

# **Good News Daily**

**January 3-9, 2016**

## **Sunday, January 3**

Colossians 3:12-17 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.*  
(v.15a NJB)

I have a thin place. For me, the beach is a place where the veil between this world and the eternal is very thin. I live just north of Seattle; Edmonds Beach is only a 15-minute drive from my home. The truth is, I grew up on a beach—Will Roger's State Beach, Santa Monica, California. From the time we were able to swim until high school, most summer days, my mother used to round up all of us—which included me, my brother, and 3 sisters along with a handful of neighborhood kids. She'd count heads (sometimes 10 or more) and begin making sandwiches: 6 PB&J, 6 tuna. We'd pile into Mom's '62 Chevy (no seatbelts!) and wind our way through Topanga Canyon. At lunchtime I always went for a warmed, squished, sometimes sandy, tuna sandwich. Here I am (now: 58 years old) sitting on Edmonds Beach nibbling a squished, warmed-by-the-sun tuna sandwich. I am struck by the sacramental quality of this moment. I cannot help but feel an intense connection with my mother and father, and for a split second I feel an almost painful awareness of the entire universe. One of the greatest gifts Jesus gave us was the sacrament of the Eucharist—which allows us to be joined with all souls. I feel the sweetest peace knowing that my loved ones are still with me—in spirit. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

Proverbs 4:1-27; Psalms 66, 67; John 6:41-47

**Birthdays:** Rose Carneiro, Liria Huber, Carolina Larrazabal, Deric Officer and Troy Spicer

**Anniversaries:** Whit & Peggy Burrows and Alvin & Gloria Hanson

## **Monday, January 4**

Ephesians 5:1-20 *Try to discover what the Lord wants of you.*  
(v.10)

I'm worried about my job. For the past 16 years I've been working with neuropsychologists in the role of administering neuro-cognitive testing. I've had the pleasure of working with a diverse group of patients and I've found this to be a sometimes challenging, always interesting, truly fulfilling career. For the last 3 years I've been working at a clinic in which the bulk of the patients are elderly, and approximately 90% of these patients are being tested for dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Lately I've noticed a shift in me and in one of the new doctors with whom I work. I seem to be leaning toward a reasonable, more compassionate battery of tests for these elderly patients, while this new doctor wants a battery that includes every test in our arsenal—which could take anywhere between 4 to 6 hours in one sitting. I am not sure what to do. My conscience is nudging me, but I don't see a clear answer to this dilemma. I'm trying to discover what the Lord wants me to do.

Joshua 3:14—4:7; Psalms 85, 87; John 9:1-12, 35-38

**Birthdays:** Janet Burgess and Hazel Mitchell

**Anniversaries:** None

## **Tuesday, January 5**

Ephesians 6:10-20 *Put on the full armor of God so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics.* (v.11)

This is embarrassing...I have an addiction: Talk Radio. The radio in my car was always on. My favorite: political pundits, but just about anything would do: Car Talk, Fresh Air, even sports commentary. It took my attending weekly Lenten classes at church to realize my problem. Our beloved rector, John, challenged us to figure out a way to spend time everyday in prayer and contemplation. My online dictionary defines "addiction" as "a physical or psychological need for a habit-forming substance." When I asked Fr. John to give me a spiritual definition of "addiction" he said, "...something, anything that takes God's place in your life." Clearly, there is something quite evil about addiction. At that moment I decided that during Lent I would give up talk radio. I don't know about you, but I spend a lot of time in my car. Just using the 60-minute roundtrip commute to/from work freed an entire hour each weekday. During Lent I now listen to a 10-minute "Pray As You Go" episode, pray a bit, then allow my mind and heart to wander. I thought this would be a really tough challenge, but it wasn't at all. It was a joyous time for reflection and renewal. Praying and listening to God during my commute has turned out to be a priceless gift. I've decided that God is the best speaker I've ever listened to.

Jonah 2:2-9; Psalms 2, 110; John 11:17-27, 38-44

**Birthdays:** Daniella Bonnitto, Ed Brillinger, Marilyn Forbes and Mikey Valere

**Anniversaries:** Mr. & Mrs. Michael Gavaghen

## **Wednesday, January 6**

Matthew 12:14-21 *Many followed him and he healed all their sick.* (v.15b)

Our pediatrician advised us to take Andrew to Children's Hospital. He said it was probably just a virus, but because he was only 3 months old it would be best to be on the safe side. My husband stayed home with our 19-month-old daughter while Andrew and I spent the next 48 hours at Children's. The first 24 hours were dreadful; it was agonizing to hear Andrew's wailing, coughing, and choking. I felt helpless; the usual soothing techniques like walking, rocking, and singing didn't seem to make any difference. Soon, the two of us were crying in 2-part harmony. Through our tears I wondered, "Where is God in all this?" A bit later I started singing the Kyrie Eleison while Andrew and I swayed to its rhythm. I sang The Lord's Prayer as we rocked the night away. After awhile we both fell asleep. When Andrew awoke several hours later he seemed better. Everything started to calm down. We spent one more night in the hospital and he was discharged the next afternoon. This I believe: He heals all their sick—in this case a sick child, and a heartsick mother.

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalms 46, 97; Revelation 21:22-27

**Birthdays:** Jesfye Barnett and Jeffrey Thompson

**Anniversaries:** William & Wanda Kitchens

## **Thursday, January 7**

Psalm 103 *Yahweh is tenderness and pity, slow to anger and rich in faithful love; his indignation does not last for ever, nor his resentment remain for all time; he does not treat us as our sins deserve, nor repay us as befits our offences.* (vv.8-10)

This psalm proves that David really understood God. This is the God I knew was there, but I was taught differently—or at least I understood it differently. I spent much of my youth trying to appease God and wondering, “Did I just commit a venial sin or was that a mortal sin?” Definition of venial sin: a forgivable sin, “a sin that does not result in a complete separation from God and eternal damnation in Hell.” A mortal sin: “a willfully committed, serious transgression against the law of God, depriving the soul of divine grace.”

Fast-forward to today’s reading in Colossians where Paul writes, “It is he who has rescued us from the ruling force of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son that he loves and in him we enjoy our freedom, the forgiveness of sin” (v.13b). Good God Almighty! I’ve wasted precious time worrying about eternal damnation and Hell when I could have been truly living in his precious love. It’s a new year. And from now on I will not live in fear, I will live in love. Happy New Year!

Deuteronomy 8:1-3; Colossians 1:1-14; John 6:30-33, 48-51

**Birthdays:** None

**Anniversaries:** None

### **Friday, January 8**

*Psalm 118 I shall not die, I shall live to recount the great deeds of Yahweh. (v.17)*

“Mary, age 82. Diagnosis: ALS. Religion: Christian. Wants to die with dignity.” After reading this I looked no further on the long list of patients waiting for a hospice volunteer. I contacted the social worker and met Mary the next morning.

When I arrived at noon, Mary was laying in bed—curtains drawn to shut out the great Northwest’s muted light of the shortest days of the year. After chatting for a bit, she allowed me to open the curtains. Mary and I spent several hours together. She told me interesting stories about her life as a prominent (black) woman in the Seattle area. Most interesting were the stories she told me about the ways God had influenced her life. She also spoke about her struggle with wanting to die. Mary tried to get her doctor to sign paperwork to allow her to die with dignity—but because she was in absolutely no physical pain he refused. Before I left, I handed her an old copy of my writing in the Good News Daily. I told her that I thought she could write inspiring stories about her own life and how God has influenced and directed her. As I said good-bye, I told her I’d be back next week, and that I was hoping to hear more of her God-inspired stories.

I never went back. Mary had been discharged—meaning that she was no longer a hospice candidate because she was doing so well! Perhaps she decided she didn’t want to die; instead she’ll live to recount the great deeds of Yahweh.

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 117; Colossians 1:15-23; John 7:37-52

**Birthdays:** Christine Charles, Andreu Hall-Pinnock and Khaliq King

**Anniversaries:** None

### **Saturday, January 9**

*Colossians 1:24—2:7 I may be absent in body, but in Spirit I am there among you. (v.5a)*

This week’s writing begins and ends at my thin place—Edmonds Beach. Yesterday, I said goodbye to my son

who is off on another adventure: discovering Peru (“Dude, that’s where you’ll find the longest wave!”). Because he’s not sure when he’ll be returning, he bought a one-way ticket. Although he is 26 years old, he’s traveled the world to more distant places than many folks much older than he. With all this experience he has grown to be quite savvy, parsimonious, and pragmatic which, if you add in his incredible charm, allows him to be easily accepted by all. None of this quells my fear.

This morning I took myself with all my fear, confusion, and loneliness to my thin place. Here, where that veil between my painful world and the Land of Promise is lifted, I begin to feel lighter. My heavy tears of fear become sacramental as they mix with the cool salty air and the Puget Sound. I feel an enormous sense that I am experiencing a holy moment—with Jesus as our holy Conduit, mom, daddy, and the universe—my son included. I am now able to move on, knowing in the truest sense that although absent in body, “in Spirit I am there among you.” Before I leave my sandy sanctuary, I plunge my right hand into the chilly Puget Sound then make the Sign of the Cross. We are all together. Forever.

Isaiah 45:14-19; Psalms 121, 122, 123; John 8:12-19

**Birthdays:** Monique Smith and Leila Yocum

**Anniversaries:** None

*by Kate Donaldson*

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