

A Note from St. James' Pastoral Care *October 2023, Season of Pentecost*

Dear Friend,

As I sit down to write this Note to you, Harvest Thanksgiving is past, the vibrant Autumn leaves are falling fast, the season the Pentecost stretches on throughout October, and November will greet us with All Saints' Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. For most of us reading this Note who are in the "autumn" of our days, it feels like a time for looking back and reflecting on our lives. Most of us will see ourselves as very "ordinary" people, who have done nothing heroic or note-worthy throughout the course of our lives, and we may wonder rather sadly, "Have I done anything to make the world - or my corner of it - any better? Am I leaving any real legacy?" I believe that most of us will never know. We are far more likely to remember the big mistakes we made that hurt others and/or ourselves than to be aware of the tiny actions that could "brighten the corner where you are", as the old hymn proclaims...

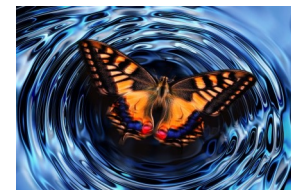
Have you heard of the "Butterfly Effect" or the "Ripple Effect"? Both of them basically posit that any action, however small and insignificant it may seem to us, can have consequences that "ripple on" and change other people, things or future events in ways which we cannot possibly imagine. The comforting presence, the welcoming smile, the encouraging word, the faithful action - the "normal", everyday things we never really thought about - are more likely to "ripple through" the lives of one person to another and another, running "like sparks in the stubble" as it reads in the Book of Wisdom from the Apocrypha (the extra Books and bits of Books of Scripture, sandwiched between the Old and New Testaments in some Protestant Bibles). In case you only have a Bible that does not contain these extra writing, I'm going to



quote you the reading in which these words are found. In fact, it is this year's designated "Old Testament" reading for All Saints' Sunday, taken from Wisdom 3: 1-9 in the New Revised Standard Version:

¹But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. ²In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster ³and their going from us to be their destruction, but they are at peace. ⁴For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. ⁵Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; ⁶like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. ⁷In the time of their visitation they will shine forth and will run like sparks through the stubble. ⁸They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. ⁹Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells us, "You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:14-16) In St. John's Gospel, we are told, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5), So, let us join our "sparks" to the Light of Christ the Word, that one day - God willing - we may, with all God's "ordinary" people, "shine like the sun in the kingdom of [our] Father." (Matthew 14:43)



Now let me give you the Gospel readings to carry you on until Remember Sunday:

October 22	Matthew 22: 15-22
October 29	Matthew 22: 34 –46
November 5	All Saints’ Sunday
	John 11: 32-44
November 12	Remembrance Sunday
	John 11: 21-27

As I’ve done before, I’m sharing only one sonnet by Malcolm Guite, because some of his introduction also seems necessary to give it context and connection for us:

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus:
A Requiem Sonnet for All Souls Day

If there is ever a moment when the veil is thin, when, as we come close to Christ, we come close to those who are alive in Christ, then it is when we sing the *Sanctus* in Communion.... we sing for a moment, not only with the angels, but with those whom we have loved and see no longer, those with whom we are still bound together in the communion of saints.

So here, for the feast, is a sonnet which was originally composed about the experience of listening to Mozart’s Requiem at Greenbelt in 2001, as I took leave of good friends....

We lie upon the grass on God’s good earth
and listen to the Requiem’s intense,
long, love-laden keening, calling forth
echoes of Eden, blessing every sense
with brimming blisses, every death with birth,
until all passion passes into praise.
I bless the winding paths that brought us here,
I bless this day, distinct amidst our days,
I bless the light, the music-laden air,
I bless the interweaving of our ways,
the lifting of the burdens that we bear,
I bless the broken body that we share
Sanctus the heart, *Sanctus* the spirit cries,
Sanctus the flesh in every touch replies

Finally here is a prayer by John Donne that, although I've printed it before, just seems so appropriate that I'm offering it to you again. (Set to music by William Harris and sung by "Voces 8", it is absolutely breath-taking!)

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening,
into the house and gate of heaven, to enter
into that gate and dwell in that house, where
there shall be no darkness nor
dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor
silence, but one equal music; no fears nor
hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor
beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the
habitation of thy glory and dominion, world
without end. Amen.

Until we meet again,
by God's Grace, let us
SHINE!
(M.C.)



With Love and Prayers
from your St. James'
Parish Family

From Jeff Campbell's home



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