

## *Good News Daily*

**Volume  
XX**

**April 19-25, 2020**

**Number 16**

### **Sunday, April 19**

John 14:1-7 *In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (v.2 KJV)*

It is quite common as we get older, like my wife and I, to read the obituaries. Lives remembered and friends now gone, and funerals become regular. In today's Scripture, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his own death, but reassuring them of his resurrection and their eternal life.

I recently watched a documentary on Netflix narrated by actor Morgan Freeman where he had researched the religions of the world and their belief on afterlife. They explained that the Jews and Hindus believe their worldly actions determine their place in the here-after. As Christians, we remember Jesus' promise of our mansion and that he is the way, truth, and life.

Our church is named All Saint's and my favorite hymn is the children's song, "Saints of God." After close to 50 years of worshipping God there, I have said goodbye to many loved brothers and sisters. Our funerals represent a joyous celebration of the resurrection. Someday, I know it will be my turn, but until then I'm going to remember that we are living in God's kingdom right now. We should be living in more and more holy moments.

May God bless us all today as we give Him thanksgiving for His gift of life.

Exodus 14:5-22; Psalms 146, 147; 1 John 1:1-7

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for the Church of Church of Ireland

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Church, Lincoln, The Rev. Canon Mark Evans, Rector; Kaliua Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Nason Muhuta, Rural Dean; The Mission of Santiago Apóstol, Selva Alegre, Peru, Rev'd Victor Condori, Vicar, St. John's, Decatur, consecration of present church building, Birthday of The Rt. Rev. Anthony F.M. Clavier, Glen

Carbon; Wedding Anniversary of The Rev. Beth H. Maynard and Mark Dirksen, Champaign.

### **Monday, April 20**

1 Peter 1:1-12 *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*  
(v.7)

When I read today's Scripture, I am reminded of my sister in Christ, Agatha. I first met her during a Stephen Ministry class at our church. She had to lie on the floor because of her back pain. This was only the beginning of a series of medical problems for her. It started with urogenital problems and secondary infections, finally resulting in losing both her kidneys. She then suffered with three-times-a-week kidney dialysis treatments. At one time she almost died and received last rights from our priest, only to miraculously recover. Over many years, she spent more time in the hospital than out. However, through her many years of suffering and hospitalizations she always trusted and loved Jesus. She also always shared her faith with the nursing community and our church members.

During Lent our teachings from the Order of Saint Luke are about the 26 Healing Miracles of Jesus. We have learned that our prayers for healing are always answered through God's promise and power, but not always the way we think. As Agatha's earthly body failed her, the amazing grace God gave her through her final journey grew her faith and spiritual body and was inspirational and a blessing to all of us. Agatha was truly a brave and courageous Christian soldier.

Exodus 14:21-31; Psalms 1, 2, 3; John 14:8-17

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Montana (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd C. Franklin Brookhart, Wiawso (West Africa) The Rt Revd Abraham Kobina Ackah, Igbomina - West (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Olajide Adebayo

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

ST MATTHEWS: Morgan Kimmerling's birthday.

## **Tuesday, April 21**

1 Peter 1:13-25 *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.* (v.16)

Not long ago, I visited my brother's church, and everyone was given a free book titled *The Biggest Lie in The History of Christianity* by Matthew Kelly. That lie is that holiness is not possible. He states this one lie can neutralize the majority of Christians. He believes that it may be the devil's greatest triumph in modern history. It is the holocaust of Christian spirituality. His answer is for us to believe in today's Scripture reading from 1 Peter and go out today and create just one "holy moment." Not a holy life or even a holy day. Not a holy hour or even a holy fifteen minutes—just one single holy moment. A moment when you open yourself to God. You make yourself available to Him. A holy moment is a moment when you are being the person God created you to be and you are doing what you believe God is calling you to do in that moment—what you believe will bring the most good to the most people right then. It will be a thing of beauty! Yes, Jesus assures us that holiness is possible for each of us. By spiritual transformation and multiplication, this idea can change the world.

Opportunities to create holy moments are everywhere. History has proved it works.

Exodus 15:1-21; Psalms 5, 6; John 14:18-31

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Montreal (Canada) The Rt Revd Mary Irwin-Gibson, Willochra (Australia) The Rt Revd John Stead, Ijebu (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Ezekiel Awosoga, Ijebu - North (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Solomon Kuponu

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Jon E. Griffin, West Frankfort; Birthday of Elizabeth, wife of The Rev. Canon David M. Baumann, Salem.

## **Wednesday, April 22**

Exodus 15:22—16:10 *And it came to pass, as Aaron spoke unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness and, hold the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.* (v.10)

As I write this, we are in the season of Lent and our small Bible study group is studying the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism.

We were first reminded of Adam's temptation in Genesis and his falling to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Next there was all of mankind falling, which resulted in Noah's ark and the great flood with only eight survivors and the animals. Then, there was Moses and most of the Israelites falling to temptations during their 40 years in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

The difference in Jesus' wilderness temptations was that he was both the Son of Man and the Son of God. With the Holy Spirit, in the first two temptations he counters the Devil with the word of God, and in the third temptation he reminds us to serve and worship God only.

My "take away" from Jesus' example is to face our daily temptations with prayer for the Spirit's help, and to use God's word in defense, while always serving and worshipping God only. I am also encouraged by God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 which says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Psalm 119:1-24; 1 Peter 2:1-10; John 15:1-11

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Moosonee (Canada) The Rt Revd Thomas Corston, Winchester (England) The Rt Revd Tim Dakin

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven. Alleluia! He whom Thou wast meet to bear. Alleluia! As He promised hath arisen. Alleluia!

### **Thursday, April 23**

Psalms 18:1-20 *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.* (v.16)

Have you ever had what seemed to be a near death experience? I have. It happened while on a camping trip to the Florida Keys at John Pennekamp State Park. After another father and our two sons arrived to, I couldn't wait to go snorkeling. I hurriedly joined a group loading a

park boat to go to the off-shore reef. Despite being a good swimmer and an old YMCA lifeguard, I violated an important rule: Never swim without a buddy or a lifeguard near. While snorkeling, I was soon mesmerized by the variety of fish and the beautiful coral and found myself a long way from the boat. The park rangers had earlier advised us to never swim across or touch the coral because you can damage it or cut yourself.

I found I was beginning to fight the strong waves, had become very tired, and started to fear drowning. I'm asthmatic and was also having difficulty breathing. At that point, I had what my wife (the counselor) would call a "panic attack." I imagined that I was the last one who had not boarded the boat and thought everyone was watching my struggle.

In my distress, I prayed to God to help me and He answered my prayer by giving me a peace. He told me to stop my futile efforts, float awhile, and rest. Then, slowly, I followed the channels back through the reef to the boat. When I got on board, I found there were many swimmers still out snorkeling—my perception of the emergency had been a figment of my imagination.

That incident reminds me of the disciples on the Sea of Galilee when they panicked, and Jesus had come to their rescue too.

Exodus 16:10-22; 1 Peter 2:11-25; John 15:12-27

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Moray, Ross & Caithness (Scotland) The Most Revd Mark Strange (Primate), Windward Islands (West Indies) The Rt Revd C. Leopold Friday, Wondurba (South Sudan) The Rt Revd Matthew Taban Peter

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

*ST MATTHEWS*: Gary Ploense's birthday.

## **Friday, April 24**

John 16:1-15 *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (v.7)*

I have always felt the human-animal bond, which I've observed so often in my 50 plus years as a veterinarian, is characterized by a spiritual relationship based on unconditional love. In today's scriptural promise of Jesus sending his gift of the Holy Spirit, we are changed into his Christ's likeness. His spirit is the life-giving force that motivates, energizes, and influences us. His spirit controls our soul (our intellect, emotions, and will). It controls our brain and conscious and non-conscious actions. Our brains and hearts are wired for God's love. The body carries out God's will of our spirit and soul.

I like the Jewish Kabbalah view that animals have souls like earthly angels, unlike us. They have emotions and intellect, just no will. That's why I think they will be in heaven.

Our spirituality can include a sense of interconnectedness with all living things. Biophilia, explained by biologist E. O. Wilson, believes humans have a psychological need for a relationship with different aspects of the natural world—like animals, plants, landscapes, and wilderness. In other words, he believes we need to be connected with all of God's creation. This all led my wife (a PhD psychotherapist) and myself to study the healing power of animals.

At my church, we are currently reviewing Marti Healy's book *The God Dog Connection* about what she has learned in her life about God and her faith from her dogs and cats.

Exodus 16:23-36; Psalms 16, 17; 1 Peter 3:13—4:6

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Morobo (South Sudan) The Rt Revd James Kenyi Elia, Worcester (England) The Rt Revd John Inge

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 Very Rev. David J. Halt, Bloomington.

*ST MATTHEWS*: Susan Clark and Amy Halt's birthdays.

## **Saturday, April 25**

1 Peter 4:7-19 *And above all things have fervent love among yourselves; for love shall cover the multitude of sins. (v.8)*

I just got off the phone with the young lady my 28-year-old grandson recently abused, resulting in jail time for domestic violence. She has asked me to pick him up from jail and she will pay his bail, drop charges, and give him a second chance. She's a hard-working single mother who's had a tough life herself. This is the second time my grandson has had a similar incident, with another young woman. Recently, he has been unemployed—no car, and living off the housing and employment of the young lady. He has been estranged from both his parents since their divorce several years ago. As his grandfather, I've always tried to believe in him and love him—and have seen his potential. While in college, he became father to my beautiful 8-year-old great-granddaughter who now lives with her biological mother.

This seems to be one of those life moments when we must ask, "What would Jesus do?" I'm praying and confident in today's Scripture of grace and wisdom. Maybe next year, I'll have good news to report to you.

Exodus 17:1-16; Psalms 20, 21; John 16:16-33

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Morogoro (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Godfrey Sehaba, Wulu (South Sudan) The Rt Revd Zacharia Mangar Apeti, Ijesa North East (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Joseph Olusola

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

*by R. Bruce Keene*

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**Pray for** those sick and those in distress: Margaret L., Allan H., James G., Mark S., Karen P., Noah D.

**Pray for** the Faithful Departed: June G.

**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.