



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – May 2013

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4: 6 ESV

Welcome to our May 2013 1st Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will enhance your prayer experience and will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, May 3rd**, as a day of prayer and fasting for the Church in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day

Prayer Quotes

“When we live in harmony with the Lord, it is joy and delight to linger in His presence.”

Charles Dickens 1812-1870

The Key to Stamina

This month's meditation is more in the form of a testimony than usual. It is unabashedly subjective and personal. However, I believe that it contains a message for all of us who are involved in any kind of ministry, whether it be episcopal, pastoral, parental or intercessory. We all need the key to stamina and perseverance. May the Lord bless you as you read this. Garth+

“So, are you looking forward to the Eastern Regional Assembly next week?” I was asked by a person who was keenly anticipating the event. I knew the expected response was something like, “Absolutely! Can't wait! It's going to be amazing!” But it was not at all how I was feeling, and so I mumbled a less-than-enthusiastic “Oh sure”, and hoped that my interrogator would not pursue the question any further.

Please let me explain: it's not that there was anything remotely wrong with the projected assembly. No, it was all about where I was, emotionally and spiritually. I had been through a hectic few weeks that included some unexpected sermon preparation, a harrowing drive to Ottawa through a massive ice and freezing rain storm, and the leadership of a weekend men's seminar. But more than just that, for some time I was feeling irritable, weary, old and running on empty. Ever feel that way in pastoral ministry or intercession? Perhaps it's just me . . .

I have battled a tendency towards self-pity most of my life (I blame it on my Irish heritage – no one suffers like the Irish!), and it was on the ascendancy once more. When I get this way, I feel like I'm just plodding off to the next thing, whatever the next thing is. Even wonderful events can become the “next thing” and the goal is to be done and then plod on to the next “next thing”. So the regional assembly fell into the “next thing” category. The cave to which Elijah fled from the wrath of Queen Jezebel, and with which I am all too familiar, beckoned to me once again.

As I drove home from Ottawa on a much nicer day than the one of my arrival, I was blessed by the beauty of the coming spring, and I felt the Lord tugging on my heart (that's the only way I can describe it). It was not clear to me what he was trying to say to me, but I knew there was definitely something. Rather than stress about it, I decided to wait for further guidance. It was not long in coming!

Three days later, we were gathered for the clergy day at the beginning of the regional assembly. Archbishop Tito Zavala of the Southern Cone was addressing the gathered clerics on the challenges of ministry in a province that is spread over 7 dioceses in 6 different countries. In his inimitable and candid style, the archbishop shared about his early days as a parish priest and the importance for clergy to maintain a balance among personal, family and ministry spheres of responsibility.

Then he made a comment that I immediately recognized as the word from the Lord for which I had been waiting. He said, "If you can **learn to live in the joy of the Spirit**, you will be okay. . . So, guard your hearts." As I sat there listening to this dear man of God, the truth of his words hit me like the proverbial ton of bricks. That was it – my weariness was the direct result of my having lost my joy; my joy in ministry, my joy in prayer, my joy in being forgiven, my joy in the Lord's salvation. My delight in being in Jesus' presence had been surreptitiously eroded without my awareness by the one who comes "to steal, kill and destroy". (John 10: 10)

Three scriptures verses immediately came to my mind. The first one was made into a song that every evangelical Christian from 1970's forward will remember:-

*And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for **the joy of the Lord is your strength**."* Nehemiah 8: 9-10 ESV

The context here is that revival has broken out amongst the exiles who have returned to Jerusalem after having heard the reading of God's word. I felt like revival was beginning to break out in me as well as I realized that my source of strength, of stamina, was just as Archbishop Tito had said – the joy of the Lord!

Another scripture verse came to mind as I reflected on the other side of the same coin. The psalmist, David, cried out to the Lord in confession:

*For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; **my strength fails because of my iniquity**, and my bones waste away.* Psalm 31: 8 ESV

Another version expresses it this simply; "My sin has sapped my strength". My sin of wallowing in self-pity, complaining about being old and feeling over the hill; all this had indeed sapped my strength. It wasn't really an issue of old age or over work so much as it was the result of my not "guarding my heart" as Archbishop Tito had reminded us.

As I took some time throughout the rest of the assembly sessions to repent, I found myself turning once more to a verse written by the psalmist, David:

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. . . . **Restore to me the joy of your salvation**, and uphold me with a willing spirit.* Psalm 51:10, 12 ESV

And God has answered that prayer, as he always will. At the final session of the regional assembly, a communion service with contemporary worship music, I was able to enter into to the spirit of worship with great joy. At the conclusion of the service, I was the recipient of some prayer ministry that seemed to bring a seal to all the Lord had been doing in me during the week. I was, and am, profoundly grateful for the Lord's grace-filled patience with me, and the restoration of that "*joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory*". (1 Peter 1:8)

Brothers and sisters, this may all seem incredibly basic stuff – Christian Life 101. After all these years, I should know better, right? Even though I have counseled others and taught from the pulpit on the importance of maintaining a joyful spirit, this time it took the words of a dear Archbishop who had come all the way from Chile to penetrate through my malaise and bring me release and renewal.

And, yes, your Grace, I have purposed to be more diligent to "guard my heart" with a greater vigilance against the one who would steal it through the circumstances of life.

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and **joy in the Holy Spirit**.* Amen! Romans 14:17, ESV

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Praise God ...

- For the incredible sacrifice that Jesus, our Advocate and the Propitiation for our sins, has made on our behalf, and for the indescribable joy that His salvation brings.
- For God's evident grace and presence at the amazing Regional Assemblies that we have just experienced. Thank Him for all those whom He brought to minister to us.
- For the many ANiC "projects" and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans that He is adding to our number.
- For faithful Anglican primates, bishops, clergy and laity – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

Confess if needed...

- The times that we have allowed the joy of our salvation to be eroded or stolen resulting in loss of power and stamina in our ministry and intercessory prayer.

Please pray...

- That each of us would **guard our hearts** more closely to maintain **our joy in the Lord**, no matter the circumstances.
- For a new visitation of the **Holy Spirit** upon our bishops and clergy, our parishes and our diocese. Pray that the fresh wind of the Spirit will bring renewal, healing and empowerment.
- For **Bishops** Donald Harvey, Charlie Masters, Stephen Leung, Trevor Walters, Ronald Ferris and Malcolm Harding (retired) – and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and renewal, for wisdom, and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec) – and our Dean of Multicultural Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Archie Pell..
- For our **ANiC clergy in the New England region** as they minister compassion and comfort to those who have been deeply affected by the recent bombing at the Boston marathon.
- For all of our **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- That God would continue His work in and through the **Anglican Church in North America**
 - For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara), especially for wisdom as he seeks to give godly leadership through any growing pains our province may encounter.
- **GAFCon Primates and Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (FCA) leaders** – Pray for the Lord's courage and wisdom as they seek to guide the orthodox reformation and realignment that is taking place throughout the Anglican Communion. Pray for the global gathering this October in Kenya.
- For the new Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby**. Pray that the Lord will grace him with wisdom, courage and the faithfulness to follow the teachings of Scripture in his decision-making.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship and are meeting in temporary facilities. May God comfort and pour out His blessing on them. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord as they seek His guidance for more permanent worship facilities. Pray especially for St Aidan's (Windsor, ON) as the congregation awaits the court's response to their appeal.
- For the **Anglican Sojourner Fellowship** as it seeks to connect and encourage isolated Christians who live where there are no biblically faithful Anglican churches.
- For the **all the Christians in the Middle East** who are facing increasing pressure and persecution as many of their countries embrace a more aggressive and extreme form of Islam.

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