

Good News Daily

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Sunday, March 1

Daniel 9:3-10 *I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying...we have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances.* (vv.4a, 5 NRSV)

The prayer of Daniel calls me not only to a personal repentance, but a corporate one for the sins of the church. I wrestle with the question, “How did we drift so far from God’s will?” Surely, God has not changed His mind about the integrity of His Word!

As I seek God’s voice in the midst of my struggle, familiar words come to mind: “for we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts” (*Book of Common Prayer*). This certainly rings true for me personally, as well as for our corporate body. “But why are some indifferent to this spiritual contagion?” we may ask.

It seems that our culture has caused us to redefine our image of God into one of a doting, permissive Father. This Santa Claus-like deity, that we have created, excuses our sin and pampers our sinful nature, all under the guise of love. As I ponder this, I find myself praying, “Lord, have mercy! Purify us through your Word, that we may not remain in darkness.”

Psalms 63, 98; Hebrews 2:10-18; John 12:44-50

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for the Iglesia Anglicana de Chile, The Most Revd Héctor (Tito) Zavala Muñoz - Bishop of Santiago & Primate.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Emanuel Memorial, Champaign, The Rev. Beth H. Maynard, Rector; Urambo Parish: The Rev. Shadrack Sabaya, The Rev. Alex Iseke, Curate, Urambo, Tanzania; The Mission of Jesus Source of Life, District of Comas, Lima, Peru, Ms. Edith Varillas. Lay Minister.

Monday, March 2

Mark 1:1-13 *The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.”* (v.3)

As I meditate on this Scripture, the figure of John the Baptist preaching his message of repentance is a disconcerting one! This strange, bizarre figure invades my comfy-cozy world, enticing me to come humbly to Jesus, to once again lay bare my sinful nature, and receive His love and forgiveness.

But I may not appreciate this invasion, as I scurry around in my orderly little world, attempting to organize and control the things and events around me. I want to resist, desiring him to go away, and leave me to my daily busy-ness.

But he continues to call me to leave my wilderness of self and its distractions and come to the one who gives me life! I stop, reflecting on all the ways I have rejected and neglected my Lord—all the ways I have sought my own will, and not His.

I submit to God, giving Him all my self-imposed burdens, repent of my numerous sins and weaknesses, and beseech Him to forgive and cleanse me once again, vowing to change my errant ways, through His grace.

Genesis 37:1-11; Psalms 41, 52; 1 Corinthians 1:1-19

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Mandalay (Myanmar), The Right Revd David Nyi Nyi Naing; Toronto (Canada), The Most Revd Colin Robert Johnson.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Holy Spirit, guide us in our work for the Church.

Tuesday, March 3

1 Corinthians 1:20-31 *He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”* (vv.30-31)

Often, I can get caught up in the pride of my own effectiveness when things are going well. My temptation is to pat myself on the back and revel in my ability to do this or that, while keeping the outward facade of humility intact for the world to see.

Yet, when confronted with people taking credit for the marvelous way they accomplish something, I am immediately incensed at their boastful nature, and cast a judgmental eye on their braggadocio!

In these times, the Lord convicts me of the “log” in my own eye, and I repent of boasting in my own accomplishments and for judging others who tend to do the same. He promptly reminds me that “apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). It is He who enables, strengthens, and empowers me to complete the tasks to which He has called me.

Genesis 37:12-24; Psalm 45; Mark 1:14-28

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Manicaland (Central Africa), The Right Revd Erick Ruwona; Toungoo (Myanmar), The Right Revd Saw John Wilme; Hawaii (The Episcopal Church), The Right Revd Robert Fitzpatrick.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O Lord God, your will is holy, loving and wise.

Wednesday, March 4

Mark 1:29-45 *In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.* (v.35)

Occasionally, my morning quiet time becomes condensed. I rationalize that this is out of necessity, as I have so many “places to be, and things to do.” I seem to be structuring my day around personal needs and obligations!

Some years ago, I went on retreat to a Trappist monastery where one's time is structured around prayer and worship, not personal desires. We retreatants arose at the same time as the monks, at 3:00 a.m., and were gathered in the church by 3:20 a.m. It was at this time that Opus Dei, the Liturgy of the Hours (the round of communal prayer that punctuates the entire monastic day), began. We engaged in worship, prayer, Scripture reading, and quiet time, until 8:15 a.m.—some five hours later—when the monks went off to work. (The rest of the Opus Dei was yet to come: at noon, 5:00 p.m., and 7:15 p.m.)

This experience greatly impacted me with the blessing of wanting, as my first desire, to spend time with the Lord, and to order my time around Him—even if it does mean getting up while it is still dark! I have to ask myself, “Is an hour of sleep really more important to me than my relationship with God? Can I really come to know Him if I don't spend time with Him?”

Genesis 37:25-36; Psalm 119:49-72; 1 Corinthians 2:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Maper (South Sudan), The Right Revd William Madding Machar; Trichy-Tanjore (South India), The Right Revd Gnanamuthu Paul Vasanthakumar;

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.*

Thursday, March 5

Mark 2:1-12 *And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. (v.4)*

I am amazed as I ponder the tenacity and determination of the faithful friends of the paralytic. No matter what the obstacle, they were going to get their friend to Jesus. They knew he was the one and only answer to all that ailed their friend. They exhibited total trust in their Lord. Often, we desire to bring someone to Jesus, either through our prayers or by sharing the Good News. Yet there are times that we lose heart and talk ourselves out of doing or saying anything. What is the reason for our reluctance? Is it pride, or insecurity at not having the “right words”? Or could it be that we really don't trust God?

Sometimes I have to remind myself that it does not depend on me. I am only a “seed planter.” It is the Holy Spirit who will convict the person of truth in his or her heart. It is Jesus who is the healer, not I. If I ask him, the Holy Spirit will give me the words to say, and the strength to persevere.

Genesis 39:1-23; Psalm 50; 1 Corinthians 2:14—3:15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Mara (Tanzania), The Right Revd George Okoth; Trinidad & Tobago (West Indies), The Right Revd Claude Berkley; Truro (England), The Right Revd Philip Mounstephen.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Thomas, Salem, Anniversary of the Consecration of Church building, 1926.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Heather Mather's birthday.

Friday, March 6

Mark 2:13-22 *He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."* (v.17)

Jesus' response to the questioning by the Pharisees as to why he was hanging out with tax collectors and sinners, surely gives me reason to stop and take stock of myself. I know that it is easy for me to become so comfortable and complacent in the company of believers, that I look with smug disdain at those who are on the outside of the Church.

Yet I must consider, have I done what the Lord wants me to do to help bring them into the fold? Have I provided a welcoming face and genuine warmth to those who happen to visit? Or am I too busy with my own agenda? How about the street people? Do I shun them, or invite them into our place of worship?

Will I really reach out with God's love to those who are marginalized, or those who offend me in some way? Is my church simply a "social club," or are we serious about reaching those who are lost? I need to ask myself regularly, "What *would* Jesus do?"

Genesis 40:1-23; Psalms 40, 54; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Maralal (Kenya), The Right Revd Jacob Lesuada; Tuam, Killala & Achonry (Ireland), The Right Revd Patrick William Rooke.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev Mary Christine "Mollie" Ward, Bloomington.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Dede & Doug Dyson's wedding anniversary, and Jane Shadid's birthday.

Saturday, March 7

Psalms 55 *Cast your burdens on the LORD, and He will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.* (v.22)

There are days that I tend to "wrestle" with God about one thing or another. Days when things in my life seem to overwhelm me and I wonder, while in the struggle, "Where is God in all this?"

Psalms 55 delineates such a struggle, while imploring us to cast our cares upon the Lord. This means that I must be willing to let go of all of those areas that I seek to control or manage. It means that I am to submit to Him all of those things where

I want to dictate my own terms to God to fulfill. Letting go means just that—not taking up the burden once again. Letting go means trusting implicitly in the Lord in His providence to bring about His will (not mine) in His way (not mine). Letting go means allowing the weight of the burden to be released to Him and receiving His calm assurance that all will be well. Now that’s what I call living in faith!

Genesis 41:1-13; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7; Mark 2:23—3:6

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Marathwada (North India), The Right Revd Madhukar Kasab; Twic East (South Sudan), The Right Revd Ezekiel Diing Ajang Malangdit; Hereford (England), The Right Revd Richard Frith.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Sue, widow of The Rev Thomas A. Davis, Salem.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Happy Birthday to: George Dyson and to Matt Matsuda.

by Carolyn Petersen

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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.