

Good News Daily

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Sunday, April 14

1 John 2:7-17 *The one who says he is in the Light yet hates his brother is in the darkness....* (v.9 NAS)

A friend once told me the most vivid memory she had of her grandfather was his outrage. He would stand in front of the television set and curse, and yell, and contort, and shake his hand at news anchors—endlessly. Everyday! Actually, I can relate. Sometimes I think I have earned a degree in Self Righteousness. I loved my own father, but he could turn the air blue with cutting sarcastic judgment. Sadly, so can I.

Recently I found myself in a searing religious disagreement with an old friend. We were writing and our correspondence grew heated month after month. At one point my friend sent a video with speakers supporting his views. My outrage went through the roof. Upon cooling down I was reminded of *the accuser of the brethren*—the devil who relishes in dividing people. Is this worth ruining a friendship over, I had to ask myself? I decided not. I'm just not going to hate on him. I prayed for my friend (and myself) instead.

Exodus 18:1-12; Psalms 148, 149, 150; Mark 16:9-20

Monday, April 15

1 Peter 5:1-14 *...clothe yourself with humility towards one another* (v.5)

I have attended many churches throughout my lifetime, mostly due to moving. One pastor I recalled had an endearing habit of introducing himself as “one of the pastors here.” Truth is he was the Lead Pastor and head of that particular Church. While it was a very simple gesture, I always took note of that humility.

Another time I recall a Bishop celebrating Easter Mass. Oh my, he had every kind of cloak and crown and satchels, and ribbons and a shepherd staff. Pulling at his collar, his crown tilting, he finally let the crown fall and asked a lady in the front row if she wouldn't mind holding it. I couldn't help musing at how humble this dear Bishop was as well—clearly uncomfortable with excess.

And, then there was Jesus who took a servant's role washing his disciples' feet as, in his own words, an everlasting example for all of us.

The American culture I live in and am part of worships its all-consuming Bill of Rights mindset for which my faith constantly reminds me otherwise.

Exodus 18:13-27; Psalm 25; Matthew 1:1-17, 3:1-6

Tuesday, April 16

Exodus 19:1-16 “...*whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.*” (v.12b)

We are told God’s first meeting with Moses had severe preconditions. So foul the humans race had apparently become, even Moses himself was required to remove his shoes and hide his face at the first encounter. While God did make Israel a nation of priests later, initially even those priests who were defective were banned from the most sacred inner area by a 60-foot temple curtain. Only the most righteous and unblemished priests could enter beyond.

All of which reminds me of my own epiphany at 16. So powerful was the experience that at one point I had to pull away. A memory still etched in my seventy-year-old soul. The fear of God has unique meaning to me. For which today’s reading makes me all the more grateful for the crucifixion—the one and only thing that finally satisfied God and at that very moment, granted grace even to the defective with that enormous temple curtain tearing in half—forever.

Psalm 26, 28; Colossians 1:1-14; Matthew 3:7-12

Wednesday, April 17

Psalm 38 *Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me!* (v.21)

Today’s reading is very typical David. Bemoaning his enemies, his wretched soul, his sinfulness. Depressed by even his loved ones who stand aloof as if they clearly perceive the murderous, lustful, manipulating person that he sometimes was. I have to admit I too sometimes feel great resentment against that king. So revered by Christians, Jews, and Muslims and yet someone who entertained multiple wives and shed blood.

David peers with others such as Egypt’s Ramses II, husband to over 200 wives who engaged in, what the American Research Center dubbed, the first world war; and Britain’s Henry VIII who waged to kill the French, the Scots, the Irish, and even 2 of his 6 wives.

And yet, David, for all his adultery, treachery, and bloodshed as well, remains highly regarded. Even bearing Christ through family heritage. So what was different about him? Perhaps his persistent self-abasement, rare for a King. Along with those who hated, loathed, and devised against him, he, too, hated his sins, often begging for mercy, pleading the Lord his God: “be not far.”

Exodus 19:16-25; Colossians 1:15-23; Matthew 3:13-17

St. Matthew’s: Sue Jones’ birthday.

Thursday, April 18

Psalm 37:1-18 *Give up anger, abandon fury,...it can only do harm.* (v.8 JSB)

Today's US military budget is about \$800 billion (second highest is China at \$230 billion). We also have a million armed government officers serving to protect our states, cities, and counties. But, in addition, we now we have 300 million civilian-owned firearms and skyrocketing mass shootings suggesting a country growing in fear and anger.

I used to read the Sermon on the Mount every Saturday morning. I did this for a long time. I always learned something new or felt guilty about somewhere I'd fallen short. I never recall the Sermon discussing preferred forms of government. Instead, I learned about the *spirit* of human behavior (or the lack of it) and was challenged to step back and look above the fray for answers and that narrow road that few find—or quickly dismiss.

What is very much in the fray is human anger and revenge. A friend visiting a cousin in France was once asked by locals, “You Americans have everything. What are you so angry about?”

Exodus 20:1-21; Colossians 1:24—2:7; Matthew 4:1-11

Friday, April 19

Exodus 24:1-18 *...and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.* (v.18 NAS)

In subsequent chapters of today's reading, we learn why Moses needed to be gone so long, but the people of Israel didn't have that advantage which might have curbed their ensuing idolatry.

1892 author Violet Fane's original quote “Good things come to those who wait” is said to be translated from the French *Tout vient a qui sait attendre* which more accurately reads, Everything comes to who knows *how* to wait—something neither Israel nor I have done very well.

In her book *7 Lenses*, consultant Linda Thornton suggests at least 7 ways on *how* to wait. A person must work hard; help others; keep working; keep learning; keep serving; never quit; and repeat all those over and over.

The speed at which Israel took to worshiping graven images in that short 40-day time frame remind me of Carrie Fisher who said, “Instant gratification takes too long.” However, today's reading reminds me that Israel's impatience ultimately cost them dearly. So might mine.

Psalm 105:1-22; Colossians 2:8-23; Matthew 4:12-17

Saturday, April 20

Exodus 25:1-22 “*And this is the contribution you are to raise from them: gold, silver, bronze....acacia wood....*” (vv.3-5).

God gave Moses a list of items to build His sanctuary. Along with gold and silver was, of all things, acacia wood. As an arborist, I wondered what was so special about this desert tree. Because, unlike the sexy weeping Willow, the statuesque Cedar, or the dreamy Tamarisk, desert Acacia is rather plain in appearance.

In Greek, *Acacia* rightly translates, “thorny.” It’s pods are twisted and the bipinnate leaves are tiny. Not a tall tree. But, the desert *Acacia raddiana* thrives in dry river beds with roots penetrating far deeper than most plants allowing it to tolerate the worst of droughts. And while even its grain is said to be “gnarly and changes direction,” finished Acacia furniture is stunning.

I confess to a lifetime of poor self-esteem. Wasn’t popular in high school. Late bloomer. Never the center of attention and challenged with emotional identity. But while I may only make claim to mediocrity, I take courage in the peculiar and inauspicious Acacia tree for which God, apparently, found value.

Psalms 30, 32; Colossians 3:1-17; Matthew 4:18-25

by William Bacon

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Pray for those who are sick, in distress, and in need of healing: Jenna, Sawyer, Fr. Andy, Sandy, Marie, Pam, Kyle, Steve, Bill, Jeff, Char, Rutger, DiAnne, Cynthia, Diane, Peter, Linda, Shayne

Pray for the Faithful Departed: Gail, Susie, Margaret, Ray, and Joseph

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Martha, and Ellie

Pray for Bishop Brian and the clergy of the Diocese of Springfield. Pray for Fr. Tom, and all local clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the altar.