

TUESDAY, September 1*David Pendleton Oakerhater*

Job 13:3-5. *But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with God. As for you, you whitewash with lies; all of you are worthless physicians. If you would only keep silent, that would be your wisdom!*

*Ps 26, 28 * 36, 39 | Job 12:1; 13:3-17, 21-27 | Acts 12:1-17 | John 8:33-47*

How often have I sought to speak for God? Nearly always this inclination comes from a place of compassion, offering the hope I find in scripture as salve to a hurting heart or as a candle guiding another away from a road I perceive to lead to pain and heartache. I have learned—slowly—that silence is sometimes the better medicine, my presence the only gospel I need to share.

Job cries out in his misery and begs his friends to be quiet: They cannot help his pain or quiet his misery; they cannot understand. He must confront his pain alone and take it directly to God, unmediated. How can I point the way, offer the aid, and stand in solidarity without attempting to mediate someone's relationship with God? How do I remind myself that God speaks healing directly to the human heart?

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Moray, Ross & Caithness (Scotland),
the Windward Islands (West Indies), and Wondurba (South Sudan)*

MOVING FORWARD: *How do you offer comfort? What feels like comforting action to you?*

WEDNESDAY, September 2*The Martyrs of New Guinea*

Job 14:1-2. *A mortal, born of woman, few of days and full of trouble, comes up like a flower and withers, flees like a shadow and does not last.*

*Ps 38 * 119:25-48 | Job 12:1; 14:1-22 | Acts 12:18-25 | John 8:47-59*

In my work, I sometimes feel very important. The leaders of the organizations I counsel make space in their calendars for our meetings. They review the materials I send in advance of our meetings and express gratitude as we tie up loose ends.

These meetings and the relationships we cultivate are a tiny blip in the life of an organization. Most employees will never know those meetings happened, and the impacts will be so intermixed with all the other contributing factors of organizational success or failure that it will be impossible to assign credit or blame to any one factor in the end.

Our world is not populated by superheroes—nothing great can ever be attributed to a single individual. The web the Holy Spirit weaves between us is complex and interdependent. The story of which we are a part matters—even our shadows lend movement and life to the forward march of a spectacular universe.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Morobo (South Sudan) and Worcester (England)

MOVING FORWARD: *How do you stay humble in your work?*

THURSDAY, September 3

Phoebe

Romans 10:8-9. *But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*Ps 37:1-18 * 37:19-42 | Job 16:16-22; 17:1,13-16 | Acts 13:1-12 | John 9:1-17*

From the Archives: August 23, 1952

There were thousands of martyrs in the early days, people who were not ashamed to confess the Lord Jesus with their mouths. They confessed, even though it meant they were to be stoned, beheaded, crucified, thrown to lions. It took real courage to say, "I believe in Christ the King."

There are those among us who make up their own religion and keep it loved deep within their hearts. Some make public professions of faith but do nothing about them. Still others make a religion of good deeds. None of these actions are enough. The urgency, the immediacy of the gospel, must be proclaimed to all people today.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Morogoro (Tanzania),
Wulu (South Sudan), and Ijesa North East (Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *Where do you see pain—unspoken, unattended, unrecognized—in your life and community?*

FRIDAY, September 4

Paul Jones

John 9:30. *The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes."*

*Ps 31 * 35 | Job 19:1-7,14-27 | Acts 13:13-25 | John 9:18-41*

I have become unsurprised by bad news: another political mess, another milestone of ecological unraveling, another conflict on the global stage. It is often the good news that can be hard for me to accept and digest, especially when it comes from somewhere unexpected.

Sometimes good news comes from unlikely places: a stranger helps out in a moment of crisis, an estranged friend puts aside past wrongs when times are rough, a hopeless situation takes a surprising turn for the better. Grace—especially when we are surprised by it—can be hard to accept.

Some of the folks around Jesus could not believe the blind man had been healed, despite his testimony and that of his parents. Can anything good come from Nazareth? Just because we don't understand how it came to be that our enemies should bless us doesn't mean God cannot find a way.

PRAY for the Diocese of Mount Kenya (Kenya)

MOVING FORWARD: *When have you experienced or extended surprising grace?*

John 10:4-5. *When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.*

*Ps 30, 32 * 42, 43 | Job 22:1-4, 21—23:7 | Acts 13:26-43 | John 10:1-18*

God calls us into many kinds of relationships: with God's heart, with God's creation, with the people around us, and with ourselves. These relationships can give life and joy—and they can take it away. The thief can sound like the shepherd, especially in a world where we are so hungry for connection, for anyone to say our name and speak a kind word.

The relationships and connections that bind us to the fold and to the shepherd look and sound like this: friendships that help us to know ourselves better, communities that empower us to be more present to our loved ones, self-knowledge that shows us God alive and at work in all of it. The shepherd calls and ties us together with love, at every level of relationship.

PRAY for the Anglican Communion in Japan

MOVING FORWARD: *Call your best friend today.*

Romans 13:8. *Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

Ps 149 and Exodus 12:1-14 or Ps 119:33-40 and Ezekiel 33:7-11

Romans 13:8-14 | Matthew 18:15-20

Many of my relationships are challenged by the scarcity of time. We want to give our best and most fully present selves to each other, but we fall short of our own hopes, intentions, and expectations.

Paul encourages us to pay our debts so that we owe no one anything—except what we owe everyone: our love. When we give ourselves in love, we fulfill God's law.

What would it feel like to give love and all we hope for in return is to be loved? What freedom might we experience if we released ourselves from the right words and gifts and visits and committed ourselves to loving those around us more deeply, more intentionally—each prayer and thought crystallizing around the care we experience for the other?

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Mount Kilimanjaro (Tanzania)
and Wusasa and Ijesha North (both in Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *Does time feel scarce to you? How can you confront that with love?*

MONDAY, September 7

Kassiani

Job 32:6-8. Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite answered: "I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you. I said, 'Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.' But truly it is the spirit in a mortal, the breath of the Almighty, that makes for understanding."

*Ps 41, 52 * 44 | Job 32:1-10, 19—33:1, 19-28 | Acts 13:44-52 | John 10:19-30*

In large-group discussion, I often experience a great deal of anxiety before I contribute. A thought will hit me, and I quickly bat it away. I try to listen even harder to what others are saying, but the incessant buzzing of that thought grows in intensity until I decide I will speak. My palms sweat, my heart pounds, my breath quickens, and I look for my moment. Once my voice rings in the space, each subsequent comment centers me a bit more, and I can relax into the conversation.

We can never fully know the barriers that might hold others back from their own participation. How can we actively invite the unspoken, knowing that God may be seeking to speak to us from unexpected places?

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Mpumalanga (Tanzania),
Yambio (South Sudan), and Yangon (Myanmar)*

MOVING FORWARD: *What does healthy interaction in a large group look like for you?*

TUESDAY, September 8

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Acts 14:11. When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"

*Ps 45 * 47, 48 | Job 29:1-20 | Acts 14:1-18 | John 10:31-42*

Paul and Barnabas have just healed a man, lame from birth, in the name of Jesus. The people are amazed and attribute the act to the men before them, not the God they serve. We only see what we know how to look for.

By putting Edison's face on the light bulb, we erase the inventors who had early, non-commercially successful prototypes and the numerous assistants who worked tirelessly under Edison's tutelage. We also miss out on the incredible technological creativity of the age—we are drawn in by the flash and dash of mass marketing and artificial enlightenment.

I wonder what else we miss when we look for greatness in the person rather than seek to understand the world that makes them and their achievements possible. Are we looking for I AM or Apollos?

PRAY for the Dioceses of Mthatha (South Africa) and Yei (South Sudan)

MOVING FORWARD: *Do you know any unsung heroes? Sing their praises to someone today. Share your story with #ForwardDaybyDay.*

John 11:9-10. *Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them."*

*Ps 119:49-72 * 49, [53] | Job 29:1; 30:1-2, 16-31 | Acts 14:19-28 | John 11:1-16*

There is always more to be done: I sometimes wish I could extend the day infinitely, just to catch up so that tomorrow might arrive with a blank slate. The blue light of our screens and the caffeine in our coffees incrementally extend day into night, often at the cost of our physical and mental health, and we risk stumbling in the dark.

Jesus assures us that God has allotted the appropriate time to each activity, twelve hours to the day. We too have enough time, if we use it as God calls us and without fear.

In what parts of our lives are we holding on to a fear that keeps us from living in the light? Perhaps we have a fear of missing out or of not being perfect enough or of working on the wrong thing. Let us trust today that God has given us good work and daylight to do it.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Muhabura (Uganda),
Yeri (South Sudan), and Ijumu (Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *How will you invite the Holy Spirit to help you organize your time today?*

Psalm 19:13. *Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.*

*Ps 50 * [59, 60], or 93, 96 | Job 29:1; 31:1-23 | Acts 15:1-11 | John 11:17-29*

From the Archives: October 10, 1952

The psalmist appears to be celebrating the two things that have most impressed their mind and spirit: the glory of God manifested in the heavens and the righteousness of God as revealed in the Law. The first of these has given the psalmist a sense of the divine majesty and the second of that moral sovereignty in obedience in which is found the highest wisdom and deepest joy.

But what the psalmist has seen of the glory and the will of God has revealed personal sins and faults that have not honestly been dealt with before God. The psalmist knows these are there and ought to be faced.

The psalmist prayerfully commits to reflection and self-examination, which provides us with an example to do the same. Contemplation leads to reflection and self-examination, and these lead to closer fellowship with God.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Mukono (Uganda)
and Yewa and Ikara (both in Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *Where does diversity in your own life make you smile? Where does it challenge you to stretch yourself?*

FRIDAY, September 11

John 11:35-36. *Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"*

*Ps 40, 54 * 51 | Job 29:1; 31:24-40 | Acts 15:21-21 | John 11:30-44*

John is the gospel of the divine Jesus, who foretells his own death and who is the Word incarnate. In the story of the raising of Lazarus, Jesus decides not to go directly when he hears his friend is ill. He is infinitely confident in his divinity and seems to know the miracle he will perform. And yet he weeps for Lazarus. Jesus weeps alongside Lazarus's bereaved sisters. Jesus weeps at the sealed tomb, a testament to his love for this singular man.

God's omnipotence and omnipresence in our minds can easily become cold and impersonal. But God is also present in just this moment and just this place, so specific is God's love that it is impossible to imagine that love being meaningful to any other human being in the way it is to us.

PRAY for the Anglican Church of Kenya

MOVING FORWARD: *How is God's love fitting perfectly around your heart today? What do you need God to feel alongside you?*

SATURDAY, September 12

John Henry Hobart

Job 38:1-2. *Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"*

*Ps 55 * 138, 139:1-17(18-23) | Job 38:1-17 | Acts 15:22-35 | John 11:45-54*

As a consultant, I am often invited into spaces where I may know less than those I am advising. I do not understand chemistry as well as an engineer, instruction as well as a curriculum designer. Yet I am invited to counsel and help to clarify paths around and through huge problems and obstacles.

As this passage reminds us, words can illumine but they can also further obscure. The knowledge behind the words we share makes all the difference. As I approach my work, this passage calls me to consider what kind of knowledge I need to access in each situation in order to bring light. And then there is also knowledge of what I don't know, knowledge that manifests itself as curiosity and humility, knowledge that invites others to shine a light of their own. And together, we learn how to counsel each other with knowledge.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Multan (Pakistan), Ikeduru (Nigeria), and Yirol, Nyang, and Aluakluak (all in South Sudan)

MOVING FORWARD: *Before you begin your work this week, pray: Lord, grant me the wisdom to access the knowledge that is needed in each moment. Amen.*

SUNDAY, September 13

15 Pentecost

Romans 14:4. *Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.*

Ps 114 and Exodus 14:19-31 or Ps 103:(1-7)8-13 and Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21 or
Genesis 50:15-21 | Romans 14:1-12 | Matthew 18:21-35

Like many Christians, I seek to serve; I look for opportunities to help. Unwittingly I appoint myself judge over who needs help and what help they need. I see the homeless on the street and decide who to give to and in what amount.

Congregations and community groups design our outreach ministries around the causes we judge to be most worthy. Various laws dictate who deserves what support, in what amount, and by what means.

Paul reminds us that we must be in service of our God—and that we cannot understand how God will redeem others. Who is already asking for my help? What are they saying they need? Am I willing to give them that control over my service, trusting that God alone can make them stand?

PRAY for the Dioceses of Mumias (Kenya), Yola (Nigeria), and York (England)

MOVING FORWARD: *Is God inviting you to serve in a new way, one different from where you want to serve? How will you respond?*

MONDAY, September 14

Holy Cross

Philippians 2:5-7. *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form...*

Ps 98 or 98:1-4 | Isaiah 45:21-25 | Philippians 2:5-11 or
Galatians 6:14-18 | John 12:31-36a

Almost every supervillain storyline follows a similar trope: dispossessed individuals gain some power but subsequently isolate and overextend themselves. Meanwhile, much more powerful superheroes acknowledge their need for relationship and commitment to others and prevail over the supervillain. I wonder: Is there some point at which the heroes become self-aware while the villains remain blinded by their striving?

How can I detach myself from ego? How can I acknowledge that nothing is guaranteed or earned—that all is granted and all is grace? May I treat whatever power I possess in this world as a gift, entrusted to build up others with love and light.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Mundri (South Sudan) and Ysabel (Melanesia)

MOVING FORWARD: *Who has been a hero to you? How have they changed the way you view yourself or avoid becoming villainous?*

TUESDAY, September 15*Catherine of Genoa*

John 12:19. *The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!"*

Ps 61, 62 * 68:1-20(21-23)24-36 | Job 40:1; 41:1-11 | Acts 16:6-15 | John 12:9-19

These words spoken by the Pharisees after seeing Jesus ride triumphant into Jerusalem for the Passover strike me as both folly and cause for celebration. For one, God's movement in the world is too powerful for evil to overcome. God moves in the world, and the world rejoices—it can look like there is no turning back. And yet, the world can be fickle. God's grace continues to flow, but the path is not straight.

There is a hopelessness that can come from looking at our planet's climate crisis. Can we do nothing? Has the world chased too far after the false god of fossil fuels? Or are we looking at too small a picture? The arc of history can be confusing, and it can be hard to know if we are zooming out far enough to comprehend what God is doing. As we engage in God's work, may we be granted the wisdom to discern our part in that great arc toward redemption.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Mundu (South Sudan),
Yukon (Canada), and Ikka (Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *Visit your local farmers' market this weekend for some great late-summer produce!*

WEDNESDAY, September 16*Ninian, Ember Day*

John 1:22-23. *Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" [John] said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah said.*

Ps 72 * 119:73-96 | Job 42:1-17 | Acts 16:16-24 | John 12:20-26

When I was a young adult minister, I had the privilege of listening to a lot of people discerning their vocations. Some were called to holy orders; far more were confirmed in the ministry of the laity. Some were called to strive for equality and environmental stewardship, to teach, build, encourage, or counsel.

When the calling was clear, the individuals weren't talking about themselves but about the world they were being called to create. That clarity was beautiful to witness. Their vocation was an invitation to see the possibility through their own eyes and to be swept up in the change. Just as John the Baptist pushed back against those who wanted to know who he was, may we also put our own glory down and instead raise up our voices in proclaiming the coming of the Lord.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Muranga South (Kenya)
and Zaki-Biam and Ikwerre (both in Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *Do you know someone who is discerning their vocation? Plan to have coffee or lunch with them this week.*

THURSDAY, September 17

Hildegard of Bingen

1 Thessalonians 5:25. *Beloved, pray for us.*

*Ps [70], 71 * 74 | Job 28:1-28 | Acts 16:25-40 | John 12:27-36a*

From the Archives: May 29, 1953

How should people feel toward their clergy and how should they treat them? Let me offer my own answer as a minister.

We want your prayers. Our task is spiritual, and it puts a heavy drain on our souls. We have the same temptations that you have and some that are particular to our vocation. Your intercessions can reinforce our weakness and increase our strength in the Lord. Like most people, we have many problems. Pray for us that we may think clearly and act wisely according to the mind of Christ.

We want your friendship. We are human beings. Don't put us on pedestals. When you invite us into your homes, treat us "like home folks," naturally and simply. We like to see you around the parish, and we want to know about your job and interests. Tell us about your hobbies—we will tell you about some of ours.

My family doctor is my friend. When I see this person professionally, we both feel a deeper sense of how to help and be helped. That's the kind of feeling I'd like to have between my parishioners and me.

PRAY for the Anglican Church of Korea

MOVING FORWARD: *Read all of Job 28 this weekend.*

FRIDAY, September 18

Edward B. Pusey, Ember Day

John 12:36. *While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.*

*Ps 69:1-23(24-30)31-38 * 73 | Esther 1:1-4,10-19
Acts 17:1-15 | John 12:36b-43*

For a moment with the dying sun before me and the warm rock beneath me, I feel peace settling into my bones. I breathe with the waves and am carried by gulls into even deeper peace. I allow myself to be taken by it, to dwell in it, and to begin to carry that peace within. I drive away with peace and light deeply seated in my heart and mind.

I believe this is the kind of having, believing, and becoming Jesus is calling us to embrace. This is a way of loving and being love that asks us to be still, to wallow in God's love for us, to "believe" by letting down our guards and trusting love to keep us safe. These moments transform us, become part of us, and we carry them as part of our deepest selves. May I take the chance to have, believe, and become the light God has blessed me with today.

***PRAY for the Dioceses of Muyinga (Burundi), Zanzibar (Tanzania),
and Ikwo (Nigeria)***

MOVING FORWARD: *What manifestation of God can you give yourself over to today?*

SATURDAY, September 19

Theodore of Tarsus, Ember Day

John 12:46. *I have come as a light to the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness.*

*Ps 75, 76 * 23, 27 | Esther 2:5-8, 15-23 | Acts 17:16-34 | John 12:44-50*

I try to keep myself very busy running from work to home, to the gym, to a friend's, to church, to the store. I fill my life with activities and people I care for. This is the life I live alongside all of the other striving, hardworking people of this country. Our society doesn't encourage a lot of white space, doesn't give us breathing room to look at these bright jewels of faith.

Without undeveloped space, we cannot encounter the truly new or the holy ephemeral. Without white space, we crowd out the still small voices and the major revelations God may be making in our lives. That may require not just white space, but monumental white space, enduring white space, celebrated white space. I pray that I might carve out the space to be in the presence of the unknown and that God might find me there.

PRAY for the Diocese of Zaria (Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: *How can you create time and space to reflect on what God is teaching you in this season?*

SUNDAY, September 20

16 Pentecost

Philippians 1:27. *Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.*

Ps 105:1-6, 37-45 and Exodus 16:2-15 or Ps 145:1-8 and Jonah 3:10—4:11

Philippians 1:21-30 | Matthew 20:1-16

I struggle with the idea of Christian unity, of being of "one mind" by faith. This has sometimes set Christians in opposition to their neighbors in ways that have been exclusionary and violent. We have drawn lines in the sand and divided communities. And yet, our brains are nothing more than millions of neurons firing in rhythmic sequences. We know there can be unity in a human body when it is healthy, and all the parts are working in harmony.

I pray that the one mind we find in community may always be greater than the sum of our individual hearts—and never less. This unity of hearts and thoughts creates more abundance and diversity of grace than any one heart or mind can hold.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Myitkyina (Myanmar), Zonkwa (Nigeria), and Zululand (South Africa)

MOVING FORWARD: *How will you pray for unity in your own mind and in your church this week?*

MONDAY, September 21

Saint Matthew

Matthew 9:11-12. *When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."*

Ps 119:30-44 | Proverbs 3:1-16 | 2 Timothy 3:14-17 | Matthew 9:9-13

How must Matthew have felt in this moment? Was Matthew embarrassed? Insulted? Perhaps even insulted on behalf of his guests? Admitting personal weaknesses is difficult. It makes us vulnerable. It is possible we will be ridiculed and ostracized, shown to be utterly alone in our weakness with no one to come to our aid.

But Jesus has come to the whole community, knowing no one is blameless, none are well. In this moment, there is strength in standing together, being diagnosed together, sitting at the feet of the physician together. They have one foot through the door of their healing while the naysayers stand outside scoffing. Perhaps Matthew felt a tug at his pride, but he also must have known that if you cannot be honest with your doctor, you cannot be healed.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Nagpur (India) and Aba (Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: *What's the hardest truth you've ever told? How did it change you?*

TUESDAY, September 22

Philander Chase

Psalm 78:38-39. *But he was so merciful that he forgave their sins and did not destroy them; many times he held back his anger and did not permit his wrath to be roused. For he remembered that they were but flesh, a breath that goes forth and does not return.*

*Ps 78:1-39 * 78:40-72 | Esther 5:1-14 | Acts 18:12-28 | Luke 3:15-22*

Jesus calls us to forgive seven times seventy times. I often struggle to do it once. But God forgives by putting it all in perspective, remembering that his people are only flesh.

I fail to put things in perspective, to acknowledge the truth of my family and coworkers' reality: the million things on their mind, the signals I'm sending that may be contradictory or confusing, the history of relationship we share. We are but flesh and will pass away.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nairobi (Kenya)
and Aba Ngwa North and Ikwuano (both in Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *How can we reflect God's forgiveness today to make this brief existence more generous, more connected, more merciful?*

WEDNESDAY, September 23

Thecla of Iconium

Luke 4:6-8. *And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"*

*Ps 119:97-120 * 81, 82 | Esther 6:1-14 | Acts 19:1-10 | Luke 4:1-13*

I live in a mid-size city, and it is easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of daily life. I rush here and there, busy thinking about work, buying groceries, and arriving at the gym before it gets too crowded. I see—but don't always acknowledge—the trash in the grass, the people sleeping by the side of the road, the school building falling into ruin.

With so many people around, it can be easy to assume someone else will care for our common life—elected officials, nonprofit service providers, corporate philanthropists. When I make this assumption, I give away my power and responsibility for the kingdom and create space for the devils of greed and negligence to take root.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nakuru (Kenya)
and Abakaliki and Ilaje (both in Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *How might you reclaim a small part of your power as a member of the body of Christ, returning to God what is God's?*

THURSDAY, September 24

Anna Alexander

Psalms 46:11. *Be still, then, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.*

*Ps [83], or 116, 117 * 85, 86 | Esther 7:1-10 | Acts 19:11-20 | Luke 4:14-30*

From the Archives: June 19, 1953

Forbes Robinson became the chaplain of Christ College, Cambridge, almost directly after his ordination. He wanted very much to be close to the lives of the undergraduates, and he followed them to their games and helped them with their academic work. But always it was as though a barrier stood between himself and these young people.

Then he took ill with the disease that claimed his life. Now forced to spend many hours in bed, he could not perform many of his chaplain's functions. Then he began a life of prayer, the effect of which is still felt throughout the university. He told God all about the students whom he longed to bring him. Then the barriers came down—the boys sought him out, and they knew Forbes Robinson as a man of God. His great work came when his activeness had to be given up and replaced by a life rooted in prayer.

PRAY for the Anglican Church of Melanesia

MOVING FORWARD: *How can you acknowledge that despite the gifts we may bring to other spaces, our role with each other is to be family?*

FRIDAY, September 25*Sergius of Radonezh*

Acts 19:27. *And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be scorned, and she will be deprived of her majesty that brought all Asia and the world to worship her.*

*Ps 88 * 91, 92 | Esther 8:1-8, 15-17 | Acts 19:21-41 | Luke 4:31-37*

Sometimes, God offers me the opportunity to see things from a different perspective. I stopped kneeling to receive the eucharist. I had done this for years, harkening back to that beautiful Catholic response: "only say the word, and I shall be healed." And then I got married, and my husband did not kneel.

I started to stand beside him, somewhat resentfully at first. But the symbol of the welcome table, the acknowledgment that I have been invited as friend not slave, proved to be a healing balm, a re-engagement with the holy meal that empowered me to invite others to join in. Standing or kneeling, I am grateful for the abundance of grace I receive in those moments worship and praise.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nambale (Kenya),
Aberdeen & Orkney (Scotland), and Ile-Oluji (Nigeria)*

MOVING FORWARD: *Where might you be holding on to "shrines in the temple" when God might be offering something new?*

SATURDAY, September 26*Lancelot Andrewes*

Psalms 90:12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.*

*Ps 87, 90 * 136 | Hosea 1:1—2:1 | Acts 20:1-16 | Luke 4:38-44*

Some days are worse than others. Things do not go well at work. We are at odds with someone we love. Our bodies fail.

It's easy for me to get stuck in a downward spiral on these days, full of resentment and regret. The hurt becomes all-encompassing, and it is nearly impossible to see anything else. Every inconvenience or annoyance only adds to the mounting body of evidence that this day was sent to torture me.

And then the psalmist reminds me that wisdom is finding gratitude in the midst of our worst days. Our lives are fleeting, our bodies failing, but God endures. God gifts us each day, each year. How can I find hope in my own existence each day even when it hurts? Who can remind me to seek the goodness? What can I do in the good times to build the net to catch me and turn me from despair?

PRAY for the Dioceses of Namibia and Abuja (both in Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: *Who helps you mend the net that catches you on bad days? Thank that person today.*

SUNDAY, September 27

17 Pentecost

Philippians 2:12-13. *Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

*Ps 78:1-4, 12-16 and Exodus 17:1-7 or Ps 25:1-8 and Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32
Philippians 2:1-13 | Matthew 21:23-32*

I can do a lot of things. But the will to do them can be harder to come by. I know how to work out, eat better, get organized, respond to emails, give frequent high-quality feedback. Sustaining the will to do things that are hard is... hard. Paul reminds us that the gifts that enable our work and the will to complete it both come from God.

When I rely on my own will, I will burn out. But when I look to the world around me, remind myself of my calling, and see God's grace at work in the world around me, I remember that I do not strive alone. I can give myself over to the stream of God's love and be carried by that current, following God's will to the work I've been given to do.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Namirembe (Uganda),
Abyei (South Sudan), and Accra (West Africa)*

MOVING FORWARD: *Where do you go for inspiration when you need the will to do hard things?*

MONDAY, September 28

Paula and Eustochium

Luke 5:10b-11. *Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.*

*Ps 89:1-18 * 89:19-52 | Hosea 2:14-23 | Acts 20:17-28 | Luke 5:1-11*

The "fishers of men" image is a powerful and familiar one. It can also be one that puts the power and the gain into the fisherman's hands: the net, the boat, the meal, all things that clearly empower the fisherman over the fish. When this is translated in English as "catching people" however, it opens up another image.

I like to think Jesus calls us to be especially mindful about catching those who have slipped through the safety nets of our communities—to keep them from harm. These are the pieces of good news that I have felt myself, been caught by and called back to God: the friend who saw me going through a rough patch and reached out, the parish that wrapped itself around a family in crisis, those who provide listening ears to comfort the grieving. May we seek to catch and keep one another.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Nandyal (India) and Adelaide (Australia)

MOVING FORWARD: *Are there pieces in your spiritual tackle box that need some extra attention?*

TUESDAY, September 29

Saint Michael and All Angels

Psalm 103:1. *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.*

Ps 103 or 103:19-22 | Genesis 28:10-17 | Revelation 12:7-12 | John 1:47-51

The word bless has many meanings depending on the subject that is blessing and the object that is being blessed. Its most familiar form means to invoke or confer divine favor upon. This is what we mean when God blesses us or when a person (often clergy) blesses another person or object. We can even bless ourselves when we make the sign of the cross.

Blessing God means expressing a deep sense of gratitude that transforms us, a sacrifice of that thanksgiving to God. There is something beautiful in this blessing being mutual, reciprocal, relational. Our relationship with God becomes one of the ways God blesses us as individuals in a community of faith.

My deepest, truest relationships are those that bless everyone involved, where I can honor the glimpses of God I see in people and offer those bits of God reflected in me.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Nashik (India) and Afikpo, Ilesa, and Ilesa South West (all three in Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: *Bless is one of the aspects of the Way of Love. How do you practice blessing in your own life?*

WEDNESDAY, September 30

Jerome

Psalm 101:2. *I will strive to follow a blameless course; oh, when will you come to me? I will walk with sincerity of heart within my house.*

*Ps 101, 109:1-4(5-19)20-30 * 119:121-144 | Hosea 4:11-19
Acts 21:15-26 | Luke 5:27-39*

What I love most about studying scripture is that they teach through narrative. There is no directive that stands untroubled or unquestioned. The commands of the Old Testament are reinterpreted through the New Testament.

The red-letter words of Jesus cross each other and contradict across the gospels. Acts takes us on the wild ride during which the epistles were written, each missive put into context alongside the singular community it was meant to instruct. This is the story of the people of God studying God's blameless way and wondering when they will attain it.

With each story, we recognize signposts. Some are clearly well within the path, some well beyond, and most somewhere on the edge. We bear witness to deeply human attempts at answering divine calling. May we study the way that is blameless, knowing that we are in good company with all who have struggled to attain it.

PRAY for your own diocese.

MOVING FORWARD: *How will you be walking with sincerity into October?*