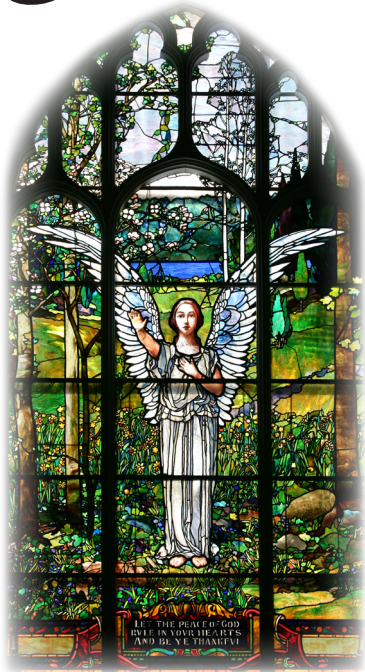


Grateful for God's Peace



Introduction

In our world, the news never fails to let us know what's "on fire" (literally and figuratively). In our individual lives, some of us feel pressure always to do more, while others yearn for something meaningful to do. It's enough to make you want to stop, and take a breath, and find the "peace of God that surpasses understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

One of the best spots in the church is our columbarium. Being in the company of all those saints, you can feel the truth of what we say each time we celebrate Eucharist, that we stand with "angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven" as we make our way through this present chapter of eternal life (BCP 362). And welcoming us there is our stunning stained-glass angel. In one sense, she represents our future hope – life in God's presence that never ends. But below her is a reminder we need to hear each day: **"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and be ye thankful."**

Which comes first? It's a chicken-and-egg situation. Does peace bring us gratitude, or does gratitude bring us peace? Perhaps the answer is, "Yes."

For this season of stewardship, we've put together these daily reflections to help us remember some of God's greatest gifts to us: unconditional love, our relationships with others, God's presence with us, the people who will come after us, and our service to bless others. For each day, you'll find Scripture and some reflection to open your heart to both the peace that surpasses understanding and the gratitude that only life with Christ can bring.

We hope you'll set aside a few minutes each day to read, pray, and see how God will show up with you on your pilgrimage toward peace.

— Fr. John Spicer, Mtr. Jean Long, Mtr. Rita Kendagor, Mtr. Anne Hutcherson, Deacon Adam James, and Archdeacon Bruce Bower

Week 1: Grateful for God's Unconditional Love

Oct. 22, 2023

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. *John 3:16*

These words may be scripture's ultimate expression of God's unconditional love. They assure us of grace – love freely given – across time, connecting a gift from millennia past with my own eternal future. Between those points lies today. Lord, this very day, regardless of its ups and downs, help me to be grateful for love I can never earn. – *Fr. John*

Oct. 23, 2023

While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. *Romans 5:6-8*

The New International Version of the Bible uses the word “powerless” instead of “weak.” “Powerless” indicates to me one who lacks the ability to do something for oneself. We are told

here that even before we knew we were powerless, even before we realized we didn't have the ability to save ourselves, Christ stepped in to help us. This amazes me, because even in a state of unknowing, Christ saw my need and my vulnerability. When was the last time someone did something for you before you even knew you had a need? How did that experience make you feel? – *Mtr. Rita*

Oct. 24, 2023

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. *Ephesians 2:4-6*

God's Word says that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus and not by our own efforts or works. Grace alone. Faith alone. Grace alone means that God loves, forgives, and saves us not because of who we are or what we do, but because of the work of Christ. In a world where we believe that we must earn what's provided to us, God's free, unconditional love and grace is a strange concept, sometimes difficult to accept. Today, be grateful for – and bask in – the gift of God's unconditional love. – *Ven. Bruce*

Oct. 25, 2023

We have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. *1 John 4:16*

The concept that “God is love” is easy to understand. But I find it challenging to grasp it fully and live it out in my daily life. It speaks to the core of faith and understanding of the divine. It beckons us to recognize that every act of love, no matter how small, is a way to draw closer to God. However, as we navigate our daily lives in a world that often prioritizes things other than love, the challenge lies in embodying this concept. How can we be conduits of God’s love, working toward healing and reconciliation in a world desperately in need of it? – *Mtr. Jean*

Oct. 26, 2023

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor

anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8:35, 37-39*

Today's world is stressful. Whether it's the increasing cost of our grocery bills, gas prices, prescription medications, or extracurricular activities for our kids, it's easy to feel that many things take us away from being able to focus on God and our faith. But the good news is that despite hardships, we will be victorious through Christ, who loves us. This passage is a beautiful reminder that we are not alone in our struggles and that we can always turn to God for comfort and support. – *Dcn. Adam*

Oct. 27, 2023

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart; I will let you find me, says the Lord. *Jeremiah 29:11-13*

I'm skeptical about discussing God's "plans." I've preferred my own plans, particularly when I traveled the world. One day, standing in China's Forbidden City, a voice from afar seemed to call me: "Seek with all your heart if you wish to find God." Given 40 years avoiding God's church, that voice shook me

a bit, and later I ventured into an Episcopal Church where I found my “fit”! I continue to ask questions, wonder where God is in troubled times, and worry a lot: Given how I avoided God, I wonder if God now avoids me. Yet repeatedly, I hear that assuring voice: “Seek me and you will find me.” Obviously, God wants us to be seekers: Are you willing to trust, to seek enough to be found? – *Mtr. Anne*

Oct. 28, 2023

How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. *Psalm 36:7-9*

What an offer! God’s steadfast love is a feast, the fountain of life, the light that gives us light. Then why, in the hardest times, does that feast seem scarce, the fountain run dry, and the light grow dim? It comes down to a word we likely miss: “may.” God doesn’t compel us but gives us the choice to take grateful refuge under the shadow of these wings. What will you choose today? – *Fr. John*

Week 2: Grateful for My Relationships with Others

Oct. 29, 2023

Naomi said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die – there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!” *Ruth 1:15-16*

The story of Ruth has become kind of cliché, but I love this story. Ruth goes beyond gratitude by expressing ongoing love through her intention to not only remain with Naomi but to worship and live as Naomi lives. Orpha, the sister-in-law, doesn't show a lack of gratitude; it's just that her role in this story was over. There are times when I get the opportunity to show gratitude but other times when my showing of gratitude is delayed. Does anyone come to mind from your past to whom you feel compelled to say “thank you” or maybe drop a note? – *Mtr. Rita*

Oct. 30, 2023

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” ... So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!” *Genesis 2:18, 21-23*

Occasionally, my dear wife, Joy, goes out of town on trips with her “girlfriends.” I secretly look forward to those times, anticipating my solitude. Yet always, by the end of the first day of my bachelorhood, I feel lonely and miss my partner ... a lot. In those times, I often turn to my relationships with others to fill the void. Scripture rightly advises that we are not meant to be alone. Having family and friends with whom to share life’s pleasures and challenges is a true gift. I am deeply grateful for the many deep relationships into which God has placed me. – *Ven. Bruce*

Oct. 31, 2023

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to

one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Is God speaking directly to me in these verses – reminding me that I don't have to face life's challenges alone? Holy One, thank you for this reminder today. – *Mtr. Jean*

Nov. 1, 2023

The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ... Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. 1
Samuel 18:1,3

Here, we read about the strong friendship between Jonathan and David. Their bond was built on love and loyalty, with Jonathan loving David as he loved his own soul. This friendship serves as a good example of how we should love and support our friends, even during tough times. Do you have friends who are struggling, and how can you assist them? – *Dcn. Adam*

Nov. 2, 2023

My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and

gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. ... Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” ... Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. *Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7*

This quote from the Song of Solomon was the only Bible verse I knew when asked if I had a preferred reading for my father’s funeral. I was, as I’ve often confessed, not “of the church.” The family was dismayed at my lack of biblical knowledge, and following the funeral we lived separate lives for several years. Gratefully, my brother and I were reconciled and smiled at the irony as I sought to be ordained! While I still don’t quote Scripture too well, I experience a daily presence of God and am reminded of the command: “Arise my love ... and come away.” The invitation is clear; have you accepted yours? – *Mtr. Anne*

Nov. 3, 2023

Jesus said, “A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” *Matthew 19:5-6*

When Ann and I were first together, one of the songs on the radio was Kathy Mattea's "Where've You Been?" — a story of a decades-long relationship and the pain that came when the couple was apart. The more time that passes, the more I understand that song. God connects us with our beloved in depth we can only glimpse at first, and each day is a chance to say "thank you" for it. — *Fr. John*

Nov. 4, 2023

When Job's three friends heard of all the troubles that had come upon him, each of them set out from his home — Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud.... They sat with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great. *Job 2:11-13*

When my father died in 1979, I was 25 years old and definitely not ready for my Daddy to die. I don't remember the funeral sermon; I don't remember most of the words that people spoke to me. But my friend took me to her mother's nail salon. And her mother meticulously massaged my hands, very gently shaped my fingernails, and painted them a most beautiful

color. She didn't speak many words to me; she didn't try to take away my obvious pain. But she sat with me, soaked my hands in warm soapy water, and was gentle – not only with my hands but with my broken heart. Can you remember anyone who has soothed your soul with caring silence? – *Mtr. Rita*

Week 3: Grateful for God's Presence With Me

Nov. 5, 2023

Thus says the Lord: The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. *Jeremiah 31:2-3*

Four decades ago, I remember sitting in the St. Andrew's pews and praying that God would "accept me into the family." I wanted what all those around me seemed to have – a legitimate relationship with God. I deeply desired to experience God's presence. Finally, I completely surrendered and opened myself to God. I laid down all my defenses and the conditions that had stood in the way of my relationship with Him. I found that I had long been part of the family ... that God had been present with me all along the way. I only needed to surrender and open myself to His presence. – *Ven. Bruce*

Nov. 6, 2023

God said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. *2 Corinthians 12:9*

God's grace is enough, made perfect through weakness. God's grace is enough, made perfect through weakness. Yes, God, I am listening. Strength can be found in vulnerability and weakness. I hear you. How do we handle our weaknesses and limitations in our daily lives? Are we willing to acknowledge our shortcomings, not being self-deprecating but in a way that opens us to the transformative power of Christ's strength and grace? If we do, it is precisely in our weakness that the power of Christ can shine through us most brightly. – *Mtr. Jean*

Nov. 7, 2023

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you. *Isaiah 54:10*

After being medically retired from my firefighting career, I faced a great deal of uncertainty about what to do next in life. It was more than just retiring from a job; it was like losing my identity, which I had lived for 15 years. Moreover, being the son of a firefighter had made this an indispensable part of my life. In this challenging time, I took comfort in knowing God loved me and would guide me toward the right path. The

words of Isaiah served as a reminder of God's compassion and faithfulness, which gave me strength and hope for the future.

– *Dcn. Adam*

Nov. 8, 2023

The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. *John 1:14*

On the island where I've spent the last five months, an unusual hurricane came as an undesired climax to the summer. As the winds ramped up, my concern was for the trees, especially the ancient dogwoods – fragile they seemed when forced nearly to the ground. Yet amazing strength allowed continuing glory; and when the sea had settled and the winds softly whispered, the trees brushed off random twigs and stood up gracefully. Then I remembered: Trees are recognized by scientists as having “voice” among each other. Little wonder they have remained a significant part of God's steady presence among us, a truth begun when carrying the Christ to His cross. I've often regarded nature, particularly trees, as spiritual directors. Have you? – *Mtr. Anne*

Nov. 9, 2023

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. *John 14:27*

I've always wanted to be fearless, willing to take big risks and make grand gestures. Looking in the mirror, I know better. But looking to Jesus, I know fearlessness is less about our wiring and more about our trust. When I come alongside God, I see how small my fears really are – and how willing God is to take them. What might I hand off today? What might you? – *Fr. John*

Nov. 10, 2023

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” *John 20:19*

We tend to be hard on the disciples because they appeared to abandon their friend Jesus and everything he stood for after the crucifixion. But can you blame them? Death by crucifixion was particularly brutal. And the disciples were understandably scared. But the presence of their friend, and the words of

peace spoken by their friend, created not only an atmosphere of calm but provided for them an inner peace, which was the opposite of their fears. When you're afraid, in what ways do you experience the peace of Christ? – *Mtr. Rita*

Nov. 11, 2023

Jesus said, “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.” *John 15:15*

Jesus was not friends with every person in the world. His friends were those who followed his commands. We can choose to obey him or not; and in that choice, we determine whether we are his friends. You don't need to look any farther than the disciples to gain some reassurance. They were hardly role models all the time ... sometimes petty, self-centered, vengeful, cowardly. And yet, they were friends of God because their hearts were turned to Christ. They sought Christ first, and their lives reflected it. Do you have what it takes to be Jesus' friend?
– *Ven. Bruce*

Week 4: Grateful for the People Who Will Come After Me

Nov. 12, 2023

Children are indeed a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Happy is the person who has a quiver full of them. *Psalms 127:3-5*

Psalms 127 beautifully underscores the significance of children in the eyes of God, describing them as a precious gift and a source of happiness. It emphasizes their role as future blessings, suggesting they carry potential, purpose, and the ability to impact the world positively. How do we value and nurture the gift of children, as individuals and as a society? How can we ensure we invest in their well-being, growth, and development? – *Mtr. Jean*

Nov. 13, 2023

People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to

such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. *Mark 10:13-16*

We are all little children in need of connection with Jesus. However, like the disciples here, sometimes we act as gatekeepers, stopping others from experiencing God’s love because we fear they may not respect our creator enough. The kingdom of God is for all of God’s children, not just the faithful churchgoers. How do you support others on their faith journeys, even if they don’t attend church regularly? – *Dcn. Adam*

Nov. 14, 2023

Jesus took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” *Mark 9:36-37*

I have treasured the opportunity to serve the Church as a priest – blessed indeed. However, I was a “late bloomer,” and retirement was mandatory far too soon. “Not fair,” I silently grumbled, sensing that I no longer had much purpose. A new clergy staff was in place; they were talented and dedicated,

and I was ... obsolete! Poor Mother Anne! Thankfully, God was patient with my wining, continually nudging me to understand I had a great purpose right before me. The new staff might appreciate an experienced perspective or alternative ideas based on experience. Best of all, I might offer a light touch when anxiety runs rampant! Even better, I myself might learn anew; and together, we could discover new and better ways to serve God. The question is, are you open for exploration and change, much as Jesus invited us to consider? – *Mtr. Anne*

Nov. 15, 2023

Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray. *Proverbs 22:6*

“If only it were that easy,” says my cynical-parent self. Half the time you’re not sure whether your “right way” is really the way that will best serve your child ... especially not when they start claiming the fullness of their own God-given identities. But I think the “right way” is just doing the next faithful thing and trusting that God will be there, leading you both to keep on walking. – *Fr. John*

Nov. 16, 2023

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

My great-grandmother's parents were slaves. When I was very young, she was unable to speak and would sit quietly in her rocker. But I had been told the story; it was seared in my young mind that I was a descendant of slaves. I remember sitting at her feet and just looking at her with awe because, even at my age, I knew she had seen some very difficult days. And that story continues because I have told my children, and one day they will tell theirs. In what way is sharing your love of God a part of your ongoing family story? – *Mtr. Rita*

Nov. 17, 2023

God established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. *Psalm 78:5-7*

Joy and I have a darling 4-year old granddaughter, Sloan, in San Antonio. When she and her parents come to visit Kansas City, Sloan makes it known, when we sit down to dinner, that it's time for a "talking prayer." She doesn't like sing-songy, rhyming "kid prayers" but demands the kind where we talk to God and thank Him for our blessings. Of course, we happily oblige her. It's a small opportunity to help pass along our faith within the expanding family unit. Who knows? Sloan may someday be acolyte material! – *Ven. Bruce*

Nov. 18, 2023

It was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed. *Psalm 139:13-16*

Holy One, you created each of us with divine intricacy and intentionality. It is with awe and gratitude that I thank you for my life. – *Mtr. Jean*

Week 5: Grateful to Bless Others Through Service

Nov. 19, 2023

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. *Romans 12:6-8*

Each of us is a unique creation made in the image and likeness of God. And yet, we're all different from one another. This realization challenges us to question our perception of who God is. In my case, I see God looking and speaking like my grandfather, who showered me with unconditional love and guidance, even while correcting me when I was wrong. I still feel his love from heaven. How do you imagine God? Does God appear to you as a father, mother, or someone else? – *Dcn. Adam*

Nov. 20, 2023

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when

you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. *Isaiah 58:6-9*

Early this summer, a woodpecker flew into our window and fell to the ground. I ran to its aid but to no avail; the bird would die quickly I was assured by those nearby. I found some soft leaves to serve as his or her deathbed, but I could not make myself leave. “Honey, leave the poor bird. It won’t fly again,” I heard my husband say. Nevertheless, I stayed ... and I prayed. After some time, as I looked to the sky for no particular reason, suddenly the bird flew. I was, of course, delighted. But more important, I remembered: We are all called for ministry (not necessarily clearly defined); we are all called to hear the cry for help and respond: Here I am. Are *you* ready? – *Mtr. Anne*

Nov. 21, 2023

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.

To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.
1 Peter 4:10-11

Most days, there seems to be an indirect relationship between task and capacity: The steeper the ask, the less capable I feel. Of course, the problem there is the “I.” Stewarding grace, God’s love freely given, means recognizing that our capacity to serve is not our own. Where do you seem to fall short in loving service? Ask, and ye shall receive.... – *Fr. John*

Nov. 22, 2023

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith. *James 2:15-18*

One of the things that impressed me about President Jimmy Carter was his willingness to put his work where his mouth was. His personal involvement with Habitat for Humanity is unsurpassed. While other politicians have quoted Scripture or made various religious claims, President Carter continued to teach Sunday School, as well as build houses with Habitat for

Humanity. While we cannot and should not compare ourselves to another person and their calling, what does putting your faith into action mean to you? – *Mtr. Rita*

Nov. 23, 2023

Jesus said, “The king will say to those at his right hand ... ‘I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” *Matthew 25:34-40*

Many years ago, I shared lunch with parishioner Ron Spradley, who was deeply involved in a prison ministry at Leavenworth Penitentiary. I asked Ron what motivated him to do that challenging ministry, and he referred to Matthew 25:34-40. He said that one day he recognized that he'd helped to feed and clothe people and that he'd assisted folks who were ill ...

but he'd never served those who were imprisoned. Ron figured Jesus expected him to live out the Gospel more fully, so he did! Serving others is not about just writing checks to support charities and ministries. It's about engaging and moving into relationship with those in need. Be grateful that you can serve others in ways big and small. – *Ven. Bruce*

Nov. 24, 2023

Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. *Matthew 16:24-25*

Deny myself, take up my cross, and follow you, Jesus? My heart is there, ready for action; but there are days when I find the call to follow you incredibly challenging. Why does life have to get in the way? Why can't life slow down? Instead of these questions, perhaps the question really ought to be, “What aspects of my life do I need to let go of or surrender for the sake of following You more closely?” – *Mtr. Jean*

Nov. 25, 2023

After Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. *John 13:12-15*

Washing feet is a beautiful act of service we hear about on Maundy Thursday, which marks the night of Jesus' Last Supper. After the meal, Jesus humbly took the time to serve his disciples, setting an example of love and compassion. In this moment, Jesus was teaching his followers to do the same, to serve one another with love and humility. It's a powerful reminder for us to think about how we can serve others with kindness and compassion in our daily lives. Reflecting on our own acts of service can help us grow in faith and deepen our relationship with God. How have you been serving others lately? How has this affected your spiritual journey? – *Dcn. Adam*

*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord
make his face to shine upon you, and be
gracious to you; the Lord lift up his
countenance upon you, and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26

*The peace of God, which surpasses all
understanding, will guard your hearts
and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:7



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