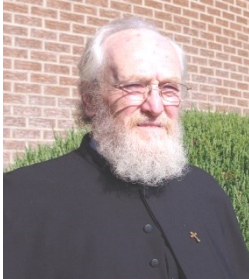


THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN NEWS

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Fr. Robert's Remarks



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC
VICAR GENERAL

Greetings; the Lord be with you!

Oh; the joys of modern technology.

This month the newsletter is somewhat late. It has been reworked after a computer crash. We had a local power fail one evening last week that resulted in one dead computer. The computer was a useful instrument for 10 years. I can hope that its successor will be as helpful.

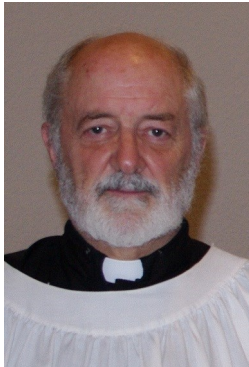
Gratefully, the repair shop tells me no files were not lost in the crash—and that means my email address books and newsletter

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The Rev. Peter Jardine: Some Thoughts on the Messages from Genesis



THE REV. PETER JARDINE

God's covenant with Noah, described in Genesis 9 is binding on all the descendants of Noah, i.e. a universal moral law was established which was to be obeyed and observed by all men. In the next chapters, we find another covenant put in place by God, one of even more significance.

What God also began here was a series of events to save from destruction the creatures He had set upon the face of the earth and given dominion over it. Some 2,000 years later these events reached their conclusion with the Incarnation of God the Son and His sacrifice upon the Cross. In Genesis chapters 12 to 50 we are reading nothing less than the beginning of the salvation story and in them we find foreshadowings of the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Some 3,500 years before Christ people worshipped multiple gods. They had come to believe in spirit, and everything had, to them, both a physical and a spiritual side, even inanimate objects like sun, moon and stars. They often attempted to unite with those gods through sacrifice. To quote Dr. Robertson Smith from Bishop Gore's book, *The Body of Christ*, **"The fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion, and that all atoning rites are ultimately to be regarded as owing their efficacy to a communication of divine life to the worshipper, and to the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between them and their worshippers."** Many of the people were nomads, wandering from oasis to oasis in the desert in small (family) groups. The oases were too small to support large groups. At night they would often build an altar and share their meal with a deity.

Unknowingly, they were practicing what we know as the *sacramental principle*.

Eventually a group of the Semitic nomads (those arising from Shem) arrived in the Tigris Euphrates Valley, in what was known as Babylonia. Babylonia was already populated by Sumerians,

Rev. Peter Jardine: Messages from Genesis

peaceful, cultivated and organised. Over generations the Semitic genes of the more virile Semitic nomads prevailed, along with the culture of the Sumerians. The result was a powerful stimulus to progress in a number of directions. Dominance shifted from one part, or city to another. Around 2,400 BC Ur was the dominant city. Their god was Sin, the moon god. The people were predominantly monotheistic.

Later (around 2,000) BC Babylon overtook Ur in power and influence. The people did so with a different god, Marduk, who gradually came to overshadow Sin. The people of Ur then found their monotheistic beliefs challenged. Among them was Terah – who reacted by taking his family back into the desert, journeying far to the north to Haran in Mesopotamia.



ICE ART IN DECEMBER

Everything changed from this point, with God acting through the son of Terah, Abram. God began speaking to those who would become known as His chosen people. It is the beginning of the direct Revelation of God, first to those who became known as Israelites, but secondly to all humankind.

Abram was subjected to a number of challenges. Firstly, to leave his own people (12:1). Then to accept and love a barren wife, who he chooses to hide from the Egyptians (12:11-13). To rescue his brother Lot from the kings who invaded the Jordan Valley where he and his people were living. (Chapter 14). To sacrifice his own son Isaac. (Chapter 22) This was perhaps the ultimate challenge.

The story of Abram, whose name God changes to Abraham (17:5), is a long one and full of fascinating elements.

Consider, for example, his obedience to God, and the rewards that followed.

Those rewards included : **I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, an him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.** (12:1-3).

They arrive at Shechem in the land of Canaan, which God promises to Abraham's offspring. (12:7) **Then the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, To your offspring I will give this land.**

And, of course, riches. (13:2) **Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.** Those riches arose from a strange episode which we read in 12:10-20.

The covenant of circumcision. (17:1-14) This is followed by the promise of a son through his aged wife Sarai, whose name God says is to be changed to Sarah.

Abraham's intercession for Sodom, from which God rescues Lot, his nephew. (18:22-19:22). The story of Sodom and Gomorrah illustrates clearly God's hatred of evil.

Abraham died at the ripe old age of 175. First, some time after his wife Sarah died, he married another, Keturah, who bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. The rest of Genesis follows some of their stories.

Rev. Peter Jardine: Some on the Messages from Genesis

It can be easy to miss the importance of the messages in Genesis. Let us not do that. In the difficult times through which we are living, those messages may pass on much hope to us.



Bonnies' Reflections: In The Field



BONNIE IVEY (& LAD)

In chapter 13 of Matthew's gospel, we see Jesus going out to address the crowds. With him are the twelve men he has chosen to be his closest associates. Jesus is using parables to make his hearers think. He speaks about everyday things like seeds and fishing nets; surprising things like hidden treasure and pearls. He puts vivid images into people's minds so they

will remember his stories.

Disappointingly, the Twelve seem to be confused by the stories. They ask why he teaches in parables. Jesus' reply indicates a parable will go over the heads of people who are not interested in the kingdom of heaven. Those who really are seeking God, however, will be open to learning more. They may come, as do the Twelve, and ask for an explanation.

One parable concerns a wheat field. A man sowed good seed, but an enemy came that night, when everyone was asleep, and sowed weeds among the wheat. Everything seemed fine until the crop developed the first seed heads. Then the harmful weeds were apparent. Jesus was talking about darnel, or tares, which looks much like wheat but has black seeds, not brown like wheat kernels. Darnel seeds are often infected by a fungus which causes illness if the darnel is eaten.

The man's servants offer to pull out the weeds, but he prevents this, for the roots of the valuable wheat will be damaged. The harvesters will arrive at the proper time, he says. They will sort the plants. The darnels will be bundled up for burning, but the wheat will go into the master's barn.

The Twelve listened to this parable along with the rest of the crowd. At the end of the day, back at the house where they were staying, they asked Jesus what it meant. The sower is the Son of Man, he tells them. The field is the world. The good seed represents the "sons of the kingdom", the people who seek to follow God. The weeds are those who are planted by the devil and are enemies of God. The harvesters are the angels who will come "at the end of the age", the day of judgment.

We might be distressed when we see evil things being done. "Why does God allow this?" we ask. "Why does he allow this person, those people, to make life a burden for others? Couldn't he just remove them? Wouldn't it be great if we woke up to a world



Image in the Public Domain

DARNEL

Bonnies' Reflections: In The Field

tomorrow with no cruelty, neglect, or war?" But Jesus has addressed this in his parable. Pulling out the weeds will damage the wheat. We are all growing in that field, and our roots are intermingled. Our lives are interconnected. Pulling out a villain will tear the roots of whoever loved them.

Each individual's heart is also a field, capable of growing good or evil fruit. We crave freedom, and fight for it, yet that freedom allows us to choose the wrong thing. But we can also choose to repent, turning away from evil. The story is not over.

Matthew, who wrote this gospel, had repented. He was formerly a tax collector who worked for the Roman Empire. He took money from his own countrymen and put it into the coffers of their conquerors. Many of the Jews who held this position availed themselves of the perks allowed by the Roman government. They added extra charges which went into their own pockets. But Jesus called Matthew, who immediately left his job to become a disciple.

Peter had left his fishing business to follow Jesus. He was a bold and decisive man who knew the right answer when Jesus asked "Who do men say that I am? And who do YOU say that I am?"

Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of God.' Yet when Jesus predicted his own death, Peter argued with him. When Jesus prophesied that his followers would forsake him, Peter claimed he would never do that. Yet he did. Later, he repented, and was restored by the risen Jesus.

When we find evil in our own hearts, or see it in the actions of others, we must remember that the story is not over. If we wish to receive mercy ourselves, we must be willing to see others receive it as well.



THE SILVER IS MINE,
AND THE GOLD IS
MINE, SAITH THE
LORD OF HOSTS.
HAGGAI 2.8

Frances Ridley Havergal: Kept For The Master's Use

Chapter VII.

Our Silver and Gold Kept for Jesus.

*'Keep my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.'*

'The silver and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.' Yes, every coin we have is literally our 'Lord's money.' Simple belief of this fact is the stepping-stone to full consecration of what He has given us, whether much or little.

'Then you mean to say we are never to spend anything on ourselves?' Not so. Another fact must be considered,—the fact that our Lord has given us our bodies as a special personal charge, and that we are responsible for keeping these bodies, according to the means given and the work required, in working order for Him. This is part of our

Frances Ridley Havergal: Kept For The Master's Use

'own work.' A master entrusts a workman with a delicate machine, with which his appointed work is to be done. He also provides him with a sum of money with which he is to procure all that may be necessary for keeping the machine in thorough repair. Is it not obvious that it is the man's distinct duty to see to this faithfully? Would he not be failing in duty if he chose to spend it all on something for somebody else's work, or on a present for his master, fancying that would please him better, while the machine is creaking and wearing for want of a little oil, or working badly for want of a new band or screw? Just so, we are to spend what is really needful on ourselves, because it is our charge to do so; but not for ourselves, because we are not our own, but our Master's. He who knoweth our frame, knows its needs of rest and medicine, food and clothing; and the procuring of these for our own entrusted bodies should be done just as much 'for Jesus' as the greater pleasure of procuring them for some one else. Therefore there need be no quibbling over the assertion that consecration is not real and complete while we are looking upon a single shilling as our own to do what we like with. Also the principle is exactly the same, whether we are spending pence or pounds; it is our Lord's money, and must not be spent without reference to Him.

When we have asked Him to take, and continually trust Him to keep our money, 'shopping' becomes a different thing. We look up to our Lord for guidance to lay out His money prudently and rightly, and as He would have us lay it out. The gift or garment is selected consciously under His eye, and with conscious reference to Him as our own dear Master, for whose sake we shall give it, or in whose service we shall wear it, and whose own silver or gold we shall pay for it, and then it is all right.

But have you found out that it is one of the secrets of the Lord, that when any of His dear children turn aside a little bit after having once entered the blessed path of true and conscious consecration, He is sure to send them some little punishment? He will not let us go back without a sharp, even if quite secret, reminder. Go and spend ever such a little without reference to Him after you have once pledged the silver and gold entirely to Him, and see if you are not in some way rebuked for it! Very often by being permitted to find that you have made a mistake in your purchase, or that in some way it does not prosper. If you 'observe these things,' you will find that the more closely we are walking with our Lord, the more immediate and unmistakeable will be His gracious rebukes when we swerve in any detail of the full consecration to which He has called us. And if you have already experienced and recognised this part of His personal dealing with us, you will know also how we love and bless Him for it.

There is always a danger that just because we say 'all,' we may practically fall shorter than if we had only said 'some,' but said it very definitely. God recognises this, and provides against it in many departments. For instance, though our time is to be 'all' for Him, yet He solemnly sets apart the one day in seven which is to be specially for Him. Those who think they know better than God, and profess that every day is a Sabbath, little know what floodgates of temptation they are opening by being so very wise above what is written. God knows best, and that should be quite enough for every loyal heart. So, as to money, though we place it all at our Lord's disposal, and rejoice to spend



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it all for Him directly or indirectly, yet I am quite certain it is a great help and safeguard, and, what is more, a matter of simple obedience to the spirit of His commands, to set aside a definite and regular proportion of our income or receipts for His direct service. It is a great mistake to suppose that the law of giving the tenth to God is merely Levitical. ‘Search and look’ for yourselves, and you will find that it is, like the Sabbath, a far older rule, running all through the Bible,[1] and endorsed, not abrogated, by Christ Himself. For, speaking of tithes, He said, ‘These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.’ To dedicate the tenth of whatever we have is mere duty; charity begins beyond it; free-will offerings and thank-offerings beyond that again.

First-fruits, also, should be thus specially set apart. This, too, we find running all through the Bible. There is a tacit appeal to our gratitude in the suggestion of them,—the very word implies bounty received and bounty in prospect. Bringing ‘the first of the first-fruits into the house of the Lord thy God,’ was like ‘saying grace’ for all the plenty He was going to bestow on the faithful Israelite. Something of gladness, too, seems always implied. ‘The day of the first-fruits’ was to be a day of rejoicing (compare Num. xxviii. 26 with Deut. xvi. 10, 11). There is also an appeal to loyalty: we are commanded to honour the Lord with the first-fruits of all our increase. And that is the way to prosper, for the next word is, ‘So shall thy barns be filled with plenty.’ The friend who first called my attention to this command, said that the setting apart first-fruits—making a proportion for God’s work a *first charge* upon the income—always seemed to bring a blessing on the rest, and that since this had been systematically done, it actually seemed to go farther than when not thus lessened. Presenting our first-fruits should be a peculiarly delightful act, as they are themselves the emblem of our consecrated relationship to God. For of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. How sweet and hallowed and richly emblematic our little acts of obedience in this matter become, when we throw this light upon them! And how blessedly they may remind us of the heavenly company, singing, as it were, a new song before the throne; for they are the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Perhaps we shall find no better plan of detailed and systematic setting apart than the New Testament one: ‘Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.’ The very act of literally fulfilling this apostolic command seems to bring a blessing with it, as all simple obedience does. I wish, dear friends, you would try it! You will find it a sweet reminder on His own day of this part of your consecration. You will find it an immense help in making the most of your little charities. The regular inflow will guide the outflow, and ensure your always having *something* for any sudden call for your Master’s poor or your Master’s cause. Do not say you are ‘afraid you could not keep to it.’ What has a consecrated life to do with being ‘afraid’? Some of us could tell of such sweet and singular lessons of trust in this matter, that they are written in golden letters of love on our memories. Of course there will be trials of our faith in this, as well as in everything else. But every trial of our faith is but a trial of His faithfulness, and is ‘much more precious than gold which perisheth.’

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‘What about self-denial?’ some reader will say. Consecration does not supersede this, but transfigures it. Literally, a consecrated life is and must be a life of denial of self. But all the effort and pain of it is changed into very delight. We love our Master; we know, surely and absolutely, that He is listening and watching our every word and way, and that He has called us to the privilege of walking ‘worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.’ And in so far as this is a reality to us, the identical things which are still *self-denial* in one sense, become actual *self-delight* in another. It may be self-denial to us to turn away from something within reach of our purse which it would be very convenient or pleasant to possess. But if the Master lifted the veil, and revealed Himself standing at our side, and let us hear His audible voice asking us to reserve the price of it for His treasury, should we talk about self-denial then? Should we not be utterly ashamed to think of it? or rather, should we, for one instant, think about self or self-denial at all? Would it not be an unimaginable joy to do what He asked us to do with that money? But as long as His own unchangeable promise stands written in His word for us, ‘Lo, I am with you *always*,’ we may be sure that He *is* with us, and that His eye is as certainly on our opened or half-opened purse as it was on the treasury, when He sat over against it and saw the two mites cast in. So let us do our shopping ‘as seeing Him who is invisible.’

It is important to remember that there is no much or little in God’s sight, except as relatively to our means and willingness. ‘For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.’ He knows what we have *not*, as well as what we have. He knows all about the low wages in one sphere, and the small allowance, or the fixed income with rising prices in another. And it is not a question of paying to God what can be screwed out of these, but of giving Him all, and then holding all at His disposal, and taking His orders about the disposal of all.

But I do not see at all how self-indulgence and needless extravagance can possibly co-exist with true consecration. If we really never do go *without* anything for the Lord’s sake, but, just because He has graciously given us means, always supply for ourselves not only every need but ‘every notion,’ I think it is high time we looked into the matter before God. Why should only those who have limited means have the privilege of offering to their Lord that which has really cost them something to offer? Observe, it is not *merely* going without something we would naturally like to have or do, but going without it *for Jesus’ sake*. Not, ‘I will go without it, because, after all, I can’t very well afford it;’ or, ‘because I really ought to subscribe to so and so;’ or, ‘because I daresay I shall be glad I have not spent the money:’ but, ‘I will do without it, because I *do* want to do a little more for Him who so loves me—just that much more than I could do if I did this other thing.’ I fancy this is more often the heart language of those who *have* to cut and contrive, than of those who are able to give liberally without any cutting and contriving at all. The very abundance of God’s good gifts too often hinders from the privilege and delight of really doing without something superfluous or comfortable or usual, that they may give just that much more to their Lord. What a pity!

The following quotation may (I hope it will), touch some conscience:—‘A gentleman once told us that his wine bill was £100 a year—more than enough to keep a Scripture reader always at work in some populous district. And it is one of the countless

‘WHAT ABOUT SELF-DENIAL?’ SOME READER WILL SAY. CONSECRATION DOES NOT SUPERSEDE THIS, BUT TRANSFIGURES IT. LITERALLY, A CONSECRATED LIFE IS AND MUST BE A LIFE OF DENIAL OF SELF. BUT ALL THE EFFORT AND PAIN OF IT IS CHANGED INTO VERY DELIGHT.

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advantages of total abstinence that it at once sets free a certain amount of money for such work. Smoking, too, is a habit not only injurious to the health in a vast majority of cases, and, to our mind, very unbecoming in a “temple of the Holy Ghost,” but also one which squanders money which might be used for the Lord. Expenses in dress might in most people be curtailed; expensive tastes should be denied; and simplicity in all habits of life should be a mark of the followers of Him who had not where to lay His head.’

And again: ‘The self-indulgence of wealthy Christians, who might largely support the Lord’s work with what they lavish upon their houses, their tables, or their personal expenditure, is very sad to see.’[2]

Here the question of jewellery seems to come in. Perhaps it was an instance of the gradual showing of the details of consecration, illustrated on page 21, but I will confess that when I wrote ‘Take my silver and my gold,’ it never dawned on me that anything was included beyond the coin of the realm! But the Lord ‘leads on softly,’ and a good many of us have been shown some capital bits of unenclosed but easily enclosable ground, which have yielded ‘pleasant fruit.’ Yes, very pleasant fruit! It is wonderfully nice to light upon something that we really never thought of as a possible gift to our Lord, and just to give it, straight away, to Him. I do not press the matter, but I do ask my lady friends to give it fair and candid and prayerful consideration. Which do you really care most about—a diamond on your finger, or a star in the Redeemer’s kingdom, shining for ever and ever? That is what it comes to, and there I leave it.



On the other hand, it is very possible to be fairly faithful in much, and yet unfaithful in that which is least. We may have thought about our gold and silver, and yet have been altogether thoughtless about our rubbish! Some have a habit of hoarding away old garments, ‘pieces,’ remnants, and odds and ends generally, under the idea that they ‘will come in useful some day;’ very likely setting it up as a kind of mild virtue, backed by that noxious old saying, ‘Keep it by you seven years, and you’ll find a use for it.’ And so the shabby things get shabbier, and moth and dust doth corrupt, and the drawers and places get choked and crowded; and meanwhile all this that is sheer rubbish to you might be made useful at once, to a degree beyond what you would guess, to some poor person.

It would be a nice variety for the clever fingers of a lady’s maid to be set to work to do up old things; or some tidy woman may be found in almost every locality who knows how to contrive children’s things out of what seems to you only fit for the rag-bag, either for her own little ones or those of her neighbours.

My sister trimmed 70 or 80 hats every spring for several years with the contents of friends’ rubbish drawers, thus relieving dozens of poor mothers who liked their children to ‘go tidy on Sunday,’ and also keeping down finery in her Sunday school. Those who literally fulfilled her request for ‘rubbish’ used to marvel at the results.

Little scraps of carpet, torn old curtains, faded blinds, and all such gear, go a wonderfully long way towards making poor cottagers and old or sick people comfortable. I never saw anything in this ‘rubbish’ line yet that could not be turned to good account somehow, with a little *considering* of the poor and their discomforts.

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I wish my lady reader would just leave this book now, and go straight up-stairs and have a good rummage at once, and see what can be thus cleared out. If she does not know the right recipients at first hand, let her send it off to the nearest working clergyman's wife, and see how gratefully it will be received! For it is a great trial to workers among the poor not to be able to supply the needs they see. Such supplies are far more useful than treble their small money value.

Just a word of earnest pleading for needs, closely veiled, but very sore, which might be wonderfully lightened if this wardrobe over-hauling were systematic and faithful. There are hundreds of poor clergymen's families to whom a few old garments or any household oddments are as great a charity as to any of the poor under their charge. There are two Societies for aiding these with such gifts, under initials which are explained in the Reports; the P.P.C. Society—Secretary, Miss Breay, Battenhall Place, Worcester; and the A.F.D. Society—Secretary, Miss Hinton, 4 York Place, Clifton. I only ask my lady friends to send for a report to either of these devoted secretaries; and if their hearts are not so touched by the cases of brave and bitter need that they go forthwith to wardrobes and drawers to see what can be spared and sent, they are colder and harder than I give Englishwomen credit for.

There is no bondage in consecration. The two things are opposites, and cannot co-exist, much less mingle. We should suspect our consecration, and come afresh to our great Counsellor about it, directly we have any sense of bondage. As long as we have an unacknowledged feeling of fidget about our account-book, and a smothered wondering what and how much we *'ought'* to give, and a hushed-up wishing the thing had not been put quite so strongly before us, depend upon it we have not said unreservedly, 'Take my silver and my gold.' And how can the Lord keep what He has not been sincerely asked to take?

Ah! if we had stood at the foot of the Cross, and watched the tremendous payment of our redemption with the precious blood of Christ,—if we had seen that awful price told out, drop by drop, from His own dear patient brow and torn hands and feet, till it was ALL paid, and the central word of eternity was uttered, *'It is finished!'* should we not have been ready to say, *'Not a mite will I withhold!'*

My Jewels

'Shall I hold them back— my jewels?
Time has travelled many a day
Since I laid them by for ever,
Safely locking them away;
And I thought them yielded wholly.
When I dared no longer wear
Gems contrasting, oh, so sadly!

With the adorning I would bear.
'Shall I keep them still— my jewels?
Shall I, can I yet withhold
From that living, loving Saviour
Aught of silver or of gold?
Gold so needed, that His gospel
May resound from sea to sea;
Can I know Christ's service lacketh,
Yet forget His "unto Me"!



Frances Ridley Havergal: Kept For The Master's Use

‘No; I lay them down— my jewels,
Truly on the altar now. Stay!
I see a vision passing
Of a gem-encircled brow:
Heavenly treasure worn by Jesus,
Souls won through my gift outpoured;
Freely, gladly I will offer
Jewels thus to crown my Lord!’

From *Woman's Work*.

Notes

^[1]See Gen. xiv. 20, xxviii. 22; Lev. xxvii. 30, 32; Num. xviii. 21; Deut. xiv. 22; 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 6, 12; Neh. x. 37, xii. 44, xiii. 12; Mal. iii. 8, 10; Matt. xxiii. 23; Luke xi. 42; 1 Cor xvi. 2; Heb. vii. 8.

^[2]Christian Progress, vol. iii. pp. 25, 26.



From the Parishes

Holstein, ON, Brantford, ON, & Elmira, ON



On the Saturday of the last weekend of October, Joyce and I travelled to a farm just outside Holstein, ON for a service with the Creeses—Bill and Becky. There we offered the Eucharist of Trinity XX. There was some rearrangement of the set up to accommodate the distancing rules for COVID-19.. The small, recently built, timber-frame building set in among the trees of the Creese property serves as a full-time chapel . In the photo below, Bill adjusted the wood-fire just before the service began. As usual coffee hour followed the service.

Regrettably, the COVID situation has prevented a follow-up service there.

After spending the night in Elmira, we travelled to Brantford. To *The Carriage House*. Brian



From the Parishes

Munro had arranged the use of the venue for the feast of Christ the King. For our first Sunday in Brantford we had five of us.—Brian Munro, Alison Barr, Dr. Gerardo Wood, with Joyce and me for the Mass. Of course, coffee hour followed.

The Carriage House below used to be just that—a carriage house. It has been renovated and now serves as a reception hall for a local funeral home. We have been blessed to be able to use the hall each month. The altar set up is shown on the preceding page is from a service on Advent Sunday. On January 3 we celebrated the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Hopefully this arrangement will continue and the congregation will grow.

Before our return home on Monday we offered a house mass in Elmira.

The trip from Holstein to Brantford through Elmira is about 2 hours. Equidistant from both is Waterloo where, in the past we have held monthly services; but, since COVID-19 arrived, we do not have access to the facility we have used for the last six or seven years.

Please pray for our presence there and for growth throughout that area.



The Church Mouse: Many Books

The pounding of feet made the floor shake and woke me up. Was it the children coming in for their bible lesson? I scrambled out of my fluffy nest and peeked out from under the radiator. Yes, there were all the children's feet under the table. I waited eagerly for the sound of the cookie tin being opened. Soon there was the sound of children munching, and even better, the sound of crumbs falling on the floor. Oh look! A whole raisin! I held it in my front paws, nibbling, and listened to Fr. Palmer as he began the lesson. Something big went PLUNK on the table above me.

"What's in the box, Fr. Palmer?" asked Kevin. There were ripping noises and all the children stood up to see.

"It's a box of bibles," said Fr. Palmer. "There is one for each of you." He started passing the bibles around.

"I already have one that my Auntie gave me," said Lila. "I actually don't read it, because the words are so old fashioned I can't understand them."

"Ah, but these are a modern translation," he answered, "and will be easier for you to read. Now how many of you have tried reading the bible by yourself already?" A few children said they had tried. One said he thought there were too many battles. Another was puzzled because there seemed to be stories about people who did bad things. Wasn't the bible supposed to be all about being good? And they all wanted to know who wrote the bible.

"There is something you must know about the bible. It isn't one book. It's a LIBRARY. "Bible" means "Many books." These books were written by many different people, over hundreds of years, with the Holy Spirit helping them write. Now, how many of you go to the library in town to take out books?" All the children said they did. "And how many different kinds of books are in the library?" Well, they could not answer that question easily.

"In the bible you will find history, and songs, good advice, war stories, books of law, books about kings. Everyday things and very strange things. Stories of families."

"I want to read stories about Jesus," said Mona. "Where are they?"

"You can imagine the books of the bible as being in two bookcases side by side. In one bookcase are all the stories about the years before Jesus was born. That part is called the Old Testament. The other bookcase holds all the stories about when Jesus came into the world, and the things that happened afterward. We call that the New Testament."

Fr. Palmer then helped the children find the beginning of the New Testament in their bibles.





The Church Mouse: Many Books

“The first four New Testament books are about Jesus, and are called *Gospels*. Gospel is an old word meaning “Good News.” The gospel books are named after the people who wrote them: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Let’s start with Mark. Mark begins his book, not with Jesus the baby in the stable as you might expect. He begins with a strange young man called John the Baptist, who lived in the desert...”

After listening to Fr. Palmer read a chapter, Lila said, “I like this story. I like the way Mark tells it. He sounds so excited!” And all the children were excited to have their own bibles to take home with them.



Fr. Robert’s Remarks

materials among other things—and I shall have them back with the new computer. It has been a frustrating week. Now that I have that off my chest, I shall move on.

This personal frustration actually brings me to a point that I want to make this month. I have no doubt that you have your own frustrations too—the limitation of numbers allowed for church, the inability of clergy to visit people in their homes, or in their care facilities and the like. Perhaps they have been getting to you, too. Over Christmas we were limited in visiting or inviting people into our homes—even family. There are many lonely people. There is a lot of anxiety.

Not infrequently, I hear or read comments like, “Oh, if we could just get back to normal.” But, what is normal? Shall we ever get back to what we felt to be normal a year ago? Personally, I doubt it. A follow-up question might be, “Should we?” I think back over my life and realise that what I saw as normal years ago is quite different from where we are to-day. Next year will be different again. Whether for any individual that different time will be seen or experienced as good or bad will depend on the individual. Perhaps this suggests that we probably need to do some self-care.

I am reminded of the verses in St. Matthew’s gospel, chapter 6—

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. ³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

These verses, along with the Lord’s Prayer just before, seem to me to be good advice about the need for self-care.

There is a book that I should like to recommend in the area of self care—published by Ancient Faith Publishing and available in paper or electronically. Published in 2020 by The Rev. Nicholas and Dr Roxanne Louh, it is called *Renewing You: A Priest, a Psychologist, and a Plan*. It is written for ordinary people like you and me. Both have

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Fr. Robert's Remarks

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a lot in them to help sort out some self-care strategies and it is a book that can be used by persons by themselves or in a group setting whether face to face or on ZOOM, Facebook video, or whatever. There are study questions and hints at the end of each chapter

In a chapter entitled *Tend to Yourself*, there is an anecdote about the their daughter:

When our daughter was just six years old, she made the most amazing observation about this concept.

"Mom," she said, "when I feel tired, all the 'good stuff' just goes away. It's like I can't remember all the ways I know I'm supposed to behave. And I want to, but I just can't. From the mouths of children, God often send us such honest truths! We all experience how it takes a little more effort to do the right thing when we feel tired, hungry, or are otherwise running on fumes—and when our body distracts us like this, it's so much harder to stay open to God's renewing presence in our lives.

I am not going to belabour this, only commend the book to you for your own self-care.

Till next month; God Bless!

R+



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