat sits cockily on her head. Her short, gray hair juts out beneath: a silent witness to the shaved, scarred head that hat adorns. Her prognosis is not hopeful. Her eloquence has slowed. She picks her words carefully. Sentences drift out of focus... then are abandoned... left undone. Her right eye droops a little. Her smile seems half done. And yet, I sense in her a remarkable, quiet peace. It all reminds me how resurrection begins in the darkness. "Hallelujah Christ is risen!" is God's answer to our cross.

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalms 148, 149, 150

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray: Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia! our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!

who did once upon the cross, Alleluia! suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Mark's, W. Frankfort, The Rev. Sherry Black, Priest-in-Charge; Muungano Parish, Tanzania: Rev. Rev. Samson Yakobo; The missions of Santa Natividad, Yarabamba, and Santas María y Martha de Betania, Ilo, Peru, Rev'd Victor Condori, Vicar.; J. Victor Sheldon, Washington, D.C., ordination to the Priesthood

ST. MATTHEW'S: Julie & Chris Bennett's wedding anniversary.

Monday, April 2

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 *But by the grace of God I am what I am...* (v.10a)

Disgusted with myself, I am at our beach house exhausted and alone. Guilt gnaws my soul. I definitely deserve the misery I've become. Then, in what I can best describe as a day-dream, I find myself surrounded by myself at various stages of my life. I see the three-month-old. I pick him up and hold him in my arms. Next comes the four-year-old and crawls up onto my lap. The high school football player comes in and stands beside the four-

year-old. The college student joins the group. The soldier arrives in his green uniform. The graduate student is followed by the thirty-three-year-old CEO. It is as if we are sitting for a family photograph, a loving family embrace. I am surprised by gratitude and compassion for each one. In their innocence and guilt, they are simply trying their best to get me to safely to the next stage of my life. I thank each one for their effort. I forgive each one his faults. I promise to do my best to carry on. I fall asleep. Peace comes. Hallelujah!

Exodus 12:14-27; Psalms 93, 98; Mark 16:1-8

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Butare - (Rwanda) The Rt Revd Nathan Gasatura

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Give us insight, Lord, to understand and feel as others feel.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Patty Pitts' birthday.

Tuesday, April 3

1 Corinthians 15:12-28 *...all will be made alive in Christ.* (v.22b)

My headlight casts a white circle on the brackish water. I step into the river in the dark. The water is warm. We climb in the canoe and float into the night. Our headlamps cast just enough light to keep us from the banks. Gator eyes sparkle as we slip by. The sapphire sky is littered with shiny grains of salt. Proudly, Venus hangs low on the eastern sky. Cool air brushes past my cheeks. I savor the wet, sweet stench of the Florida wetlands. Soft pink glows out of the grey horizon. White birds on cypress trees glow in the soft light. Grey turns blue, then white, as a bright orange fireball climbs into the sky. Swampy shores emerge. White herons stretch their long necks above the spiny grass. Insects dance on water. Sparrows dart. The river splashes playfully on the canoe's side. For an eternal instant, I let go of all reflection... a portal into the is-ness of Being. In the most ordinary way... I find, in Christ, I am alive. Hallelujah!

Exodus 12:28-39; Psalm 103; Mark 16:9-20

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Butere - (Kenya) The Rt Revd Timothy Wambunya

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Wednesday, April 4

Exodus 12:40-51 *That was for the LORD a night of vigil, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.* (v.42a)

I have come to the Sacred Valley seeking stillness through deep and constant silence. I long for respite from the wounds of a lifetime in a world that feels lonely... angry... dreadful. My daily routine is simple: three one-

hour-long periods of Christian contemplation and eleven miles of hiking in grand silence. In unreflective receptivity, I cultivate presence as I climb the snowcapped mountains. I welcome the slope's bite on my thighs... the symphony of wildlife that surrounds me... the gentle scent of mud and game droppings. Each night, painful fears wake me. I sense the invitation to embrace them. Instead, I resist them. On the fourth night, as if approaching a coiled rattler, I draw near. The fear becomes physical. I remain present... a silent watcher. To my surprise, it subsides. It melts away. I search for it. I cannot find it. Each night of vigil, it arrives... indomitable; then, is transmuted as I embrace it. A startling discovery: embrace despair in God's love... and by so doing... transcend it. Hallelujah!

Psalms 97, 99; 1 Corinthians 15:29-41; Matthew 28:1-16

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Buye - (Burundi) The Rt Revd Sixbert Macumi

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Jesus, illuminate and brighten the entire world.

Thursday, April 5

Matthew 28:16-20 "*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" (v.20b)

While mountain-top experiences, and dark valleys, shine like diamonds scattered along a trail, the ordinary *now* is my life. The morning cup of Cuban coffee followed by a quiet time nestled in my favorite spot. Fifty or so emails answered before dawn. The phone calls, welcomed and unwelcomed, connect me to those I care about... and those I don't. The tasty, mid-morning protein bar that hits the "perfect spot." Projects and chores are followed by lunch, topped off with a very juicy mango playfully dripping on the counter top! My daily nap and my second prayer time cultivate stillness and consent. The workout in the gym is immersed in music, burning muscles and the clanging of the weights. Our evening dinner on the couch... elbows touching... her leg carelessly dangling over mine. Our reading time before we fall asleep. My day is filled with a hundred thousand ordinary now's... a cornucopia of simple blessings. His promise to be with me always means He is with me *right here, right now*. Hallelujah!

Exodus 13:3-10; Psalms 146, 147; 1 Corinthians 15:41-50

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Byumba - (Rwanda) The Rt Revd Emmanuel Ngendahayo

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Venerable Shawn W. Denney, Springfield; Birthday of Jan, wife of The Rev. Dr. Ralph N. McMichael, St. Louis.

ST. MATTHEW'S: birthdays of Martha Carroll and Ann Sokan

Friday, April 6

Exodus 13:1-2, 11-16 *By strength of hand the LORD brought us out... from the house of slavery.* (v.14b)

What begins as a well-intentioned conversation, suddenly feels vicious. Embarrassed, I swirl into a vortex of hurt and anger. For days, I lie in a cesspool of high dudgeon savoring the bitter taste of righteous indignation. Dismayed, I realize being right brings no liberation. Like a thirsty deer, I find my water brook: the prayer of forgiveness. Its simplicity astounds me. I pray it daily. After a few minutes of quiet relaxation, I vividly imagine telling her in great detail how her comments have hurt and offended me. I get in touch with my feelings. I quietly observe them. When ready, I repeat, "I forgive you... I forgive you." I rest in silence. Then, I ask her how I have hurt and offended her. I listen very, very carefully. I try to get in touch with her feelings. When ready, I repeat, "Please forgive me... please forgive me." I close in silence. Days turn to weeks... resentment abates... peace dawns out of forgiveness. I am brought out from the house of slavery to righteous indignation. Hallelujah!

Psalm 136; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; Luke 24:1-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Calabar - (Niger Delta, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Tunde Adeleye

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Holy Spirit give us hearts to understand.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Debbie Thomas' birthday

Saturday, April 7

Psalm 145 *I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.* (v.1a)

As I write this, I pray these reflections will bless you. We have been invited to write about what a specific verse means to us personally and/or how it has affected or influenced our life. This is the reason why you read so many "I's." Like a long day on a steep trail, they are a joy to experience... and hard. Every reflection begins in mild anxiety: a creative emptiness. I'm invited go into places in my heart I am reluctant to acknowledge, much less embrace. It is precisely in this shadowy land that, sometimes, something deep within me is awakened. The wrestling begins. I explore feelings I repress, gather slippery insights, capture words that dart around my head like butterflies. Most difficult of all, I must find the courage to share them. Through this wrestling, I fall in love with life: its peace and joy... its uncertain emptiness, my imperfections, my guilt, the sand accelerating out of

my life's hourglass. Like young birds nudged out of their nest I send them to you. Christ *is*. Hallelujah!

Exodus 13:17—14:4; 2 Corinthians 4:16—5:10; Mark 12:18-27

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Calcutta - (North India) The Rt Revd Ashoke Biswas

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Mary Ann, wife of The Venerable Shawn W. Denney, Springfield.

by Nestor de Armas

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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., Roger H., Jack P., Zac & Alyssa & Carson C., Jenna A.

Pray for the Faithful Departed:

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

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