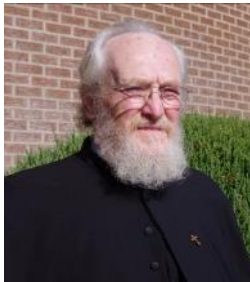


# THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN NEWS

NOVEMBER 15, 2016

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 11

## *Fr. Robert's Remarks*



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC  
VICAR GENERAL

Greetings; the Lord be with you!

With effect October 22, 2016, Archbishop Mark Haverland appointed Bishop Rocco Florenza as Episcopal Visitor to the Missionary District of Canada. Some of us have met Bishop Florenza, Bishop of the ACC Diocese of the Resurrection, at Provincial Synods; some have met him at Holy Trinity & St. Jude parish in Thunder Bay where he has ordained and confirmed; others have met him at our recent District Synod in Mississauga last month. We welcome him among us as Episcopal Visitor.

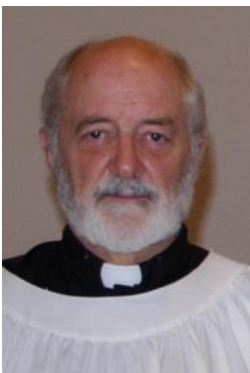
The last several weeks have been rather busy—hence the lateness of this issue. There is much seasonal work that needs doing around home and there has been travel too. (This is my excuse, anyway.)



THE RT. REV. ROCCO A. FLORENZA  
EPISCOPAL VISITOR  
MISSIONARY DISTRICT OF CANADA

(Continued on page 10)

## *The Rev. Peter Jardine: A Sermon for Trinity 22*



THE REV. PETER JARDINE

**And his lord was wroth and delivered him to his tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye forgive not from your hearts every one his brother that trespasses. Matthew 18:34 – 35.**

Each and every one of us needs forgiveness at God's hands, as that sombre warning from Jesus Christ tells us. I pray that none of us will ever forget this, or try to delude ourselves that it is not so. Let us also be sure that one of the things that displeases God most is an unwillingness to forgive others their offences against us.

Such forgiveness has to be much more than a token gesture or fine, but empty words. It must, Jesus says, come from our hearts. It must be an expression of that great Christian attribute, love. St. John certainly understood this, and so he wrote in his first epistle (3:18) **My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**

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## *The Rev. Peter Jardine: A Sermon for Trinity 22*

The love that Jesus teaches us and wants us to show to others is the closest possible reflection of God's Love, shown so clearly in the Incarnation of our Lord and His sacrificial death upon the Cross. When our hearts are full of that godly love, the forgiving nature required by God is easier to achieve and maintain. In fact, that is when we will be loving in deed and in truth. That is when love and forgiveness will be firmly and finely blended and bonded inside us. It will become our second nature.

I just used the word "maintain" in connection with our forgiving nature. In this wicked world maintaining that nature is put to the test, sometimes more often than we want to think about. I have found that the best approach to those tests is to welcome them and quietly reflect on what God is teaching us through them.

Some of you may remember my personal story of being tested. Going over it in my mind certainly helps me, so let me repeat it now. It happened on my first and longest visit to Dajo in the Eastern Upper Nile region of South Sudan.

When I arrived there I discovered that the Land Rover was unusable, and after inspecting it I found that the front wheel drive differential, basically the control box that allowed four wheel drive, was completely destroyed. I radioed the office in Nairobi and asked of a new unit to be airlifted in to Dajo. When it arrived I spent a day fitting and testing it.

Then I learned of a woman who was dying and urgently needed to be taken to hospital. The nearest was in Kurmuk, 125 miles to the north of Dajo. To us in Canada, such a distance is nothing, but in the Eastern Upper Nile there are no roads, so it turned into a two day trip along a route in which land mines had been planted. We arrived well after dark on the second day.

The following morning Stephen, the SPLA officer who, along with another soldier, came with us to protect us, asked me for some money to buy a gift for the commander of the base at Kurmuk. I gave Stephen money and reminded him that we had to leave early the next morning.

Stephen did not show up until the afternoon and he was still visibly drunk. So much for the present! I was so angry I completely lost my temper – which, I am happy to say is very rare with me, but he was messing with MY mission! I was yelling at him so loudly that people ran away and hid.

The following morning we were on the road not long after dawn and I was still seething with anger. I said next to nothing to Stephen, but after about two hours he said very quietly to me, "Peter, Jesus says we are to forgive, and you have not forgiven me."

In the short silence that followed I felt very, very small and my anger vanished. I told Stephen he was forgiven and we became good friends throughout my several visits to Dajo. That lesson from God brought home to me the importance of forgiveness

"PETER, JESUS  
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FORGIVEN ME."

## *The Rev. Peter Jardine: A Sermon for Trinity 22*

in our every day lives. It also showed me how such things as foolish human pride can get in the way of such necessary human attributes. *My mission?* No – **God’s mission!**

Another remarkable lesson I have learned from working with persecuted Christians is how deeply engrained in them is that vital attribute of forgiveness. It is almost as if they know and live by our Lord’s response when Peter asks if he should forgive an offence up to seven times. Jesus tells him, **I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.**

That was the level of forgiveness shown by Manini Digal whose story I will repeat quickly. Manini was at home with her father in Barakhama, in Kandhamal district of Orissa State when the persecution broke out. It came as the result of the murder of a Hindu Guru and, although the Communist guerillas took full and public credit for it, the Hindus turned on the Christians.

Manini’s house was attacked one evening and the Hindus tried to kill her father, but he managed to escape. They then found Manini and beat her unconscious with iron rods. Several of them raped her, after which they poured kerosene on her and tried to burn her alive. The pain brought Manini back to consciousness and she ran to an aunts house to get water to douse her burning sari. The entire right side of her body was burned and when her father found her he broke down, then took her to the local hospital. The Hindus followed them there and told the doctors that if they treated the girl they would be killed.

At some point a wonderful Christian man from Indore in central India came to Orissa and took Manini back to Indore for treatment. When we interviewed her we asked what she thought of the men who committed that horrific assault on her, two of which she recognized as from her school. Manini replied, *“I have forgiven them because they don’t know Jesus Christ”*. Those words, and the gentle, sincere expression on Manini’s face will stay with me forever.

Asia Bibi, who remains in prison in Pakistan under sentence of death by hanging, shows a similar level of this beautiful Christian quality. When her family visited her last Christmas Eve, Asia said this: “Christmas is the celebration of God’s mercy. I forgive my persecutors, those who have falsely accused me.”

That Asia could say that after six and a half years in prison, mostly in solitary confinement, is really heart warming. Please, let us take into our own hearts the lessons God teaches us through these very special women.

Let us, at the same time, observe that at no time have either of these women suggested that we should tolerate what was done to them. Tolerance is not a Christian virtue. Jesus teaches us that when He says, **If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him. Rebuke him** – in other words, we are not to put up with wrongdoing. That

“MANINI  
REPLIED, “I HAVE  
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## *The Rev. Peter Jardine: A Sermon for Trinity 22*

just encourages it to continue, grow and spread. But Jesus continues, **and if he repent, forgive him.**

So we are not to tolerate wrong doing but, as J.C. Ryle says, *We are to lay aside everything like malice, revenge and retaliation. Such feelings are only fit for heathens: they are utterly unworthy of a disciple of Christ.*

The true disciple of Christ must always be ready to forgive. That way we can live in full accordance with verse 21 in Romans 12, **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

The driving force behind that is the power of forgiveness – the power which melts away enmity and turns enemies into friends.

The power which allows us to give proof that we are at peace with God, washed in Christ's blood, born of the Spirit, and made God's children by adoption and grace.

The power which allows God to deliver us, not to the tormentors, but into His glorious band of angels.

Forgiveness is not an option for a true Christian. It is an absolutely essential element of the genuine Christian nature.



## *Bonnie's Reflections: Us and Them*



MRS. BONNIE IVEY

Isaiah chapter 44 contains a satirical description of an idolater. A man fells a tree and uses half of it for firewood. He basks in its heat. He bakes bread on its coals. "Ah, I am warm!" Then he carves the other half into an idol. Falling down to worship it, he cries "Save me! For you are my God!" The Jews were hard on the nations who did not believe in the God of Abraham. These people were called Gentiles, the nations, the peoples. Not Us. Them.

To the Jews, their identity as God's chosen race depended upon heredity. They were the descendants of Abraham. A person might marry into the faith, or a slave might become "one of the family", but that person would have to submit to the Law.

If male, circumcision was required in order to belong to Israel's God. At the time of Jesus' ministry, a Gentile's home was regarded as unclean. Food, furniture, or fabric, might have been accidentally or deliberately contaminated by exposure to pagan worship. There might be idols on the shelf. If you did business with a Gentile on a pagan festival day, he might pollute your money by giving thanks for it to his idol. The very

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## Bonnie's Reflections: *Us and Them*

meat in Gentile markets was slaughtered in honor of pagan gods.

The rules meant to keep Israel on the narrow path led to prejudice and suspicion. Although Jesus sometimes ministered to Gentiles, and made a Samaritan the hero of a parable, his closest followers sometimes showed reluctance to view pagans or “half-Jew” outsiders as objects of God’s concern. Jesus and his disciples once sought shelter in a Samaritan village. It was refused, because his intent was to worship in Jerusalem rather than on Mt. Gerizim, the site of Samaritan worship. James and John, those Sons of Thunder, asked “Do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?” Jesus rebuked them. (Luke 9:51-56)

The story of an encounter with a Gentile woman, described as Syrophenician or “Greek” in Luke 15 and Mark 7, shocks many. **She comes to Jesus for help, and he says it wouldn’t be right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.** Is he calling her a dog? There is a sequence of events involving this moment that sheds light on it.

When John the Baptist, Jesus’ cousin, is murdered by Herod, Jesus withdraws to a “lonely place” near the Sea of Galilee, to mourn in private, and keep away from Herod. Nothing must be allowed to end Jesus’ ministry before the time set by his Father arrives. But the crowds find Jesus and his disciples. He ministers to them. The day wanes. The disciples want the Master to “tell them to go away” to buy food. They act more like security guards or “handlers” of Jesus than his attentive pupils. But Jesus prevails, and miraculously over 5000 people are fed. (Matthew 14: 13-21) In chapter 15 Matthew tells us that a dispute with the Pharisees leads to the disciples asking Jesus about his parable of the blind guides. “Are you still so dull?” he responds. Externals do not defile a person, but evil intentions of the heart.

Avoiding further conflict with the Pharisees, he takes them into Gentile territory, to the city of Tyre. They settle into a house and keep a low profile, but word gets out. A woman appears, calling out “Sir! Have mercy on me, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a devil!” Jesus is silent.

The disciples urge him to “Send her away! See how she is crying after us!” Jesus replies “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” **He says this not to discourage the woman but to teach the disciples something.** She had been paying attention to news about Jesus. She addressed him correctly by his Messianic title, “Son of David”. She asks for mercy because she knows she is an outsider. When the woman throws herself at his feet pleading for help, he answers “It is not right to take the children’s bread



**A MEMORIAL FOR A ROMAN CHILD**

“

### *Bonnie's Reflections: Us and Them*



**SKY WHO IS NOT AVERSE TO ATTENDING HER MISTRESS'S TABLE WHETHER FOR SCRAPS OR A PAT ON THE HEAD.**

and throw it to the little dogs." Jews considered dogs unclean; threatening, feral scavengers. The term Jesus uses is "little dogs", that might be allowed near the table at a family meal. A child might slip a bit of crust to a little dog. Jesus waits.

"True, Sir, but even the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table!"

"Woman, what faith you have! Be it as you wish!" And her child was healed. (Matthew 15: 1-28)

Though the Jews, "the children", are fed first, the time was soon to come when Jew and Gentile believers would be seated together around the table of the body and blood of Christ. The disciples were slow to understand the lesson, but obeyed the risen Jesus who commanded them to make disciples of all nations. Thanks be to God, through their ministry we have been adopted into the family of God.



*Photos from a recent trip to Chapleau (15-17 Nov 2016)*



**BONNIE WITH HER FRIEND LAD**





*The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way (continued)*



**THE REV.  
VERNON STALEY**

**Daily Prayers**

Pour out your hearts before Him.

*Three Forms of Daily Prayers are given here. You should use the Form which best meets your needs, and which helps you most. You may vary your Daily Prayers from time to time; and you may add prayers of your own, speaking to God out of your heart. Before you kneel down, pause a moment, and remember God's Presence.*

THIRD FORM.

**Morning.**

✠ IN the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Come, Holy Ghost, and fill the hearts of Thy faithful people.

*Adoration.*

O HOLY, Blessed and Glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, I adore and worship Thee.

*Thanksgiving.*

O MY God, I give Thee thanks for all Thy mercies. Thou hast made me: Thou hast redeemed me: Thou sanctifiest me. It is of Thy goodness that I see the light of another day. I pray Thee that I may spend it wholly in Thy service.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

*The Lord's Prayer.*

OUR Father Which art in heaven .

*Memorial of the Incarnation.*

WE beseech Thee, O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by His Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of His Resurrection ; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Apostles' Creed.*

I BELIEVE in God the Father Al mighty . . .

*Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity*

O MY God, I believe that Thou art one God in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and I believe that God the Son was made man and died for me upon the cross; and I believe all the truths which Thou hast revealed to Thy Church and in Thy Word.

O my God, relying upon Thy power and mercy, and the Blood of my Saviour Jesus Christ, I hope to obtain forgiveness of my sins, and everlasting life; and I resolve by Thy grace, to do Thy will.

O my God, because Thou art of infinite goodness, and most worthy of all love, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart, and above all things: and for Thy sake to love my neighbor as myself.

“BOW DOWN

THINE EAR, O

GOD, AND HEAR

ME.”

## *The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way*

✠ May the Lord bless me, and preserve me from all evil, and bring me, with all I love—my father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends, the clergy—to everlasting life. Amen.

### **Evening.**

✠ IN the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

#### *Adoration.*

O ALMIGHTY God, at the close of another day, I come before Thee, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Sanctifier, to offer to Thee the worship of my heart.

#### *Thanksgiving.*

O MERCIFUL God, I thank Thee for all the blessings which this day and through my whole life Thou hast bestowed upon me. Praise and glory be to Thee for ever and ever.

O Lord, hear my prayer; and let my crying come unto Thee.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

#### *The Lord's Prayer.*

OUR Father Which art in heaven . . .

O GOD, grant that I may now remember My sins against Thee this day.

#### *Here examine your conscience.*

*Does my conscience accuse me of any wrong, against God, my neighbour, myself? Is there anything on my mind which makes me fear death?*

*Have I been self-willed, proud, or vain?*

*Have I been selfish, jealous, or envious?*

*Have I been impatient, angry without a cause; unkind in thought, word, or deed; quarrelsome, or unforgiving?*

*Have I been covetous, or murmured at my lot?*

*Have I been greedy in eating or drinking? Have I been impure or immodest in desire, look, word, or act?*

*Have I been idle, or done my work badly? Have I been deceitful, untruthful, dishonest, or used bad language?*

*Have I been ashamed of Christ, and of owning Him as my Master?*

#### *Confession.*

O MY God, I grieve that I have sinned against Thee. I accuse myself of the wrong desires and thoughts to which I have this day given way . . . the wrong words which I have said . . . the wrong deeds which I have committed. . . . Make me truly sorry : forgive me these and all my past sins : and help me to lead a better life ; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.





## *The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way*

### *Intercession.*

ALMIGHTY Father, I commend to Thy mercy and protection all those for whom I ought to pray, especially . . . beseeching Thee to supply their needs, to comfort them in their troubles, to save them from evil, and to bring them to everlasting life ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

VISIT, O Lord, this house and family, and drive from us all evil. May Thy holy angels dwell herein, to keep us in peace and safety, and may Thy blessing rest upon us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

✠ MAY the Lord bless and keep me, and bring me and all I love to life everlasting: And may the souls of the faithful departed . . . through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

### MID-DAY PRAYER.

Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUR Father Which art in heaven . . .

O SAVIOUR of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us, and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father . . .

### GRACE BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS.

BLESS, O Lord, this food to our use, and us to Thy service, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THANK God for these and all His mercies, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### PRAYER BEFORE SERVICE.

LORD, I come into the Presence of

Thy Divine Majesty to praise Thy holy Name. Cleanse my mind from vain and wandering thoughts, that I may fitly offer to Thee the prayers and praises of Thy Church, in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### PRAYER AFTER SERVICE.

TO Thy mercy, O Lord, I commend

this imperfect service which I have offered to Thee. Do Thou, O Lord, pardon the weakness and defects of my prayers and praises, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

*Continued next month*



## *Fr. Robert's Remarks*

In a photography course I audited last year, the lecturer—Joel Sartore, a National Geographic photographer— said, “Sometimes you have to just pet the whale.” Since then I have heard the phrase from others whom I have no doubt were influenced by Sartore.

Sartore explained:

Why do I say “Sometimes you have to just pet the whale”? Well, because years ago, literally, I encountered whales on a piece I was doing for the Endangered Species Act story I was working on for National Geographic, and we went to this Laguna San Ignacio in Mexico on the Baja Peninsula.

You go out in these little boats called pangas and you are in this beautiful lagoon on a sunny day, and there are these grey whales there that have no memory of being hunted, and some of them come right up to the boat to be petted, believe it or not. Because they don’t remember that people used to hunt them. Some of them roll on their backs and on their sides. They stick their tongues out. They want you to scratch their tongues! It is really incredible, just incredible.

So, there were people in the boat, believe it or not, and this is the saddest thing. They insisted on videotaping and shooting the entire thing, but they were supposed to be on vacation! They were supposed to be on vacation! They never stopped to pet the whales. They never stopped to pet the whales, can you believe it? If you can, you must pet a whale! And this means you have to put your camera down to do this.”

While the “camera” *per se* is certainly critical to the point of Sartore’s particular story, it can undoubtedly also be seen as a metaphor for the many things in our lives that keep us from enjoying our relationships with God and his creation. It could, of course, be a camera, or, perhaps, a cell phone with the ability to upload images immediately to Facebook or any other of the social media. Equally, it could be a job or a project for which we think ourselves indispensable. It could be anything.

Years ago I had an injury to my right (dominant) hand that kept me off work for a couple of months. I really ought to have known better, but I remember feeling so frustrated, so resentful, because I “needed to be at work.” and “they need me at work”. Eventually, I came to realise that the job and the hospital had been there long before I arrived and on the occasions on which I have visited the hospital in these years since my retirement, I notice that everything is still there and functioning well.

In retrospect, it was the spirit in which I worked that was, ultimately, the more important. There were definitely others who could, from a technical point of view, do my job as well or, in some cases, better than I. I do like to think or at least hope that I was able to deal with things appropriately so that when I did go back to work I was able



## Fr. Robert's Remarks

to be more of a “healing presence”—to borrow a phrase from the title of Dr. Albert Rossi’s little book, *Becoming a Healing Presence*—than I had been before.

In his Introduction, Dr. Rossi established that “The thesis of this book is that we are all called to be a healing presence to others, always.” He continues, “When we are a healing presence to others, we are, in some sense, a healing presence to Christ Himself, who resides in others. Better said, Christ is the healing presence in us who moves through us to heal others.”

He then began by speaking of the need for inner stillness in this way:

“ON AN AIRPLANE, as a flight prepares to depart, the flight attendant tells the passengers that, in case of an emergency, oxygen bags will drop from overhead. Those passengers with infants will receive two masks. The adult is to put his or her own oxygen mask on first, and only then put a mask on the infant. For me, as an Italian grandfather, those instructions are counterintuitive. I want to give my life for my grandchild, to care for her first, and then myself. But— and this is a big but— if I truly love my granddaughter, I will put my own oxygen mask on first, then hers. The sequence is vital to my granddaughter’s survival. If I don’t take care of myself first, both of us might be lost. The oxygen mask example is a model for becoming a healing presence to others. If I don’t take care of myself first, I have nothing to give to others. People seek me out as a counselor and expect that when they come into my office, I have time and energy for them. They don’t need a tired, grumpy, sleep-deprived, inattentive, and self-absorbed counselor. The only way I can have something to give is if I have allowed Christ to care for me first and foremost. There is no other way. I begin to care for myself by centering my being, my soul-mind-body. I allow Christ to center me by gradually becoming still inwardly, which is no small task in today’s environment.”

As Dr. Rossi says, it is no small task in today’s environment, but, the Psalmist directs us in imperative form: “Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps. 46) This inner stillness is not just a suggestion but a command every bit as important as any other command in the Scriptures.. One wonders what the world would be like if we all obeyed it.

Fr. Jonah Paffhausen, Abbot of St. John of Shanghai Monastery in California before he was elected as Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America, wrote a paper entitled *The Path to Prayer: Do Not Resent, Do Not React, Keep Inner Stillness*. [The paper is available online at: [http://www.monasteryofstjohn.org/documents/abbatialessays/Do\\_not\\_react.pdf](http://www.monasteryofstjohn.org/documents/abbatialessays/Do_not_react.pdf).] Personally, I have found it helpful.

The then Fr. Jonah wrote:

“The whole spiritual vision of Bishop Kallistos [of Xelon, who was Jonah’s mentor at the time. ed. ] had three very simple points.



**A LAST ROSE OF THIS  
SUMMER**

**TAKEN 08 NOV. 2016**

### *Fr. Robert's Remarks*

Do not resent. Do not react. Keep inner stillness.

These three spiritual principles, or disciplines, are really a summation of the Philokalia, the collection of Orthodox Christian spiritual wisdom. And they are disciplines every single one of us can practice, no matter where we are in life – whether we're in the monastery or in school; whether we're housewives or retired; whether we've got a job or we've got little kids to run after. If we can hold on to and exercise these three principles, we will be able to go deeper and deeper in our spiritual life."

Until next month, God bless!



“YEA, BLESSED  
EVEN NOW ARE  
THEY WHICH DO  
HUNGER AND  
THIRST AFTER  
RIGHTEOUSNESS,  
FOR THEY, AND  
THEY ONLY,  
SHALL BE  
FILLED.”

### *St. Bernard of Clairvaux: On Loving God (Serialised)*



**ST. BERNARD OF  
CLAIRVAUX**  
**1090–20/08/1153**

#### **Chapter IV. Of those who find comfort in the recollection of God, or are fittest for His love**

But it will be well to note what class of people takes comfort in the thought of God. Surely not that perverse and crooked generation to whom it was said, 'Woe unto you that are rich; for ye have received your consolation' (Luke 6:24). Rather, those who can say with truth, 'My soul refuseth comfort' (Ps. 77:2). For it is meet that those who are not satisfied by the present should be sustained by the thought of the future, and that the contemplation of eternal happiness should solace those who scorn to drink from the river of transitory joys. That is the generation of them that seek the Lord, even of them that seek, not their own, but the face of the God of Jacob. To them that long for the presence of the living God, the thought of Him is sweetest itself: but there is no satiety, rather an ever-increasing appetite, even as the Scripture bears witness, 'they that eat me shall yet be hungry' (Ecclus. 24:21); and if the one an-hungred spake, 'When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.' Yea, blessed even now are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they, and they only, shall be filled. Woe to you, wicked and perverse generation; woe to you, foolish and abandoned people, who hate Christ's memory, and dread His second Advent! Well may you fear, who will not now seek deliverance from the snare of the hunter; because 'they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts' (I Tim. 6:9). In that day we shall not escape the dreadful sentence of condemnation, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire' (Matt. 25:41). O dreadful sentence indeed, O hard saying! How much harder to bear than that other saying which we repeat daily in church, in memory of the Passion: 'Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life' (John 6:54). That signifies, whoso honors My death and after My example mortifies his mem-



## *St. Bernard of Clairvaux: On Loving God*

bers which are upon the earth (Col. 3:5) shall have eternal life, even as the apostle says, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him' (II Tim. 2:12). And yet many even today recoil from these words and go away, saying by their action if not with their lips, 'This is a hard saying; who can hear it?' (John 6:60). 'A generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not steadfastly unto God' (Ps. 78:8), but chooseth rather to trust in uncertain riches, it is disturbed at the very name of the Cross, and counts the memory of the Passion intolerable. How can such sustain the burden of that fearful sentence, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels'? 'On whomsoever that stone shall fall it will grind him to powder' (Luke 20:18); but 'the generation of the faithful shall be blessed' (Ps. 112:2), since, like the apostle, they labor that whether present or absent they may be accepted of the Lord (II Cor. 5:9). At the last day they too shall hear the Judge pronounce their award, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matt. 25:34).

In that day those who set not their hearts aright will feel, too late, how easy is Christ's yoke, to which they would not bend their necks and how light His burden, in comparison with the pains they must then endure. O wretched slaves of Mammon, you cannot glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ while you trust in treasures laid up on earth: you cannot taste and see how gracious the Lord is, while you are hungering for gold. If you have not rejoiced at the thought of His coming, that day will be indeed a day of wrath to you.

But the believing soul longs and faints for God; she rests sweetly in the contemplation of Him. She glories in the reproach of the Cross, until the glory of His face shall be revealed. Like the Bride, the dove of Christ, that is covered with silver wings (Ps. 68:13), white with innocence and purity, she reposes in the thought of Thine abundant kindness, Lord Jesus; and above all she longs for that day when in the joyful splendor of Thy saints, gleaming with the radiance of the Beatific Vision, her feathers shall be like gold, resplendent with the joy of Thy countenance.

Rightly then may she exult, 'His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace me.' The left hand signifies the memory of that matchless love, which moved Him to lay down His life for His friends; and the right hand is the Beatific Vision which He hath promised to His own, and the delight they have in His presence. The Psalmist sings rapturously, 'At Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore' (Ps. 16:11): so we are warranted in explaining the right hand as that divine and deifying joy of His presence.

Rightly too is that wondrous and ever-memorable love symbolized as His left hand, upon which the Bride rests her head until iniquity be done away: for He sustains the purpose of her mind, lest it should be turned aside to earthly, carnal desires. For the flesh wars against the spirit: 'The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things' (Wisdom 9:15). What could result from the contemplation of compassion so marvelous and so undeserved, favor so free and so well attested, kindness so unexpected, clemency so unconquerable, grace so amazing except that the

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## TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

TACC Office  
136 William St.  
Parry Sound, ON  
P2A 1W2

Phone: 705-746-7378  
E-mail:  
vicargeneral@traditionalanglican.ca  
&  
We're on the web at

TRADITIONALANGLICAN.CA



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### *St. Bernard of Clairvaux: On Loving God*

soul should withdraw from all sinful affections, reject all that is inconsistent with God's love, and yield herself wholly to heavenly things? No wonder is it that the Bride, moved by the perfume of these unctions, runs swiftly, all on fire with love, yet reckons herself as loving all too little in return for the Bridegroom's love. And rightly, since it is no great matter that a little dust should be all consumed with love of that Majesty which loved her first and which revealed itself as wholly bent on saving her. For 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life' (John 3:16). This sets forth the Father's love. But 'He hath poured out His soul unto death,' was written of the Son (Isa. 53:12). And of the Holy Spirit it is said, 'The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you' (John 14:26). It is plain, therefore, that God loves us, and loves us with all His heart; for the Holy Trinity altogether loves us, if we may venture so to speak of the infinite and incomprehensible Godhead who is essentially one.



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Contact Info:

**Fr. David Marriott**  
[drm274@hotmail.com](mailto:drm274@hotmail.com)  
409-15210 Guildford Dr.  
Surrey BC V3R 0X7  
604-551-4660