

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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THOUGHTS ON THANKSGIVING

Faced with busy schedules and challenging lives, we often forget how fortunate we are. Even when things are going well, we forget.

Being thankful should be treated as an important part of the day because appreciation contributes to our genuine happiness. When times are tough, or if you are in the midst of despair, or emotional mayhem, taking a moment to foster appreciation will create a sense of encouragement and calm when we need it most. It can be hard to see the goodness when we are living in the shadows of life. But that is when we need gratitude the most.

Gratitude is easy when we are in the midst of success, say a raise in salary, when you receive a special gift – or even when it is only the baby sleeping through the night! It's all well and good to give thanks when the food is on the table, the boss compliments you at work, or the car is humming.

But can you also give thanks when a recipe is ruined or the boss is a bully – and car repairs are going to cost \$1,200?

Gratitude is not frivolous, not a luxury. It is a coping strategy. And it works. During difficult times, giving thanks must become a deliberate, active practice.

When you are knocked back by life, find any little thing that is working and cling to it. The breath in your body. A place to sleep. A bite of food. Eyes to see with. A friend to call. When you think of it, these so-called little things are not really little at all. They are life giving. Just a minute's thought could be enough to shift us to a place where we can better deal with



the challenges before us. Understand that worrying about all of the troubles in our world are not unique to us as individuals. Others around may also be struggling.

Reach out to help. Let someone move ahead of you in line at the store. When we reach out to others, even in small ways, not only do we make their day brighter, the generous act will brighten ours also. Generosity is as much a talent as the others you may possess; don't be shy about sharing.

When the wind blows and troubles come and you are looking for help to get through the day, being thankful for the blessings which we all receive will be the surest way to find that elusive light at the end of the tunnel.

From Polly Campbell, 'Gratitude in Tough Times', Psychology Today, November 2014

HAVE A "NICE" DAY

It's one of the astonishing trends of our day that nice has replaced almost all the other virtues. You hear very little today about goodness, righteousness, purity of heart, charity, or any number of classical traits. Now almost everything positive is put down as nice. For example, we no longer send someone off with the nostalgic, "Godspeed," or "The Lord be with you." Now it's simply, "Have a nice trip." Whether it's a casual goodbye between business associates or a parting between intimate friends, I find almost everyone saying, "Have a nice day."

Of course, there are some advantages to this lingo, especially in a pluralistic, secular culture like our own. For "God be with you," raises the question as to whether the person you're speaking with actually believes in God. Even, "Have a good day," might make one pause to contemplate the meaning of goodness. In a fast moving, secular world such as our own, we don't often have time for such deep philosophical and theological questions. So, simply as a matter of convenience, we're down to just plain nice.

Perhaps the reason people have come to prefer niceness over any other virtue is that it's so safe, so convenient, so effortless. It requires very little imagination at all to have a nice day; one need hold no strong opinions, one need affirm no deep values, one need not exert oneself at all. Just sit back and relax. Now admittedly, nice will suffice when it comes to facing up to the routine and the mundane situations in life. Getting out of bed in the morning or making your coffee, for

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Vicar's Vignette

What's in a Name?

Generally, I'm not one to buy knick-knacks or souvenirs. But a number of years ago while on a family visit to Newfoundland I came across a little wooden plaque, about the size of a 5" x 10" envelope, with the following inscription written on it, titled "Your Name."



It came from your father, it was all he had to give.

So it's yours to use and cherish as long as you may live.

If you lose the watch he gave you, it can always be replaced.

But a black mark on your name, son, can never be erased.

It was clean the day you took it and a worthy name to bear,

When I got it from my father, there was no dishonor there.

So make sure you guard it wisely, after all is said and done,

You'll be glad the name is spotless when you give it to your son.

My kids at the time were just about to enter their teenage years and I thought that this inscription's message just might strike a cord with them in some way, as their attitudes and actions were beginning to shape their own reputation in people's minds whether they realized or not. So I bought the plaque read it to my kids and when we got home I hung it up on the inside door of the vestibule leading into the house, hoping that every once in a while they might just read it. That little plaque came up in conversation recently when our youngest son, now twenty-eight, came for a visit. And I was reminded once again of its message and how name and reputation go hand in hand, whether justly deserved or not.

That brought to mind the life changing power associated with the name of Christ and how the faithful invocation of that name can and does bring change and new life into people's lives. As Paul writes in his 2nd letter to the Corinthian church, "...you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

I was also reminded of the words written to the church in Philadelphia in Revelations 3, which state, "I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name... Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown... I will write on them the name of my God... and I will also write on them my new name."

The name of Jesus is more than a label or a reputation. It is life itself. It came from God the Father, and it is yours and mine to call upon and cherish.

Yours in Christ, Lorne+



Saying Goodbye One Piece of Cake at a Time

After twenty-seven years of service with us, Barbara, our Organist and Choir Director is leaving to accept a full-time position, in Charlottetown, as archivist with the Government of Prince Edward Island. She previously held a similar position at the Diocese. The possibility, finally, of permanent full-time employment must be considered as a very attractive opportunity after many years of study and hard work.

Barbara's time as organist and choir director in Pointe Claire has not been easy given the changing Anglican landscape in Montreal (and the West Island in particular) during her 'residency' with us and at St. Stephen's Church in Lachine. As most choir members will agree, her patience with 'the choir' has been remarkable as she tried to find suitable material for its dwindling numbers. It is hard to imagine many others who would have maintained such positive tenacity over such a long period, always maintaining her *effervescent* optimism in the face of vocal adversity(?) and frigid Thursday evenings!

Barbara's extensive knowledge of the Anglican liturgy was omnipresent and her choice of music always reflected that fact, whether in the presentation of anthems for the choir or in the hymns sung by the congregation at large.

So we wish Barbara and Bruce well as this new stage in Barbara's career takes shape. Our loss will almost certainly – and before too long – be a gain for a church somewhere "on the Island"! Bonne chance et meilleurs vœux pour l'avenir.



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example, that process should be as pleasant as possible. There are times when a warm and comfortable feeling inside is just what we need. However, can you imagine suggesting to a person who is about to endure serious brain surgery, “Have a nice day.” Or imagine the commander of a division of soldiers urging his troops to go forward into battle with, “Have a nice afternoon.”

There is a clue to the poverty of nice in the etymology of the word itself. The modern word nice is derived from the Middle English root meaning foolish, or the Old French, meaning silly, and ultimately from the Latin, meaning ignorant. So a nice smile can conceal an empty mind, and a heart unmoved by deep passion or feeling.

When we face any of the truly important situations in life, it is silly and foolish to be just plain *nice*. The apostle Paul reminded us in his letter to the Ephesians, that our human situation is not nice at all. So he suggests that, if we are to be equipped for living, we must put on the “whole armor of God, for we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of this present darkness.”

Truth and righteousness, peace and love, these antiquated virtues may in fact be just as pertinent to living in our day as all the niceties taught in the schools of secular culture.

As Christians we are not meant to be just another innocuous association, but a people gathered to make real the love of God. It is not appropriate to pay lip service to the Lord God Almighty, even though our lips may bespeak the nicest words in the English language. Rather we must put forward the full challenge of the gospel; as Jesus said: “You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

The supreme challenge is to love the Lord with all our hearts, with all the deep feelings of the soul and body, with the whole range of awareness our human senses and our God given intelligence allow. This surely is the supreme goal of our faith. And more than that; it is a source of all our smaller virtues. For as we follow this single commandment; as we try to discern what God’s love allows in a given situation, then we have a guide and a stay suitable in the most difficult and trying situations of life.

Christ’s commandment is a compass that shall guide us through the thickest fog or the most tremendous storms. So whenever we are put to the test, whenever we find that ‘nice will not suffice’, we shall have the resources sufficient to the hour. Thanks be to God that in Jesus we have such a sure and certain guide.

From: ‘When Nice Won’t Suffice’, Charles Henderson, GodWeb

DLP, Editor

A Harvest Recollection

Whilst searching for a suitable Harvest image for this month’s FIVE ALIVE cover, I rediscovered one of my holiday snaps of a basket of fruit and nuts. It felt like I struck gold and that I was over my first hurdle of writing the lead article. However, my next hurdle was finding the inspiration for writing about the season of Harvest. I am currently in the midst of preparing two very different schools for their upcoming Harvest celebrations and there’s nothing like endlessly rehearsing songs about cauliflowers and tractors to kill the seasonal mood.



After staring at the photograph for a long time, my mind wandered and I recalled the day that the photo was taken. A few years ago, whilst on holiday in Croatia, we ventured into Bosnia-Herzegovina for the day. The breakup of the former Yugoslavia and ensuing conflicts during the 1990s has a complicated history immersed in religion and race. My husband’s first deployment in the Army was to Bosnia and he never imagined that he would be visiting the country again as a tourist. I found the experience of witnessing the continuing recovery of different religious and ethnic communities after one of the most devastating conflicts in Europe since World War II quite overwhelming.

Tourism is booming in Croatia. 14 million foreign tourists visited the country last year, whereas Bosnia attracted only 0.8 million tourists. Immediately after crossing the border, there were many stark contrasts between the two countries. Croatia is a mostly Catholic country, identifying itself with central European culture, and has a large share of the stunning Adriatic coastline; Bosnia-Herzegovina is a mainly mountainous and almost land-locked country, identifying itself with its Ottoman legacies and is nominally Muslim but with large Christian (Orthodox and Catholic) communities.



We first visited the mountaintop village of Medjugorje, an unofficial place of Catholic pilgrimage since the apparition of the Virgin Mary in 1981. It was everything that you might expect from a pilgrimage town with the vulgar souvenir shops to the peace and quiet of prayer gardens, only to then stumble upon a large open-air mass

(Continued overleaf)

Mystery Cake Recipe

For the 2016 Christmas Bazaar, a Giant Ginger Cake was made and presented for sale – leading to several requests for the recipe.



No one seemed to know the baker of the cake and, consequently, an ad was placed in the MESSENGER asking for the culprit to own up! After almost a year, guilt has overcome modesty and the recipe has been found and is to be made available to all. One wonders how many Giant Ginger Cakes will be on view at the 2017 version of the Bazaar.

Apple Sauce Gingerbread

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour

2 cups packed dark brown sugar

1 cup margarine or butter

1/2 cup apple juice

2 tsps ground ginger

2 tsps baking soda

1 tsp salt

3 large eggs

2 tsps ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp ground all spice

1 8 oz. jar apple sauce

Confectioner's sugar (optional)



1. Pre-heat oven to 350° and grease 10" bundt pan
2. Into large bowl, measure all ingredients except confectioner's sugar. With mixer at low speed, beat ingredients until well blended constantly scraping bowl with rubber spatula. Increase speed to high, beat for 2 minutes, occasionally scraping.
3. Pour batter into pan. Bake for about 1 hour until a toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean. Cool in pan on wire rack for 10 minutes, remove from pan and cool completely on rack.

Sprinkle with confectioner's sugar if desired.

With thanks to Heather McFadden

Cooking with your kids and engaging them in hands-on activities are two ways to begin to educate children about healthy eating, and kick start the important task to help change how the younger generation looks at food and nutrition.

I love Thanksgiving because it's a holiday that is centered around food and family, two things that are of utmost importance to me.

Marcus Samuelsson

They all ate until they were full. After they had finished eating, the followers filled twelve baskets with the pieces of bread and fish that were left. There were about five thousand men there who ate.

From: The Gospel According to Mark.

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with a congregation of thousands. Interestingly, during the Bosnian War, Međugorje remained in the hands of the Croatian Defence Council, but by 1995 it was incorporated into the newly formed Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Our next stop was only a 20-minute drive away, but the two villages of Međugorje and Počitelj could not be more different. Počitelj is a fortified village built along a river with a heritage that combines medieval European with the Ottoman Empire. Croatian forces heavily damaged the village during



the Bosnian War and a programme of repatriation of displaced persons and the restoration of buildings is still ongoing. The mosque, built in 1563, was badly damaged in 1993 and later restored in 2002. After

the suffocating crowds at Međugorje, the peace and quiet of the mosque, which I had all to myself, was a welcome moment of calm.

And so, we return to the Harvest theme and that basket of fruit and nuts. Harvest is a universal celebration and one of the few acts of thanksgiving we share across different faiths and cultures. This is perhaps something to cling to when human beings continue to create terror and conflict against one another.

Walnuts, figs, kiwis, pomegranates, grapes and more grow in abundance in the little village of Počitelj – it just grows on the pathways or from riverside trees. Locals sell the fruit from stalls or as a simple "take-away" cone from a basket: I have never enjoyed eating a bunch of grapes from a paper cone as much as I did that day, sheltering from the August midday sun in the shade of a kiwi tree.



With thanks to Julia Knight-Bennett: FIVE ALIVE, October 2017



100 and Counting

“Wear pink, red or fuchsia, and come and celebrate Grandma’s birthday with our family.”



So read the invitation from Angela, in Vernon, B.C., who with the family from Hemmingford, went all out to make Evelyn Case’s one hundredth birthday a special event. Bright colours, and happy faces, were certainly worn on that day!

The celebration was held in our church hall, with cider from the Petch Apple Orchard flowing, along with delicious finger food and a sinful number of luscious apple desserts from the Petch farm kitchen. The room was festive with balloons, and the memory table covered with family photos and framed cards from the Queen, the Governor General, the Prime Minister and the Premier of the Province of Quebec .

The Mayor of Pointe Claire paid his respects the following day, and also enjoyed the produce of the orchard!



A Southern Delight

If you are travelling south this year, it is well worth a stop to visit the quaint and charming City of St. Augustine.

St. Augustine claims to be the oldest city in the U.S.A. Whether that is true or not, it is certainly a lovely place to

stroll around and enjoy the pedestrianised area with its beautiful old buildings and its many charming, flower-bedecked restaurants – great spots to while away an hour or two.

You can explore the old Fort and the sea views

and there are plenty of places to stop and just soak up the atmosphere, breathing the sea air. If you are willing to explore, you can find all kinds of hidden places. I found a lovely old bookstore, which looked like nothing from the outside but was filled with all kinds of treasures inside and a charming lady full of information, both on the local area and the books in her store.

There are lots of places to eat and stay. For example, I found that the Comfort Inn was both reasonable and very handy for everything – plus it had a nice pool outside for those who like to swim or just laze in the water, especially after a hot day on one’s feet.

I have visited St. Augustine, both in summer and winter; even in winter, it is beautiful enough to take your breath away. The town is decorated with white sparkling lights – and I mean everything down to the old horse-drawn carriages.

June Mace



At the party, Evelyn was serenaded by Larry Hughes, who crooned “Moon River”, to a beaming Birthday Gal! The hall rang out with Happy Birthday as the cake was cut, with many generations of the Case, Petch, and Marshall families, along with many friends, all wishing Evelyn a happy day, and many more to come.

Reflecting on the celebration, Evelyn said she was overwhelmed by all the phone calls, cards, flowers, and tributes. She received letters of congratulations and thanks from the Principal of McGill University, and the Dean of Music, a faculty Evelyn has supported for years.

The Birthday Announcement in the Saturday Gazette read:

Happy 100th Birthday Evelyn – With warmest Thoughts, and wishes to a beautiful, loving, smart, witty and independent lady.

We all from the St. J. the B. family echo that tribute and wish for many more happy days to come.

With thanks to Margaret Nicoll-Griffiths

Family Planning

Tom worked in the family business with his ailing father. He knew that he would inherit a fortune once his sickly father died and he wanted only two things in life – to learn how to invest his inheritance and to find a wife to share his fortune.

One evening at an investment meeting, he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her natural beauty took his breath away.



“I may not look like much but I am not just an ordinary man,” he said to her. “In just a few years time, my father will die, and I’ll inherit 20 million dollars.”

Impressed, the woman obtained his business card. Two weeks later, she became his stepmother.

Obviously, women are much, much better at inheritance planning than men . . .

Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.

Albert Einstein

Doppelganger

When Albert Einstein was making the rounds of the speaker’s circuit, he usually found himself eagerly longing to get back to his laboratory work. One night as they were driving to yet another dinner, Einstein mentioned to his chauffeur (a man who somewhat resembled Einstein in looks and manner) that he was tired of speech-making.

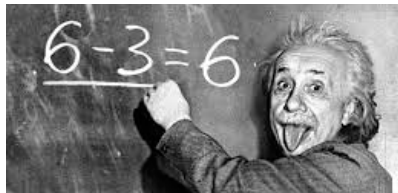
“I have an idea, sir,” his chauffeur said. “I’ve heard you give this speech so many times, I’ll bet I could give it for you.”

Einstein laughed loudly and said, “Why not? Let’s do it!”

When they arrived at the dinner, Einstein donned the chauffeur’s cap and jacket and sat in the back of the room. The chauffeur gave a convincing rendition of Einstein’s speech and even answered a few questions expertly.

Then a supremely pompous professor stood to ask an esoteric question about antimatter formation, digressing here and there to let everyone in the audience know that he was nobody’s fool.

Without missing a beat, the chauffeur fixed the professor with a steely stare and said, “Sir, the answer to that question is so simple that I will let my chauffeur, who is sitting in the back, answer it for me.”



I. P.

Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not sure about the former.

Albert Einstein

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS

On Saturday morning, the day of the Rummage Sale, there was a steady stream of customers searching among the ‘merchandise’ on view. Why so many this year? It might be worth suggesting in the appropriate quarters that Cartier Avenue could be “dug up” every year around this time, thus forcing all cars and buses along Ste-Claire past the doors of our church!

In his remarks on Sunday, Lorne took several moments to thank those members of the parish who helped make the Rummage Sale of the previous day such a success. In all, the sum of almost \$3500.00 was raised, perhaps the best ever recorded. However, he took pains to stress the benefits which accrued beyond the financial ones, including the participation on many levels by many parishioners. There was also the fact that many of the unsold items, in particular clothing, were passed on to such community organizations as *Renaissance*, *St. Michael’s Mission* and *Dans la Rue* for use in the work which they do with those who exist on the margins of our society.

In the same vein, it was made known that the six hundredth *Memory Muff* had been sent out to an individual struggling with loss of memory due to illness and the process of aging. This is a major accomplishment made possible by the hard work of a band of enthusiastic knitter/decorators within the congregation.

Indeed, we continue to have much for which to be thankful, not least the efforts of those who strive to make our presence in the community a blessing well beyond the walls of the church building.

P.S. On a more immediate note, how about a nod of acknowledgement to those responsible for the beautiful seasonal decoration of the chancel and altar area this past Thanksgiving!

DLP, Editor

A gentleman walking through the church grounds said, “God does a wonderful job on this garden,” to which the gardener replied, “Oh, you should have seen it when he did it all by himself.”

Source: Unknown

