

Good News Daily

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Sunday, April 22

Psalm 63 “*O God, you are my God. I earnestly search for you.*” (v.1 NLT)

In the Peanuts comic strip, one of my favorite recurring events is “Lucy and the Football.” Lucy holds a football for Charlie Brown to kick, but at the last minute she yanks the ball away. Poor Charlie Brown ends up flat on his back, looking up and bewailing the fact that Lucy has fooled him *again*. It makes me laugh but, truthfully, there have been many times in my life when my “football” was yanked away and I ended up flat on my back, looking up. And I’m not alone—King David’s “football” was yanked away when his son Absalom usurped his throne.

Psalm 63 was composed when David was in the desert, hiding from Absalom’s forces. While they were looking for him, David was looking for God. So, when you end up flat on your back looking up, don’t despair. You are already looking in the right direction.

Exodus 28:1-4, 30-38; Psalm 98; 1 John 2:18-29; Mark 6:30-44

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Communion in Japan) The Most Revd Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu Primate of The Nippon Sei Ko Kai & Bishop of Hokkaido

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Church, Lincoln, The Very Rev. Mark Evans, Rector; Kaliua Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Nason Muhuta, Rural Dean; The Mission of Santiago Apóstol, Selva Alegre, Peru, Rev’d Victor Condori, Vicar.

Monday, April 23

Matthew 5:1-10 “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” (v.3 ESV)

When my sister and I were toddlers, our parents took us to a drive-in movie (cheap, fun family entertainment). One time during the show, my sister’s pacifier somehow dropped out of the car onto the muddy ground. She was in despair! My parents fussed over her and calmed her down.

Well, I was watching all this, and a minute later I purposely launched my pacifier out the car window so that I would be fussed over, too. I’d studied what happened when a person lost a pacifier, but I’d learned *the exact wrong thing*.

Jesus faced the same dilemma. Before he came, many people who studied the Lord had learned *the exact wrong thing*. The Sermon on the Mount is Christ’s way of showing us who God truly is. No pacifier required!

Exodus 32:1-20; Psalm 41, 52; Colossians 3:18—4:18

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Florida - (Province IV, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Gregory Brewer; Central Gulf Coast - The Rt Revd Russell Kendrick

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Give thanks for the risen life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

ST. MATTHEWS: Birthday of Gary Ploense

Tuesday, April 24

Matthew 5:10-16 *“You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.”*
(vv.13-14)

Open any Fashion Magazine and you will invariably find a quiz entitled “Are You Truly Happy?” The questions are some variation of this: Do I take myself seriously? Do I depend on others? Am I self-sufficient? Am I good to myself? All this points to a “me-focused” happiness, one where satisfaction is determined by self.

Jesus would have scored very low on these tests.

James MacArthur wrote, “All the virtues of the Beatitudes character are intolerable to an evil world.” We are “happiest” not when we focus on glorifying ourselves, but when we let the Holy Spirit shine through us to light the world.

Exodus 32:21-34; Psalm 45; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 5:11-16

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Newfoundland - (Canada, Canada) The Rt Revd John Watton

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Christ the King, Normal, admitted to the Diocese, 1978; Birthday of Reba, wife of The Rev. Dr. Eugene E. Hall, Champaign; Birthday of Amy, wife of The Rev. David J. Halt, Bloomington

ST. MATTHEWS: (as noted above) Birthday of Amy Halt and Birthday of Susan Clark

Wednesday, April 25

Psalm 119:49-72 *Your decrees have been the theme of my songs wherever I have lived.* (v.54 NLT)

What’s in your playlist? You know, the list of songs that you listen to on your smartphones and computers (and on tapes and CDs, for the dinosaurs among us). Look in any direction and you’re sure to see someone wearing earphones, listing to their personally crafted mix-lists. These songs fill our brains and inform our lives, no matter where we are.

King David knew the power of songs to shape us. In Psalm 119, he wrote how God’s decrees were the theme of his songs, no matter where he lived. Even in his most desperate psalms, David never wavered from his belief that God’s decrees were ultimately life-giving. His mix-list, however painful or broken, always pointed to hope. Does yours?

Exodus 33:1-23; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:17-20

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Philippines - (Philippines) The Rt Revd Dixie Copanut Taclobao

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Patronal Feast Day of St. Mark's, West Frankfort; John F. Wall, Fredericksburg, VA., ordination to the Priesthood; Birthday of The Rev. Christine C. Hopkins, Champaign.

Thursday, April 26

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20 *After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! Yes, you are our pride and joy.*

(vv.19-20)

Thursday is a difficult day. Saturday is tantalizingly close, but not here yet, and sometimes those last few hours before the weekend can seem to stretch out longer than all the days that came before. Anticipation makes us yearn even more for those longed-for days off.

Paul felt something similar when he kept trying and failing to get back to his beloved Thessalonian believers. Satan kept throwing up roadblocks, again and again, and there was no guarantee that Paul would even be able to ever see them again.

Paul could have become discouraged, but instead the apostle focused on the “pride and joy” he had in this feisty little congregation. Paul says that when Jesus returns, his “proud reward and crown” will be the church of Thessalonica. Now that’s a weekend to look forward to!

Exodus 34:1-17; Psalm 50; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20; Matthew 5:21-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central New York - (Province II, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd DeDe Duncan-Probe

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed the world.

Friday, April 27

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 *So we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering dear brothers and sisters, because you have remained strong in your faith. It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord.* (vv.7-8)

Some of my most precious treasures are old letters handed down through my family. Two-hundred-year-old words are faded and hard to read, but the sentiments are as true today as it was then: How are you? Are our children alright? I miss you with all my heart. I long to be with you.

Centuries separate me from my ancestors, and much longer from Paul's Thessalonians, but concern for distant loved ones never changes.

Paul's letter contains the same questions as my family letters. Stuck in Athens, Paul was worried about his spiritual children's wellbeing. But Timothy reported that Paul's "brother and sisters" were not only still spiritually alive, but thriving. And their good report gave Paul "new life."

Exodus 34:18-35; Psalms 40, 54; Matthew 5:27-37

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Solomons - (Melanesia) The Rt Revd Ben Seka

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Melinda, wife of The Rt. Rev. Peter H. Beckwith, Hillsdale, MI.

Saturday, April 28

Matthew 5:38-48 *"But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike."* (vv.44-45)

If I could ask God to rewrite a part of the Bible to match my preferences, this would be it. I don't know about you, but I don't think it is at all fair of God to ask me to love my enemies. They are dreadful people and they don't deserve my love, let alone God's. I keep hoping that someone will find the original copy of Matthew's Gospel and discover that he includes a note that Jesus was only kidding!

Of course, Jesus meant every word. He charges us to love our enemies—not to agree with or enable them, but to love them. And I try to, because I know that when I was Christ's enemy, he still loved me.

Exodus 40:18-38; Psalm 55; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Tanganyika - (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Dickson Chilongani

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Peter's Chapel, Chesterfield, consecration of church building, 1861

by Ruth Owen

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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: George K., Alicia P.

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