

Holy Trinity and St. George Parish Magazine

Winter 2026



“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake,
It is necessary to stand out in the cold.”

Aristotle

Issue 35

Suggested Donation: £1

Man's Best Friend

Dear Friends:

Happy New Year! I hope 2026 brings you health, happiness and at least one other thing you wish for.

I am writing from the midst of the biggest winter storm in a decade, and while I love snow with all my heart, this one is bringing at least as much ice as snow. That I do not love. Tomorrow is a "snow day" from school, so I hope to get my own contributions to this issue compiled during this unexpected and much appreciated period of free time.

Yesterday was bitterly cold. When I left my house to go to work at the parish thrift shop, the temperature was -12 degrees. The upside to this is that pop-up shelters are established for the unhoused to protect them from the worst of the winter weather.

There were happy highlights throughout the day as there always are; one little girl brought in a colourful picture she had drawn emblazoned with the words "THIS IS MY FAVOURITE PLACE." It is now permanently enshrined in a place of honour.

But there was poignancy as well, which I want to share with you. Two young men came in, chilled to the bone. Their thin coats were no match for the air outside, but they had learned how to layer, and they found some clothes on our free rack. One had a handsome black Alsatian with him, walking itself with its lead in its mouth. And on this much-beloved dog was a smart black coat, in every way superior to the clothes the young men were wearing. Its master had somehow found a way to keep it warm even as he struggled to clothe himself.

A few minutes later, one of our early-morning customers came in, a Latino man with a tender heart. He had been moved to tears by what he had just seen. A local man with a large gray and white dog was camping with his dog by the railway line. "He will not go to the shelter," the man said, "because they will not accept his dog.... Such love!" He burst into tears. When life strips everything else away, relationships are all that matter, and it makes no difference whether the object of affection has two or four legs.

My thanks to **Raymond Daley** who took the time and trouble to publish a supplement to issue 34 for you all and to **Brian Stabler**, whose lovely contributions were included therein; Brian's contributions here will resume soon. Other than Raymond, this issue's contributor was **Pamela Boyes** (thanks, Pamela!). Too much *me* here!

Next up (and very soon!) we will be on to the Spring/Lent/Easter issue. Please consider contributing. Meanwhile, stay warm and well.

Celeste



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A New Year Prayer for Living Justice

Lord Jesus,
Open my eyes to the needs of my brothers and sisters.
Soften my heart to those who are poor, forgotten or alone.
Make me quick to listen, slow to judge, and eager to serve.
Teach me to live simply, to act with integrity,
and to see Your image in every person I meet.
Strengthen me to work for justice,
to defend the vulnerable,
and to be an instrument of Your peace.
Holy Spirit, guide my steps today.
Mary, Mother of Mercy, pray for me.
Amen.



Turn to God

When your spirit's heavy-laden
And your sorrows get you down,
When your heartaches overwhelm you
And your problems make you frown...
Don't weep bitter tears of sadness
Nor give way to dark despair;
Don't give up. You have a Father
You can always reach with prayer.
Just remember He is waiting;
He can make all things come right;
You can reach Him when you're troubled,
Be it day or darkest night.
He is always there to listen,
And to help you if you ask;
He can soothe your worried spirit;
He can lighten every task.

Delphine LeDoux

"Let Your Spirit Soar"



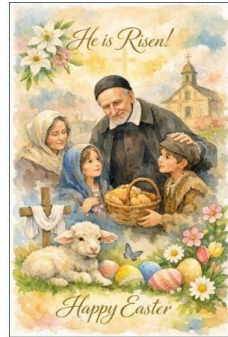
St Vincent
de Paul Society
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Turning Concern into Action

Looking for Gift Ideas?

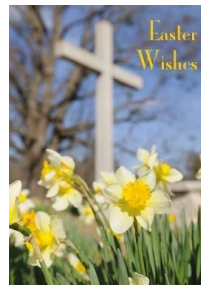
Why not visit the SVP Online Shop for Easter Cards and sustainable, ethically-sourced gifts for adults and children.

Website: <https://stvincentsshops.com>

Or call the order line: 07435 284 508.

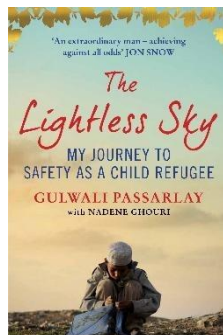


Bespoke and exclusive SVP Easter card with envelope. £1.50



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I Am in the Flow of Life

I move through each day with ease and grace. My every breath and deep attention to the world around me connect me to the rhythm of life. Seasons change, tides rise and fall ~ and I flow in harmony with all of it.

Even when challenges arise, I flow with them. I respond to agitating situations calmly, meet difficulties with equilibrium, and am kind in all my interactions.

I practice open-hearted acceptance of the world as it is and other people as they are. This practice keeps me in the flow of life, grateful for all my experiences.

With an open heart, I let life unfold. As I continue to grow in spiritual understanding, I move forward with joy knowing that, as a divine being, God's good flows to me and through me.

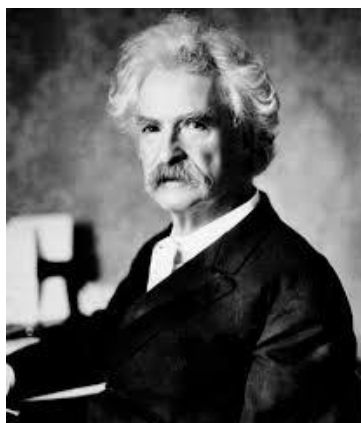
Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life
Proverbs 4:23

From "Daily Word: January/February 2026"



Patriotism is loving your country all of the time
and supporting your government when it deserves it.

Mark Twain



Do Not Forget Them

A Modern Prayer Based on Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14

Composed by Fr. Vincent Guest, Pastor, Sacred Heart Church, Camden, New Jersey, USA

My children, take care of your parents
and all the elder members of your family.
When they grow old, do not forget them.

When their minds start to fail with memory loss,
when they forget their keys or cell phone,
or even if they forget who you are,
be kind.

When they cannot see like they used to,
be their eyes.

When they cannot hear too well
and when the TV is blasting in their home,
and when you have to repeat yourself,
be patient.

When your grandparents or parents or aunts or uncles cannot drive their car,
or even walk like they did in the past,
do not forget them.
You can be their legs.
You can drive them.

My sons and daughters,
kindness to your parents and your grandparents
and your elder aunts and uncles
will not be forgotten by the Lord.

If they have to go into a nursing facility
because you cannot take care of their medical needs,
I understand that.
But don't leave them alone.
Call them.
Visit them.
Teach your young children to respect the elderly.

If you do not know what to say,
do not worry.

Your presence is most important.
My grace will work through you.

See the face of God in the elderly.
When you forget them,
You forget Me.
When you love them,
you love Me.

Amen.



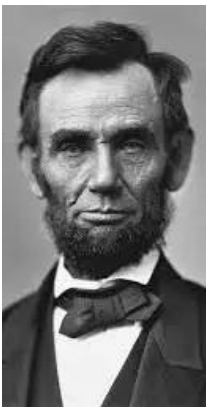
Pamela opens her portion of the magazine with a tribute to my favourite US President. One guess who my LEAST favourite is! Her cheesy poem made me smile, especially because I recently received a tea towel which reads:

*Sweet dreams are made of cheese.
Who am I to dis a Brie?*

And I think Daisy and I would get on just fine!

Pamela's Pages

On This Day: What Happened Today in History 1809



12th February is the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States of America.

Lincoln was president during America's darkest hour: the civil war of 1861-65. He is remembered as a great leader, not least because slavery was abolished under his presidency.

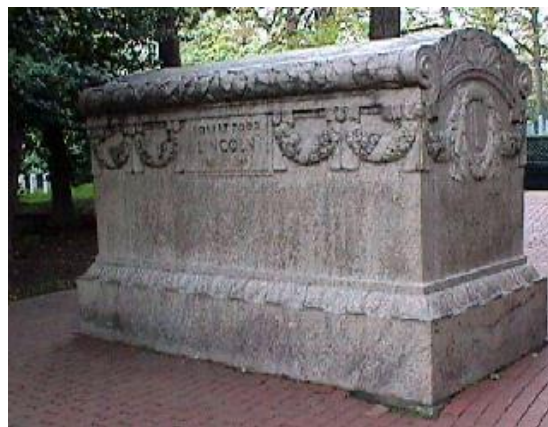
We visited Washington over 20 years ago now and it was on a very unseasonal and very hot day at the beginning of November that we walked the National Mall to the west end, seeing the reflecting pool on our way to the statue of Abraham Lincoln, before we climbed the 87 steps to the entrance of his memorial.



We also visited the scene of his assassination at the Ford Theatre, where he was shot on 14th April 1865 by John Wilkes Booth, a Confederate sympathiser, who was strongly opposed to the abolitionist movement. Lincoln was to be the first of the four US Presidents to die at the hands of gunmen.



Lincoln is buried in the Lincoln Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois.



Arlington Cemetery in Virginia was on our itinerary because we wanted to visit JFK's memorial and it also happens to be where Robert Todd Lincoln (the eldest and only one of Lincoln's children to reach adulthood and outlive his parents) is buried. The tomb is just a short walk up the hill from the main gate and not far from Arlington House, the national memorial to Robert E. Lee. Robert was buried here due to his wife's wishes for privacy, despite his own desire to be with his family in Springfield.

James Weldon Johnson, an author and civil rights activist, wrote the following lines on this day in 1900 to commemorate Lincoln on his birthday. It is often referred to as the American 'Black National Anthem'.



Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn has died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the
slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;

Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.



James Weldon Johnson
17 June 1871 ~ 26 June 1938

A short, funny and clever poem from The Banksy of Poetry” (you need to know your cheeses):



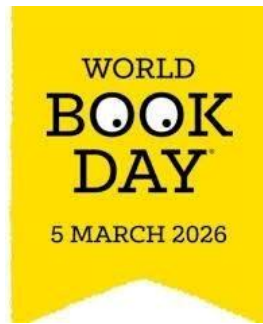
Brie Encounter

the skies are gruyere since she left me
I've never felt so danish blue
caught between a roquefort and a hard cheese,
i stilton know what to do

don't give edam about the future
now my babybel's walked out the door
can't believe i've double gloucester
i camembert it any more

i've ricotta get myself together
and build my life back caerphilly
cheddar tear for the final time
say goodbye to us and halloumi

Brian Bilston



This year World Book Day is 5th March, and Brian Bilston wrote this amusing poem for the 2025 World Book Day.



Read a Book

If loneliness ever comes calling
or you're feeling down on your luck,
here's a remedy that's sure to cure:
you should go and read a book. 1

If you've been climbing mountains
but then find that you've got stuck,
whatever you do, don't panic:
it's a chance to read a book. 2



If you've run out of inspiration
and you don't know what to cook,
forget about food completely
and go and read a book. 3

If you're having a night on the town
and you want to strike the right look,
to impress your fellow clubbers,
just sit and read a book. 4

- 1 does not include the novels of Jeffrey Archer
- 2 but not *The DaVinci Code* by Dan Brown
- 3 except for Naomi Campbell's Swan
- 4 does not work with The World According to Clarkson

My granddaughter Daisy takes reading "anywhere" to another level!

Tony and Dermot on the Radio



Tony's nephew is editor of *Boating Monthly*, but he lost his job recently. Sails were down.

*

Dermot's friend was going out with a well-known tennis player. She broken it off and he hasn't heard from her. Dermot asked his mate how he was feeling and he said, "Tennis players? Love means nothing to them."

*

Dermot kept dreaming about the "Grease" soundtrack so he went to a dream specialist. She said, "Tell me more, tell me more..."

Tony has bought a new car, but it hasn't got a floor. It's great for running around in.

*

Sometimes one of them will anticipate or even correct the other's story! Dermot started to tell us about a truck full of Vick's products and Tony took over and said a lorry full of nasal spray overturned on the M40, but the police aren't expecting any congestion.

*

He also tried to join the Kleptomaniac Society. He went along to one of their meetings, but all the seats had been taken.



An Irish Prayer



May God give you...
For every storm, a rainbow,
For every tear, a smile,
For every care, a promise,
And a blessing in each trial.

For every problem life sends,
A faithful friend to share,
For every sigh, a sweet song,
And an answer for each prayer.



It is with a heavy heart that I write these words. My friends already know the saga, but I want to share it with our readers and hope to gain perspective with the passage of time. This article is placed before our new “A Favourite Prayer” feature intentionally. John Cardinal Newman’s Prayer has hung in my kitchen for years. It feels very personal indeed. I continually try to take its message to heart.

Leaving My Heart Behind

by Celeste Bonfanti

By now, most of our readers probably don’t remember the years when I was a parishioner at Holy Trinity and St. Goerge. I arrived in 1989 at the age of 26. Fr. Mark was still here, and Alf Parker was pastor. This was before the fall of the Berlin Wall, a long time ago now. I was a parishioner until 1996, when I moved back to the US, although I always refer to you as “my English parish.”

I had made up my mind to move to the UK on my first visit in 1985. That was with the American Branch of the Richard III Society, commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Battle of Bosworth Field. I had been a member since the age of seventeen, and I had just graduated as a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing [D/HH] in New Jersey. The trip, at age 22, was my graduation present to myself: perfect timing before I began an internship at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York.



What a trip! We visited so many places which I had only read about: Warwick, Middleham, York and, of course, Bosworth, along with what felt like dozens of others: history come to life in living colour. And the only place we visited on our three-week stay which was not Ricardian was... the Lake District. But it was one of those foggy, chilly summers up here and, while I kept seeing beautiful pictures everywhere of the fells and lakes, all I saw during my Cumbrian stay was a foggy curtain! We were staying at the Cumbria Grand in Grange, and there were swans swimming on the golf course, things were so waterlogged!

But it was a wonderful trip overall. I met the author (Rosemary Hawley Jarman) whose book had made me a Ricardian and she became a lifelong friend. Our group went everywhere, from London to Ludlow to Penrith, and everywhere I went, I felt the overwhelming sense that I *belonged* here, in a very real sense. I cried a lot on that trip, especially attending a memorial service for Richard at the Church of St. Alkelda in Middleham at which the altar server was a descendent of Richard’s standard bearer. The three weeks passed very quickly indeed, and leaving felt utterly wrong. On the plane home, self-medicating with a gin and tonic, I made up my mind to explore options for exercising my vocation with Deaf people here.

It took a while. I finished my internship and took up my first professional position in my field, squirreling away my money for more than two years. In the summer of 1987, I returned to do some research (in those pre-internet days) on services for Deaf people from London to Dumfries. Among other resources, I picked up a directory from the RNID, and over the next year I peppered UK Deaf service providers with CVs and enquiries. By 1988 I had been granted eleven interviews.

My father, with whom I was very close, was mystified. A child of the Depression, he was all for the safe option. I had a good job with the Division of the Deaf in New Jersey, and he could not understand why I was

willing to throw it all away on a pipe dream. I told him I felt in my heart and soul that it was where I needed to be, and that once I landed my job and he and my mother came to visit me, he'd understand. He reluctantly gave me his blessing, probably hoping and believing that it would come to nothing.

I returned to the UK again in the autumn of 1988, and the first interview I had was in Newcastle with the late Stewart Simpson, then head of the CACDP. He had no job for me, but he lived in Catterlen and was Chairman of the Cumbria Deaf Association [CDA]. This charity, based in Carlisle, *did* have an opening, in Kendal, and he asked me to add one more interview to my itinerary, with the late Mick Barber in Carlisle. Of course, I did. When I met my pen friend Kim in Durham and told her about my interview with Stewart, she said, "Kendal...? You *have* to get it, you *have* to! Kendal is wonderful!" I promised to do my level best.

But by the time I met Mick, I had a streaming cold and felt miserable. I had traipsed all over the country and was not at all hopeful that any of my interviews were going to result in a job offer. I took the train to Carlisle and trekked up to the third floor of what was then CDA's headquarters on Compton Street. Mick was wonderful, the son of Deaf parents, with a glass eye, and I couldn't decide which eye to look into! He made me a cup of tea, told me that Stewart had been impressed with me, and asked me a number of searching questions. The last of which was, "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

I said, with a conviction I did not feel, "Working for you, in Kendal."

I climbed down the steps with the feeling that it had been another hopeless interview and caught the train for London and the flight home, giving in to tears.

It was then that God tipped his hand. Out of nowhere, I had an overwhelming sense of a warm, loving blanket of peace draped over my shoulders. It was so palpable I trembled. And I knew that, no matter what, everything was going to be OK.

Two months later, I was offered the job of Social Worker with Deaf People at the Kendal Centre. I have never in my life felt so elated. And in mid-May, despite the fact that my BSL was limited to the alphabet and the signs for GOOD and BAD, I shipped a couple of boxes of personal effects to the CDA Kendal Centre and headed for the airport. I was still living with my parents, and my mother was so distraught she wouldn't even come to the door to see me off as my friend's car pulled out of the drive. It was my dad, swallowing his fears and waving from the door.

After a few days at Stewart Simpson's home, two weeks in a bedsit and another two in a B&B, I moved into a little furnished house on Sparrowmire Lane where I was to spend the next seven years. They were years in which I worked very hard, covered countless miles, made lifelong friends and gorged on medieval history. I was living the lyrics of the Jackson Brown song:



I am a child in these hills.

I am awake. I am alone.

I'm looking for water. I'm looking for life.

Who will show me the river and ask me my name?

I have come to these hill, I have come to the river,

As I choose to be gone from the house of my father.

I am a child in these hills.

And I felt the hand of God on my shoulder as I became deeply involved at Holy Trinity and St. George, as a reader, a catechist, an enthusiastic participant in parish walks, quizzes and other activities. I had arrived just in time for Kendal's 800th anniversary. I walked the fells, visited the Dales, and was invited to be one of three BSL interpreters on a Deaf pilgrimage to Israel. I have never felt as closely in step with God. My parents, friends and one of my sisters visited me and declared Kendal a perfect match to my personality and interests. Dad was particularly charmed by the fact that, when he went to Barclays to cash travelers cheques, the teller lowered his specs and asked, "Celeste's father...?") He agreed wholeheartedly that Kendal and I were a perfect fit.

I went home for a few weeks from time to time, and for the first time in my life, going home (to Kendal) at the end of a holiday was just as happy as the holiday itself. I was granted permanent residency in 1995 and told US friends who came to visit that, if I had ever met a man who made me feel like the North of England did, I would marry him immediately!



But back in the US, my dad had a catastrophic fall. He was permanently disabled by it, and after flying back and visiting him in hospital, it became clear to me that his life would be changed, and likely shortened, forever. And I gradually came to the realization that I needed to leave Kendal and return to the States. I wanted to be a part of parents' lives as they aged and became more dependent, and for the first time, the *right* thing to do and the *easy* thing to do were radically different.

I took up a position teaching D/HH children in New Jersey and moved to the town I now live in. But to call the ensuing few years traumatic would not be overstating the case. I was a weepy mess. I visited the UK as often as I could and each time, on my final night, I felt as if my heart would break. I knew I'd made the right decision... but I had left a large part of myself behind, and that schism has never been healed. Living with a foot in both countries had been easy while I lived in Kendal; from these shores, it's very painful... especially these days when the US seems to be led by a madman and is imploding all around me.

My parents lived long lives, thank God. Dad passed in 2004 at the age of 86 and Mom in 2015 at 90. During these years, my "permanent residency" expired as I had moved away and had not returned. Nevertheless, I truly believed it was finally my turn to fulfill the dream of returning to Kendal. I truly believed it was God's will as well, finding comfort in rainbows and readings and warm feelings of hope. I knew I was doing good work here with my D/HH children and at my parish... but I also knew I had good work to do in the UK. Surely I would be allowed to heal the schism of so many years and be where I longed to be, now that I had supported my parents through the end of their lives....

I rented a home in Kendal briefly about seven years ago and tried to find work in my field once again. telling myself I was willing to do my time anywhere to earn a reinstatement of my permanent residency and finally retire to Kendal. But the face of Deaf services, as well as the stringency of immigration rules, had greatly changed over the years. Everything had gotten much tighter after 9/11, and the failure to secure a position pushed me to total despair. CDA, my once and (I had hoped) future employer, tried valiantly, but failed to secure the funding we had hoped for. There is no denying it: this is the end of the road. I am relegated to the role of a perpetual visitor.

God's plans for me don't include a permanent return, I am forced to concede. This was brought home in living colour when I attended my annual New Year's Eve retreat. At the end of the afternoon, we are invited

to choose one of a selection of face-down cards on a plate. On it, Sr. Marcy says each year, is a gift from God for the New Year. I have always enjoyed this activity and have blindly selected such wonderful gifts as REST and PEACE over the years. This time? My gift was SURRENDER. I got chills as I looked at it; I get chills as I write about it now.

I see in the New Year with Dawn, a childhood friend whose life is complicated and unfulfilling. She comes early in the evening, and at midnight we go out to the ringing of church bells and fireworks on every side. This year, as soon as she arrived, we went to the churchyard across the street and selected two large pinecones. We took them to the river three blocks away and declared to the universe all we were hoping to leave behind with the old year. For me, this included the despair of losing the dream of a return. I knew I needed to turn some kind of corner, to resign myself that, while my heart is in Kendal, the rest of me is staying in New Jersey. We cast our pinecones into the river and watched them float away.

Just before this winter storm, I went back to the churchyard and selected seven more pinecones. When Dawn arrived for our weekly visit, she helped me coat them with peanut butter and birdseed. We took them out to the garden where my denuded Christmas tree was acting as a bird shelter and hung them there so the birds could weather the storm.

The pinecones have moved on, no longer symbols of casting away but of nurturing, of moving lovingly forward. And I need to find a way to do the same.



A Favourite Prayer

God has created me to do Him some definite service.

He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another.

I have my mission.

I may never know it in this life,
but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught.

I shall do good; I shall do his work.

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place
while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him.

Whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him.

If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

He does nothing in vain.

He knows what He is about.

He may take away my friends.

He may throw me among strangers.
He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me.
Still, He knows what he is about.

St. John Henry Newman



21 February 1801 ~ 11 August 1890

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The wisdom, the non-violence and the moral fortitude of Dr. King is so desperately needed at this dark moment in the US and the world. Let's reflect for a moment on some of his eloquence.



"It is not enough to say, 'We must not wage war.' It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it. We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but the positive affirmation of peace."



"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."



“May I stress the need for courageous, intelligent, and dedicated leadership.... Leaders of sound integrity. Leaders not in love with publicity, but in love with justice. Leaders not in love with money, but in love with humanity. Leaders who can subject their particular egos to the greatness of the cause.”



“The silence of the good people is more dangerous than the brutality of the bad people.”



“Use me, God. Show me how to take who I am, who I want to be, and what I can do, and use it for a purpose greater than myself.”

Last issue, Anne Townsend established this feature, and we would love to include contributions from you. The nice thing is these conversations happen so frequently with all of us, there is a constant source of material to share!

SPEAKING TO STRANGERS

A Feature Established by Anne Townsend

This Issue's Contributor: Celeste Bonfanti

I have had too many memorable encounters on UK trains to count. One of my favourite was about five years ago on a very overcrowded train. I had a seat, but as the train got more crowded, I gave mine to a woman who walked with a stick. At the same time, a young man gave his seat to a very elderly gentleman.

A while later, a young mum with a toddler got on and there were no seats to be had. She stood with her son between the cars, trying to amuse him by pointing out things she saw from the window. I was hoping someone would offer her a seat, but no one made a move, adopting that familiar see-no-evil stance, either staring at their phones, magazines or out the window.

The young man wasn't having it. He took to walking up and down the aisle, encouraging those seated to give the mum their seat: “Come, come, now ~ look at this lass, trying to keep her little one on his feet. Surely someone is willing to do the right thing and let her sit...?” Eventually it worked, and a middle-aged woman shamefacedly changed places with her. When I congratulated the young man on his advocacy, he winked without a word.



For my most memorable train conversation, however, I would need to go back many years prior. I was taking that beautiful run east from Carlisle to Middlesbrough, sharing a table with an

older Jamaican woman as enthralled with the view as I was. Suddenly she said, “Look at those peaks and valleys, peaks and valleys. That’s what I want to tell young people who are going through a hard time: ‘Don’t worry, love. That’s all life is, you know: peaks and valleys, peaks and valleys.’”

I have thought of her wise words again and again over the years, both when times are good and when they aren’t. How we would love to live on the mountaintops, with all the green beauty spread out like a carpet below us! But life doesn’t offer us that. Most of us spend plenty of time in the valleys, looking up at the hard climb ahead of us.

I suspect my tablemate is long gone from this earth, but her words live on in my memory. May your days on the peaks be many and your days in the valley be few!

This Issue’s Featured Hymn highlights a beloved hymn and provides a link to a recording of it, along with a little information about it. *All are welcome to submit a hymn.*

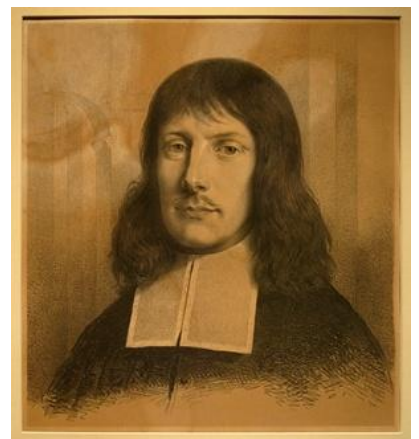
This morning at Mass, the pianist played a beautiful variation of this sweet, happy hymn, and I was reminded again of how much I like its simplicity and sincerity. My principal sources were hymnary.org and the Hymns for Worship website, and specifically an article there entitled “Joachim Neander: The Wild Hymn Writer” [[Joachim Neander: The Wild Hymn Writer - Hymns for Worship](#)].

This Issue’s Featured Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

When my family first moved from Upstate New York to New Jersey, the parish we joined, St. Gregory the Great, was so traditional that we were still kneeling at the communion rail, something that I had never seen before. I had loved our New York parish (St. Clare’s) and I was now a grump at Mass time. St. Clare’s had had a very accessible music ministry. “St. Greg’s” was very staid, and there wasn’t a wide variety of hymns. *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* (known in the US as *Praise to the Lord*) was in the rotation. And as I thawed out and started to actually listen to it, I found that it was a pleasant, hopeful hymn.

Unfortunately, no one really knows who composed the music. But the lyrics were written by Joachim Neander, born in Bremen in 1650. His father had died when Joachim was still in his teens. This created financial straits for the family and narrowed Joachim’s options, keeping him local for his studies. He was a mass of contradictions. Although he was a theology student, his personal life was described thus: “*His student life was spent in vanity of the mind, forgetfulness of God, and the eager pursuit of youthful pleasures.*”

All that changed for two reasons. One day he and some friends went to a church service intending to mock it. Instead, Joachim fell under the spell of Pietism in the German Reformed Church. A second incident occurred when he was lost in a forest as night fell and realised he was in real peril. He prayed fervently that he would find his



way back and promised God that, if he did, he would change his ways and live for God. The rest, as they say, is history!

He became so prolific a lyricist that the article declares him “...one of the finest hymn writers, not only for the Pietist movement, but for the Protestant church as a whole.”



Joachim moved to Dusseldorf to direct the Latin School there but was unhappy, as his Pietism was a source of discrimination and opposition. He used to take long walks in a river valley, seven miles away, to escape from it all, to hold services and write most of the 60 hymns he eventually penned. People began to refer to it as Neander Valley. Believe it or not, it was later the site of the discovery of early humans... *and that is why they are called Neanderthals!* The things you learn when you write for the magazine...!

Unfortunately, poor Joachim died at age 30 of tuberculosis. But his music lives on, and *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* was interpreted into English by Catherine Winkworth in the 19th century. Catherine was very interesting in her own right. She was born in London but lived for a time with relations in Germany and translated many German hymns. She was also an early feminist and a champion for higher education for women.



Praise to the Lord, the Almighty is a joyful exhortation to worship, and the link here is a particularly jubilant version by the Catholic Music Initiative. There are six verses in all, but most hymnals include verses 1, 3 and 6, and these are the ones I include here. Enjoy!

[Praise to the Lord - Catholic Music Initiative - Dave Moore, Lauren Moore, Steve Angrisano - YouTube](#)

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His altar draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend us;
Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend us;
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
Who with His love will befriend us!

Praise to the Lord, oh, let all that is in us adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him;
Let the Amen sound from His people again,
Now as we worship before Him!

Thanks to Raymond for submitting these minutes. We are happy to publish the minutes of any parish activity.

Minutes from Kendal RC Church Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

Date: Thursday 8th January 2026 7:00 PM ~ 8:30 PM

In attendance: Fr. Hugh Pollock, Iain Biddle (Chair), Caroline D'Arcy, Sarah Banks, Zibo Pawlik, Raymond Daley and Jim Boyer

Apologies: Clare McEntegart & James Leeper

1. Prayer: Fr. Hugh

2. Matters Arising from Last Meeting: Covered within the minutes below

- 3. Building Works:** Fr. Hugh spoke with Ken from the Diocese. Further quotes are needed and will be sought. Survey work has been undertaken. We are awaiting a significant structural assessment from the Diocese. Possible option might be for some small-scale work to be completed around the front of the church.



Action Point: Fr. Hugh will liaise with the Diocese regarding the building update.

New CCTV have been installed in the parish: six cameras, covering the church building and the corridor outside the sanctuary. The new cameras provide greater detail than the old.

The steps to the Parish Centre have been power washed to ensure safer access to the centre door.

- 4. Parish Youth Worker Post:** Owing to a re-shuffle of personnel within the Diocese we are still awaiting feedback from Andrew Dawson around the finance of the role.

We have received feedback from Financial Secretary Paul Ryan with questions around:

- Discussion around whether the person would cover the other local churches –~ the PPC felt this was not appropriate as it would dilute the role. It can be opened to other churches in time, but not initially.
- Is driving essential to the role? The PPC felt it would be desirable, not essential.

The PPC discussed the possibility of a PPC member rep attending the Trustee's meeting, in part or whole.

Action Point: Fr. Hugh will confirm the Trustees' next meeting time and update the group on the date/time.

5. **Running of the Parish:** There are questions around feedback from other parish teams, i.e. Finance, Buildings, etc. How can we resurrect/provide regular communication from the groups to the PPC and Parish?

Different structures were spoken about, and the need for new people. Milnthorpe have a model that gives more autonomy for parishioners, with the Parish Priest overseeing larger purchases and bigger issues.

There is a need for structure and clarity of roles/needs within sub-groups. The diocesan website has exemplars/ideas.

Action Point: Fr. Hugh will contact Milnthorpe/Grange/Arnside regarding their structure for advice and suggestions.

Action Point: Iain will invite Greg Tagney to a separate meeting with the PPC.

Wider engagement with newer migrant groups and cultural groups is needed. It would be ideal to have better representation within the PPC.



6. **Parish Hall Kitchen:** A parishioner has experience of how St. George's remodelled their kitchen. We are still looking for parishioners to contact the PPC offering any expertise or ideas for a kitchen revamp.

Action Point: Raymond will liaise with the appropriate parishioners.

Action Point: Iain will contact appropriate local tradesmen linked to the parish for kitchen quotes.

7. **Parish Hall Toilets:** There was general consensus to redevelop the parish toilets.

Action Point: Iain will contact appropriate local tradesmen linked to the parish for toilet quotes. We need to establish the nature of any pipe/structural issues.

8. **Security of Parish Centre:** Fr. Hugh has had a number lock added to the upstairs parish room. See Fr. Hugh for the number code for parish use.
9. **SumUp Donation Machine:** Iain visited the Kendal Parish Church regarding the SumUp machine. The machine costs around £50. We would also need to buy a unit secured to the floor. The PPC authorised purchase of a machine and stand. It will be situated inside the main doors.

Action Point: Iain will liaise with the Parish Office regarding the order and installation of the machine.

10. **AOB:** None

11. **Date for Next Meeting:** Thursday, 26th February ,2026 at 7:00 PM.

Please email Fr. Hugh or speak to any member of the PPC (Names may be found at top) if you wish to be part of this vital group. At present we meet every 6 ~ 8 weeks.

It is an important way of shaping our parish life and church.

I have a tote bag which reads, "A Book Is a Present You Can Open Again and Again." Indeed, I have books that feel like old friends, those that I love to reread, and every time I find something new. I'm sure you do as well. Remember, it's not only Elizabeth Cartmell and I who have good book recommendations! Let's hear yours!



by Celeste Bonfanti

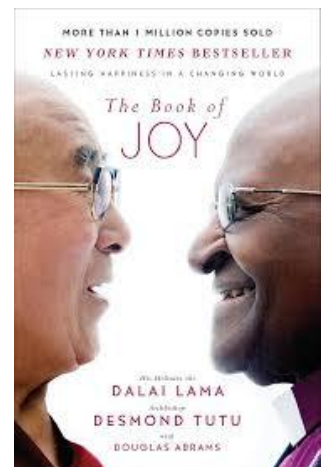
The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

Authors: His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams

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If this isn't a time crying out for joy, I don't know what is.

And when one thinks the world is too grim to entertain such a thought, one need only consider what the authors of this book have endured to acknowledge that, if they have been able to find lasting happiness, we ought to be able to as well. The cover alone makes me smile. And throughout the book there are marvelous little pictures of these two titans of joy sharing a giggle, giving each other piggyback rides, and puckering up for kisses. The two considered each other "mischievous spiritual brothers," and indeed they shared a lightness and playfulness which is ageless. The book attempts to determine "...how we can transform joy from an ephemeral **state** into an enduring **trait**, from a fleeting feeling into a lasting way of being."



For years I had a poster of Tutu in my dining room with the quote, "I wonder which Bible people are reading when they say religion and politics don't mix." His Truth and Reconciliation Commission was an integral part of the dismantling of South Africa's apartheid and, I have always believed, the only reason the aftermath produced a lasting peace. For his part, at the time the book was written, the Dalai

Lama had lived as an exile for 56 years and had somehow managed, despite the brutal Chinese repression of Tibet, to keep bitterness at bay. So when my retreat house offered a course on the book, I leapt at the chance to enjoy it with like-minded readers.

The book is the product of a five-day visit in April 2015 between these Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and the co-author, Douglas Abrams, on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday. They met at the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, with the sublime aim of designing a roadmap to joy for the rest of us. The book is arranged in three principal sections:

DAY 1: The Nature of True Joy

DAYS 2 and 3: Obstacles to Joy

DAYS 4 and 5: The Eight Pillars of Joy

And Abrams writes that he envisaged the book to be, in effect, a three-tiered birthday cake, with the first layer the **teachings** of joy, the second the latest **science** on joy and the third the **stories** that the visit generated. Before the plane even touches down, Tutu shares with Abrams that:

Discovering more joy does not, I'm sorry to say, save us from the inevitability of hardship and heartbreak. In fact, we may cry more easily, but we will laugh more easily, too. Perhaps we are just more alive. Yet as we discover more joy, we can face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard. We have heartbreak without being broken.

I don't think it's giving too much away to say that the Eight Pillars of Joy as highlighted by the friends are PERSPECTIVE, HUMILITY, HUMOUR, ACCEPTANCE, FORGIVENESS, GRATITUDE, COMPASSION and GENEROSITY.

There is a section at the end of the book delineating a variety of Joy Practices. These include such things as Morning Intention Setting and Meditation Walks. But there is nothing formulaic about this book. It's as if you have had lovely, long, nourishing conversations with people who epitomize the love of God in the midst of chaos. It is a beautiful expression of ministry to the reader, very readable, funny at times and poignant to the core. I can't imagine ever parting with it and I think it would be a welcome addition to any home library.



Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms ~ to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

Viktor E. Frankl

To get understanding, I must forget everything I think I know. In this forgetting, I release assumptions, and my heart opens to spiritual understanding. As I listen with an open heart, I support my highest good. Now I am perfectly positioned to embrace a new year.

I assume nothing about the year ahead, and with compassion I see clearly who and where I am in this moment. My heart space expands into the mystery of what is within me and what is before me. The mystery contains the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, building blocks of spiritual understanding. My view becomes less myopic and expands to encompass the bigger cosmic picture of which I am a part.

Insights flood my awareness as I see the whole of life. I begin to understand how divinely orchestrated life is. I am grateful for this clarity.

I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:2-3

From "A Christmas of Light and Peace: Advent 2022"



They say life is a marathon. There are highs and lows. There are storms and sunny days. But the road stretches out before us, never wavering. Sometimes our legs get tired ~ at least mine do.

A particularly steep hill looms and I look over at my lifelong Running Companion. "Are we doing this?"

He says the same thing he always does. "Every day."

And so we do. And somewhere along the way, I begin to enjoy it. Not the climb, maybe. But the company is perfect.

Dear God, thank You that we don't run this race alone.

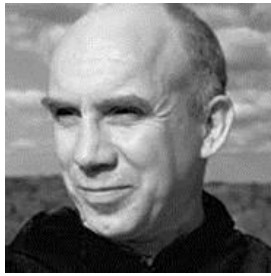
That You are lockstep with us every mile.

And that You are the prize at the finish line.

I will press on.

Buck Storm in Walking in Grace 2025: Daily Devotions to Draw You Closer to God

Merton Corner



It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race, though it is a race dedicated to many absurdities and one which makes many terrible mistakes: yet, with all that, God Himself gloried in becoming a member of the human race. A member of the human race! To think that such a commonplace realization should suddenly seem like news that one holds the winning ticket in a cosmic sweepstake.

I have the immense joy of being a member of a race in which God became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realise what we all are. And if only everybody could realise this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.

It was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.

Thomas Merton in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

Which Gospel?

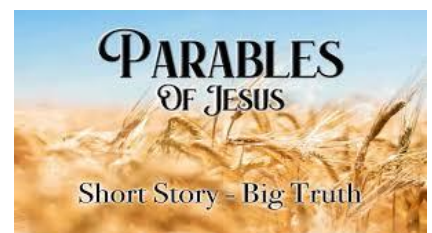
The Parables

by Celeste Bonfanti


I have, as I have confessed before, a deep love of words, and I remember noticing the word PARABLES for the first time in St. Clare's Parochial School in Albany, New York, USA. They sounded like solid things, parables. As I learned about them, I was enchanted to think of Jesus as a storyteller. I was already a storyteller, as I believe I have written about: I would turn the pages of books I couldn't read and prattle on about the story as I created it. Who knew then that over 50 years later I would be a published playwright? The muse was present early!

When it comes to the parables, I tend to include idiomatic expressions, those descriptive phrases which paint a picture throughout the Gospels.

Some parables and descriptive phrases are recorded by only one



evangelist; others were recorded by more than one. First let's look at those recorded by a single evangelist.

EVANGELIST	PARABLE/IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION
<p>Matthew</p> 	<p>"The Salt of the Earth" (a phrase often used by my father to describe rock-solid people)</p> <p>The Parable of the True Treasure</p> <p>"Foxes Have Holes...."</p> <p>"The Harvest is Rich but the Labourers are Few"</p> <p>The Easy Yoke and Light Burden of Jesus</p> <p>"Sheep without a Shepherd"</p> <p>"A Tree Can Be Known by Its Fruit"</p> <p>The Parable of the Darnel</p> <p>The Parable of the Treasure Buried in a Field</p> <p>The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price</p> <p>The Parable of the Dragnet</p> <p>The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard</p> <p>Parable of Two Sons: Which Did the Father's Will?</p> <p>The Parable of the Conscientious Steward</p> <p>The Parable of the Wedding Attendants</p> <p>The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats</p>
<p>Mark</p>	<p>The Parable of the Seed Growing by Itself</p>
<p>Luke</p>	<p>"Wherever Your Treasure Is, There Your Heart Will Be Also"</p> <p>The Parable of the Man Hoarding Possessions</p> <p>"The Blind Leading the Blind"</p> <p>The Parable of the Importunate Judge and the Persistent Widow</p> <p>The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree</p> <p>The Parable of the Yeast</p> <p>The Parable of the Lost Coin</p> <p>The Parable of the Prodigal Son</p> <p>The Parable of the Crafty Steward</p> <p>The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus</p> <p>The Parable of the Man Building a Tower</p> <p>The Parable of the King Riding into Battle</p> <p>Salt Losing Its Taste = Loss of Enthusiasm in a Disciple</p> <p>"The Stone Which the Builders Rejected Has Become the Cornerstone"</p> <p>The Parable of the Good Samaritan</p> <p>The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector</p>
<p>John</p>	<p>"The Bread of Life," an image taken literally by many who followed him no longer</p> <p>"The Light of the World"</p> <p>The Parable of the Grain of Wheat</p>

	<p>"I Am the Resurrection and the Life"</p> <p>"The Way, the Truth and the Life"</p> <p>"I Shall Not Leave You Orphans"</p> <p>The Parable of the Vine and the Branches</p>
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All the other parables and idiomatic expressions appear in more than one Gospel, although sometimes certain evangelists put their own spin on them. Let's look at these.

PARABLE/IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION	RECORDED BY	DIFFERENCES
The Parable of The Lamp on a Stand	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	None
The Parable of The Narrow Gate	Matthew Luke	In Luke, it's the narrow DOOR
The Parable of The House Built on Rock	Matthew Luke	None
"A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand"	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	None
The Parable of the Sower	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	None
The Parable of the Mustard Seed	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	None
"The Yeast of the Pharisees"	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	Matthew: and the Sadducees Mark: and Herod
"Faith the Size of a Mustard Seed"	Matthew Luke	None
Parable of the Lost Sheep	Matthew Luke	None
Parable of the Good Shepherd	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	None
"It is Easier for a Camel to Pass through the Eye of a Needle..."	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	None
The Parable of the Wicked Tenants	All 3 Synoptic Gospels	None
Parable of the Wedding Feast	Matthew Luke	None
Parable of the Widow's Mite	Mark Luke	None
Parable of the Talents	Matthew Luke	"Talents" is the word used in Matthew Luke's word varies according to translation

It's interesting to reflect on those parables which were recorded the most; these were clearly Jesus's most famous and remembered stories. I was thinking the other day of that verse in Mark where he mentions that Jesus only spoke to the crowds in parables, but to his disciples he explained everything in private. I had always regarded that line as purely explanatory, but this time I wondered if there wasn't a tinge of pride in it: "They got the parables... but *we* got the *real* story." It made Mark seem more relatable to me. To these simple, unimportant men, traveling with the Messiah was undoubtedly profoundly intoxicating. Surely they felt singularly special and set apart; who wouldn't...? Maybe Mark couldn't resist reminding his readers of this special status. I wonder if he smiled as he wrote that line...?

Having fun is not a diversion from a successful life; it is the pathway to it. Each of us is born with a propensity to have fun doing certain types of activities, in certain proportions ~ you may love doing something I hate and vice versa. I call the pattern of activities you most enjoy your "funprint," and like your thumbprint it's unique.

It seems obvious to me (and research backs me up) that we are most productive, persistent, creative and flexible when we're engaged in precisely the combination of activities that brings us maximum fun. Your funprint isn't a frivolous indulgence. It is the map of your true life, an instruction manual for your essential purpose, written in the language of joy. Learning to read and respond to it is one of the most crucial things you'll ever do.

Martha Beck in "Do You Need More Fun in Your Life?"

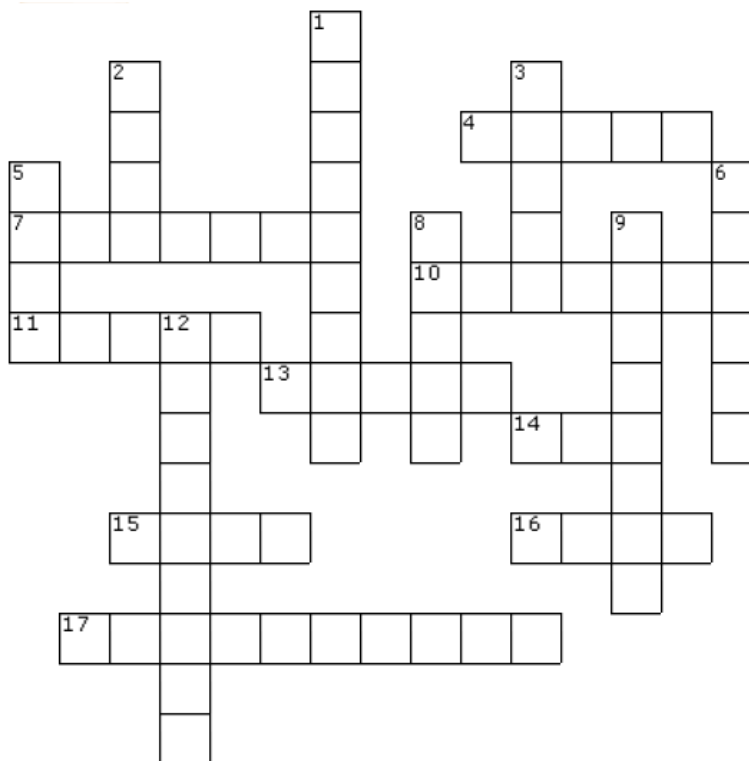


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"Acme Excavating. Faith Speaking."

Who Said That...?



ACROSS

- 4 He said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
 7 She said, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued."
 10 He said to the Lord, "Will you destroy both innocent and guilty alike? Suppose you find fifty innocent people there within the city--will you still destroy it, and not spare it for their sakes?"
 11 He said, "Who

- am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"
 13 He said to the sailors, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea, and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."
 14 She said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
 15 She said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."
 16 He said, "Am I my brother's

- keeper?"
 17 He said, "You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
 (2 words)

DOWN

- 1 He said to the wise men, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." (2 words)
 2 He said, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does

- not boast, it is not proud."
 3 When Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?", this disciple answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 5 He said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."
 6 Bracing himself against the central pillars of the temple, He said, "Let me die with the Philistines!"
 8 When this elderly woman heard talk that she would have a baby, she

- thought to herself, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"
 9 He said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."
 (2 words)
 12 She said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"

WINTER

Word Search Puzzle



I	C	E	S	K	A	T	E	S	S	M	C	S	Z	R	S	B	B	Y
G	H	W	N	D	J	F	S	U	K	R	M	Y	C	G	T	H	A	U
M	R	Z	K	X	G	J	Y	U	I	H	Q	S	W	E	A	T	E	R
F	I	R	E	P	L	A	C	E	I	K	R	V	E	I	O	N	B	S
E	S	T	K	K	I	F	S	K	N	C	J	L	K	O	H	V	H	N
B	T	H	T	G	X	C	Z	N	G	R	S	A	W	R	V	S	C	O
R	M	O	J	E	A	R	M	U	F	F	S	C	U	D	U	H	J	W
U	A	L	H	H	N	P	S	S	S	Q	L	O	R	L	T	D	T	M
A	S	I	B	A	I	S	H	K	U	R	D	A	S	R	X	E	B	A
R	U	D	E	N	C	Z	Y	E	B	N	Z	T	D	L	A	C	F	N
Y	Y	A	Q	U	L	J	E	O	Y	Z	W	S	H	O	V	E	L	W
C	X	Y	S	K	X	Y	Q	C	I	J	E	Y	C	Y	S	M	H	K
W	F	S	L	K	R	H	N	L	Q	L	H	O	N	V	L	B	E	E
P	U	O	H	A	T	N	B	Y	C	Z	C	O	E	V	E	E	S	C
K	F	N	U	H	W	Y	U	I	Z	T	D	P	W	J	D	R	J	H
X	R	N	M	U	O	S	C	S	O	V	X	A	Y	S	D	Z	B	I
X	A	Y	I	O	C	I	I	H	U	B	B	R	E	D	I	L	U	L
J	Y	Z	M	E	W	P	G	P	T	L	Q	K	A	U	N	B	A	L
N	X	W	A	V	K	C	O	A	J	E	F	A	R	T	G	T	Z	Y



BLIZZARD	HANUKKAH	PARKA
CHILLY	HOLIDAYS	SHOVEL
CHRISTMAS	HOT COCOA	SKIING
COAT	ICE SKATES	SLEDDING
DECEMBER	ICICLES	SLEET
EARMUFFS	JANUARY	SLUSH
FEBRUARY	MITTENS	SNOWMAN
FIREPLACE	NEW YEAR	SWEATER

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