

Good News Daily

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Sunday, May 19

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word. (vv.16-17 NRSV)*

This is a characteristic biblical benediction. Paul, in one tightly packed sentence, enumerates wonderful blessings. He lists love, eternal comfort, good hope, strengthening, and the grace of the Father and the Son.

It reminds me of a book I read some time ago about blessing, especially on Sundays. The author suggested that when we attend a worship service, we seek to open ourselves to blessing from God, whether from the Scripture, the music, the sermon, or another person touching us, opening our heart. The other suggestion is that we be a conduit through which God can bless another person there. It may take boldness to offer words (the Scripture above gives some ideas) or even a direct smile, but the Holy Spirit will guide us as we try it and it will become easier week by week. If this becomes a habit on Sundays, it's possible it will continue on Mondays and spill over into other areas of our lives as well. "Make me a blessing," says the old hymn.

Joshua 17:14-18; Psalms 24, 29; Matthew 7:7-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for the Anglican Church of Melanesia, The Most Revd George Takeli - Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia and Bishop of Central Melanesia

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. John's Episcopal Church, Albion, The Rev. George W. Howard, III, Vicar; Usinge Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Robert Makela; The Mission of St. Philip, Cabanaconde, Caylloma, Peru, Rev'd Justo Maqqe, Deacon.

Monday, May 20

Psalm 56 *You have count of my tossing; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record? (v.8)*

We love reading of the intimacy that New Testament people enjoyed with Jesus. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Peter and John, and Mary Magdalene, just to remember a few. The writer of Psalm 56, David, is the Old Testament person we usually associate with awareness of God's presence even as he tossed on his bed trying to sleep in the midst of terror and fear.

I am a tosser. There are nights when I am sure I have set a world record. One such night God gave me a poem during my wakeful hours. This is the last verse.

Many nights I have awakened in my bed, picturing my children learning to walk, going off to college, getting married, having children of their own. Worry clings as I toss in the sheets, forgetting they are also God's children. The Father says, "Give it to me, Carolyn. Go to sleep."

I join others in the intimacy of my relationship with God. He has a record of my tossing and of yours as well.

Joshua 18:1-10; Psalms 57, 58; Colossians 3:18—4:18; Luke 7:36-50

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Nambale (*Kenya*) The Rt Revd Robert Magina Barasa; Aberdeen & Orkney (*Scotland*) The Rt Revd Anne Dyer; Ile - Oluji (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Abel Oluyemi Ajibodu

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

ST. MATTHEWS: Amy & Fr. Dave Halt's wedding anniversary.

Tuesday, May 21

Psalm 61 *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I; for you are my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.* (vv.2b-3)

If we don't walk the beach to the inlet for a week or two, we hardly recognize the area. The sand is constantly being rearranged by the waves and the wind, especially a northeast wind. But if you lie on a rock beside a mountain lake and come back a year later, the rock looks and feels the same.

When David needed a hiding place, he knew he could depend on a rocky crag still being there for his protection, just as it had been a week or a year before. So as he reflected on God, he naturally associated the two. He needed the constant, the firm, the changeless in both his physical world and his spiritual life. A rock wouldn't give much protection from the weapons of destruction in our time, but being aware that "He alone is my rock and my salvation" (Psalm 62:6a) makes all the difference in the way we face life each day.

That rock by the lake is special to me. Do you remember a rock from some time in your life that can help you make a connection with "the solid rock?"

Joshua 20:1-9; Psalm 62; Romans 12:1-21; Luke 8:1-15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Namibia (*Southern Africa*) The Rt Revd Luke Pato; Abuja (*Nigeria*) The Most Revd Nicholas Okoh (*Primate*)

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield, consecration of present church building, 1913.

Wednesday, May 22

Luke 8:16-25 *"No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lamp stand so that those who enter may see the light."* (v.16)

On vacation one year, we visited a number of lighthouses along the Atlantic coast. Have you ever climbed their winding stairs? It seems like you will never get to the top. In a sense, a lighthouse is a “lamp stand.” The light, magnified and raised high, is sent out over dark troubled waters. Generations of boaters have been saved because these beams were burning into the night.

When we look around, we see many lives suffering shipwreck. Their rescue is found in Acts 4:12, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

As the keeper of a lighthouse has to keep the light polished and clean, so our lives must be so that we can reflect the “light of the world” in sharing that salvation message. Every Christian can help others sail safely.

Joshua 21:43-45, 22:1-6; Psalm 72; Romans 13:1-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Namirembe (*Uganda*) The Rt Revd Wilberforce Kityo Luwalira; Abyei (*South Sudan*) The Rt Revd Michael Deng K Bol; Accra (*West Africa*) The Rt Revd Daniel Sylvanus Mensah Torto

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding Anniversary of The Rev. David J. and Amy Halt, Bloomington.

Thursday, May 23

Psalm 71 *Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength is spent.* (v.9)

There can be a tendency to grow stale as we grow older. Studying, stretching our minds, trying out new ideas can be overshadowed by our daily tasks or just plain laziness. I served for a time as a chaplain in an assisted living/nursing home. Many of our residents were still interested in discussing spiritual things, the things of God. We met for an hour on Mondays and used such books as *Out of Solitude* by Henri Nouwen and *Gift from the Sea* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, as well as the Bible. These men and women inspired me not only by their thirst to continue to grow, but by their communication with God. Prayers for children, grandchildren, pastors and priests were a regular part of their lives, especially during the nights alone in their rooms.

I told them they reminded me of Psalm 91:12, “In old age they still produce fruit, they are always green and full of sap.” We laughed, cried, and learned together. Some were unable to leave their rooms, but their eyes sparkled when I visited and prayed. One woman who was blind said, “I love it when you come.” Her heart and spirit were still reaching upward.

Joshua 22:7-20; Psalm 70; Romans 14:1-12; Luke 8:26-39

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Nandyal (*South India*) The Rt Revd Eggoni Pushpalalitha; Adelaide (*Australia*) The Most Revd Geoffrey Martyn Smith, The Rt Revd Tim Harris, The Rt Revd Christopher McLeod

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Matthew B. Kemp, Chicago. Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Dr. Thomas W. and Elisabeth Langford, Springfield.

Friday, May 24

Luke 8:40-56 *But he took her by the hand and called out, "Child, get up!" Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat.* (vv.54-56)

In the story of Jairus' daughter, we see the love and affection that Jesus has for the "one." He left the crowd to minister to one small child. To the family gathered in the room who witnessed her return to life, Jesus gave a command: "Give her something to eat." I think Jesus meant physical food, but he also commands families to provide spiritual food for every child. Children should be given instruction from God's word. They should be taught that God has a plan for each life.

A church family can also play an important role in a young life. Children will grow when nurtured by a body of believers who tend to the ones with whom they have been entrusted. The twelve-year-old girl in our Scripture verse knew the voice of Jesus. Surely, she never forgot that tone of love. Our little ones need to know that love as well.

Joshua 22:21-34; Psalm 106:1-18; Romans 14:13-23

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Nasik (*North India*) The Rt Revd Pradip Kamble; Afikpo (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Paul Udogu; Ilesa, The Rt Revd Samuel Olubayu Sowale; Ilesa South West, The Rt Revd Samuel Egbebumi

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Admission of Diocese of Illinois by General Convention, 1835.

Saturday, May 25

Luke 9:1-17 *On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida.* (v.10)

Have you ever had Jesus encourage you to resign from a ministry and pull away privately with Him?

Once when it happened with me, I grew impatient as time passed. I wrote in my journal that I felt like I was floating with no goal. I was looking up another Scripture when a verse from Acts 27 jumped out at me. "Nevertheless we must run aground on some island" (v.26). The verse seemed to assure me that I would find the place of service that he had chosen for me. Sure enough, it came, and I would have never been prepared to even consider such a call without that midstream time.

J. I. Packer in *Rediscovering Holiness* says, "God does not value us primarily in terms of what we can do—even what we can do in His strength. He values us primarily in terms of what He makes us, character-wise as he conforms us to Christ by His grace."

We may seem to be drifting, but if it is in “the living water,” it can be a time of being made over in His image for His purpose.

Joshua 23:1-16; Psalms 75, 76; Romans 15:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Nasir (*South Sudan*) The Rt Revd Simon Lual Bang Jal; Agra (*North India*) The Rt Revd Prem Prakash Habil; Indianapolis (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, The Rt Revd Catherine Waynick

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Grant, O Lord, that from the written word, and by our spoken word, men and women may catch a vision of the Incarnate Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit. *D.Coggan*

by Carolyn Byrd

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Pray for the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Margret L.

Pray for the Faithful Departed: Woody S. & Bob C.

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