

Good News Daily

May 7-13, 2017

Sunday, May 7

Psalm 63 *O God, you are my God, I pine for you; my heart thirsts for you, my body longs for you, as a land parched, dreary and waterless.* (v.1 NJB)

This psalm verse always makes me somewhat uncomfortable. It's like inadvertently overhearing a passionate lover's conversation.

I have a Trappist monk friend. The first few times I met with him, he talked about the importance of *desiring* God. It turns out Christian mystics have long spoken about that desire. (Writing commentaries on the Song of Songs was a creative work done by many of them.)

At that point in my life, I loved God, but it was a desire to be present with God. (I confess that it was often a desire to have God do something in my life.) It certainly wasn't a pining for, heart thirsting, body longing desire the psalmist describes.

A few years later, I was still grappling with this desire for God business. My monk friend said, "John, God already loves you more completely, deeply, and passionately than you could image. God wants, most of all, for you to join in that complete, deep, passionate love."

I wonder what would happen if we would allow ourselves to grow in love and desire for God? That love would be contagious!

Joshua 4:19-24, 5:1-9; Psalm 98; 1 Peter 5:1-11; Matthew 7:15-29

Birthdays: Shirley Ross

Anniversaries: None

Monday, May 8

Luke 6:1-11 *The scribes and the Pharisees were watching him to see if he would cure somebody on the Sabbath, hoping to find something to charge him with.* (v.7)

A member of our congregation seems to always be on the lookout for other Christians who "break the rules." He then dismisses them as "unfaithful."

Frankly, I've broken rules during my lifetime. I've never found someone reminding me of those failings to be at all helpful. What I've needed is for some caring Christian to lead this Prodigal back to the loving, healing, forgiving embrace of God, the Father. I've found that God responds to our failings and weakness by loving us onto a more whole and complete path than the one we've strayed onto.

Our watchful congregation member often complains that the church is "full of unrighteous sinners." Actually, that may be a better reality than he thinks. Sinners usually know the way back to God and new life better than self-righteous people. God already

knows everything about everybody. God really doesn't need help discovering our failings. What God does need are those who with love and compassion are willing to accompany us Prodigals return home to fullness of life in Christ.

Joshua 10:16-27; Psalms 41, 52; Colossians 1:1-14

Birthdays: David Rowe

Anniversaries: Pascal & Deborah Anglade

Tuesday, May 9

Colossians 1:15-23 *He is the Beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he should be supreme in every way; because God wanted all fullness to be found in him and through him to reconcile all things to him...* (vv.18b-19)

In my spiritual life, I sometimes become so preoccupied with Jesus as my Savior, Shepherd, and Companion, that I forget about the cosmic dimension of Christ: the second person of the Holy Trinity.

I recently received some new images taken from the Hubble Telescope. They are breathtaking! They're also a reminder that the realities revealed in those images "came into being" through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (John's Gospel reminds us, "not one thing came into being except through him.")

Those Hubble images recall for us that our Christian faith is grounded in the truth that the Son, the agent of Creation, was born into human history to share our humanity and existence.

Though being present and participating in the very creation of the universe, Jesus, the Son of God is always with us, sharing our problems, joys, victories, and failures, closer to us than we are ourselves. He is always at work reconciling all things to God, the Father.

This is the deepest mystery and the greatest love we can ever know and experience!

Joshua 10:29-43; Psalm 45; Luke 6:12-26

Birthdays: Andrew Mendiola

Anniversaries: David & Roseanne Rowe

Wednesday, May 10

Luke 6:27-38 *"Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate."* (v.36)

I've worked with my fellow Vietnam veterans for over twenty years. Very often, they are convinced that God is judging and punishing. Talking with them about the cruel violence, fear, and horrors of war they've experienced, many of them eventually utter the statement, "God will never forgive me!" That they believe this is an incredible tragedy. It's as if Jesus Christ had never been born, died, and resurrected!

I often respond to their utterance of hopelessness by saying, "I'll bet my life that God can and will forgive you." That always brings about a stunned silence. Then, I'm able to tell them about the

violence, fear, and horrors of war I experienced, witnessing to the “transforming power and transfiguring mercy” God has poured into my life. In that moment a new possibility opens for them.

There are many people who feel lost and unforgivable. They need us Christians to talk openly with them about our own brokenness, and the healing, love, and compassion God has given us.

That would fill the pews!

Joshua 11:1-23; Psalm 119:49-72; Colossians 1:24—2:7

Birthdays: Barbara Decker, Tom Gibbs and Jonathan Sibblis

Anniversaries: Sean & Judy Burke and Lydell & Zarifa Innis

Thursday, May 11

Colossians 2:8-23 *You have been buried with him by your baptism; by which, too, you have been raised with up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead.* (v.12)

Most of the baptisms I’m present for are of infants or small children. That makes it all too easy to view baptism as mostly about family, or being welcomed into a Christian community. It’s important to remember that something mysterious and incredibly profound takes place when someone is baptized.

Since the beginnings of the Church, Christians have believed that the promises and actions of the baptismal service, in a mysterious way, cause a person to participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and be filled with the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. Having received those gifts in baptism, the baptized person is deeply united with Christ, and all who have been baptized. Thereby, all baptized persons, in heaven and on earth, are incorporated with the risen and ascended Jesus, into the Body of Christ. Wow! This is a major miracle we’re participating in.

Next time we attend a baptism, let our hearts absorb the familial love, joy, and excitement present while our souls sing, “Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!”

Joshua 13:1-13; Psalm 50; Luke 6:39-49

Birthdays: Jewel Greer, Dorothea Phillips, Catherine Roy and Phillip Wong

Anniversaries: None

Friday, May 12

Psalm 40 *I waited, I waited for Yahweh, then he stooped to me and heard my cry for help.* (v.1)

I was having coffee with a friend when she suddenly blurted out, “I’ve had a terrible argument with my best friend. I’ve prayed about it for two weeks, but God hasn’t done anything to help!”

The only advice I could offer her was what my Trappist monk friend told me to do when this happens. His answer was, “Persevere!”

We ran into each other about two weeks later. She said, “I’ve been meaning to call you. I hated your

monk friend’s advice, but I kept on praying. Five days ago, during prayer, it came to me that I should visit my friend to say I was sorry about the argument, and that I missed her.”

Her friend answered the door, and immediately gave her a hug, saying, “I was praying a few minutes ago. It came to me that I should visit you to tell you I was sorry about the argument. I’ve missed you so much!”

When these two friends were both ready to reconcile, God acted! Sometimes the waiting in prayer is all about us being prepared for God’s answer.

Joshua 13:14-32; Psalm 54; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 7:1-17

Birthdays: Richard Doeblner, Oswald Hixon and Trisha Mitchell

Anniversaries: Kevin & Suzee Newman

Saturday, May 13

Colossians 3:12-17 *And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together in one body. Always be thankful.* (v.15)

A few years ago, a very special person in my life was dying of cancer. The closing months of her life were filled with pain, and an indignity that certainly must have deeply troubled this grand and gracious woman. Yet, every time I visited her, she seemed so radiant and very peaceful.

One day, I asked, “Dorothy, you are so peaceful in spite of all you’re enduring. How does that happen?” She answered, “When I realized I was dying, It occurred to me that I have so much and so many people to be thankful about. I asked God to help me remember them all. Every morning I pray a bit, and then get on with my thanksgivings. One morning I found myself thanking God for my cancer. I realized that I’d learned so much about myself dealing with this disease. Without it, I certainly wouldn’t have remembered all that I’ve given thanks for. The most amazing thing is that since I’ve started these thanksgivings I feel very peaceful.”

An amazing witness from an amazing human being. Thanksgiving and peacefulness go hand in hand!

Joshua 14:1-15; Psalm 55; Luke 7:18-35

Birthdays: None

Anniversaries: None

By John Ferguson

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