

Good News Daily

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Sunday, February 2

Genesis 18:16-33 *When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home. (v.33 NIV)*

Genesis 18 begins with these compelling words, “The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day” (v.1). In the mundane of daily life, the Lord visited Abraham and got his attention. Overjoyed, Abraham quickly mobilized expressions of hospitality to encourage the Lord to stay, and *the Lord dwelled there with him*.

After Abraham’s warm welcome, God spoke words of life, promise, and blessing unto Abraham and Sarah that would impact all nations in God’s perfect time (vv.10, 17). These astounding words were followed by God’s disapproving concern over the sinful people of Sodom and Gomorrah, for whom Abraham interceded with great perseverance (vv.23-32). And as in verse 22, Abraham *remained* with the Lord for as long as He was speaking and not a second less.

Did these visitations only take place in Old Testament times? Surely not, for we know Jesus appeared in the upper room, to Peter, to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, to various women, to Paul on his way to Damascus, and many more. Indeed, the Lord is here; our Emmanuel has come. And when he speaks, may we *remain* there, ready to receive his words of hope, blessing, and truth.

Psalms 24, 29; Galatians 5:13-25; Mark 8:22-30

ANGLICAN CYCLE: **Pray for** the Anglican Church of Burundi, The Most Revd Martin Blaise Nyaboho - Archbishop of Burundi & Bishop of Makamba.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Christ Church, Springfield, The Rev Dr Gregory Tournoux, Rector; Mbugani Parish: Rev. Leonard Birusha, Tabora, Tanzania; The Parish of Jesus the Saviour, Villa El Salvador, Lima, Peru, The Rev. Carlos Quispe, Priest in Charge; Feast of Title, Emmanuel Memorial, Champaign; Birthday of the Rev Christopher L. Ashmore, Jacksonville.

Monday, February 3

Hebrews 11:1-12 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (v.6)*

Our God-given gift of faith is an expression of God’s love for us. I am so grateful for the seed of faith planted in my heart at a young age, and for every person who has watered it over the years. For me, the journey of faith is both an adventure and a priceless treasure. It involves prayer, worship, God’s word, the sacraments,

gifts of intercession, hospitality, discipleship, forgiveness, mercy, the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5), the armor of God (Ephesians 6), and so much more! Our faith is lived out in *relationship* with imperfect people. Likewise, God's revelation inspires actions based on a *relationship* with Him. God speaks, people listen and believe, and their faith-fueled actions follow.

In John 6:29, Jesus places himself in the center of this journey of faith by proclaiming, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." Then he adds, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

Throughout the Old Testament, God prepared His people to receive their Messiah—"the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is here, so let us listen, believe, and follow.

Genesis 19:1-29; Psalm 56, 57, 58; John 6:27-40

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lui (South Sudan), The Most Revd Stephen Dokolo Ismail Mbalah; Taiwan (The Episcopal Church), The Right Revd David Lai; Guildford (England), The Right Revd Andrew John Watson.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Tuesday, February 4

Psalm 61 *Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.* (v.1)

Truly, the psalms contain a prayer for every occasion. I'm so glad these prayers were recorded to inspire our prayers and teach us about faith. We all struggle at times, and the life of faith is all about experiencing God's presence, comfort, and peace in times of sorrow as well as in times of rejoicing. Life is hills and valleys and, in all of it, God is with us.

In Psalm 61, the psalmist cries out to God for help, and then proclaims the truth of his experience of God as exalted above all things (v.2), a refuge and strong tower (vv.3-4), a God who hears us and bestows an inheritance to all who fear Him (v.5).

In Psalm 62, the psalmist proclaims God his salvation and rest, an indestructible fortress (v.2). He then pours out his soul and fears to God (vv.3-4), seeking rest while feeling restless (v.5), hopeful that since God is the indestructible fortress to which he has run, he will not be shaken (vv.5-6).

In the midst of the prayer through which the psalmist abides in his Rock once more, songs of the assurance brought by faith rise in adoration, calling others to trust God and pour their hearts to Him (vv.7-8). What a transformation! We can experience this too, as we pour our hearts to God in prayer.

Genesis 21:1-21; Psalm 62; Hebrews 11:13-22; John 6:41-51

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lusaka (Central Africa), The Right Revd David Njovu; Tamale (West Africa), The Right Revd Jacob Ayeebo; Guinea, The Right Revd Jacques Boston.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: God, fill us with your grace.

Wednesday, February 5

Hebrews 11:23-31 *...he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.* (v.27b)

Hebrews 11:1 opens with a definition: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Throughout the rest of the chapter, “the ancients” are commended for their faith (v.2). Every “ancient” tells a story that looks ahead to the same reward.

Beginning with creation, the invisible was at work to create all that is visible (v.3). Some “ancients” risked everything because they believed God’s promises they could neither see nor hope to see fulfilled in their time. Yet they believed, and acted on the belief that came from knowing their Father.

Reading Hebrews 11 again today, I noticed a special appearance that made me recall Abraham in Genesis 18:1, when the Lord Himself appeared to him. In Hebrews 11—a bridge between the Old and New Testaments—Jesus shows up in the midst of the “ancients.” Did you catch that? In Hebrews 11:16, we are told Moses “regarded disgrace *for the sake of Christ* as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward” (emphasis added).

John 6 makes reference to the manna that fell from heaven during Moses’ time as a sign of the reward Moses awaited. Jesus said, “...the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever” (John 6:57-58). We, too, believe, and await the same reward.

Genesis 22:1-18; Psalm 72; John 6:52-59

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lusitanian Church (Portugal), The Right Revd Jorge Pina Cabral; Tanga (Tanzania), The Most Revd Dr Maimbo Mndolwa (Primate).

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Ordination to the Priesthood, Sean D. Ferrell, Champaign.

Thursday, February 6

John 6:60-71 *Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”* (v.68)

Writing for Good News Daily since 2001 has been a meaningful way to live in the Scriptures and grasp how the Old and New Testaments are two sides of the same coin. In Hebrews, we see the face of the one who is our reward, our hope, and our very life. We see Jesus as the awaited Messiah prophesied and longed for from Genesis through Revelation. In him, God’s promises are fulfilled: “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

I encourage you to read today's passage from Hebrews again. Did you catch how our lives are intertwined with the lives of every believer before us? Referring to the "ancients" commended for their faith, Hebrews 11:40 asserts, "God had planned something better *for us* so that only *together with us* would *they* be made perfect" (emphasis added). This is the marvelous mystery of our life in Christ.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2). Jesus is the Way and our reward.

Genesis 23:1-20; Psalm 70, 71; Hebrews 11:32—12:2

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Luwero (Uganda), The Right Revd Eridard Kironde Nsubuga; Tarime (Tanzania), The Right Revd R Mwita Akiri; Tasmania (Australia), The Right Revd Dr Richard Condie.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Brenda, wife of the Rt. Rev. Daniel H. Martins, Bishop of Springfield; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Sean D. and Kiezha Ferrell, Champaign.

Friday, February 7

Psalm 69 *But I pray to you, O LORD.* (v.13a)

Being in the presence of God is powerful. It is also healing, imparting wisdom, comfort, and peace. When you've experienced this, you crave it. You long to return to the safety of the shadow under His wings. In Psalm 17:8, the psalmist prays, "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings." And Psalm 91:1 teaches a foundational truth, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty."

I have experienced the power of resting in God's presence. Some of these moments were sweet surprises from God, glimpses of His beauty while walking outdoors, sitting by my mother-in-law's garden, receiving the Eucharist, caring for the sick, holding my children, and more. These gifts of grace have warmed my heart and brought peace to my soul.

And then there are those times when I have felt desperate and begged to see God, to know His presence and experience His peace. As in today's psalm, these moments often start with me pouring my soul unto God (vv.1-12). Eventually I reach verse 13, "But I pray to you, O Lord..." My self-centered grumbling and fretting turn into prayers, and then, like verses 30-36, I find myself praising God for His goodness and love. Another miraculous transformation!

Dwelling in His presence brings rest.

Genesis 24:1-27; Hebrews 12:3-11; John 7:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lweru (Tanzania), The Right Revd Godfrey Mbelwa; Te Pihopatanga o Tai Tokerau (Aotearoa NZ & Polynesia), The Right Revd Te Kitohi Wiremu Pikaahu.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord, bless the work that we do.

Saturday, February 8

Hebrews 12:12-29 *See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks.* (v.25a)

I live in awe of the word of God. It is, undoubtedly, the richest and most moving book ever written. Hebrews 4:12 explains why, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” No other book does that.

I have written several books, and it is always heartwarming to hear from readers that they’ve gained insights and clarity from reading my words. Yet, I am keenly aware that I only know in part, as declared in 1 Corinthians 13:9, “For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.” In 1 Corinthians 13:12, Paul reminds us, “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

Until we see Jesus’ radiance face to face, we are blessed with God’s presence in His people, in His glory revealed throughout creation, in the mystery of the sacraments, in His holy word, in the gentle whispers through which He speaks, and in our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. One day, my imperfect words will vanish, but “the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8). May we never refuse the one who speaks to the imperfect human soul.

Genesis 24:28-38, 49-51; Psalms 75, 76; John 7:14-36

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Machakos (Kenya), The Right Revd Joseph Mutungi; Te Pihopatanga o Tairawhiti (Aotearoa NZ & Polynesia), The Most Revd Don Tamihere (Primate); Gujarat (North India), The Right Revd Silvans Christian.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of the Rev Brian T. Kellington, The Villages, FL; Wedding Anniversary of The Venerable Shawn W. and Mary Ann Denney, Springfield.

by Amaryllis Sánchez Wohlever, MD

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Pray for the sick and those in distress: Margret L., Allan H., James G.

Pray for the Faithful Departed: Charlie C. and Steve W.

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