

Thursday, December 22, 2011

NEW QT THOTS (DEVOTIONALS) HAVE BEEN POSTED

Three of my Devotional articles has been posted at

http://kudospress.com/serendipity/index.php?/pages/library/QT_Thots_December2011.html

"His Will sustains me"

"His will strengthens me"

"His will feeds me"

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 20:22

Thursday, December 8, 2011

"FOOD"

My latest Devotional writing (QT Thots), entitled "Food" is now available in this ever interesting webzine

<http://kudospress.com/serendipity/index.php?/pages/library.html>

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:18

Tuesday, June 3, 2008

RELIGION WITHOUT POLITICS?

A local TV news program was interviewing people on the street tonight. The Question: Should Religion be kept out of Politics? The unanimous reply: Absolutely! Religion is private, they said, and should not be mixed with politics, economics or even social issues. What kind of Religion, we may ask, would that be? It would be a Religion without values, principles to live by or morals. Or are those also private matters having nothing to do with living our lives in society? Does Religion have nothing to say about character and human relations? Does it offer no guidance about social justice and the care of the marginalized and oppressed? What kind of Religion has no connection with health and wealth? Has it nothing to offer to counter greed and selfishness, not only in our private lives, but in our national lives as well. Our Nation has the world's largest Prison System with more people incarcerated than any other country in the world. What kind of Religion has nothing to say about that or about terrorism or war or violence? These people interviewed must think Religion is confined only to mystical inner feelings and maybe to events like weddings and funerals. They certainly do not know anything about Biblical Christianity! There is an increasingly popular twist on this scenario. There are many young "Evangelicals" who also insist that the Religion they believe in should be kept separate from politics and cultural issues. This is strange because they are very concerned, even passionate, about changing the world, including its Politics and cultural issues. Turns out what these young Evangelicals mean is that Religion should be kept separate from what they perceive the Religious Right and the Republic Party stand for. In practice their Religion is more compatible with the Religious Left and the Democratic Party. I really wish I had the opportunity to show them what the Bible actually says about Politics and social, economic issues. They have a lot to learn!http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/01/us/01evangelical.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 18:54

Friday, January 19, 2007

QT THOTS

My wife and I have been sick and confined to bed most of the last 3 weeks, but are gradually coming out of the cave of coughs and congestion. Thus, I haven't been doing much writing; but I expect to resume over the weekend. We have not stopped praying. Romans 12:1-8 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your [gifts] as a living sacrifice, ... to God, [this] is your spiritual worship. How can I best serve [worship] God? By discovering and using the gifts he has given me. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: We have gifts! Each one of us has at least one gift. Some many have more than one. None of us have "nothing to offer". Here is one short list. There are other lists and other gifts. Each is from the Lord and given to us in God's plan for our lives. Note that none of them is a Profession in itself nor are they gender or age specific or confined to a church box Preaching, proclaiming, communicating, pastoring (shepherding), teaching, mentoring, exhortation, counseling, generosity, hospitality, leading, organizing, compassion, works of mercy, be transformed by the renewing of your minds, ... to think ... according to the [gift] that God has assigned. Many of us would be transformed, if we learn to think about ourselves, our lives, according to our God-given gifts and abilities, our aptitudes and strengths. This means not measuring ourselves in terms of others or of their expectations of us. Our assignment today is to be what God has assigned us to be

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:10

Friday, January 12, 2007

QT THOTS

The Oremus page is down today- it can not be reached. I am down today, too. This is our 11th day feeling miserable. Both my wife and I have very bad head and chest colds. I do not feel up to singing and praising the Lord this morning. Actually, with our sore throats we can not. I just want to go back to bed. Ever have a day like this? Sure you have. And there's the lesson. We don't have to always be up and atem for the Lord. The Lord knows when we are sidelined. He is still ok. He is still here whether we "feel" His presence or not. He is still in control. We walk by faith, not by feelings anyway. Right? On these days, we just need to let go and rest in His keeping, while He does His thing. Sometimes, that is the reason He allows us to be down, so we have to look up.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:01

Monday, January 8, 2007

QT THOTS

My wife has had a bad cold for several days, feeling miserable. Others in our family are struggling with "stuff" and it is raining out. So I was hoping for something uplifting and inspiring, even comforting, from my Devotions this morning [same as you, right?] What I found were these three readings, which I have abridged-Psalm 21 Why are the nations in tumult, and why do the peoples devise a vain plot? 2 The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed: 3 'Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us.' Sorry, but the news headlines and the condition of our world appears the same today as it was last week. Pagans and Secularists and myriads of sinners are still all arraigned against their King, Jesus Christ. There is but one verse in the Bible where it says God laughs. This is it-4 He who dwells in heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision. 5Then shall he speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury:6 I [have] set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.' 7 I said ... 'You are my Son; this day have I begotten you. 8...I will give you the nations for your inheritance This is the Word of the Lord to all those with power in our world-10 Now therefore be wise, O kings; be prudent, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and with trembling kiss his feet, lest he be angry and you perish from the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled.Psalm 110This is one of the most quoted Psalms from the OT in the NT. It is about Christ-2 the Lord [shall] stretch forth the sceptre of [his] power; 6 In all his majesty, he shall judge among the nations, smiting heads over all the wide earth.And then I read this wonderful prophecy-2 Though night still covers the earth, and darkness the peoples; 1 Arise, shine out, for light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising Let that sink in: though darkness still covers the earth and its peoples light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising Hallelujah! That is encouraging today. We are on the Lord's side and that is the winning side. I don't know if the Patriots will beat the Chargers next week, but I absolutely know that the Lord will defeat the Devil and his minions! Truth shall prevail. Faith shall rout Unbelief. Our work is not in vain. "Stuff" will not get us down!3. Above you the Holy One arises, and above you God's glory appears. Repeat that: Above you the Holy One arises, and above you God's glory appears. 4 nations will come to ... light, and kings to ... dawning brightness.Isaiah 60.1-3, 11a, 18, 19, 14b

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:28

Friday, January 5, 2007

QT THOTS

I struggle with the state of the Church [define that as you will]; I see its walls crumbling and wonder if its foundation will last. Then comes this reassuring prophecy in today's Readings-Psalm 48: Great is the Lord and highly to be praised, in the city of our God. 3 On Mount Zion, the divine dwelling place, stands the city of the great king. 4 In her palaces God has shown himself to be a sure refuge. The Church is the dwelling place of God. Yes, He may be found everywhere in the world, but His unique and special presence is in the Church, His House, His Body. 2 His holy mountain is fair and lifted high, the joy of all the earth. This is not true yet, the Church is not "the joy of all the earth". Most of the Nations and the world's 6.5 billion people do not consider the Church of Christ to be where God (and Salvation) is found. But one day, they shall! 5 For behold, the kings of the earth assembled and swept forward together. 6 They saw, and were dumbfounded; dismayed, they fled in terror. 7 Trembling seized them there; they writhed like a woman in labour, The Nations, the Peoples of other Faiths, the Atheists, Scoffers and Skeptics, the Cultured Despisers of Orthodox, Catholic and Reformed Christianity, the Church, shall be dismayed and come to ruin. 8 As we had heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, the city of our God: God has established her for ever. Yes, God has established His Church. As Christ said, He would build His Church and the gates of Hell would not prevail against Her! 10 As with your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is full of justice. 11 Let Mount Zion rejoice and the daughters of Judah be glad, because of your judgments, O Lord. This is the Justice and Judgment of God. 12 Walk about Zion and go round about her; count all her towers; consider well her bulwarks; pass through her citadels, 13 That you may tell those who come after that such is our God for ever and ever. Consider well the Doctrine, Tradition and Heritage of the Christian Church- her towers, bulwarks and citadels. She shall stand! She shall overcome and persevere because of Who inhabits Her. It is he that shall be our guide for evermore.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:32

Monday, January 1, 2007

PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

HYMN - Words: Meaux Breviary, 1713; trans. Francis Pott, 1861 The year is gone, beyond recall, with all its hopes and fears, with all its bright and gladdening smiles, with all its mourners' tears. Thy thankful people praise thee, Lord, for countless gifts received; and pray for grace to keep the faith which saints of old believed. To thee we come, O gracious Lord, the newborn year to bless; defend our land from pestilence, give peace and plenteousness. Forgive this nation's many sins, the growth of vice restrain; and help us all with sin to strive, and crowns of life to gain. From evil deeds that stain the past we now desire to flee; and pray that (this new) year may be spent, good Lord, for thee.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:09

Friday, December 29, 2006

QT THOTS

Isaiah 9 [selected and adapted]1 The light has dawned [upon] those who dwelt in a land of deep darknessWhen did this happen? at the Incarnation: when God became flesh in Jesus3 ...you have shattered the yoke that burdened them; the collar that lay heavy on their shoulders.When did this happen? At the Incarnation: when Jesus was born in Bethlehem4 For to us a child is born and to us a son is givenAnd who is this baby?5 his name will be called: Wonderful Counselor; Mighty God; Everlasting Father; Prince of PeaceThis new-born came to rule over all nationsand the government will be upon his shoulder. 7 ...the throne of David and ... his kingdom, And what will be His program?to establish and uphold [His Kingdom] with justice and righteousness.Can we be sure this shall happen? Yes! [and] 6 Of the increase of his government there will be no end, 8 ... the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.[By doing all this, God has] 2 increased [our] joy and given [us] great gladness Ours is to see the King at work and to serve Him

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:51

Friday, December 22, 2006

QT THOTS

Psalm 126:2 our mouth [is] filled with laughter and our tongue with songs of joy. This sounds like what our time together as family should be this Christmas, simply because we shall be all together. But, that is not what the Psalmist is talking about. He is remembering hard times, times of suffering and sadness. Ironically, we often muse on them during this time of festive family fun. 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream. 3 Then [it was we said] 'The Lord has done great things...' Best remedy for the blues, is remembering the blessings of the Lord over times past, particularly when he healed and helped us through those hard times. My, how faithful He was, coming to our rescue. He heard our hearts break and our tears fall. 4 The Lord has indeed done great things for us, and therefore we rejoiced. This is why "our mouth [is] filled with laughter and our tongue with songs of joy". 6 Those who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy. 7 Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed, will come back with shouts of joy, bearing their sheaves with them. Here is one of the great promises of Scripture. Christian ministry, Christian living, often is done with heart break and with difficulty; but, we push on all the same. We don't give up. We know that, if we are faithful anyway, eventually it will all be worthwhile. God will honor and bless our hard labor, finally. Our work will bear fruit in abundance. Weeping shall give way to joy.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:40

Monday, December 18, 2006

QT Thots

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 adapted
The Scripture readings in Advent are primarily about the Second Coming (Advent) of Christ. We sing of that Coming as a joyous occasion. For many it will be the most terrifying Day in History. They will not be ready... sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! It will be a day of reckoning, a Day of Wrath. Scoffers and Skeptics, Agnostics and Atheists are doomed. Non-Christians will perish for Eternity. concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you ... know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. What about Christians? We do not need to fear that Day. God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us. This means whether we are awake [alive] or asleep [have died] we may live with him when He comes. Meanwhile, let us be sober [serious minded], and put on armor for our personal spiritual warfare-the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. and stay active in the church ... encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. As the Day approaches, we need each other more than ever!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 14:56

Friday, December 15, 2006

QT THOTS

Psalm 108 My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and make melody. Wake up, my spirit; awake, lute and harp; I myself will waken the dawn. I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord; I will sing praises to you among the nations. Jim and Eleanor Pelley's life together (52 years) has been committed to spreading the Word of God around the world via radio. Upon returning from years doing this overseas, they settled in Hamden, CT and continued that ministry with the Christian radio station WIHS in Middletown. Jim Pelley was the first voice heard on WIHS when the Station initially began radio transmissions on October 11, 1969. He served the Station as Lead Announcer and Program Director for the next 22 years, through the end of 1991 and, after retirement, he and his wife continued on as volunteers until recently. Jim went to be with the Lord last Sunday. Early in our marriage, my wife and I and our first child lived in what was the North American Headquarters for another Christian Radio Station, HCJB. Clarence Jones and his wife were radio missionary pioneers. They went to Quito, Ecuador and set up a short wave station there, in a sheep shed, high in the Andes. Then they traveled down into the jungles and gave out radios fixed to receive only one station- HCJB. It began broadcasting on Christmas Day 1931. HCJB stands for "Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings". The Pelleys and WIHS and the Jones and HCJB were all dedicated to doing just that. And they did it to the Glory of God. Millions have heard the Word and untold numbers have come to Christ and grown in grace, through these people and their ministries. We thank the Lord for them and renew our own commitment today to personally herald Christ Jesus blessings, in every way we can.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:05

Sunday, December 10, 2006

QT THOTS

Luke 1.1-24 I believe the Bible is the Word of God, meaning its contents, from beginning to end, is revelation, given by God to humans, who write it down. We read what they write as Scripture, the revealed Word written- inspired, verbal, propositional Revelation. This opening paragraph (one long sentence) of the Revelation we know as "The Gospel according to Luke" tells us, however, that this "Book" comes from human research into historical facts. The words have not been dictated by God to a writer who is in some trance. The writer investigated and interviewed eye-witnesses and wrote down the facts he uncovered in an orderly manner. He did this that the intended original reader, Theophilus, might know the truth about the account of Jesus he had heard. God used the mind, research and editing ability, even the vocabulary, of a man to record Revelation from above. Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. Our Faith is historical, based on facts. Those "facts" are true because they correspond to reality- what really happened. We accept the original, common sense meaning of the words and sentences used to record and communicate the revelation of God. Our definition of Truth is not coherence with our personal or shared group experience. The Gospel is objective and public Truth, not subjective and private. We accept and give priority to the original intent and meaning of the writer (Luke, in this case) over our personal interpretation of it or how our local "faith-community" feels about it, these many centuries later. This simple text encourages me today to have confidence in the Scripture and gives me courage to proclaim it in the market of ideas around me. It emboldens me in this age of skepticism.

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah .. Once when he was serving ... at the time of the incense-offering ... there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. ... Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak ... Within this historically true story, there is another kind of revelation mentioned: a private vision. An angel appeared and spoke to a man, Zechariah. He gave him an oral, unwritten prophecy that would become historically true and recorded in a book - the conception, birth and ministry of John (the Baptist). Zechariah did not believe the words the angel spoke to him and he paid the consequences. We want to believe what we read in the Bible. The Bible tells us to be sure to also believe the words the God may speak to us orally and personally that know one else knows about.

This gets us into a gray area. We have to grant that such messages may come to us ("The Lord said to me..") Normally, we call this guidance of the Spirit and it has to do with our private lives, often direction about something we must do. The danger is that we could misunderstand what we think we are hearing. What we think the Spirit has said may not really be from the Spirit. In this case, realistic Zechariah did not want to believe what he thought he heard, because there were facts that seemed to make it impossible. That is an important factor to check- common sense. The Angel persisted. He would show Zechariah that what he predicted would come to pass. Then, based on that evidence, that fulfilled prophecy, he would believe what he had heard. That, too, is a wise thing to do when we think the Lord is leading us. Wait and look for confirmation that we can test. The fact that the elderly couple conceived convinced Zechariah. Over the next 9 months, he mediated over and over on what he heard the Angel had say to him and he came to believe it was all true. So must we. This story is recorded in The Gospel according to Luke. It is historical fact, along with the rest of the Nativity Story.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 22:40

Monday, December 4, 2006

QT Thots

Isaiah 35:3-8 adapted
The Season of Advent is all about preparing for the Second Coming Of Christ, even as Christmas celebrates His First Coming. For the Faithful, the Second Coming is something to look forward to with joyful expectations. 4 Say to the anxious, 'Be strong, fear not, your God is coming with judgment, coming with judgment to save you.' 5 Then [when He comes again] shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6 Then shall the lame leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy
The "blind", "deaf", "dumb" and "lame" are the Covenant People who had grown away from the Lord; doubting Him, they had become spiritually disabled: they had lost faith and hope that the Lord would come to them in their trial. BUT, the Lord had not forgotten His People or His promises to them. He would come and rescue them. Then-8 The ransomed of the Lord shall return [to the Lord] with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads. 9 Joy and gladness shall be theirs, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. These words are great encouragement to those of us today who are going around depressed and crest fallen. 3 Strengthen the weary hands, and make firm the feeble knees. The exhortation from the Lord to us today: "Get a grip. Stand up straight and walk tall!" The Lord is coming.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:49

Friday, December 1, 2006

QT Thots

Isaiah 42 [adapted] Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him. With these words, at his baptism in Jordan, God anointed Jesus as His chosen Prophet, Priest and King [“the anointed one” is the meaning of the word “Christ” or “Messiah”] see Matt.3:17, 12:17-18, etc. Having the Spirit poured out upon him empowered Jesus for his mission that began at that moment and which is described by God, as follows-He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Justice: Jesus is all about Justice. The Baby, whose birthday we are about to celebrate, had come into the world on this mission to establish Justice on the earth. Here is a Promise from God that is the real hope of the world. All the Nations, all Peoples, shall one day hear and submit to the Law of God and obey it. It is crucial that we define “Justice” Biblically. God has declared His will. Simply put, Justice is conformity or obedience to that will [pray-“Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth...”] Thus says God, the Lord,... I have given you [Jesus] as ... a light to the nations. This is a call to world-wide Missions: we, the Body of Christ, exist to hold up that Light for all the Nations to see. One day they will. Let us hasten that day today! It is the only hope for the Middle East, Darfur, the victims of AIDS and all the peoples of the world.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:22

Friday, November 17, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 143 adapted Lord, hear my prayer, and in your faithfulness heed my supplications; answer me in your righteousness. ... my enemy [Satan] has sought my life and has crushed me to the ground; making me live in dark places [within my soul] ... My spirit faints within me; my heart within me is desolate. ... I lift up my soul to you. Deliver me from my [dark thoughts], O Lord, for I flee to you for refuge. I spread out my hands to you; my soul gasps to you like a thirsty land. O Lord, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me; do not hide your face from me ... Let me hear of your loving-kindness ..., for I put my trust in you; Revive me, O Lord, for your name's sake; for your righteousness' sake, bring me out of trouble. Teach me to do what pleases you, for you are my God; let your good Spirit lead me on level ground. ... show me the road that I must walk Note: I am taking a long Holiday break from the Computer, but not from my prayers for you. Till we write again, Peace be with you. -Cal

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:08

Monday, November 13, 2006

QT Thots

Many people here are putting great hope in our Governor-elect and the new Legislature to solve what are perceived to be great social and economic problems in the State. The Business Editor of our local paper, says "But we should all recognize that if government and politics could mend what ails us, it would have been mended by now. As far as business and the economy go, our fortunes rides on what happens in the private sector, not what happens in Washington or Boston. Yes, but what happens in the private sector depends a lot upon government and politics. We must go deeper to find the solution to what ails our society. Psalm 9... The Lord is enthroned for ever; he has set up his throne for judgment. It is he who rules the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with equity. The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. The Lord is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are trapped in the works of their own hands. The wicked shall be given over to the grave, and also all the peoples that forget God. Put fear upon them, O Lord; let the ungodly know they are but mortal. The celebration of a certain birthday is coming. "Thou shalt call [the Baby] 'Jesus' because He shall save..." Turning to Him is what will really cure our ailments as a society.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:15

Friday, November 10, 2006

QT Thots

I did not sleep well last night and I was grumpy and irritable at Breakfast with my wife. I tend to worry and be fearful about a lot of "little stuff". She told me I needed my Quiet Time. True! Here I am and this Psalm is a great help-Psalm 161 Preserve me, O God, for in you have I taken refuge; 10 ... in your presence is the fullness of joy and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore. That is why I am waiting on you, now, Lord. Forgive my bad attitude and complaining this morning. I have said to the Lord, 'You are my lord, all my good depends on you.' 4 The Lord himself is my portion and my cup; in your hands alone is my fortune. I need to remember that and let it sink in. My fretting does not help. My grouching is stupid. 5 My share has fallen in a fair land; indeed, I have a goodly heritage. I know this Lord. Help me, Lord, to remember it and be thankful. 6 I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel, he instructs my heart. Thank you, Lord. Give me grace to follow through. 7 I have set the Lord always before me; he is at my right hand; I shall not fall. Yes, Lord! Now help me do this all day. 8 Wherefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices; my flesh also shall rest secure. 9 For you will not abandon [me] I face the things ahead of me now with this assurance. Thank you, Lord!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:44

Monday, November 6, 2006

QT THOTS

Psalm 139 Youth in High School struggle to answer questions about themselves on the essay they must write on applications to colleges. The self-examination continues into college and beyond. Indeed, all our lives many of us question who we are, where we've been, where we are going. Actually, at the close of every day, it is good to evaluate our day before the Lord, making confessions and resolutions as needed. We often think "no one knows me", "no one understands me". Then we are remembered-Lord, you have searched me out and known me; you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways. Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O Lord, know it altogether. This is not mere knowledge on God's part. The verbs, discern and trace, indicate He searches and probes deeply into our personal lives. He really cares what's going on in us. But more than that-You press upon me behind and before and lay your hand upon me. There are times when God convicts us and prods us to make a certain decision or take a particular course of action. He knows what is best for us. It is wise to follow, unwise to push His Hand away. Search me out, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my restless [anxious, fearful] thoughts. Look well whether there be any wickedness [literally, any thing which will grieve others, loved ones? close friends? God Himself?] in me and lead me in the way that is everlasting. [the way that is right]

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:55

Friday, November 3, 2006

QT Thots

Eternal God, we acknowledge the uncertainty of our life on earth. We are given a mere handful of days, and our span of life seems nothing in your sight. All flesh is as grass; and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades; but your word will stand forever. In this our hope, for you are our God. Even in the valley of the shadow of death, you are with us. O Lord, let us know our end and the number of our days, that we may learn how fleeting life is. Turn your ear to our cry, and hear our prayer. Do not be silent at our tears, for we live as strangers before you, wandering pilgrims as all our ancestors were. But you are the same and your years shall have no end. Eternal God, our maker and redeemer, grant us, with all the faithful departed, the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection that, in the last day, when you gather up all things in Christ, we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (from the BCP)

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:11

Monday, October 30, 2006

QT Thots

1 Timothy 1.1-8 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my loyal child in the faith:... instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine... rather than God's redemptive purpose accomplished in history, or simply, God's saving Plan that is known by faith. [The "divine training" in the RSV is literally: "stewardship". The Greek word here means the management of a household. See Ephesians 1:10, 3:9 for its use as translated here] ...the aim of such instruction [by Timothy] is love that comes from a pure [ie-without duplicity or alloy, single-minded, devoted] heart. [This is the only source of authentic love] , a good conscience [one that is morally discriminating and free from self recrimination, guilt], and sincere faith [in Christ]. Faith by definition can not be insincere. Paul means true or genuine faith. These are three goals of a good Bible study or sermon. In practice the order is reversed. Sound teaching leads to true faith in Christ which leads to a good conscience which leads to a pure heart and to love. Some people have deviated from these [goals] and turned to meaningless talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions. These words from Paul bring me up short. I desire to be a teacher of the Law (the Word of God). Now we know that the law is good, But God forbid I should deviate from the three goals above and turn to meaningless talk or internet writing. Lord grant me understanding of your Word-Law that I might teach it correctly and meaningfully as You intend. ...the law is good, if one uses it legitimately [for, as Paul says in 2 Tim 3:16, All Scripture...is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.]

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:52

Friday, October 27, 2006

QT THOTS

Psalm 139 O Lord, you have searched me out and known me; Forgotten and lonely. So often we feel this way. Does anyone know who I am? Does anyone care? Yes! The Lord does! He knows me you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 2 You mark out my journeys and my resting place and are acquainted with all my ways. 3 For there is not a word on my tongue, but you, O Lord, know it altogether. Everything, the Lord knows everything, good and bad, about me. My thoughts, my words, my routine, my circumstances- everything. He knows all. 4 You encompass me behind and before and lay your hand upon me. 6 Where can I go then from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? 7 If I climb up to heaven, you are there; if I make the grave my bed, you are there also. I think particularly this morning of a friend serving our country in the military far from home. Brother, the Lord knows where you slept last night. He knows what you face today. He knows your fears and burdens. He is there with you and He is with your family back home and He knows all your needs and theirs. 8 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 9 Even there your hand shall lead me, your right hand hold me fast. We experience life as good or bad. It is easy to rejoice in the Lord when all is well. But the darkness is so real and pervasive. Lord, what about the darkness? The danger? The evil that surrounds us? 10 If I say, 'Surely the darkness will cover me and the light around me turn to night,' Then I remember this wonderful, marvelous truth- 11 Even darkness is no darkness with you; the night is as clear as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. The Lord is constant. Darkness does not change Him. Evil can not dissuade Him. He is with us, loving us, protecting us- no matter what! Though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil. For Thou art with me. You lead me in the paths that are right- for your Name's sake. 5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:01

Monday, October 23, 2006

QT THOTS

Philippians 1.1-11 To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are [on my prayer list], I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy ... for all of you, Every morning I begin the day interceding for many people I know. I thank the Lord for each of them, but I do not always pray with joy, because sometimes I am worried or troubled or concerned about something in their lives. We are called to share each others burdens and what better place than before the Lord? We should allow confidants to know our sorrows and troubles so that they may be brought before the Throne for God's help. Going through a list of these does not produce joy. It is serious work, but the joy does come when we later hear of answers, of healing, of deliverance, of improvement and progress, of provision and protection from the Lord for these loved ones and friends. It is a privilege to have a ministry of intercession. Let me know how I may pray for you. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:56

Monday, October 16, 2006

QT THOTS

Isaiah 12.2-6 This Psalm in the book of Isaiah draws my attention first to personal salvation: 1 'Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid; 2 'For the Lord God is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.' 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. I am encouraged to find my deepest needs met in Him. This is a call to joyful spirituality. Then, the Psalm calls me to public, corporate Worship 4 ... 'Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name; 7 'Shout and sing for joy, you that dwell in Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.' All of that is fine, and I am glad to do this, but then comes this jarring and radical command: 5 'Make known his deeds among the nations, proclaim that his name is exalted 6 'Sing God's praises, who has triumphed gloriously; let this be known in all the world. I am to be engaged with world wide missions. The Church everywhere has this Mandate to go into the world everywhere and make the Name and deeds and triumph of God in Christ known to all Nations. My faith is not only for my personal benefit and blessing. The Church does not exist for itself or only the good of its members. Nor do we exist for Crop Walks and AIDS Awareness or Voter Registration. Those are important, and many groups are doing them, but they are not the primary outreach mission of Christians and the Church. Our Mission is to Proclaim the Name of God and His Victory over the Powers of Death and Darkness to all the Nations. OK, now I am focused again for this new week.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:39

Friday, October 13, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 55 [adapted] 1 Hear my prayer, O God; hide not yourself from my petition. 2 Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaining. 5 My heart is disquieted within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 6 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and a horrible dread has overwhelmed me 7 I said: 'O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest. 8 'Then would I flee far away 9 'I would make haste to escape from the stormy wind and tempest.' 18 [but instead]...I will call upon God and the Lord will deliver me. 19 In the evening and morning and at noonday I will pray and make my supplication, and he shall hear my voice. 20 He shall redeem my soul in peace from the battle waged against me 24 Cast your burden upon the Lord and he will sustain you... 26 ...my trust shall be in you, O Lord. "Lord, in all times of fear and dread, grant that we may so cast our burdens upon you, that you may bear us on the holy wings of the Spirit to the stronghold of your peace"

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:25

Monday, October 9, 2006

QT Thots

"Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord..." Psalm 71 adapted
1 In you, O Lord, do I seek refuge; let me never be put to shame.
2 In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; incline your ear to me and save me.
3 Be for me a stronghold to which I may ever resort; ... you are my rock and my fortress.
4 For you are my hope, O Lord God, my confidence, even from my youth.
5 Upon you have I leaned from my birth, when you drew me from my mother's womb; my praise shall be always of you.
6 Do not cast me away in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails.
7 O God, you have taught me since I was young, and to this day I tell of your wonderful works.
8 Forsake me not, O God, when I am old and grey-headed, till I make known your deeds to the next generation and your power to all that are to come.
9 Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens; in the great things you have done, who is like you, O God?
10 Therefore will I praise you for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing to you...
11 My lips will sing out... and so will my soul, which you have redeemed.
12 Faithful Lord, living Savior, in youth and old age, from the womb to the grave, may we know your protection and proclaim your great salvation to the glory of God the Father."
http://daily.commonworship.com/daily.cgi?today_mp=1

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:48

Monday, October 2, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 44 Most of the Psalms are personal, i.e.- by an individual about himself in relation to the Lord. However, in this Psalm, the person praying seems to be the King of Israel and he speaks, as king, to God, about the nation and on its behalf. 1 We have heard with our ears, O God, our forebears have told us, all that you did in their days, in time of old; 2 How with your hand you drove out nations and planted us in, and broke the power of peoples and set us free. 6 Through you we drove back our adversaries; through your name we trod down our foes. 9 We gloried in God all the day long, and were ever praising your name. 10 But now you have rejected us and brought us to shame, and go not out with our armies. 11 ...and our enemies have despoiled us. 14 You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the scorn and derision of those that are round about us. 16 My confusion is daily before me, and shame has covered my face, Today, this could be the lament and confusion of those who believe America is a Christian Nation. But the following description does not apply to our Country 18 All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten you and have not played false to your covenant. 19 Our hearts have not turned back, nor our steps gone out of your way, ... 21 we have [not] forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to any strange god... This is a description of God's faithful Covenant People. The psalmist's confusion and consternation is how they could be in such calamity when they have been exactly that: God's faithful People. He then grasps the deep truth: they are suffering not because of anything terrible they may have done. They are not being punished for any sins they have committed. They are suffering for the sake of God! Just like Jesus did. 23 But for your sake are we killed all the day long, and are counted as sheep for the slaughter. This is the very verse the Apostle Paul used to explain the suffering of the persecuted Church, centuries later. (Rom 8:36) Far from being a disgrace, this suffering is a privilege. See Acts 5:41 It is a mystery, but sometimes He calls us to endure suffering for Him to accomplish His purposes in our lives. By His grace, we are to be thankful for that. Nevertheless, the very human psalmist loses patience and cries out- 24 Rise up! Why sleep, O Lord? Awake, and do not reject us for ever. 25 Why do you hide your face and forget our grief and oppression? 27 Rise up, O Lord, to help us and redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love. This plea reminds us of the Apostles yelling at Jesus who was asleep in the boat, during the storm threatening their lives. The plea contains its own answer: God's love for us is steadfast. He has not forgotten us. From our perspective, undergoing hardship, it seems as though He has. Faith answers: He has not and in His own time, he will rescue us.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:14

Friday, September 29, 2006

QT THOTS

Psalm 95 [NRSV, Adapted] 2 Let us come into his presence Sunday is coming up again. What will Worship be like this week? This Psalm gives us a good outline of typical Biblical corporate Worship. It begins by the worshipers coming into the presence of God. Above all, the place where we gather is the place where the presence of God is found: a sacred, holy place. It is not simply an auditorium [or nave] It is a sanctuary- the entire place [more than that part where the Altar is in Catholic churches]. Everything about the room (and our deportment in it) should communicate this fundamental truth: we are on holy ground in this place. 1 let us sing...; let us heartily rejoice ...and be glad This is joyful singing with heartfelt feeling. 1 O come, let us sing to the Lord; The audience to whom it is directed is God Himself (our singing is an offering to Him, an act of worship) let us heartily rejoice in the rock of our salvation. 2 Let us ... be glad in him The content of our songs, the words, are about God. What we sing to God is about God. [Note: the instrumental music, including the actions of the musicians, must never drown out those words or take precedence over them,] 3 For the Lord is a great God 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth and the heights of the mountains are his also. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands have molded the dry land. As with the Creeds, the first thing we confess about God is that He is the Almighty, the maker of Heaven and earth. We are in the Presence of our Creator. 6 Come, let us worship and bow down and kneel before the Lord our Maker. This realization leads to prostration: bowing down and kneeling before the Holy, Almighty, Triune God. We are humbled as we realize how puny, weak and mortal we are before our Maker- sinners in need of mercy, beholden to His grace for the privilege of just being in His Holy Presence 7 For he is our God; we are the people ... of his hand. We are reminded of who we are or, better, whose we are. We are not our own. (Actually, there is comfort in knowing we are in His hand). We are not here to get Him to serve us. Just the opposite. That includes listening to God's Word and then doing it. 8 O that today you would listen to his voice: We come prepared to receive teaching, guidance, direction from our God. Perhaps we will also hear rebuke and correction. 'Harden not your hearts as ... in the wilderness, 9 'When your forebears tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my works. The Service ends with introspection. We examine our attitudes. We look to see whether there is within us a rebellious heart. How have we been doing in our walk with the Lord this past week. Have we obeyed Him? What changes do we need to make this week? 10 "This people are wayward in their hearts; they do not know my ways." Above all, we want to have broken, yielded hearts before the Lord as we worship in His Presence. Then, we may go in love and peace to serve Him.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:33

Monday, September 25, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 27 (adapted) I confess that I tend to be anxious and worry about a lot of things, in my daily life, as well as in the lives of many others I care for. I must constantly remember this verse. 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid? I know God is good and greater than any trouble I might meet today. But, I also know bad things happen to good people. Today, we are going to the wake of an old friend who died last week from breast cancer, after she was assured that she had been cured of it. 3 Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid, and though there rise up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him. That is my resolve always. 4 One thing have I asked of the Lord and that alone I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, I don't want to actually live in a church building. The one thing I want to do, more than any other is- 5 To behold the fair beauty of the Lord To contemplate Him in all His Glory. He Himself invites me to do this very thing- 10 My heart tells of your word, 'Seek my face.' Your face, Lord, will I seek. I have learned again and again, 6 in the day of trouble the best place to be is close, very close to the Lord, hidden in His arms, wrapped in His strong Presence He shall hide me in his shelter; in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me and set me high upon a rock. Dear Reader- 17 Wait for the Lord; be strong and he shall comfort your heart; wait patiently for the Lord.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:40

Friday, September 22, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 17 (adapted) 1 Hear my cause, O Lord; consider my complaint; listen to my prayer, 6 I call upon you, O God, for you will answer me; incline your ear to me, and listen to my words. What a privilege this is: to approach the Almighty, in His awesome holiness, sitting on the Throne from which He is ever occupied as Sovereign of the Universe. What boldness and audacity on our part to think we can complain to Him and think that He cares, let alone listens and will respond! 3 Weigh my heart, examine me by night, refine me, and you will find no impurity in me. 4 My mouth does not trespass for earthly rewards; I have heeded the words of your lips. 5 My footsteps hold fast in the ways of your commandments; my feet have not stumbled in your paths. The Psalmist knows that sin can ruin his relationship with the Lord- it will come between them, separate them. He has been diligent in seeking to live a righteous life. But, I think he over reaches. I have the same aspiration, but I do not have the same over confidence. I know I sin. I am very aware of my shortcomings. I know I can approach God in prayer only with a contrite heart, confessing my sin and seeking His mercy. This privilege of approaching His Holiness is only by His grace. I can approach only through the Blood of Jesus and clothed in His righteousness alone, not my own. 7 Show me your marvellous loving-kindness, 8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; Oh, yes, Lord. Please, Lord. Thank you, Lord! hide me under the shadow of your wings 9 From the wicked who assault me, from my enemies who surround me to take away my life. 11 They press me hard, they surround me on every side, watching how they may cast me to the ground These enemies are within me, Lord. Dark thoughts and desires. Dark powers of fear and doubt and anger and frustration. Conflict and confusion within me, Lord. 13 Arise, Lord; confront them and cast them down; deliver me 14 Deliver me, O Lord, by your hand Someday, my time will come and I will pass away from this world. I believe your promise: absent from the body, I will be present with You. 16 I shall see your face in righteousness; When I awake and behold your likeness, I shall be satisfied. At last.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:42

Monday, September 18, 2006

QT Thots

I didn't get much out of my QT earlier this morning. I went through the Readings and interceded for various people, but did not "hear" anything that really "spoke" to me. Know what I mean? There are days like that and I have learned to accept them and keep on going. I have also learned that I do "hear" things while I am walking (as I also did this morning) around the neighborhood, observing people, listening to ethnic and teen music and other city sounds (like sirens and traffic and construction) and snippets of conversation and looking at buildings and yards- some well kept and others long neglected. I find all of this very stimulating spiritually- an essential context in which to "theologize". Yes, that's the word. To be aware of God and His Word (theo-logy). So many books and articles (and blogs) I read seem to be written by people with no "real world" experience or concern. Theology must be done in the world (especially in the city) by people with dirty hands and wearing work boots, as well as by those in executive or business attire, let alone in academic casual. Here's my QT Thot for the day: God so loved the world that He gave His Son. His Son dwelled in the city. There, the Son made the Father known.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 12:24

Friday, September 15, 2006

QT Thots

Thoughts from this morning's Readings Hosea 6:1-6 [adapted] 1 the Lord... has torn us and will heal us We are the people of God. We belong to Him; He may do with us whatever is best for His Name's sake. Sometimes, He breaks us down. But He does not leave us broken. He fixes us. (I think of Psalm 51:8) 2 God has stricken us and will bind up our wounds. We are often filled with ourselves, with egotism. Sometimes we fancy ourselves masters of our fate, in control. God strikes us, wounding our pride and arrogance. He usually uses people, often friends, to do this. But, when we are brought low, God lifts us up. 3 After two days, he will revive us, and on the third day will raise us up, that we may live in his presence. The Lord loves us and does not want us to remain down and defeated. After a period of struggle, He revives us. By His grace, we are renewed. Thank you, Lord! 1 Come, let us return to the Lord, confessing our sins and our needs- He knows the shape we are in, our "condition". This is the purpose of the struggles we suffer: brokenness, to make us aware of our dependency upon Him, to deepen our walk with Him and lead us to surrender more to His will and work in us, to make us whom He wants us to be, more teachable and useful... 4 Let us strive to know the Lord; Not quitting, not discouraged; but, learning from our experience, eager to improve, applying lessons the Lord has taught us, thankful for the struggle and sorrow that has brought us closer to Him. Psalm 142 [adapted] I cry aloud to the Lord; to the Lord I make my supplication. I pour out my complaint before him and tell him of my trouble. "When my spirit faints within me, you know my path; I cry out to you, O Lord, and say: 'You are my refuge, my portion 'Listen to my cry, for I am brought very low; save me 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name."

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:32

Monday, September 11, 2006

QT Thot's

Someone recently asked, "How can we make a difference with the Gospel in our area?" The first thing we must do is clarify what the "Gospel" is. This morning's Readings included this text from Acts. It defines the Gospel according to Peter-Acts 10:34-end Then Peter began to speak to them: ... You know the message [God] sent to the people of Israel... 1. ...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 2. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; 3. but God raised him on the third day 4. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. 5. everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. THE INCARNATION: (GOD) AMONG US THE CRUCIFIXION: (GOD) CRUCIFIED THE RESURRECTION: (GOD) RAISED FROM THE DEAD THE ASCENSION: (GOD) ENTHRONED AS JUDGE FORGIVENESS THROUGH (HIM) BY FAITH ALONE To answer the question from this text: God commanded us to preach and testify to these 5 Doctrines: the Good News

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 14:55

Friday, September 8, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 46 [adapted]...though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be toppled into the depths of the sea; Though its waters rage and foam, and though the mountains tremble at its tumult. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; Therefore we will not fear...The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. (Repeated 3 times) Say this over and over: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"; This is one of the most helpful and sustaining verses in the Bible. It is a Promise you can count on! There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, [this river is God Himself] God is in the midst of her; she shall not be overthrown; God shall help her If the Lord is for us, no one, nothing, can stand against us!The nations make much ado and the kingdoms are shaken;'Be still, then, and know that I am God;This command to "be still" is not telling us to be quiet and meditate. It is a command from God addressed to clamoring, war-crazed Nations I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.' God wants all Nations to know that He is God. And when He is exalted by them-He makes war to cease in all the world; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear and burns the shields with fire.The exaltation of the Lord, Jehovah, is the only hope of the world. This is the will of God and our Mission today.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:40

Monday, September 4, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 1036 As a father has compassion on his children, so is the Lord merciful towards those who fear him. 7 For he knows of what we are made; he remembers that we are but dust. 8 Our days are but as grass; we flourish as a flower of the field; 9 For as soon as the wind goes over it, it is gone, and its place shall know it no more. Yesterday, while at Church, looking at the many empty pews, I remembered many friends of yesteryear who once sat in them. It was a strange experience- I could almost see them, still there- singing, praying, listening. They are all gone now, I trust, into the presence of the Lord above. After Church we went to a Memorial Service for my wife's cousin and her mother. Yes, on the same day. The elderly mother died about a month ago and her daughter died suddenly last week. This was supposed to be the Service for the mother alone, but yesterday family and friends all gathered at what was once the family farm. The grand parents had moved there some 58 years ago and my wife's cousin was born there. Her children, and others, shared their memories of Nana and Mom on the farm. They are now gone. The farm is, too. Their house and barns remain. The animals and crops long gone. The memories were vivid and will live on in the hearts of those who held these women, and this place, dear. All else is becoming dust, their days of flourishing are over. In the end, what remains and endures is the Lord. His faithfulness through the years is without end. Some of the grandchildren seem to know Him. The hope for the future is in them now. 10 But the merciful goodness of the Lord is from of old and endures for ever on those who fear him, and his righteousness on children's children;

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:52

Friday, September 1, 2006

Q T Thots

Psalm 124
If the Lord had not been on our side, when enemies rose up against us; Then would they have swallowed us up alive Then would the waters have overwhelmed us and the torrent gone over us; Then would the raging waters have gone right over us. The wonderful Gospel is that God is on our side and, if He is for us, our enemies can not prevail against us Blessed be the Lord! He has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth. Our times, our well being, are in His Hands. He could have given us over. But He did not. He intervened on our behalf. He came between us and our enemies. We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and we have escaped. Free, thank God Almighty, we are free! The dark powers have no control over us. Dark thoughts and feelings may stalk us. The past may haunt us. People may speak against us. Temptations may surround us. Our circumstances may overwhelm us- but we are free- because Our help is in the name of the Lord, And who is the Lord? He is none other, and none less, than the maker of heaven and earth.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:44

Friday, August 25. 2006

QT Thots

Did you know the Doxology is the last stanza of a Hymn? Thomas Ken wrote this Hymn ,with which to start the day, in 1674 He wrote it secretly and not to be sung in public because at the time the Psalter alone was to be sung in Church. To learn more about this Hymn and a wealth of others click on the Cyber Hymnal (below)Awake, my soul, and with the sunThy daily stage of duty run;Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise,To pay thy morning sacrifice.All praise to Thee, Who safe has keptAnd hast refreshed me while I sleptGrant, Lord, when I from death shall wakel may of endless light partake.Heav'n is, dear Lord, where'er Thou art,O never then from me depart;For to my soul 'tis hell to beBut for one moment void of Thee.Lord, I my vows to Thee renew;Disperse my sins as morning dew.Guard my first springs of thought and will,And with Thyself my spirit fill.Direct, control, suggest, this day,All I design, or do, or say,That all my powers, with all their might,In Thy sole glory may unite.I would not wake nor rise againAnd Heaven itself I would disdain,Wert Thou not there to be enjoyed,And I in hymns to be employed.Heaven is, dear Lord, where'er Thou art;O never then from me depart;For to my soul 'tis hell to beBut for one moment without Thee.Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;Praise Him, all creatures here below;Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/a/w/awakemys.htm>

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:01

Monday, August 21, 2006

QT Thots

Ancient Irish hymn
Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.
Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armor, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.
Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:10

Friday, August 18, 2006

QT THOTS

HYMN: Abide with me Henry Francis Lyte, 1847 ...the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:when other helpers fail and comforts flee,help of the helpless, O abide with me.I need thy presence every passing hour;what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.Where is death's dark sting? where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still, if thou abide with me.THE KEY IS HAVING ASSURANCE THAT THE LORD IS, IN FACT, ABIDING WITH USAND THAT ASSURANCE COMES FROM OUR ABIDING WITH HIM

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:57

Monday, August 14, 2006

QT Thots

Today's reading from Ephesians commands us to discern-Ephesians 5: 10 try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 9 ... all that is good and right and true That verse brings to mind another like it-Romans 12:2... discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect That one leads to this command to think-Philippians 4:8 think about ...whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellen(t), worthy of praise These commands sound simple enough; the problem is defining what the words mean. What is "good, right and true"? These values are subjective in our culture and change continually. The solution to the problem is found in the study of God's Law-Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, sure, making wise, 8 right, rejoicing the heart; pure, enlightening ; 9 clean, enduring, true, and righteous Most of us are off to work today to make money. This next verse challenges our priorities-10 More to be desired are they [the Commandments] than gold, even much fine gold;

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:55

Monday, August 7, 2006

QT Thots

Galatians 4:19 my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! Something about Christ needs to be formed in us. What could that be? Many suggest his character, especially his love, needs to be formed in us. People say, "I see Christ in you", meaning the character or love of Christ. But, compare-Philippians 2:6-8 who, though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. I take this to mean- Christ was [being] in the nature of God and took the nature of Man as well. (He is both God and Man at the same time) Being a Man, he obeyed the Father. It cost him his life. Christ himself is not formed again in us, i.e.- he does not assume still another nature. Furthermore, Paul has already said, in Gal 2:20, that Christ lives in each Believer. So Paul does not mean Christ himself must come to live [be formed] in us again. I suggest that Paul is concerned that we have the brokenness of Christ, particularly the attitude of submission to the Father, the desire to obey the Father at all costs (v.2 and v.8) that Christ had. Our prayer at the start of this new week: "Father may the brokenness before You, and the submission to You, that was in Jesus, be in me today."

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:16

Friday, August 4, 2006

QT Thots

HYMN words by John Ernest Bode, 1868 O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end: be thou ever near me, my Master and my friend; I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side, nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide. O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near; I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear; my foes are ever near me, around me and within; but Jesus, draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin. O Jesus, thou hast promised to all who follow thee, that where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be; and, Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end; O give me grace to follow, my Master and my friend. O let me see thy footmarks, and in them plant mine own; My hope to follow duly is in thy strength alone. O guide me, call me, draw me, uphold me to the end; and then in heaven receive me, my Savior and my Friend.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:58

Monday, July 31, 2006

QT Thots

Isaiah 12.2-6¹ Behold, God is my salvation; Where is my healing and wholeness [salvation]? God himself, Father and Son and Spirit is my healing and wholeness. I will trust [in Him] and will not be afraid [for my future, about what could go wrong, about danger or failure. I will not fear because I will trust God. I will not fear because 2 'the Lord God is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.' The challenge is to stay focused on Him. I must continually 3 draw water from the well of salvation. (God is that well) Doing this I am ready and able to get on with my vocation to 5'Make known his deeds among the nations, and proclaim that his name is exalted.7'Shout and sing for joy, you that dwell in Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.'The idea is to allow ourselves to be excited about who God is. He is in our lives, but we usually take Him for granted. Imagine that- we take the Lord for granted! We, we, are bored with God! Today, with a mind in awe of the Living God, I will go about my work.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:22

Saturday, July 29, 2006

QT Thots

Job 19:1-28a adapted for a soldier far from home
God has put me in [harms way], and closed his net around me.....and he has set darkness upon my paths. He breaks me down, ...he has uprooted [me]... troops come on together; they have thrown up siege- and encamp around my tent.'He has put my family far from me, I have become an alien ...[BUT] now here is the good part- I know that my Redeemer lives
Yes, I know that no matter how lonely or how dangerous my situation, God is real, God cares, God knows- and I know this for sure! Because He lives, I too shall live. I can face tomorrow, because I know who holds tomorrow in His hand
One day, it may not be for years or it may be today, I shall see God
And when I do, I shall know that He has been on my side all along. He has not, he will not desert me I shall see [He is] on my side, my eyes shall behold Him in His glory and then I shall see clearly, what is now so dim

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:17

Monday, July 24, 2006

QT Thots

Romans 8:2,14,15b-19Romans 7 is the famous passage in which Paul describes himself as wretched. Yes, the Apostle, wretched! Why? He is conflicted. He knows from experience that there is a propensity, a drive, within his nature to rebel against the Lord he loves. I see that in myself, as well.The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. Ahh, good news. We are not condemned to live a wretched, conflicted life (v.1) We can live free from the power of our rebellious Sin nature within. The Holy Spirit makes that possible.for we have received the Spirit that enables us to cry, 'Abba, Father'.All who have received Christ, have received the Spirit of Christ. And the Spirit witnesses to our spirit: we are the children of God. This assurance is the first prayer and the beginning of the "victorious life" The Spirit himself bears witness that we are children of God and if God's children, then heirs of God; If heirs of God, then fellow-heirs with Christ;We are royalty. Satan would get us down on ourselves, convincing us we are no good. Nothing. Nobody. That is when we give in to temptations. We need to know who we are today: I am a redeemed, Spirit-filled child of God, saved by the Blood of Jesus and kept by the power of God.These sufferings that we now endure are not worth comparing to the glory that shall be revealed.Being royalty does not mean we have no troubles and trials. We do! But God knows. By His grace, we endure because we are confident He will not desert his own. He will not allow the trouble to be more than we can handle with His help. There will be glory one day. If I die tonight, there will be breakfast with Jesus in the morning! Hallelujah.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:54

Friday, July 21. 2006

QT Thots

Jeremiah 28... the prophet Hannah ... spoke to me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place ... all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, says the Lord, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.' the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, 'Listen, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, and you made this people trust in a lie. Therefore thus says the Lord: I am going to send you off the face of the earth. Within this year you will be dead, because you have spoken rebellion against the Lord.' In that same year, the prophet Hananiah died. What a warning here: Hannaniah preached a sermon. As many preachers do, he started by saying, "Thus saith the Lord..." The man may have sincerely believed that. He was sincerely wrong. Many of the folks in the congregation may have sincerely believed that, too. They, also, were sincerely wrong. I'll hear and read many things today that all claim comes with the authority of the Lord. The warning here is that just because someone claims something is true, from God ("The Bible says..." or, more often, "The Lord told me...") does not make it so. It may well turn out that a lot of stuff we hear from pulpits, on Christian radio or download from the internet from Christian websites may actually be wrong- a "rebellion against the Lord" I'm about to add more material to my Blog. I do it with fear and trembling, less it not be true. I sincerely believe it will be true; but, that is not enough. We must all be like the Bereans [in Acts 17] who were "examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." Test every teaching you hear, using the Scripture.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:44

Monday, July 17, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 25 [rearranged for personal prayer]To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long. Remember not ... my transgressions;... remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. For your name's sake, O Lord, forgive my sin, for it is great. Turn to me and have pity on me, for I am left alone and in misery. The sorrows of my heart have increased; bring me out of my troubles. Look upon my adversity and misery and forgive me all my sinGracious and upright is the Lord; therefore he teaches sinners in his way. He guides the humble in doing right and teaches his way to the lowly. Who are they who fear the Lord? he will teach them the way that they should choose. Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach meThe Lord is a friend to those who fear him and will show them his covenant. All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:46

Friday, July 14. 2006

QT Thots

Romans 4.24,25; 5.1-5,8,9,11 (adapted from Oremus)God reckons [attributes, officially declares] as righteous [acceptable to Him] those who believe ... Since we are justified [have been reckoned as righteous- we have acceptance now, because it was given to us once and for always, the moment we came to Christ] by faith [alone], we have peace with God [before we enjoy the peace of God we had to have the peace with God- that was ours the moment we came to saving faith]Since we have been justified ... how much more shall we be saved [Here is Eternal Security. Having been granted acceptance by God, He will never reject us]We have gained access to the grace in which we stand [We stand in grace. This is our position in Christ- we stand secure in God's grace]and rejoice in our hope [to see and experience] of the glory of God [in Heaven one day]We even exult in our sufferings,[because] suffering produces endurance,endurance brings hope,[because] our hope is not in vain [read that again, O, my Soul] Because [the assurance of] God's love has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, given to us [yes, every believer has the Holy Spirit. We do not have to seek Him, He is within us now][If the witness of the Spirit within is not enough] God proves [demonstrates] his love for us: while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. [Don't rest your assurance on feeling. Rest it on this fact]Therefore, we exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:20

Monday, July 10, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 26 People criticize and judge us. What really matters is what God thinks of us. Ultimately, only His opinion of us is what counts. Thus David prays-Test me, O Lord, and try me; examine my heart and my mind. Give judgment for me, O Lord, It takes a lot of confidence in both the Lord and in our selves to do this David is bold to say-I have lived with integrity; I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered. Can I say this of myself, this morning? your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. The ESV translation is better: "your steadfast love is before my eyes and I walk in your faithfulness" This is what has kept me going through the years- keeping my eyes on the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord. This is the key to my own faithfulness I have not sat with the worthless, nor do I consort with the deceitful. I have hated the company of evildoers; I will not sit down with the wicked. I must be careful about whom I spend my time with, whom I let influence me, whom I look to as my "inner circle" of friends. I must not allow worldly or ungodly people to be close to me. On the other hand, my deep joy is to be with godly people in worship. Lord, I love the house in which you dwell and the place where your glory abides. I will ... go in procession round your altar, Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and recounting all your wonderful deeds. ... in the full assembly, I will bless the Lord. David is not talking about lackluster singing or listening to ho hum sermons and then chatting around the coffee and goodies table afterward- the absolute essential for my spiritual life is deep, meaningful regular, corporate worship filled with songs of thanksgiving for the mighty works of God in our lives. Redeem me, O Lord, and have pity [ESV-continue to be gracious] on me.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:50

Friday, July 7, 2006

QT Thots

2 Corinthians 11:16-33 When Saul accepted Christ, and became Paul, on the Damascus Road, he knew he was in for hardship at the hands of the Jews. He had been one of them. Now he was one of the those whom he had himself hounded to death. He not only was now an infidel, but a traitor. But he could not have known the suffering he would experience, as a faithful witness to the Lord and the Gospel, at the hands of Gentile unbelievers as well. He endured... imprisonments, countless floggings, and (was) often near death. Five times I have received ... the forty lashes minus one (he reported). Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; (he faced constant) danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; (He served the Lord) in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. If that were not enough, he had an enemy within- besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. The encouraging thing to me this morning, is that Paul did not quit! He persevered in spreading the Good News no matter what the personal cost. More than that, he rejoiced in the opportunity to suffer for Christ-If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. Why? Because, as he says elsewhere, when he was the most weak he found strength. In his suffering, he experienced The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (blessed be he for ever!)

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:30

Monday, July 3, 2006

QT Thots

John 20:24-29... the other disciples told [Thomas], 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' There are many who say they will believe in Christ, if they can have proof that he is real and alive... if creation can be proved true, if the shroud of Turin really covered the body of Jesus, if the Ark can be found on Mt Ararat, if they can be miraculously healed of a crippling disease, if they can talk with a loved one who has passed away, if the ... etc, etc. A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus condescended to Thomas' doubt and demands and gave him physical evidence that he, Jesus, was indeed, real and alive. Thomas responded with faith. It was an exception. Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' Blessed are those whose prayers (demands) are not answered, but yet believe. Blessed are those who are not healed of disability, but yet believe. Blessed are those whose lives seem to be in the toilet, but yet believe. Blessed are those who have no tangible proof at all, but yet believe. Blessed are those whose doubts and questions are not answered, but yet believe. Jesus did not say that Pollyannas are blessed or nor people who insist, "You just gotta have faith". He said, blessed are those who believe that, as Thomas finally did, Jesus is Lord. When we confess that, we can come to see all kinds of evidence which confirms our faith, but which faith itself does not require.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:47

Friday, June 30, 2006

Today's QT Thots

1 Peter 2:18-25 It hurts to be abused- to be violated, used and thrown away. It hurts to not be respected and appreciated. It hurts to be insulted, put down or slandered. It hurts not to be trusted. How do we handle this? What do we do when this is happening? Today's reading has the answer-being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. ... it is to your credit you endure when you do right and suffer for it, ... you have God's approval. Christ also suffered...leaving you an example, ... When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; Christ, our Example, did not retaliate. He did not return in kind what he was given. But, more than that- and this is essential- he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He entrusted himself to his heavenly Father. His Father is our father. God is our rock and refuge. He knows what we are going through. He understands. He will provide our defense. He will enable us to overcome! by his wounds you have been healed. Some see this text as a promise that the Atonement makes the healing of our physical diseases possible. But in light of the context, I believe we can read this verse to mean-By following Christ's example, relinquishing our (situation) into God's care, our inner pain will be healed and we will find comfort and peace.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:15

Friday, June 16, 2006

Today's QTThots

1 John 1:5-9 Nathaniel Hawthorne almost went mad as he wrestled with the reality of Evil. Moby Dick was not a whale. He was a metaphor for God. Thus, he could be found everywhere. The problem was that whoever found him was killed. Hawthorne suspected that God Himself was evil and who ever got to close to Him suffered. Ahab was determined to capture this evil God, ie- Whale, and that brought him danger and destruction. Sometimes, Christians still doubt the goodness of God. We need to hear clearly- God is light, in whom there is no darkness at all. All Light: absolutely no Darkness. Ever. And He does not change. He will not be good today and then turn against us tomorrow. There is healing in coming close to Him, not harm! But we do experience darkness. There is pain and hurt in our lives over time. And in those times, we sometimes question the intentions of God and cry out, "Why?" With Martha, we complain bitterly, "If you had been here, Lord, this terrible thing would not have happened!" That implies, if He was with us and is good, we would not have suffered.. Since we did, and we do, like Hawthorne, we harbor the terrible thought that God is not all good. He has a dark, mean side. There are mysteries, but before we go there, we need to realize most often the troubles we have are not of God's making. Before we doubt His character and motives, we must look within and doubt ours. There are four conditional "ifs" in this passage- If we say that we have fellowship with God while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true. Are we living the way the Lord expects? If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Are we honest about our motives and why we have made the decisions we have made? Are we in fact, deceiving ourselves about how we got into trouble in the first place, while blaming God? If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. God is not bad, no matter what Hawthorne may have feared. God is not a terrible, dangerous whale. But if we want to walk in His Light and experience His blessing, it must be on His terms. The terrible whales in our lives are usually of our own making. If we confess our sins, the One who is faithful and just will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Have we acknowledged and dealt with all known sin in our lives? Most often, when we think God has moved away; it is actually our sin that has come between us and hides His face. The amazing thing is that God will remove the whale within, if we will fess up to it being there.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 06:35

Monday, June 12, 2006

QT Thots- The Conversion of the Church

I'm praying for the Episcopal Church, which will have its national Convention this week in Columbus, Ohio. More than 25 years ago, I kneeled before an Episcopal Bishop and was confirmed and "joined" the Church. I had been an ordained Baptist clergyman. It was a very significant event for me. God used The Prayer Book and the Worship (Liturgy) of the Church to help me through a devastating period in my Ministry and life. I was glad to discover and join a Church with the History and Heritage that the Episcopal Church has, back through the Church of England, through the Reformation and Catholic Tradition, to the Apostles themselves. In my judgment (yes, that is the accurate word) the Church as a Body has left and disavowed its History, Heritage and Tradition in very fundamental ways. I have not been active in it for many years [having again become a Protestant Pastor] but I still have a strong attraction to it and a burden for its restoration. All that came to mind as I read today's Psalm- a Prayer for the Episcopal Church Psalm 80 The Conversion of the Church

1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, ... stir up your might and come to save us! 14 Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, 15 the stock that your right hand planted, 8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. 9 You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. 12 ... all who pass along the way pluck its fruit 13 The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. 16 [enemies] have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face! 3 Restore us, [literally- Turn us again] O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved! 7 Restore us, [literally- Turn us again] O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved! 19 Restore us, [literally- Turn us again] O LORD God of hosts! let your face shine, that we may be saved! 18 Then we shall not turn [away again]... from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name! The Hope of the Church- any church- is the grace of God and its re-turning [con-verting] to Him and His Word

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:54

Friday, June 9, 2006

QT Thots

Words of this Hymn were written by Columba, missionary during the violent Dark Ages in Northern Scotland in the 6th Century. They are especially comforting, if you are walking in harms way or tempted to fear for your life. Alone with none but thee, my God, I journey on my way. What need I fear when thou art near, O King of night and day? More safe am I within thy hand than if a host should round me stand. My destined time is known to thee, and death will keep his hour; did warriors strong around me throng, they could not stay his power: no walls of stone can man defend when thou thy messenger dost send. My life I yield to thy decree, and bow to thy control in peaceful calm, for from thine arm no power can wrest my soul. Could earthly omens e'er appal a man that heeds the heavenly call? The child of God can fear no ill, his chosen dread no foe; we leave our fate with thee, and wait thy bidding when to go. 'Tis not from chance our comfort springs. thou art our trust, O King of kings.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 06:46

Monday, June 5, 2006

QTThots

Psalm 57 Troubles can track down and trouble true Believers. I know we know that, but sometimes we go into denial, thinking that we must always have peace and joy and put on a brave (but false) face. The key to getting through is repairing to the Lord. (To repair means to "go back home") Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful, for I have taken refuge in you; in the shadow of your wings will I take refuge until this time of trouble has gone by. Covered by His Love, we pour out our hearts to Him-I will call upon the Most High God, the God who maintains my cause. He will send from heaven and save me; God maintains my cause. God maintains my cause! He hears my plea for help and comes to my rescue. More than that- he will confound those who trample upon me; "trample", yes that is what my enemies do- they push me down and walk rough shod over me God will send forth his love and his faithfulness. I lie in the midst of lions that devour the people; their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongue a sharp sword. My troubles, my fears, my doubts, chew me up and devour me- I am consumed by my enemies, BUT, no matter what, in spite of my troubles-My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and make melody. I will sing the great hymns of faith. That always restores my spirit. And I resolve, in the face of my enemies, to confess you among the peoples, O Lord; I will sing praise to you among the nations. For your loving-kindness is greater than [my troubles] and your faithfulness [has no limit] Beginning with me, today-Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, and your glory over all the earth Amen

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:44

Friday, June 2, 2006

QT Thots

A Reminder to myself on my 68th Birthday-1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits;3 Who forgives all your sins and heals all your infirmities;4 Who redeems your life from the Pit and crowns you with faithful love and compassion;5 Who satisfies you with good things, so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.6 The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed.8 The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom has dominion over all.11 Bless the Lord, all you works of his, in all places of his dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul. -from Psalm 103All Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:48

Monday, May 29, 2006

QTThots- Prayer for Today

God of Power, may the boldness of your Spirit transform us, may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us, and may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and worship you now and always. Amen. I meditated on the Benediction from Oremus [above] and then changed the words to make it read as follows- God of Love, may the gentleness of your Spirit transform us, may the compassion of your Spirit lead us, and may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to worship and serve you now and always. Amen. God of Justice, may the holiness of your Spirit transform us, may the fearlessness of your Spirit lead us, and may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to worship and serve you now and always. Amen. God of Peace, may the mercy of your Spirit transform us, may the serenity of your Spirit lead us, and may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to worship and serve you now and always. Amen. God of Truth, may the light of your Spirit transform us, may the revelation of your Spirit lead us, and may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to worship and serve you now and always. Amen.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:05

Friday, May 26. 2006

QT Thots

One of the strangest and most unwarranted claims made is that the God of the Old Testament is a God of Wrath, while the God of the New Testament is the God of Love. Here are some verses from today's Psalms (in Oremus) that reveal the tender mercies of the God of the Old Testament to us- Psalm 138 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart;...because of your love and faithfulness When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; Though the Lord be high, he cares for the lowly; The Lord will make good his purpose for me; Psalm 147:1-12 Alleluia! How good it is to sing praises to our God! He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. The Lord lifts up the lowly, the Lord has pleasure in those who fear him, in those who await his gracious favor. Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; Alleluia! We may (and should) seriously study great Theology about God the Almighty Creator and Sovereign who works His purposes out in History; but sometimes, it is just good to pause and know, "Jesus loves me".

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:33

Monday, May 22, 2006

QTThots

I read and meditate on the Psalms more than any other part of the Bible. The one this morning (from Oremus) is very appropriate after a very loud, violent thunder storm last night and today is going to be very windy- Psalm 104 Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness! you are clothed with majesty and splendor... you make the clouds your chariot; you ride on the wings of the wind. You make the winds your messengers There is nothing like a fierce storm to put the fear of God in you. Those winds do speak of God's awful power and our weakness Beside them the birds of the air make their nests and sing among the branches. I sit writing this by an open window and the music of songbirds, from the trees in the yard, fills the air. Beautiful. You make grass grow ... and plants to serve us all; For sure- they seem to grow by inches every day. Color everywhere. The trees of the Lord are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which he planted, In which the birds build their nests, Leaves from tall oaks are forming canopies over the streets in the neighborhood You appointed the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun knows the time of its setting. You make darkness that it may be night There is a rhythm of life, with the seasons and the days. The older I get, the faster it goes; but it is comfortable- a good thing The laborer goes forth to work and to toil until the evening. I have a lot to do today; but now, "retired", it is on my own schedule. But many of the neighbors are rushing to their jobs- all on the clock. Will they enjoy the avian music and lush foliage on the way? O Lord, how manifold are your works! the earth is full... All of this is evidence of God. We can see His Hand in what He has made. The sights and sounds speak a non-verbal word to us of our Creator. Will rushing people make time to listen to the word of God? Bless the Lord, O my soul. Alleluia!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:55

Friday, May 19, 2006

QT Thots

More than 45 years ago, my (then) girl friend, Millie, and I dropped by the Parsonage to visit our Pastor at the time. He was talking with his two very young sons about Samson. In my daily Devotions, we have been going through the Book of Judges. This morning we came to the end of the story of Samson in Chapter 16. Our Pastor was stressing to his boys how very, very important it is to be sure that whomever they marry someday be a Christian. Millie and I were impressed that Pastor was trying to impress this lesson on his sons and at such a young age. They were less than ten. We are eternally grateful that each of our four children took that same lesson to heart and that all of them married Believers. I can not imagine myself married to a non-believer. Impossible. My entire life is rooted and grounded in Christ. How could I have a wife who does not know Him? Millie and I are, in the deepest sense, "soul-mates" and one in the Spirit. I know many Believers are married to unbelievers. That is often due to one of them becoming a Christian after the wedding. As a pastor, I refused to perform wedding ceremonies for couples who did not share the Faith. The "unequally yoked" have many heartaches, but most important they miss out on sharing all that the Lord would do in and through them as a couple. They are not "one in the Lord" or one in faith, in prayer, in worship, in values, and ministry and even in friends. They do not share the hope of eternal life or the grace God gives in crisis and sorrow. They not only miss out on the joy and meaning of Christian Marriage, but of Christ-centered parenting and family if God should gift them with children. These are reasons to teach our children the lessons learned from the story of Samson. Not only do not marry an unbeliever, do not get romantically involved with an unbeliever for fear you will give your heart (and even body) to them, let alone marry them some day. Two of my cousins became grandparents this week. I pray that the faith that is in my cousins will abound in their children and their children's children and that this circle will never be broken.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:32

Monday, May 15, 2006

QT Thots

Last week I posted a meditation on my Blog about Mary as a mother who experienced a lot of anguish. Today's OT Scripture (Judges 13:1-7,24) is a story with significant similarities-The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. God works through people. Sometimes, the people God uses to accomplish His work are very flawed people. In order to deliver the Israelites, God raised up a Savior, Samson. But there would have been no Samson, no Savior of Israel, without the woman who would be his mother. The woman God chose for this important role was barren, having borne no children. As in the case with Mary, the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Although you are barren, having borne no children, you shall conceive and bear a son. She was not a virgin and nothing is said here about the Holy Spirit coming upon her, as in Mary's case; but, conception was a miracle nevertheless. Actually, the consistent teaching through out the Bible is that all children are a gift from the Lord. In the natural scheme of things, He gives them to some, while withholding them from others. If we have children, we should consider them to be gifts from the Lord, to be dedicated back to Him for His service. It is he who shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.' Samson's service was to deliver Israel from bondage. Every child is born with a promise and purpose. Then the woman came and told her husband, 'A man of God came to me, ...an angel, ... he said to me, "You shall conceive and bear a son. Like Joseph, this story must have really dumbfounded the woman's husband. He would need to cooperate with God, if his son was to be the man God intended. As it turns out, he was an obstacle and made foolish decisions for his boy. The woman bore a son, and named him Samson. The boy grew, and the Lord blessed him. Samson's mother was thrilled. Her baby was an answer to prayer. She was assured by the Lord that her baby would grow up to do mighty things for her Country. That happened. Little did she know that her boy would also have great personal problems, struggle with his own inner demons and suffer terrible torture and die a horrible death. God does give and keep His promises to us. He does love our children and has plans for their lives. That does not mean they will not have problems or that parenting will not involve heartache for our children. We must "keep the faith" and work at not making the same mistakes Samson's parents made along the way. (read the whole story) Check out the meditation about Mary on my Blog from last week

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:01

Friday, May 12. 2006

QT Thots

This is one of the most famous and beloved hymns of all time, written by Charles Wesley in 1740. There are two more stanzas: Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly, while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high: hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life be past; safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last. Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on thee; leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me! All my trust on thee is stayed; all my help from thee I bring; cover my defenseless head with the shadow of thy wing. Plenteous grace with thee is found, grace to cover all my sin; let the healing streams abound, make and keep me pure within. Thou of life the fountain art, freely let me take of thee: spring thou up within my heart, rise to all eternity. Charles was an Anglican priest, but came to saving faith after he had been in Ministry for a few years. That was in 1738. It changed him and his preaching. That, in turn, brought him into trouble with traditionalists in the Church. He had fierce enemies and he was forced out of the Pulpit. He wrote this hymn during those early turbulent days. I know a lot of Pastors who could echo the prayer of the first stanza. Certainly many lay Christians can as well. Perhaps you. But, God did not answer Wesley's plea. It was not in His plan to call the disheartened Pastor Home at that time. Rather this tough time of trial was the beginning of a fruitful non-parochial [para-church] Ministry that would last for over 45 years. God finally granted Wesley His desire in 1788.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:49

Monday, May 8, 2006

QT Thots

Acts 4:13-22 Peter and John were determined to continue to courageously preach the Gospel in the face of opposition. Threats could not stop them..Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed Somehow, their enemies, Leaders of the Church of that day, were more struck by the Apostles lack of credentials than by the abundance of their faith. The only thing that was not ordinary about Peter and John was that they had been disciples of Jesus And [then they] recognized them as companions [of the despised troublemaker] Jesus. That worked against them. The only thing working for the Apostles was the living evidence of their faith- When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. Are there people walking around today who have found Life and healing because of our witness to them of the Gospel? That is what really matters in the long run. The threatened and fearful Church Leaders ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Can you imagine such foolish blindness? These were god-fearing religious men ordering the Apostles not to preach the Gospel!! They were just to shut down their Ministry! The criticized and rejected Apostles respond with supreme sarcasm- Peter and John answered them, 'Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; Can you imagine Church Leaders who would say that God wants their followers to listen to them, instead of listening to God? The maligned Ministers of the Gospel declare simply, in effect, "Hey do whatever you wanna do, but as for us- we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.' And so a new week begins for you and me. I do not know about you, but for me- I can not help but to keeping on keeping on for Jesus.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:05

Friday, May 5, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 105 1 Give thanks to the LORD and call upon his Name; 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him, and [sing] of all his marvelous works. 3 Glory in his holy Name Every morning begins with a call to worship, especially a call to sing praises to the Lord for all His wonderful works in the world and in our lives. Every morning begins with an invitation-3 ... seek the LORD 4 Search for the LORD and his strength; continually seek his face. It is possible to do the singing without the seeking. That would be a shame. Beyond the words about the Lord, we want the Lord Himself. There is great reward for those who take the time to do this and persist in the effort [seeking and finding the Lord does not normally happen on the fly] For those who make the effort there is this promise-3 ... the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. More than a promise, this is also the experience of the Faithful Seek the Lord while he wills to be found; call upon him when he draws near... turn to the Lord, and he will have compassion Every morning begins with a surprise For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

-- -----Isaiah 55:6-11 Every morning, we have our agenda, our To Do List; but we often learn "Man proposes, God disposes." Our thoughts and plans about things are often not God's thoughts and plans on the subject. As we search His Word and listen in prayer, He reveals what He wants for us or of us. That may call for radical change in what we expect of our day- the wise Believer will not stubbornly blow off the wisdom of the Lord.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:19

Monday, May 1, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 139I can never say I am forgotten: nobody knows, nobody cares; becauseLord, ... you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways. God not only knows and cares, He is involved with me, constantly seeking to shape and direct my life-You press upon me behind and before and lay your hand upon me. In all my circumstance He is present. There is nothing I will go through that He is not going to be with me in it- the dark and hard times, as well as the "mountain tops"-Where can I go then from your Spirit? where can I flee from your presence? If I climb up to heaven, you are there; if I make the grave my bed, you are there also. If I ... dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there your hand will lead meand your right hand [will] hold me fast. What I read next is mind-boggling-If I say, 'Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night', Darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. We are effected by everything: weather, traffic, the boss, accidents, good news and bad news. Our emotions constantly change. We are up. We are down. Sometimes, way down. God "feels our pain", but has this marvelous long range perspective. He remains the same, all the time: always on top of things, in charge, unintimidated by threats of any kind: He is God.He stills storms. They can not drown Him and He knows that. He has peace. And He promises to give His peace to us today.Search me out, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my restless thoughts... and lead me in the way that is everlasting.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:20

Friday, April 28, 2006

QTThots

Psalm 84The Psalmist is thinking about the Temple in Jerusalem (Zion). He wants to go there to be in the Presence of God, who dwells there. How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion. It is not the sacred space that draws the Psalmist, it is GOD. It is not the Worship Service or the program of activities and ministries; It is not friends and fellowship that appeals to him. It is GODHis entire being longs for the living God and finds joy in HIMmy heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. Why?For the Lord God is both sun and shield; he will give grace and glory; No good thing will the Lord withhold from those who walk with integrity. The Psalmist then shares three keys to Happiness-Happy are they who dwell in your house! they will always be praising you.O Lord of hosts, happy are they who put their trust in you!Happy are the people whose strength is in you! whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way. Pilgrims' way? In Bible times, Believers periodically traveled to Jerusalem, Zion, on a pilgrimage. Many Believers, since then, have learned that the trip to Heaven, our Zion, is a pilgrimage of a different kind. [Think of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress]Happy is the Christian who sets his (or her) heart on the journey to get to our Father's House above, knowing that it will be demanding and require perseverance and maybe suffering. It can be lonely, butThose who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs - there will be people and places along the way that bring refreshment, nourishment and encouragement. There will be valleys and deserts, but God promises His pilgrims They will climb from height to height, ... [and finally] stand at the threshold of the house of my GodOr as in Bunyan's book, they will cross the River and enter the glorious Courts above in the celestial City. Hurrah! Thanks be to God!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:53

Monday, April 24, 2006

QT Thots

I am glad to have Devotionals that inspire and uplift and do that quickly. Some do not. I spent a lot of time wrestling with issues raised by the readings from Oremus this morning. The Church Calendar commemorates 20th Century martyrs for the Faith. There were more during those one hundred years than during the previous 19 hundred. I googled the topic. There are many appropriate sites. But then I got involved meditating on the Hymn for today: Once to Every Man and Nation. Very rich. You will need to go through it very thoughtfully to plumb possible meanings. James Russell Lowell wrote this Hymn in 1849 as a protest against entering war with Mexico. Lowell was an avid Abolitionist. He saw the proposed war as unjust and an attempt by slaveholding states to acquire new territory which would increase the spread of slavery. Many theological issues are raised here. Check out the attached link if you would like some help with that. Once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide, in the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side; some great cause, some great decision, offering each the bloom or blight, and the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light. Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust, ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just; then it is the brave man chooses while the coward stands aside, till the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied. By the light of burning martyrs, Christ, thy bleeding feet we track, toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back; new occasions teach new duties, ancient values test our youth; they must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth. Though the cause of evil prosper, yet the truth alone is strong; though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong; yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own. <http://www.justbalance.net/deductions/oncetoeverymanandnation.pdf>

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:14

Friday, April 21, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 96 Sunday is coming around again. Our Duty and Privilege is made very clear-Sing to the Lord and bless his name; O the majesty and magnificence of his presence! O the power and the splendor of his sanctuary! Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ascribe to the Lord honor and power. Ascribe to the Lord the honor due to his name; bring offerings and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; This same Scripture makes equally clear what we are to do the rest of the week-... proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations and his wonders among all peoples. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is more to be feared than all gods... all the gods of the nations...are but idols God is to be feared, because...he comes to judge the earth. What standard shall God use to judge the people of the world?He will judge the world with ...his truth.Our society values multiculturalism, diversity and moral relativism. It adamantly rejects claims to absolute Truth. It is commonly said, such a claim is repressive of those who do not claim that Truth and such Truth would be oppressive to those who disagree with it. Oh, well. There is such a thing as the Truth of God and He holds everyone, every nation, accountable to it.it is the Lord who made the heavens. ...let the whole earth tremble before him. Tell it out among the nations: 'The Lord is king! After we have worshipped the King this Sunday, we must renew our commitment to proclaiming His Truth, to all, the rest of the week.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:17

Monday, April 17, 2006

QT Thots

James 1:1-16 My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, This seems like crazy advice. Why should we have joy, when facing trials, trials of any kind? because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. Apparently, trials of any kind are, really, tests of faith. Dealing with them, supposedly, will be good for us: the experience will make us grow up (mature) and become full of wisdom. We might cynically respond to this with "Yeah. Right. While going through the trials and waiting for all that maturity and wisdom to happen we might well doubt God. That would be a mistake. for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way. James reminds us God will give us all we need to deal with the trials. God... gives... generously and ungrudgingly -the grace and help we need to deal with the trials. It will be given you. One is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it. Enduring trials and temptations is actually enduring one's own inner desire, being lured and enticed by it. The struggle during hardship is really more within ourselves than it is with others or with our circumstances. Blessed is anyone who endures, does not give in to such doubt. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. That brings us back to the first verse-: therefore, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy God will see you through

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:40

Friday, April 14, 2006

QT Thots on Good Friday

The Old Testament Reading today is the classic story of the test of Abraham's Faith, offering his son, Isaac on an altar to God (Gen 22) -Isaac was to be sacrificed on the altar. God provided a substitute for him. Another died in Isaac's place. It is not the main point of the original story, but on Good Friday, we see Isaac as us. Jesus as the Substitute. The main point for Abraham was the absolute trustworthiness of God. Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide' God "provides" means, literally, God looks ahead [pro-vidéo] with the idea that "seeing" [root meaning of the Hebrew word used here] the need that will arise, He provides for it in advance. As Paul says, God tests and provides (1 Cor 10:13). He allows or even sets up situations that will test and try us sorely and yet, at the same time, provides a way to handle and get through them. He is faithful in that. I am wondering what Isaac thought about what happened to him. He must have told others and talked about it later, but nothing is recorded. The emphasis in the story is all on Abraham and God, not Isaac. But it was Isaac who's life was spared. His obedient faith in his father is astounding. You want me to do what? His faith in what his father said about God's providence is also amazing. God is going to do what? What did Isaac feel when he was set free? What "testimony" to God's faithfulness did he give? What did he feel about the ram caught in the thicket, which took his place on the altar. Did he have a new or greater love for the God who provided the Substitute? Do we? Did Isaac remember the main lesson for him from that day, God provides, for the rest of his life? Will we?

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:56

Thursday, April 13, 2006

Betrayed by a Friend

Psalm 55 Hear my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my petition. Listen to me and answer me; I have no peace, because of my cares. I am shaken by the noise of the enemy and by the pressure of the wicked; My heart quakes within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling have come over me, and horror overwhelms me. The Psalms this Holy Week are so dark and heavy. I wonder, why? And I said, 'O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. 'I would flee to a far-off place and make my lodging in the wilderness. 'I would hasten to escape Aah, we all can relate to this desire and have probably said something like this on occasion. What is this man's problem? For had it been an adversary who taunted me, then I could have borne it; or had it been an enemy who vaunted himself against me, then I could have hidden from him. But it was you, one after my own heart, my companion, my own familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together, and walked with the throng in the house of God. A friend-betrayal by a friend [a "Judas"] That is his problem. Someone from within the Church. A fellow Christian turned against him and caused him such sorrow. Some one he trusted has become an enemy. That hurts deeply. I know. Jesus knew. My companion stretched forth his hand against his comrade; he has broken his covenant. His speech is softer than butter, but war is in his heart. His words are smoother than oil, but they are drawn swords. What can I do about it now? I will call upon God, and the Lord will deliver me. In the evening, in the morning and at noonday I will complain and lament, and he will hear my voice. Ever feel this way? Jesus did. Hear the Word of the Lord-Cast your burden upon the Lord and he will sustain you Thanks be to God. Amen

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:33

Monday, April 10, 2006

QTThots- Monday of Holy Week

Psalm 25 My eyes are ever looking to the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and have pity on me, for I am left alone and in misery. The sorrows of my heart have increased; bring me out of my troubles. Look upon my adversity and misery... Look upon my enemies, for they are many, and they bear a violent hatred against me. Protect my life and deliver me; let me not be put to shame, for I have trusted in you. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for my hope has been in you. Could this have been how Jesus prayed as he went into Jerusalem? Humanly, yes. When overwhelmed with trouble and fearing for one's life, naturally a Believer would look to the Lord for protection and deliverance. This prayer expresses despair and hope at the same time. However, it would not be answered for Jesus this week. And he knew that. And knowing that did not stop him from going into the fire faithfully. Those who violently hated him would have their way. They would kill him. God would not intervene. He would allow it to happen- allow his son to suffer. Being a good man of integrity would not help either. Terrible things do happen to good people. Three times, Jesus told his disciples, "The Son of Man must suffer many things..." We are realists. In this world, being a Christian is not any guarantee of safety and well-being. In fact, in this world, being a faithful Christian can bring on trouble. Will we be like Jesus was, on this Monday morning, and decide to resolutely press on faithfully anyway? If there is a "cross" in your future, don't run away from it.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:42

Friday, April 7, 2006

QT Thots

John 11:1-27 adapted Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus ... Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ... The disciples said to him, 'Lord... he will be all right.' ... Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ... Jesus said, ... 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' A friend of a friend gave birth to twins this week. One of them lived for about 24 hours and died from a lot of complications. The other baby is alive and should be fine. Of course, I have no idea why- no one does. Faith says, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Jesus repeatedly said that his time for dying was in the Father's hand. When he faced crucifixion, Jesus said. "The hour has come." (Jn 17:1) One of the mysteries of our faith is how a God who is eternal and is not personally bound by time, nevertheless created time and operates within it. Another mystery is how, in His sovereign providence, God controls our time of dying and yet it seems we often are responsible for that by our decisions. An 18 year old took a short cut home from school yesterday here in the City. He decided to walk along the railroad tracks. He was hit and killed by a train coming from behind him. The day before, in Boston, scaffolding on a building high above a traffic clogged street gave way and fell upon cars below. A 28 year old neurologist, already a brilliant researcher in the study of brain cells, was crushed to death on his way home from his work at the hospital. Every day is a gift, to be appreciated and used wisely and well. When the time to pass away comes, in God's timing, let us pray that what was said of Lazarus, be said of us: 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' And may we all have the grace to believe the words of Jesus: 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:55

Monday, April 3, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 73 abridged Truly, God is good to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had nearly slipped; I had almost tripped and fallen; [Why?] Because I envied the proud and saw the prosperity of the wicked: they increase their wealth. [I said to myself-] In vain have I kept my heart clean, and washed my hands in innocence. I have been afflicted all day long, and punished every morning. When I tried to understand these things, it was too hard for me- until I entered the sanctuary of God and discerned the end of the wicked. Surely, ...they come to destruction, come to an end and perish. When my mind became embittered, I was sorely wounded in my heart. I was stupid and had no understanding; I was like a brute beast in your presence. Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You will guide me by your counsel, and afterwards receive me with glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? and having you I desire nothing upon earth. Though my flesh and my heart should waste away, God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever...it is good for me to be near God;I have made the Lord God my refuge.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:22

Friday, March 31, 2006

QT Thots

John 4:31-42 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' Parents are urging their soon to graduate children: "Get a Job- a good paying job with benefits. Plan ahead for your future." But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' A rare child may respond: "Fear not. I already have a job in mind." So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Perplexed parents ponder that puzzle. Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. The rare child explains: "My 'job' is to do the Lord's work, whatever that may be, wherever it may take me." Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? "Yeah, Yeah", say the parents. Maybe someday, years from now. But not now. Be realistic." But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already ... gathering fruit for eternal life, "But Mom & Dad", the child declares, "Don't you see? The opportunities are all around us. There is work I can do for the Lord now." I sent you to reap "The Lord wants me to go out into the world as a missionary: to win souls for Him. He has called me. He is sending me." Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour." I am to get involved in what others have started and build on that. (I know that may take some special training; but, it will be 'in the field') "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "This is my vision: many will come to believe because of my witness." and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.' 'My life's work, Mom and Dad, is to use my gifts and abilities so that many will know Jesus is Lord' Is this your child talking?

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:42

Monday, March 27, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 115I just listened to the news and read papers- so much distress and misery- so much to worry about- so much to fear, again today, BUT-O Israel, trust in the Lord; he is [your] help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; he is [your] help and [your] shield. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; he is [your] help and shield. Why should we still trust in Him? Because-The Lord has been mindful of us and he will bless us; He will bless those who fear the [Him], both small and great together. ... the Lord [will] increase you more and more, you and your children after you. [You will] be blessed by the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. Such reassurance inspires me to worship- to sing God's praises; but- The dead do not praise the Lord, nor all those who go down into silence; This does not mean there is no life beyond the grave. We have an Easter Faith- we know for certain that there is. It just means that after I have gone to be with the Lord, no one at Church will hear my voice singing with theirs any longer. If I'm going to sing with them (or anywhere) , I better do it now, while I can. Therefore, [I] will bless the Lord, from this time forth.... Alleluia!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:08

Saturday, March 25, 2006

QT Thots- Praying for Women

The Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Blessed Virgin MaryThe Church Calendar today commemorates that historic moment when the angel from God annunciated to a young teenage girl that she, a virgin no less, was about to become pregnant and the baby she will carry would be none other than the Son of God, Savior of the World. All of us should honor Mary and be thankful for her.The main intercessory prayer for today (on Oremus) uses this commemoration to focus on women. This led me to think more about the women in my life (on my prayer list and a few others that came to mind) as women and to pray for each one as a woman. (Many of them I usually include as part of a couple or family.)It was special to name, and try to think of the needs that each of them might have today as women- and as wives and mothers also, as the case might be.Being that today, Mary is the model, I especially prayed for each one to be as full of adoration and faith toward God as she was- and that each would be as surrendered and obedient as she was- and be as fulfilled and useful in serving His purpose with her life as Mary was.Of course, I began with my wife, daughters and daughters-in-lawThen I prayed for each of the husbands (or significant friends) in their lives, that they would honor, respect, listen to, be sensitive to and supportive and appreciative of, these women as women.Of course, I began with my self, my sons and sons-in-law.It was a special prayer time. I recommend it.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:56

Monday, March 20, 2006

QT Thots

Hosea 6:1-6 Come, let us return to the Lord. Sometimes, we run or hide from the Lord because of guilt. We have sinned and we are caught up in that. Other times, we run from the Lord because we have found Him to be demanding, or maybe it is that we have found that obeying Him can extract a price and be painful; In any case, in loving and serving the Lord, we have been torn and stricken. BUT- Hosea assures us that although God has torn us, (He) will heal us. Although God has stricken us (He) will bind up our wounds. And, as with Jesus, After two days, he will revive us, and on the third day will raise us up, that we may live in his presence. cf Ps 71:20 He says, 'For loyalty is my desire and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.' Loyalty and Knowledge are parallel. To know the Lord is to obey the Law of the Lord. To be Loyal is to obey no matter what. Worship and Ministry follow that. In fact, they are determined and shaped by that obedience. Therefore, Let us strive to know the Lord; The Second Coming shall happen. We know that Spring is arriving today, on the Calendar. We don't see evidence yet, but it is a sure thing. Likewise, the Lord is coming. He will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth. Come, Lord Jesus. May we be found faithful when you appear.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:56

Friday, March 17, 2006

QT Thots

I wrote yesterday [in my Blog] about how terrible and awful God can be. Today, my QT reading includes Psalm 51, the perfect response-Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; Terrible He may be in His Holiness, nevertheless, He has mercy and we can hope in His loving kindness to us- upon condition:... a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise...in your great compassion blot out my offences. Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment. We admit our sins and confess our agreement with God's severe judgment. We repent. Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb. For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly. This text is used to support pro-life arguments: the embryo within is a person. Actually, it is saying, that person is a sinner, from the moment s/he was born. But the baby has not had time to do anything! Ahh, what we have from the beginning is Sin (a sin nature) deep within. That will result, over time, in actual sins committed. Purge me from my sin and I shall be pure; wash me and I shall be clean indeed. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice. Inner healing and joy can only be restored in this way. But driving demons out will only leave an empty space. They will return, stronger than ever- unless that empty space is filled. Having been purged of our sins and guilt, we need next a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. We must be indwelt and sustained by God's generous Spirit. He must take over....renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. washing off the ashes, we are ready to live and serve again...

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:37

Monday, March 13, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 65-God is busy this morning: He is visiting the earth. It is raining. You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth. You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase. This is a great time of year for farmers. They have spent a lot of the Winter getting ready. They look forward to Spring planting. They do it with faith and hope, as well as with love. The end of this Psalm is a wonderful blessing to pray for them-May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy. May the meadows cover themselves with flocks and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing. Repeatedly, almost daily, the Psalms remind us that God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. The geyser of water, discovered last week spurting from one of the moons rotating around Saturn- God made it! O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of the seas that are far away. You make fast the mountains by your power; they are girded about with might. You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples. This is the beginning of hurricane season and tornadoes are wrecking havoc in the mid-west: God is a greater power, more to be feared than all of them together. Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! Why our never ceasing fascination with God? God draws us to Himself- He creates a hunger within us that will not be denied and will be satisfied only by Himself. satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple. Satisfied in Him, not in a man-made sanctuary, but by the holiness and beauty found where He truly lives- in the Courts above. We dwell and worship there, in our hearts, by faith with thanksgiving- all week long.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:49

Friday, March 10, 2006

QT Thots

An old favorite hymn, copied from Oremus this morning-

My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine! Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away; O let me from this day be wholly thine. May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire; as thou hast died for me, O may my love to thee pure, warm and changeless be, a living fire. While life's dark maze I tread, and griefs around me spread, be thou my guide; bid darkness turn to day; wipe sorrow's tears away, nor let me ever stray from thee aside. When ends life's transient dream, when death's cold sullen stream shall o'er me roll; blest Savior, then in love, fear and distrust remove; O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 17:13

Monday, March 6, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 37 [abridged]Put your trust in the Lord and do good; Take delight in the Lord, and he shall give you your heart's desire. Commit your way to the Lord and put your trust in him,Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him. Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; do not fret yourself; it leads only to evil. The little that the righteous have is better than great riches of the wicked... the Lord upholds the righteous. The Lord cares for the lives of the godlyOur steps are directed by the Lord; he strengthens those in whose way he delights. If they stumble, they shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds them by the hand. I have been young and now I am old, but never have I seen the righteous forsaken, or their children begging bread. The law of their God is in their heart, and their footsteps shall not falter.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:14

Friday, March 3, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 147:1-12 How good it is to sing praises to our God! how pleasant it is to honour him with praise! The Church Calendar today honors Charles Wesley. His brother, John was a great Evangelist and organized converts into small groups. It was the hymnody of Charles that enabled those new Believers to grow and become grounded in their Faith. Billy Graham had his George Beverly Shea, D L Moody had his Ira Sankey. John had his brother Charles. Again and again, we see that great hymns go hand in hand with great sermons in building up the Church. The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Perhaps the closest analogy to this today would be the rebuilding of New Orleans and the return of the "exiles" to their former home. An ecclesiastical analogy today would be the rebuilding of St David's Episcopal Church here in the Springfield area. Hundreds of its former members, and people who attended regularly, after a crisis, are now scattered and go elsewhere. Many of them are still broken hearted. It would be a truly marvelous and miraculous thing if God gathered those "exiles" to rebuild that Parish. But whatever God can do for a City or a Church, we can claim the same for each of us, if we are wounded and need binding up and healing [YES] The Lord lifts up the lowly... Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make music to our God. We are talking here about the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, for whom nothing is impossible- He counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; there is no limit to his wisdom. He covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth; He makes grass to grow upon the mountains and green plants to serve us all. He provides food for flocks and herds and for the young ravens when they cry. He ... has pleasure in those who fear him, in those who await his gracious favour. Is that you today? Rejoice, the Lord Almighty takes pleasure in you! Find a good hymn about Him and sing it today.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:14

Monday, February 27, 2006

QT Thots

This Hymn, by George Herbert (1643), teaches great wisdom. I have adapted it somewhat- Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see, and what I do, in anything, to do it as for thee. A man that looks on glass, on it may stay his eye; or if he pleaseth, through it pass, and then [seeing beyond or behind the glass] heaven espy....nothing can be so mean [ugly or lowly], which with this tincture [polish] [i.e.- this attitude:] "for thy sake," will not grow bright and clean. A servant with this clause ["for thy sake"] makes drudgery divine: who sweeps a room, [for Jesus] makes that [room] and the action [of sweeping] fine. This [attitude and motive] is the famous stone that turneth all to gold; for that which God doth touch and own cannot for less be [s]old.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:48

Friday, February 24, 2006

QT Thots

2 Corinthians 2:12-17 When I came to Troas to proclaim the good news of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord; You'd think this was a good thing: an open door to preach the Gospel. That is what an Evangelist lives for, and yet Paul literally walks away from it. Is it ever right to walk away from opportunities? Is an opportunity the same thing as a divine calling? That is an important question. Many would insist that an open door is from God and does, indeed, show us what He wants us to do next: go through it! But Paul does not. But my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said farewell to them and went on to Macedonia. He turns down an opportunity because of his gut feelings, his emotions. He moves on to something else because his mind could not rest. Surprising! He says his restlessness was due to concerns about his co-worker, Titus. Titus had gone to Corinth with a letter from Paul about problems there. Paul had hoped to see Titus in Troas and learn the outcome of his Corinthian trip. He was worried about both his friend and the church in that city. Very worried. He confesses to "fear within" (See 7:5) Paul was preoccupied with that and thus could not focus on the opportunity in front of him. His fears had to be resolved, peace restored, before he could go on through any new door. When Paul finally meets up with Titus, he receives good news about the man and his mission to Corinth. This news brings great comfort and joy to Paul (See chap 7) Having his fears allayed, he is able to get back to work....thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. The mental, emotional and physical strain of being an Apostle has been overwhelming. Paul asks, Who is sufficient for these things? The answer comes in the next chapter, where he answers his question, our sufficiency is from God (3:4) May the Lord enable us to apply the lessons in this story to ourselves today. Amen

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:32

Monday, February 20, 2006

QT Thots

Ephesians 1:3-10 Blessed are you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for you have blest us in Christ Jesus with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. This passage starts on a very happy note: "Blessed"= worthy of worship; "blest"= made deeply happy and "blessing"= gift. Being "in Christ" is a good place to be! Whatever our lot today, we are "rich" and have every resource we need for what is coming. You chose us to be yours in Christ before the foundation of the world, In Christ, we belong to God. He Himself chose us long before we were born. But our election was not simply for salvation in Eternity, but that we should be holy and blameless before [Him]. In love [He]- this phrase can, grammatically, go with the words before it or with the words following it: we should be "holy and blameless in love". Or- "God destined us, in love, for adoption". Both uses of the phrase teach us important truths. "In love" tells us what we should be blameless in. If not love, what else? "In love" also tells us that God's adoption of us was personal and motivated by love for us. God destined us for adoption as [His] children, through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of your will, to the praise of your glorious grace, which you freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Grace, unmerited favor, was freely bestowed on us. The next verse says that this unmerited favor was richly lavished upon us. And this was while we were yet sinners, not only after we became His chosen children. God is generous in His goodness and mercy. He is our model: unlimited, unconditional love for sinners. In you, we have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of your grace, which you have lavished upon us. Redemption is many things. At its core is one thing: the forgiveness of sins. We cheat sinners when we tell them only that God loves them and wants to give them purpose and peace. The first thing sinners need, and that God offers, is forgiveness of sins. This brings us back to the top of the text: most blessed is the sinner who's sins have been forgiven. That is the first blessing in Christ. For that we worship and bless God.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:37

Friday, February 17, 2006

QT Thots

1 Corinthians 11:27-34 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Answerable for the crucifixion of Jesus? I thought he died voluntarily for the sins of the world? "Answerable" here is a bad thing: it seems to mean responsible, personally guilty, for causing the death of Jesus. To partake of The Communion in an unworthy manner is the same as killing Jesus? How could this be? Well, if we add Heb 6:6 and 10:29 into this Meditation, the answer is that the sin in question is not the actual murder of Jesus past, but the desecration of that Sacrifice present. We are talking here of the sin of blasphemy or sacrilege, committed by partaking of Communion in an unworthy manner. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. Some churches serve Communion to very young children. This text tells us why that is not a good idea. Whoever partakes must be at least of an age and ability to understand what the Supper is about and whether they are approaching it in a worthy manner. If someone is not able to do this, they should not be given the Elements. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. This text lays to rest the Baptist idea that the Lord's Supper is merely a memorial and that the Loaf and Cup are only (empty) symbols. If that were the case, how could eating and drinking in an unworthy manner be a sin and bring condemnation? At the very least, the elements are more than what is passed around in the tray or plate. Somehow, they are "the Body and Blood of the Lord". For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. The condemnation or judgment is not in eternity, it is now. This text tells us that physical ailments may be caused by misuse of the Supper. At the very least, no one, whatever their age or background, should participate in it lightly. It really is "Holy" Communion. Beware. So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. What could possibly be the terrible sin meant by the phrase, "Unworthy manner" or "not discerning the body"? Now we arrive at it- The answer comes from the larger context of today's passage- the earlier part of this chapter, as well as this last verse. It is the same sin being committed by the Christians in James 2:1-18 Check it out!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 12:14

Monday, February 13, 2006

QT Thots

1 Corinthians 10:1-13I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors... were baptized ...and all ate the same spiritual food, and all ...drank from the spiritual rock ...and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. This text is a warning to us: amazingly, there are people who have been baptized and partake of the Lord's supper and yet still desire evil ...become idolaters ... indulge in sexual immorality... put Christ to the test, ...and complain ...These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, So if you think you are standing, secure in Christ because you have the Sacraments. Watch out that you do not fall. Do not take your salvation for granted. Yes, the Elect are eternally secure, but do not presume you are one of them because you have been baptized or take Communion [or said some "Sinners Prayer"] No testing [of your faith- to give it up] has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. All of us are tempted to fall into sin. Beware! Take heart: God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out if, of course, you chose to take it so that you may be able to endure it. The Elect shall endure. How do we know if we are among the Elect? By enduring.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:35

Friday, February 10, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 130 Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication. The psalmist is "in the depths". The major theme of this psalm is forgiveness. The depth meant here is not depression or doubt and despair. It is a deep sense of guilt, before the Lord, about sin. If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss, O Lord, who could stand? (Never ask God for what you deserve!) [but] there is forgiveness with you; very good news. Thank you, Lord. I used to resist the plea used in liturgical worship: "Lord have mercy, Christ, have mercy" because, I believe, our sins are forgiven in Christ, once for all. Why keep asking him for mercy, when we already have it once and for always? Well, by grace, we have been justified (forgiven and accepted). This position in Christ has been secure since the moment we came to saving faith. Hallelujah! But- our daily experience has us walk on paths muddied with sins and come Saturday night (at least) we need a bath of forgiveness. This Psalm is about that bath: our experience, not our position. therefore you shall be feared. This seems a strange thing to say- because God forgives, we fear Him? No. This is about the true meaning of "fear the Lord". Many people are afraid of the Lord, terrified, because of their sin and guilt before Him. But, we are not afraid of God for His anger. He has forgiven us. Therefore, for that very reason, we reverence (ie-fear) Him. We stand in awe of Him for His grace and mercy toward us. I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him; in his word [more specifically, in His Promises] is my hope. My soul waits for the Lord, more than the night-watch for the morning. Why am I still waiting on the Lord and hoping? for with the Lord there is [more] mercy; With him there is plenteous redemption "Plenteous" "Plenteous redemption"- ya gotta love that expression. The Lord has plenty more grace for me. I count on it.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:15

Monday, February 6, 2006

QT Thots

Two of today's Scripture readings (from Oremus) spoke to me-Psalm 110:1-5 This Psalm is commonly been understood as Messianic. The New Testament applies it to Jesus- He is a Priest forever. The Lord has sworn... 'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' This Priest is also a Prince with a scepter- Princely state has been yours from the day of your birth,... The Lord will send the sceptre of your power out of Zion Christ, Priest and Prince, has enemies. God promises Christ will rule over His enemies. They shall be His footstool. God Himself will see to it. The Lord said..., 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.' The Lord will send the sceptre of your power out of Zion, saying, 'Rule over your enemies round about you I was thinking this morning about those who have been my enemies through the years, including those in my last church. I believe I have forgiven them and hold no grudge. They have all been professing Christians, who sincerely believed they were right in their opposition of me as a Pastor (and ultimately, as a person) These are not good memories. There is still a lot of pain. I do not want to rule over them- or over anyone. Never did. I do pray that lessons have been learned all the way around, for everyone's benefit. But, if there is anything in them or in myself that makes us enemies of Christ, our Lord, I pray His sceptre will hold sway over it and we will lay it down at His footstool. Romans 8:2,14,15b-19... the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free ... All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God; ... that enables us to cry, 'Abba, Father'.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:58

Friday, February 3, 2006

Being Kept by God

1 Peter 1:3-4, 18-21 Lord, it is a very dreary, rainy day. I have a miserable head cold. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Ah yes, I must focus on You- not the rain or my stuffy head. I must begin the day praising You, no matter my circumstances. By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Resurrection of Jesus was impossible. Nothing is stronger than the grave- death has the last word. It can't be beat. Yet, Lord, the resurrection of Jesus is true- it happened. Your power is stronger than the grave. You have the last word. This means there is hope for me: hope to overcome my troubles, Hope for tomorrow, not despair. A lively hope: a living hope, a hope for my life into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you. "Kept for me". Precious words. You are personally looking after my affairs. My future, my inheritance, is being kept by You for me! Who are being protected by the power of God. And I am being kept for you. Your rod chases away my enemies. The staff of your Word comforts me. Nothing can separate me from your electing, keeping love. Even my faith comes from You through faith for a salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. By your grace, I have faith that my Salvation, nothing less than complete, total Healing and Wholeness will come at the right time- your time. You were ransomed... not with perishable things like silver or gold; But with the precious blood of Christ... You have redeemed me, bought me, at the highest price: the precious blood of your Son. That means You won't desert me now. I am Yours and You are mine. Through him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. All this means, as I face this day, no matter what is coming- I have confidence You are in control. Yes, indeed, my faith and hope is firmly set on You, the God who is keeping me..

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:46

Monday, January 30, 2006

Restore me, O God

Psalm 80, adapted for any Believer feeling depressed or deserted-Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, my Shepherd; my Father who art in Heavenshine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim; come to help me. Restore me, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance [upon me] and [I] shall be saved. O Lord how long will you be angered [with me] despite [my] prayers You have fed [me] with the bread of tears; you have given [me] bowls of tears to drink. Restore [me], O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance and [I] shall be [healed]. Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven; behold and tend this vine; preserve what your right hand has planted. Let your hand be upon [me. I am] the man of your right hand, [a] man you have made so strong for yourself [in days past] And so will [I] never turn away from you; give [me] life, that [I] may call upon your name. Restore [me], O Lord God of hosts; show [me] the light of your countenance [again]

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:31

Friday, January 27, 2006

"God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears"

The greatest blessing, from my Devotions this morning, came from this hymn composed more than 350 years ago. Let its words sink in-Put thou thy trust in God,in duty's path go on;walk in his strength with faith and hope,so shall thy work be done.Commit thy ways to him,thy works into his hands,and rest on his unchanging word,who heaven and earth commands.Though years on years roll on,his covenant shall endure;though clouds and darkness hide his path,the promised grace is sure.Give to the winds thy fears;hope, and be undismayed:God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears;God shall lift up thy head.Through waves and clouds and stormshis power will clear thy way:wait thou his time; the darkest nightshall end in brightest day.Leave to his sovereign swayto choose and to command;so shalt thou, wondering, own his way,how wise, how strong his hand.(based on John Wesley's 1739 paraphrase of a text by Paul Gerhardt, 1653)

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:38

Monday, January 23, 2006

QT Thots

1 Corinthians 13:4-13 for ParentsLove does not insist on its own way. Over the years, especially when the children were young, I made the hurtful mistake of insisting on my own way over theirs, just because it was my way. Sometimes I was simply being selfish and stubborn. Other times, I believed my way was right, the only way, even God's way. Sometimes I was correct, many times I was not. It is not angry... I look back now with great regret for times when I was angry with ones I dearly love. A parent driven by anger is being very ugly- and counter productive. Sometimes anger can be justified- but not the kind that comes from a parent because he is not getting his way. Love bears ...things and believes ... Oh, yes, like Mother Mary, a parent bears many wounds and hurts, exactly because he or she loves. She does this because she believes in the Lord and in her children. She bears even a broken heart, because she believes God will honor her faith and what she has invested in her children. Through the trying, testing times, a parent always hopes...and endures. He knows he can not give up as a parent, can not stop praying for his children, can not stop being there for them. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But when I became mature, I put an end to childish ways. A parent is always a parent, but parenting changes as the children and the parent change with age and circumstances. Once, all of life seemed to revolve around the children. Everything was for them or about them; if not for Dad, always for Mom. But then comes the time, suddenly or gradually, when that way of living ends. Some parents welcome this. Others are dismayed. A new life, a new purpose, must be found beyond being a parent. Exciting and daunting, too. For now we see only puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now we know only in part...But ...the partial shall pass away. ...then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. What does it all amount to? Has it been worth it? Have I done the best I could? Did I do well as a parent? Could I have done better? We see only parts of the whole. A lot does not seem to make sense. It is not as we thought it would be, The children are not sometimes as we dreamed they would be. It's ok. God sees it all. He knows. Someday, we too shall see what He does. It will all come together. Our children are in His Hands. That is good. He is, after all, a Father, a Parent, who is heavenly. There are three things that last for ever, faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:42

Friday, January 20, 2006

QT Thots

Words: William Cowper, 1768 Hark, my soul, it is the Lord! 'Tis thy Savior, hear his Word; Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee, "Say, poor, sinner, lovest thou me?" Lord, it is my chief complaint that my love is weak and faint; yet I love thee, and adore: O for grace to love thee more! Jeremiah 20:7-13 O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. The word "entice" means "attract", "tempt", "lure". It is sometimes translated as "deceive". All words with negative connotations. There is another meaning. There is a sense in which God, the Lover of our souls, seduces us. He woos us inexorably and draws us irresistibly. This happens in conversion. It happens when He has a "wild plan" for us. As with His call to Jeremiah to be a fearless prophet. The Spirit overpowers and prevails. There is no shaking Him off, no escape from His control. His will, will be done. This is, really, a good thing; but it leads to trouble. The unshakable call on my life is to apply the Word of God to all aspects of our culture. It is a very specific positive Word, with a painful downside. Much of what I see in our world, as well as in the typical church of our day, must be confronted and torn down. I speak up. The result? I have become a laughing-stock all day long; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, 'Violence and destruction!' [to the status quo] This means that the Word that means so much to me, and on which I meditate day and night, has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. People prefer, by far, words of comfort, ie- comfortable words. I am tempted to give them what they want. But-If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name', then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. Lord, You have enticed me. May your Word always prevail.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 16:09

Monday, January 16, 2006

QTThots

Last week, I was meditating on the 23rd Psalm-Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.On Friday, USA Today carried anoher story about the coal mine disaster in West Virginia. This one featured the story of one man and his 12 year old daughter. The article concluded with this prayer written by her"DEAR GOD, "My daddy was very special to me. I know everything happens for a reason. You just needed my daddy to fill up an empty space in your beautiful garden. My dad was so young, and had a young daughter that loved him very much. God, all I'm trying to say is please take good care of my dad. Tell him every day and night I love him so much. I will too, but you will too, right? He means everything to me. I love you God and I have never forgot that you are still in charge. I do understand why you did what you did. I love you daddy and God. Amen."I love you God and I have never forgot that you are still in charge."Amen, indeed. Today, I was more moved by a 12 year old knowing and believing that solid truth, than anything else I read in my Devotions. I pray she will continue to love the Lord and know and believe in His Sovereignty throughout her life.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:42

Friday, January 13, 2006

QT Thots

In light of the controversy about Judge Alito, today's OT lesson from Oremus is especially interesting-Judges 2:16-23 Then the Lord raised up judges, who delivered them out of the power of those who plundered them. Yet they did not listen even to their judges; for they lusted after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their ancestors had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord; they did not follow their example. Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord would be moved to pity by their groaning because of those who persecuted and oppressed them. But whenever the judge died, they would relapse and behave worse than their ancestors, following other gods, worshipping them and bowing down to them. They would not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. A lot of importance is given to Supreme Court Justices in our Country. From the current debates [and overblown rhetoric from certain interest groups and showboating by certain Senators] over selection of a new one, it would seem that the very future of our country, especially the future of human rights and democracy itself, is at stake. Supposedly, that will depend on whomever is selected for the Court. Well, as critical as the selection is, today's OT reading is sobering. The long range future of our country does not depend on whoever is the next Supreme Court Judge. We can have the very best person possible. All the Justices can be the best; but, our future depends on "we, the people". God has blessed America and would continue to show us His mercy and grace. BUT, there is a limit. If we, as a People, persist in idolatry and sin in our daily lives and popular culture, we are doomed as a Nation. No matter who the Justices are and what they may do. The Barbarians are coming. They are at the Gates and, unless we repent and change the way we the people live, God will no longer keep them out.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:00

Monday, January 9, 2006

QT Thots

An old favorite shows up today in the Oremus Devotional I use. Some Bible passages are like the warm comforter that is on our bed. It feels real good to snuggle under them and be warmed by their truths and promises. Psalm 23 is surely one of these passages-The Lord is my shepherd I don't need to be a sheep to appreciate what this means. I have Someone who is responsible for taking care of me and it is the Lord. Because of this, I have the assurance today that I shall not be in want. I will not lack anything I need.He provides for all my physical and material needs.He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.He renews my strength and energy and keeps me goingHe revives my soul I have His guidance and direction. I won't get lost, even when I don't see the path clearly or it is full of pitfalls- but I realize He does that for His sake, not mineand guides me along right pathways for his name's sake. Even though He is providing and guiding, I know I will still have "death valley" days. Evil will confront me, but I trust that by His grace, I will not be afraid of itThough I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;That confidence comes from realizing that my Shepherd is with me in the midst of the darkness. He will not abandon me in the face evil. My peace comes from knowingyou [Lord] are with me;I will be protected from enemies without and withinyour rod and your staff, they comfort me. -that gives me strength.I am not talking about the Lord now, in this Psalm. I am talking to HimYou spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;There are those who would diminish my life, you, Lord, fulfill ityou have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over. I have absolute confidence that your grace shall pursue me without failSurely your goodness and mercy shall follow me not only occasionally, but all the days of my life,And then Lord, when we come to the end of life's journey together, through this world with its green pastures and dangerous trails, I will dwell in [Your] house... for ever.Ahh, a sweet comforter indeed. Thank you, Lord for covering me over with it this morning.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:58

Friday, January 6, 2006

QT Thots

Meditation on Psalm 84 Today, we were away attending the Funeral of the father of a friend. I look forward to the day when I shall pass away from this world and enter into the House of the Lord, which is Heaven. My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! Heaven is this breathtakingly beautiful Temple. There I shall dwell by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. I shall sing heartily with all the happy saints gathered there. Happy are they who dwell in your house! they will always be praising you. Heaven, as described here, is a wonderful place. More to be desired than any of the houses of the rich and famous here on earth. One day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked. What makes heaven so desirable? God is there and My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. Meanwhile, between now and then, there is a pilgrimage. Yes, that is what life is: a pilgrimage [for me] from New York City, where I was born, to "Beulah Land" This can be an arduous journey; but, good news: not only is the Lord the destination, He is the help we need along the way! Happy are the people whose strength is in you! The pilgrimage to Heaven requires commitment. Our hearts [must be] set on the pilgrims' way. It can involve wandering through desolate, dry wilderness. I am so glad for the promise that Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs... [What God requires, He enables] By His grace, though my pilgrimage will go through despair now and again, I also will climb from height to height, and finally, tomorrow? next year? the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion and that will be glory for me. I will have arrived at the Place, already prepared for me.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 17:42

Monday, January 2, 2006

QT Thots

Psalm 66 Be joyful in God, ...sing the glory of his name; sing the glory of his praise. Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds! He is the Almighty, omnipotent. Nothing is impossible for Him. He is involved in the moment by moment existence of all Creation. Functioning the way He made it, being all that He intends it to be, Nature bows before its Maker and brings Him glory because of your great strength... All the earth bows down before you, sings to you, sings out your name.' All nations are to join with all Nature in praising God. Our first and highest calling is the worship of God. When we enter the Temple, our churches, we should hear voices, music, that is exalting Him. We each should join in that music. Bless our God, you peoples; make the voice of his praise to be heard; Having all power means-[God] holds our souls in life---God keeps us safe and alive. Nothing can happen to us that He does not allow. and [He] will not allow our feet to slip. He will not allow us to fall down and be injured or killed BUT wait a minute. That is not my experience. I just read yesterday of a missionary who drowned. And there were the 3 Christian teenage girls who were beheaded for their faith recently in Indonesia. Did God allow this? Why did He not use His power to hold these believers and protect them from such suffering? God loves us. God could have intervened. He has the power to do anything he wants. The answer comes next-You, O God, have proved us; you have tried us just as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; Faith knows that "bad things happen". Faith knows that God allows this. His ways are not our ways. They are the best ways, but they are not always what we want. Sometime they bring us great pain and plunge us into darkness. We can argue with Him. We might want to curse Him. Nevertheless, faith finally submits to Him. That is why it is faith: faith trusts the character of God. And faith realizes our suffering, far more than our music and singing, can bring God glory. That is exactly what the suffering of Jesus did. Why not ours? Our acceptance of this truth can be the worship that truly praises Him the most. At any rate, God knows when enough is enough. There is a limit to our suffering. Eventually, the pain and the darkness ends and we can testify [He] brought us out ... The time will come again when I will enter your house with burnt-offerings and will pay you my vows, which I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble. Perhaps it will be barely audible and through tears, but faith will again sing, "Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, nor withheld his love from me."

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 20:03

Friday, December 30, 2005

QT Thots

Micah 4:1-5 The prayers of most people, especially this time of year, are for world peace. The last paragraph of today's reading expresses the hope of millions....they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; But there is a necessary condition for world peace that is overlooked or denied: Jesus Christ must be in control. The government of the world must be on his shoulder. He must rule over all. There will be world-wide peace only when the Prince of Peace is on the throne- not before and not otherwise.

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; The prayer for the end of international violence will be answered when the nations of the world stream into the Church of Christ. In days to come...the Lord's house...shall be established ...Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: 'Come, let us go up to ...to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' We must work to answer our own prayers. When the men of faith in the Bible prayed for deliverance and victory, God answered by telling them, again and again, to get up off their knees and fight for it. The Church must be faithfully broadcasting the Word of the Lord. World-wide Missions must be the order of the day, Evangelism and Education must be job one. When the nations come to the Church, they must be taught the ways of the Lord. When they walk in those ways, there will be Peace.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:38

Monday, December 19, 2005

QT Thots

Advent is almost over. We have heard this passage from Isaiah 52 repeated often-How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, We thank the Lord for all who have come into our lives this year past and have brought us a word of Peace. With the barrage of bad news broadcast daily, we are very glad for everyone who brings good news, especially for everyone who says to Zion, to us, 'Your God reigns.' Now that is the best news, the most comforting and encouraging. Yes, it gives us courage to carry on. Listen! Your yes, your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; God has put people in our lives, his watchmen, to inspire and uplift us when we need it. Yes, let us choose to listen to them! Enough with the naysayers in our lives, the critics and pessimists. Let us choose to listen to those who see the return of the Lord ... in plain sight Ever feel like a wreck? Everything is destroyed, finished? Hear the Word of the Lord this morning- Break forth together into singing, you ruins..."Ruins" singing? Is that unrealistic, polyanna pop psych? Why should we try to sing? for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed you! Remember all He has done in your life. Remember all the times when The Lord has bared his holy arm and come to your rescue. So, go ahead, ruined though you may feel you are: Rejoice in your Savior, who has come ...and all ... shall see in your life again the salvation of our God. May this year's celebration of Christ Mass be a most blessed Holy Day for you and yours. Although I will still have them, I won't be writing my QT Thots this Friday or next Monday.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:43

Friday, December 16. 2005

QT Thots: Honest to God

I remember confessing, in a sermon I gave years ago, some of my personal struggles in my faith. A very active member came up later and accosted me- lit into me for being a bad example to the members. I was a Pastor. I was not supposed to have spiritual struggles. If I did, I was to keep them covered up and not admit them to my church because that would discourage them. They looked to me to be an example of victory and joy always. Better to be a hypocrite than authentic. Better to be a plastic saint that needs no grace, than a human one that finds grace. Many of us have a very false and unscriptural idea about what is involved in the Christian life. We know about being human but do not connect the two. That is often why we do not see the Lord doing a deep work in our lives- our preference for pretending we are perfect prevents grace from being prevalent in our lives. All the Bible Saints (including Jesus himself) struggled and admitted their struggles to the Lord and others. That, in turn, led to victory. Listen to the Psalmist in today's reading. Notice how he goes back and forth, talking to himself. As the deer longs for the water-brooks, so longs my soul for you, O God. My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God; [I long] to appear before the presence of God My tears have been my food day and night, while all day long they say to me, 'Where now is your God?' I pour out my soul when I think on these things... Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? and why are you so disquieted within me? Put your trust in God; for I will yet give thanks to him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God. My soul is heavy within me; therefore I will remember you ... The Lord grants his loving-kindness in the daytime;...I will say to the God of my strength, 'Why have you forgotten me? and why do I go so heavily while the enemy oppresses me?' While my bones [my back, my spirit] are being broken, my enemies [my problems and pains] mock me to my face; All day long they mock me [and] say to me, 'Where now is your God?' Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? and why are you so disquieted within me? Put your trust in God; I will yet give thanks to him, who is [my] help This is honest spirituality. Tell God about your troubles. It is ok to doubt. It is being human to have these feelings. For your own sake, pour out your soul to Him (He knows anyway) Admit your need and He will meet it. For the Christian it is true: Life Hurts and God heals. This applies to Pastors as well as members of the congregation.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:32

Monday, December 12. 2005

Today's QT Thots

As I think and pray about the week ahead, a number of people come to mind. I have read today's New Testament lesson devotionally, with them specifically in mind-Revelation 3:7-13The Lord has the key. It is he who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. As always Lord, I am thankful for the assurance that you are in control. Help all of who face tests, surgery and pain this week to put themselves, their bodies, into your Hands and to stay there, trusting your will shall be done. I know that you have but little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Thank you, Lord for knowing about our weakness and our sense of helplessness. That You know, that You care, means everything. Thank You for knowing that we trust You and have sought to be faithful through everything--we have tried to keep your Word... Because you have kept my word [with] patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming ... Thank You for the assurance this morning that, come what may, You will keep us. Our pain, our injuries and diseases are tests of our Faith. Nothing that can happen will keep us from You or your care. Thank You for this promise that You will not let us go- we shall not be overwhelmed by this trial. We shall make it through, because You are keeping us. I am coming soon; hold fast ... Come also to those of us who have suffered loss and are bereaved, who are really hurting and lonely. Grant us the grace to do as You say- to hold fast and not let go, not give up, not despair....I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God...Thank You for putting your Name on us- claiming us as your own. We are so glad to belong to You and have a secure place among your People, in your City. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying ... AMEN

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:52

Friday, December 9, 2005

Q T Thots

Isaiah 61.10,11; 62.1-3I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God;As always, I need to be reminded to start the day with worship, focusing first on the Lord Himself. I was bummed yesterday, as I spent time in the dentist office again. I need a root canal and that costs a lot of money. Last night, we were reminded of the struggle a certain para-church group has been having within its leadership- more pain. That reminded me of other painful experiences among Christians we know. So I went to bed rather depressed and started this new day, sitting here, thinking about these same things, still feeling the different pains. So, I am thankful for this reminder from Isaiah. I do not feel like it, but I will rejoice in the Lord, anyway. I have found, time and again, when I do this, my attitude, and the whole day, turns around, right side up. For Zion's sake, I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, OK, I am back on track. Now to get on with my work. I am finishing the (at least) third complete revision of the syllabus for my course in Genesis. It is designed for Christians- for the reformation of the Church. Almost daily, I want to throw in the towel on churches; but I will not. How long should I keep at it? Until her deliverance shines out like the dawn, and her salvation as a burning torch. My hope and prayer is for the deliverance of the Church from its bondage to the idols and powers of this world and that it will become all that it is saved to be. The nations shall see your deliverance, and all rulers shall see your glory; Now the world either mocks the Church of Christ with scorn and derision or ignores it completely. Someday, we expect the same world to gasp with the realization that the Church really is Zion, the dwelling place of the Living God.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:41

Monday, December 5, 2005

QT Thots

I have been reading and rereading all the Scripture lessons on Oremus this morning and nothing- sometimes that happens. But, there must be something here. There has to be. Lord, what is your word for me today? warning? challenge? encouragement? command? direction? promise? I will meditate more on the text from Revelation 1-First, the Gospel about Jesus- He loves us WE ARE LOVED AMEN and freed us from our sins, by his blood WE ARE FORGIVEN THANK YOU, JESUS and made us to be a kingdom [not the Kingdom of God per se, not the realm over which God reigns; but, kings- people who share in the rule of Christ in the affairs of the world. See 5:10 cf Rom 5:17] WE ARE OVERCOMERS IN CHRIST and made us to be priests serving his God and Father [We Believers can approach the Throne. We need no other intermediator. We can offer the sacrifices of praise directly] WE HAVE ACCESS TO GOD To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, -----to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. AMEN AMEN After this Doxology, the subject changes to the major Theme of the entire Book: Look! He is coming with the clouds; the personal, physical Second Coming of Christ- every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; We want Jesus to return. BUT, This will not be a happy day- and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. What will it sound like: billions of people wailing? Do I really want this Day to come? So it is to be. Amen. Lord, help me to get ready

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:20

Friday, December 2, 2005

Today's QT Thots

Psalm 16 I have said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord, my good above all other.' There are many good things in my life: my wife and marriage, my children and grandchildren, our health and home, Christian friends, freedom and opportunity. But above all these, above all else, is the Lord. O Lord, you are my portion and my cup. All the goodness I enjoy, the blessings in my life- they all come out of the goodness of the Lord. It is you who uphold my lot. My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; indeed, I have a goodly heritage. He surrounds me with boundaries. Sometimes, I chafe against them- even the idea of them: boundaries penning me in, limiting me. O, how foolish I am when I feel that way. It is within these God-given boundaries, that I find my blessings, right in front of me, surrounding me. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand I shall not fall. Like a farmer taught me many years ago, if I keep my eye fixed on the Lord, I will plow a straight furrow. If I look elsewhere, I will mess up. That is my daily prayer for my children and grandchildren- that they stay focused on the Lord; me, too. My heart, therefore, is glad and my spirit rejoices: in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore. I can tell when I am staying focused on the Lord: I have inner peace and joy. That is the sure sign. When I am anxious or depressed, that is what is wrong. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me, night after night. The Lord counsels me- my heart teaches me? Putting these together, it means the Lord is in my heart and I must learn to listen to Him there. Night after night, meaning every day, you will not abandon me. Sometimes, knowing my sinfulness and shortcomings, I fear this. Thank you, Lord, for this reassurance this morning. You will show me the path of life. Thank you, Lord, thank you.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:57

Monday, November 28, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 90 Lord, Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, from age to age you are God. Heavenly Father, I am so locked into the now- the tyranny of the urgent. I watch the clock. There are deadlines to meet. Appointments to keep. Thank you for reminding me this Monday morning, that you are eternal and unchanging. I am glad that You are here, in my time, working in my now; but I am also thankful that You are above time and are everlasting, unchanging- not pressured by my schedule or struck by the hands of my clock You turn us back to the dust and say, 'Go back, O child of earth.' For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night. You sweep us away like a dream; we fade away suddenly like the grass. In the morning it is green and flourishes; in the evening it is dried up and withered. The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty;...they pass away quickly and we are gone. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. Thank you for reminding me with this Psalm, to make the most of my time. Isn't this a contradiction? Not really. This makes me evaluate the whole span of my life: what does it add up to. This makes me take the long look- to find perspective: what really matters in the long run. Most of my time is spent on things that do not really matter when I have eternity in view. I need wisdom in how I am spending a life which can be over so soon. Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning; so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.... Thank You for reminding me of what really satisfies: You do. May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper the work of our hands. Lord, hear my prayer. Amen

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:13

Friday, November 25. 2005

TAMBO [That All May Be One]- the name of my High School Youth Group

Ezekiel 37:15-28... Thus says the Lord GOD: I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms. The Pilgrims who settled here around 1620, thought of themselves as the new Israel. Since then, it has been customary for Christians to think of America as both the Promised Land and, as a Nation, the New Israel. The Pilgrims were more Biblical. The United States of America is not the New Israel, but the Church is. (Rom 4, Gal 4-6) And this Church of Christ is now scattered around the globe and seriously divided in many ways. As we enter Advent and all Christians look once again to Bethlehem, "O Lord, we pray, forgive us our divisions, and hasten the day when we are truly, actually, united in our One Holy Lord." They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God. Forgive us, Lord, our transgressions and apostasies, as your People. Deliver us from them and cleanse us, that we might truly, actually be One Holy People. My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. They shall live in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your ancestors lived; they and their children and their children's children shall live there for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Renew a right spirit and an obedient heart in us, your Covenant People, O Lord. Grant us grace to follow your Law and live our lives according to your Word. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them for evermore. My dwelling-place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations shall know that I the LORD sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them for evermore. Yes, Lord, come and dwell among us in a new, powerful way. May we know your Presence in our midst as a People so that, being united in your Spirit and Truth, the world around us may see You in us.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:36

Monday, November 21, 2005

QT Thots: Good News for the Mountains

Ezekiel 36:1a,8-15 And you, mortal, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: You, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot out your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; ... See now, I am for you; I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown; and I will multiply your population, the whole house of Israel, all of it; the towns shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt; and I will multiply human beings and animals upon you. They shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Today's Old Testament reading [from Oremus] is very unusual. We humans often enjoy aspects of Nature, especially scenic areas. We pay exorbitant prices for houses with a view of mountains or water ways. But, our feelings toward Nature are conflicted. Some of us look forward to snow on Christmas Eve. On many other days, we complain, even curse the snow and the scenery and, we know, the weather outside can be frightful. We know "Mother Nature" can be dangerous and we continually have reminders of how ferocious "she" can be with "her" hurricanes or droughts. Many of us plan to travel this Thursday for the Holiday, but the forecast is for bad weather. Ugh! In some way, the earth has been cursed as part of the Fall described in Genesis 3. We see evidence of that all our lives. What this passage from Ezekiel reminds us is that the earth will share in the Redemption of Christ. (Rom 8) Redemption is not only about me or you: Redemption is about God transforming what He originally formed only to have sin deform. That can include you and me; but, Ezekiel is concerned here with the Earth itself, the mountains in particular: "I am for you", he quotes God as saying. Christmas celebrates the wonder of God coming to be with us. The Gospel assures us that God is for us. Ezekiel declares that God is also for His Creation, all of it.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:12

Friday, November 18. 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 40 [adapted] I waited patiently upon the Lord; he stooped to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the mire and clay; he set my feet upon a high cliff and made my footing sure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many shall see and stand in awe and put their trust in the Lord. This is not about praying to be "saved"- Sometimes, we Christians find ourselves sitting in desolate pits, stuck in miry clay: closed in, unable to extricate ourselves. Then the thing to do is call on the Lord and wait patiently for His help to come. The waiting is the hard part. But His help does come! Then we have a testimony of deliverance to share with others. Hopefully others who are "stuck" will also look patiently to the Lord. Happy are they who trust in the Lord! they do not resort to evil spirits or turn to false gods. There is none who can be compared with you. When we are trapped in what looks like a hopeless situation and help from the Lord is slow coming, we are tempted to resort to secular solutions. We seek advice from "the world" as to solving our problems. The wise Christian has learned from hard experience not to do this and in the long run he is happy that he waited patiently on the Lord. Such a believer remembers Great things are they that you have done, O Lord my God! and this reminds and reassures him how great your wonders and your plans for us! And what does the Lord require in return? A listening ear and a willing heart. In sacrifice and offering you take no pleasure, you have given me ears to hear you; Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required, and so I said, 'Behold, I come. ... "I love to do your will, O my God;

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:54

Monday, November 14, 2005

QT Thots

Oremus was down this morning, so I went to Sacred Space and was greeted by this line at the outset-"God will not have your thoughts instead of you yourself. He does not surrender himself to cerebration." As some one who values cerebration, I was struck by this.I seek to love God, as commanded, with all my mind. I passionately seek to develop and use a Christan mind- to think Biblically about everything. I intend to spend most of today studying, reading and thinking.This quote makes me realize, again, that I can do all of that apart from God and apart from any surrender or commitment of myself to Him.I do not deceive myself that God can be contained, let alone controlled, by my cerebration. The issue is whether it leads me, my Self, my total person, my thoughts and my heart and my will, to be contained and controlled by Him.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:23

Friday, November 11. 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 143 adapted Lord, hear my prayer, and in your faithfulness heed my supplications; answer me in your righteousness. Enter not into judgement with your servant, for in your sight shall no one living be justified. I know I have no right to approach You. I am a sinner and have no business approaching a holy God, a consuming fire. If you took count of my sins, I would perish. Lord, I come before you hid in Christ, my righteousness. In Him and on His merits alone, I claim access to your Throne. I come to You, Lord, For my enemy has sought my life and has crushed me to the ground; making me live in dark places... My spirit faints within me; my heart within me is desolate. I lift up my soul to you. Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord, for I flee to you for refuge. I spread out my hands to you; my soul gasps to you like a thirsty land. O Lord, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me; do not hide your face from me ... Let me hear of your loving-kindness in the morning, for I put my trust in you; ... show me the road that I must walk, Teach me to do what pleases you, for you are my God; let your good Spirit lead me on level ground. Revive me, O Lord, for your name's sake; for your righteousness' sake, bring me out of trouble. Thank you, Lord! Thank you.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:37

Monday, November 7, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 16 CEV
5 You, LORD, are all I want! You are my choice, and you keep me safe.
6 You make my life pleasant, and my future is bright. This version (CEV) is almost too cheery- v. 6 sounds like a line from a sappy greeting card. And the truth is that v.5 is not always true at all.
7 I praise you, LORD, for being my guide. Even in the darkest night, your teachings fill my mind. But this line is true. I literally would not know how to live were it not for the Word and Counsel from the Lord. I do have dark nights and I turn to the Word for light. But it can be a struggle, for other things also seek to fill my mind. Where do those dark thoughts come from? Do I carry them around, deep within, during the daylight hours. Do they influence me even when I am not conscious of them?
8 I will always look to you, as you stand beside me and protect me from fear. This works when I do it- when I remind myself that God is standing right here beside me (actually, within me)
9 With all my heart, I will celebrate, and I can safely rest. When I do cast all my care on Him, and let it stay there, I do have rest and assurance that all will be well- the Lord is in control.
10 I am your chosen one. You won't leave me in the grave or let my body decay. Yes, I have to work at choosing Him, His guidance, His way for me, often each day. But I know I do that because He first chose me. I keep on choosing Him because He first chose me. He chose and called me to belong to Him- one of the Elect- for all eternity. I have no doubt about that. That is a settled issue for me. Intermittant struggles about how to live, with my thoughts and feelings, do not deprive me of this blessed assurance. In fact, it is the context out of which I live. It makes living possible.
11 You have shown me the path to life, and you make me glad by being near to me. Sitting at your right side, I will always be joyful. This, too, may sound sappy, but it is absolutely true! When I remember it. Lord, give me eyes to see, ears to hear and a heart to receive.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:53

Friday, November 4, 2005

QT Thots

Luke 16: 1-8 Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.' Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. What do I do just to make people like me? What do I avoid doing just so I will not offend friends. What do I do that is not honest? What do I not say just because I might lose important relationships? What do I do just so people will welcome me into their homes? Father, forgive me. Why am I afraid? Help me to be open and honest about who I am, where I am, and trust you to take care of my relationships. NOTE The Oremus site wasn't working properly this morning, so I went to another I sometimes use.
<http://www.sacredspace.ie/#outline> This site takes you through a more meditative devotion than Oremus, using 6 steps or disciplines- The Presence of God Freedom Consciousness The Word Conversation Conclusion This website is maintained by Jesuits in Ireland. I am not recommending everything on it- only the basic material that goes with the 6 Steps

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:00

Monday, October 31, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 139 (CEV) 1You have looked deep into my heart, LORD, and you know all about me.2You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. 3You notice everything I do and everywhere I go. 4Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say,5and with your powerful arm you protect me from every side. 7Where could I go to escape from your Spirit or from your sight? 8If I were to climb up to the highest heavens, you would be there. If I were to dig down to the world of the dead you would also be there. 9Suppose I had wings like the dawning day and flew across the ocean.10Even then your powerful arm would guide and protect me. 11Or suppose I said, "I'll hide in the dark until night comes to cover me over." 12But you see in the dark because daylight and dark are all the same to you. Here is a Psalm loaded with great Theology. From this Psalm we learn God knows everything (omniscient), He is everywhere (omnipresent) and can do anything He wants (omnipotent). There are no limits or barriers for Him. (He is infinite). He is personal and He cares and provides for me personally.6I can't understand all of this Studying Theology does not puff me up or make me arrogant. Quite the contrary. The more I learn about God, the more I realize I do not know. I see mystery and paradox. I am led to bow in worship before the God I study. Such wonderful knowledge [Theology] is far above me. Who God is amazes me. That He is with me right now as I write this, is awesome. That He cares about my day is mind boggling. Knowing that He is in control of my day, no matter what, is so reassuring and gives me peace as it begins.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:12

Friday, October 28, 2005

Today's QT Thot

The Church Calendar today commemorates Apostles Simon and Jude"Simon is not mentioned by name in the New Testament except on these lists.

Judas (often called Jude in English, but the Greek has Judas) is variously named, but this is not surprising. Before the Crucifixion, there would be a need to distinguish him among the apostles from Judas Iscariot, and after the Crucifixion there would be an additional reason for being emphatic about the distinction. After the Last Supper it was Jude who asked Our Lord why he chose to reveal Himself only to the disciples. He received the reply: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (John 14:22f) [James Kiefer in Oremus]"What a wonderful promise: God the Father & Son will come to me and abide with me. I can have His presence in my life today. There is a condition: I must regularly obey the Word of the Lord. Why would I do that? Not to have God's presence [or other rewards], but simply because I love the Lord. Things can go wrong in a Christian's life. There are difficult times and set backs. I did not sleep well last night, my "dreams" were reminding me of some that I have experienced. I am anxious about some of the things planned for today. We often do not have explanations for why we sometimes, regardless of the Lord abiding with us- have troubles, We often do not understand why things are turning out the way they are. If we are Calvinists, believing in the sovereignty of God, it is easy to slide into fatalism or resignation or defeat, and say "What's the use trying to obey God and follow the Bible if this [stuff] happens to me?" It must be His will and for my good. UghWhy not give up? Why hang in there? Because, in site of it all, by His grace, I love the Lord. I love Him. So I keep on keepng on to please and obey Him. Simple as that.[Disclaimer: As regular readers know, I use Oremus.org for my Morning Devotions every day. I do not endorse everything on it. It is an Anglican website and has what some will consider Catholic elements. As with eating fish, you pick out and set aside any "bones" and go on to enjoy the "meat"]

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:14

Monday, October 24, 2005

QTThots

Today's Psalm from Oremus: Psalm 116

1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Amazing that God the Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth is both attuned to supplication from human beings and responds accordingly, even more amazing is that He does this for me! I cry and He hears! Amazing. 3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. There have been times when dark thoughts have tied me up in knots and dark feelings have overwhelmed me 4 Then I called on the name of the LORD : "O LORD, save me!" I am thankful for the forgiveness of my sins. I am thankful that when I called on the Lord, as a lost sinner, He saved me. That was more than 50 years ago. I am glad that, through the years, He has also saved me from dark and evil powers which have warred against my soul and sometimes brought me down into despair. 5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. 6 The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. Ah, so, today, I need to say to my self, 7 Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. He has 8 delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. Was this for my sake? No, for His. He has saved me 9 that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I look forward to walking before Him in heaven, but now, I know, I must do that in the public square- as they say, I must "walk the talk..." 12 How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? 16 O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant ; you have freed me from my chains. 18 I will fulfill my vows

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 18:50

Friday, October 21. 2005

Today's QT Thots

Romans 4.24,25; 5.1-5,8,9,11 God reckons as righteous those who believe, who believe in him who raised Jesus from the dead;

Heavenly Father, help me to realize anew that you are a miracle working God: a God who can raise the dead, a God for whom nothing is impossible, no obstacle too great

For Christ was handed over to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification. Lord Jesus, I gratefully accept the forgiveness of my sins made possible by the shedding of your blood on the Cross; but today I need even more to realize that I stand before God clothed in your righteousness- justified- made possible by your resurrection. Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you, Lord, because of your work on my behalf, I have been reconciled with my God: the sin that was between us has been removed. Thank you that there is now peace between us. Through Christ we have gained access to the grace in which we stand, and rejoice in our hope of the glory of God. How wonderful to have free access directly to God the Almighty: I have His good-will.

We even exult in our sufferings, for suffering produces endurance, and endurance brings hope, and our hope is not in vain. Thank you for the re-assurance that one day I shall see Him in all His Glory; that this hope is not empty or unwarranted. Thank you for the assurance that all my trials and troubles have meaning- part of your plan to make me the person you intend me to be.

Because God's love has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, given to us. God proves his love for us: while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Thank you for flooding my heart again with the assurance that you, Lord God, do indeed love me. I am convinced, in my mind, that You demonstrated that love at the Cross, but I am glad to have the assurance of that fact deep in my inner being.

Since we have been justified by his death, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath. I face the future with assurance of full and complete redemption. I do not fear the Day of Judgment. I know I will be found to be righteous, accepted in Christ.

Therefore, we exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have now received our reconciliation. Having all this assurance, I rejoice in your mercy and grace, Lord God. I marvel at who you are and what you have done. I EXULT in You!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:03

Monday, October 17, 2005

Today's QT Thots

Today the Church Calendar commemorates Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Martyr, c.107. He might have personally known some of the Apostles. What we know of him is primarily the story of his martyrdom, from the letters he wrote to churches and friends as he was being taken to Rome for his execution. He wrote these words-"No early pleasures, no kingdoms of this world can benefit me in any way. I

prefer death in Christ Jesus to power over the farthest limits of the earth. He who died in place of us is the one object of my quest. He who rose for our sakes is my one desire. The time for my birth is close at hand. Forgive me, my brothers. Do not stand in the way of my birth to real life; do not wish me stillborn. My desire is to belong to God. Do not, then, hand me back to the world. do not try to tempt me with material things. Let me attain pure light.

Only on my arrival there can I be fully a human being. What grabbed my attention this morning was Ignatius' use of the phrase "birth to real life" in place of "death". I have long tried to say "passed on", rather than died. "Died" reinforces the concept that physical death is the end of the person experiencing it. We know that all who die, still live [albeit without Life Eternal]. How to reinforce that concept? "Passing on" could, but it is awkward. For Christians, we speak of "going on to be with the Lord" or "into Glory". Ignatius says that his death would be his "birth into real life". I doubt the phrase will catch on, but the concept is comforting. The comfort is not simply in the assurance of "real life", but that Only on my arrival there can I be fully a human being. The emphasis is on the word "fully". We may have done and achieved a lot here on earth; but, only after we have entered Glory, can we know what it means to be fully alive. More than that- only then can we know what it means to be fully human.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:45

Friday, October 14, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 77

In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hands were stretched out by night and did not tire; I refused to be comforted. Could it be? The Lord sought to comfort me in my suffering and I refused His comfort? I'd rather be in pain, than be healed? Yes, it could be. Sometimes we seem to savor our suffering- there is some kind of satisfaction in that. Very strange. I think of God, I am restless. That is strange, too. Aren't we supposed to have peace and rest when we think of the Lord? How can I tell Him of my troubles and still be ill at ease and unsatisfied still? I ponder and my spirit faints. You will not let my eyelids close; I am troubled and I cannot speak. I consider the days of old; I remember the years long past; I commune with my heart in the night; I ponder and search my mind. Maybe the trouble is exactly this: I ponder too much. I search my mind too much. I must stop all this second guessing, all this analyzing (Why did I say that? What did they mean by that? Why did this happen? I should have...could have... Etc) Heavenly Father. Forgive me. Help me to shut up. Help me to allow You to speak- to get through to me- to have your way with my thoughts- to take over my emotions- to restore my mind Lord grant me you peace, again. Thank you, Lord

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:57

Monday, October 10, 2005

QT Thots

In the Church Calendar, today honors Paulinus, missionary Bishop in Northern England. In 625, "Edwin [a King] heard the preaching of Paulinus for many months, and finally consulted his advisors. Coifi, the high priest of the pagan religion, advised adopting Christianity, since he said that the pagan religion had not proved satisfactory. Another nobleman agreed, saying: "Life is like a banquet hall. Inside is light and fire and warmth and feasting, but outside it is cold and dark. A sparrow flies in through a window at one end, flies the length of the hall, and out through a window at the other end. That is what life is like. At birth we emerge from the unknown, and for a brief while we are here on this earth, with a fair amount of comfort and happiness. But then we fly out the window at the other end, into the cold and dark and unknown future. If the new religion can lighten that darkness for us, then let us follow it." The other elders and counselors of the king gave similar advice, and so in 627 the king and many of his chief men were baptized. Other conversions followed, and the Church in Northumbria flourished."- Oremus Today, we are really struggling with the reality of a loved one who passed on yesterday, without Christ. And what of the multitudes who were killed in the recent earthquakes in the Middle East and the mudslides in Central America. Many (most?) without Christ. Are our hearts broken for them? What will we do for those millions (and individuals) in our families who face the same future?

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:43

Friday, October 7, 2005

QTThots

1 John 2:1-17 Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. Whoever says, 'I have come to know him', but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says, 'I abide in him', ought to walk just as he walked. In the great Commandment, the context for loving our neighbor is loving God. As we do the latter, we are enabled to do the former. Today's text is plain: to love God results in obeying His Commandments; whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. What strikes me this morning is the phrase "the love of God has reached perfection." Our love for God is not static, it is meant to grow, ie- to become complete and mature [the meaning of "perfection"]. Here is the explanation why so many obey God's Word so irregularly or inconsistently: their love for God is incomplete and immature. Whoever says, 'I have come to know him', but does not obey (the tense of verb, obey, means characteristically, habitually) his commandments, is a liar, ie- does not know or love God at all! Lord, may my love for You increase today.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:43

Monday, October 3, 2005

Q T Thots

Psalm 66 Bless our God, you peoples; make the voice of his praise to be heard; [God] holds our souls in life, ie- He has kept us alive. Thank you Lord, for a new day There are so many things that could trip me up today, things I could stumble over. Thank you. Lord, for this assurance that you will not allow our feet to slip. But I have learned by experience that life will not always be easy or smooth. In fact, I have learned the painful lesson that, in your love for me you, O God, have proved us; you have tried us just as silver is tried.

You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

You let enemies ride over our heads we went through fire and water; All of this "tough love" from you has been part of your will for my life- necessary to shape me into the person you want me to be. Thank you, Father, for the trials, burdens and enemies that have come from you. But thank you, also, Lord- thank you that you brought us out into a place of refreshment. May I dwell in that place today

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:43

Friday, September 30, 2005

QT Thots

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. No question here about whom I should love, more than any other person. And no question about the intensity and passion of that love! Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. And how can I love the Lord? By keeping, preserving, in my heart His Law and Commands. And to help me do that, I should put copies of the Law and Commands everywhere around my house where I can see them and carry them with me wherever I go, so I am ever reminded of them, even in public places. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. More than reading and memorizing them, I am to talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. And my responsibility as a parent is to Recite them to your children so that they, too, will learn to love the Lord by keeping His Law. Survey after survey reveals that Christians do not know the Scripture or the Law and Commands of God. They are not heeding this admonition from Deuteronomy. How can they be loving the Lord with every fiber in them, while neglecting His Word to them?

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:18

Monday, September 26, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,*

ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name;*

worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The gods of this world are challenged to ascribe= attribute= assign glory to the Lord, our God and bow before Him in worship. Why? Because-

The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice; the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendour.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;

The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare. What is this "voice of the Lord"? Thunder and lightning. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; Truth be told, loud thunder storms with brilliant lightning scare me- they put the fear of God in me. They should. In our modern age, we try to insulate ourselves from the terrible, savage power of our Creator. We hide behind our technology and muscular machinery and pretend that we, not God, are all mighty. We delude ourselves--and emaciate our worship. We believe more in our abilities than in the God whose Name we raise in vapid singing. If we see Him in all His truly awful power, as in a terrible, life threatening storm, then we would be found in the temple of the Lord, ...crying, 'Glory!' This is not a terrifying thing; in that posture, we would be able to receive the good news:

The Lord sits enthroned above the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king for evermore. and be comforted by the truth that the awful Almighty, is our Lord, and

The Lord shall give strength to his people;*

the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:19

Friday, September 23, 2005

QT Thots

Matt 21:18 Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. 19 Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. 20 When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked. 21 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. 22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." I tell you the truth: whatever you ask for you shall receive- you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea.' and it will be done-----if you have faith and do not doubt! tend to be skeptical, cynical and pessimistic about a lot of things. I sit here looking at this verse: the "truth", and react with "Yeah, right!" I remember well the first time I prayed for a person to be healed in Jesus' Name. She wasn't healed. Through the many years since, I have still prayed, believing. Sometimes I have received what I asked for, other times I have not. I wonder if, in the latter times, I had doubt rather than faith. I'll keep on praying for the impossible. Maybe what must change is what I pray for. The story (above) mentions a tree, but the wider context is about the obstacles Jesus faces to his ministry. What was impossible, was what he was trying to do. Everything was stacked against it happening. Never mind, that wouldn't stop him. He would persevere, praying with faith that the impossible would prevail. Maybe that is what this promise is about, as we go forward on our impossible mission: evangelize the world and make disciples in all the nations.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:48

Monday, September 19, 2005

QT Thots

Matthew 20:20-28 The mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.' When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.' The sons of Zebedee are the Apostles James and John. They (or their mother at their behest) sought status in the Kingdom, positions of honor or power. Jesus has been teaching them about his coming passion, suffering and death- the Cross. They missed the point completely and understood neither what was about to happen to Jesus or what they would experience later in their lives. As it turned out, James apparently suffered martyrdom. John died peacefully as an old man. What they shared in common was spending their lives for others. Status, honor and power in the kingdom is all about being a servant- not getting, but giving. Lord, following your example, help me to give my life for many.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:24

Friday, September 16, 2005

QT Thots

For he shall deliver the poor who cries out in distress,*
and the oppressed who has no helper.

He shall have pity on the lowly and poor;*
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.

He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence,*

and dear shall their blood be in his sight. Anyone who reads the Psalms daily as I do, can not help but be impressed with the activism of God in the affairs of this world. God is not immovable- he has emotions. God is not impassible- He does suffer and feel pain. He is unchanging in His nature and character. His purposes will always be realized ultimately, but He is actively involved with His Creation and the people He has made. Although always transcendent, He is always immanent. He responds to our sins and error as well as to our prayers and faithfulness. He rewards and He disciplines as needed and appropriately in context for His Name's sake. He is flexible day by day in the execution of His will. He recognizes conditions and contingencies and acts accordingly to achieve His perfect will. I bow before You, Lord. You are an absolutely awesome God!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:49

Monday, September 12, 2005

QTThots

Psalm 116

3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.4 Then I called on the name of the LORD : "O LORD, save me!" 1 ... he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. These words may lead us to think of being saved from Hell and to remembering that moment when we cried out to Him and He us heard us and forgave our sins and we were justified. But hat is not what this verse is about. It is about a Believer has gotten into great trouble and fears for his very life. How wonderful that God the Almighty cares when we are overcome by sorrow and anguish. How wonderful that He hears our cries for help and comes to our rescue.5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.6... when I was in great need, he saved me.12 How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? I want to respond to His mercy. I am thankful for His help. How can I show that? I can't "repay" Him in kind or give to Him something of equal value. I know what I will do- I will go to Church and Worship.13 I will lift up the cup of salvation [a drink offering -Num 28:7- the Eucharist?- 1Cor 10:16] and call on the name of the LORD. [offer prayers of praise] 14 ... in the presence of all his people.9 ...in the courts of the house of the LORD—True worship comes from the grateful heart in response to God's grace. Was your worship true, yesterday?

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 13:14

Friday, September 9, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 123 We attend church services to offer the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. We read the Bible and pray each day [Quiet Time] to talk to the Lord and to listen to the Lord talk to us. Do we do these things expecting the Lord to notice? to hear us? to respond? 1 I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven. 2 As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy. 3 Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us, for we have endured much contempt. 4 We have endured much ridicule from the proud, much contempt from the arrogant. We are sinners and we do not deserve God's goodness, but we beg the Lord to show us mercy. Mercy in this Psalm is deliverance from enemies- our rescue or defense, even though we do not deserve that help. We keep on praying until we get it. Our eyes are on the Lord, waiting, watching, till it comes. Psalm 130 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; 2 O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. Sometimes the Lord lets us come to the end of our rope- the bottom of the barrel- in order to get our attention. When we are in the depths, like Jonah, we are to cry to Him. 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. 6 My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. Before we can go forward, we often must stop and wait- wait on the Lord. This time, the Psalmist is again looking for mercy, but it is not rescue from trouble. The mercy he waits for now is forgiveness of his sins. 3 If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? People are always saying, when suffering comes, "I don't deserve this." as though what we deserve is always a blessing. If we all got what we really deserve, we would be lost. 4 But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared. 7 O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. O Israel? No. This is a command to me this morning. I go forth expecting to experience God's unfailing love and full redemption today. Amen

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:12

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

QT Thots

We were away yesterday. I didn't have time to post a Thot. Driving home last night, the public radio station was playing music associated with New Orleans- mostly wonderful Dixie Land jazz and the blues. It was as though the station was doing a requiem for the City. Psalm 122 I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

When we arrived 2 Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem. The House of God is in a great City- Jerusalem. 3 Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. 5 There the thrones for judgment stand, the thrones of the house of David. In this City are found the government buildings and courts. The command from the Lord is 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: Specifically, "May those who love you [the City] be secure. 7 May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels." 8 For the sake of my brothers and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you." Christians can (should) love the City and earnestly desire its well-being (Shalom)- peace and security. This includes New Orleans and every other city. Why? 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your prosperity. We Christians are to seek the social and economic prosperity of the City because God lives in it- His House is there.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 05:12

Friday, September 2, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 77 1 I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me.2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted.3 I remembered you, O God, and I groaned; I mused, and my spirit grew faint. We must admit, Christians, even the strongest, can be in distress; praying ceaselessly unto the Lord without results. It is not all joy in Jesus. There can be dark days of doubt. We should admit it- denying it only makes it worse. 4 You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak.5 I thought about the former days, the years of long ago;6 I remembered my songs in the night. Nights are the hardest. I can be dead tired, but my mind is wide awake. Often, it is memories of the past, better days, that get me downMy heart mused and my spirit inquired:7 "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?8 Has his unfailling love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? 9 Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" What terrible doubts! God forbid we should have such doubts- but, we do! I do. 10 Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years of the right hand of the Most High.11 I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.12 I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.13 Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? 14 You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. The cure is contemplation- not nostalgia for better days now long gone; but, contemplation on the character and faithfulness and evidence of God's goodness through all the years. He has been good to me. He is good. He will be good. He really is God-in-charge.16 The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed.17 The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth.18 Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked.This terrible hurricane, Katrina and now its horrible aftermath. Lord, why? Where are you? 19 Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.You were in the storm. You are walking through the streets of New Orleans. You are in the midst of this suffering. My faith tells me this. I do not see your foot prints. But they are there. Your being merciful does not require me to see it; but, Lord, help me to see- to trust--you are there. And here, in my life, too. Today.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:36

Monday, August 29, 2005

QT Thots

I am always blessed by meditating on the Psalms. Today's Oremus includes-Psalm 111 A friend or advisor is in panic and fearful for the life of David. Because the King is surrounded by threatening enemies, his advisor admonishes him to flee to safety. "Flee like a bird to your mountain. 2 For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart. David rebukes him: In the LORD I take refuge. How then can you say to me: "Flee" David is not rejecting advice to flee from an encroaching hurricane and flooding. Saints (in New Orleans or elsewhere) must always use sanctified common sense. The threat that faces him is from the wicked. When surrounded by wickedness, 3 ... what can the righteous do ?"First, he must remember and trust in the Truth that 4 The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. God is sovereign. He is in control. Nothing comes to us without first passing by His Throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them. God knows what is happening 5 The LORD examines the righteous, He sees what the wicked are doing to them. but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates. And they will be stopped 6 On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot. 7 For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; "Justice" is God doing right- that included meting out punishment to the wicked, as well as rewarding the righteous upright men will see his face. There is no reason for David to flee, as the barbarians enter the gates. (think of the credit card commercial on TV) God is his refuge. And if his, then ours as well.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:05

Friday, August 26, 2005

QT Thots

Today's Scripture readings in Oremus includes this wonderful passage from Romans. It contains great Doctrine. Meditation on Great Doctrine really nourishes the soul -Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, I have been justified. Past tense. Once and for all, at the moment I came to faith in Christ, my sins were forgiven and I was accepted by a holy God we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. As a result, I now possess peace with God. We are reconciled forever. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, As a result, I have a standing in grace: think of that! I can stand before the Throne of God, acceptable in His eyes (because I am now clothed with the righteousness of His Son). I have access to Him- anytime, all the time. This is amazing grace! and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. As a result, I am filled with a joyful hope of someday seeing God in His glory. 3 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, I will not be disappointed. This hope of heaven is a sure thing. I will be tested and tried- all that will just make my hope more sure. How can this be? because God's love has been poured into our hearts because my heart is flooded with the assurance that God loves me through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. And this assurance, that I am a beloved child of God, is the witness of the Spirit of God who now lives within me- a gift to all of us who have been justified. Thank God for this wonderful Truth: Good Doctrine- a feast for the soul any time

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:48

Monday, August 22, 2005

QT Thots

What is my passion and greatest desire? Psalm 57:5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

Why do I go to church, any church? To sing- to sing the praises of God 7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. 8 Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! 9 I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. This is why everyone should go to church. The Lord Himself mandates it. It is His will for all peoples and nations everywhere- Psalm 66:1 Shout with joy to God, all the earth! 2 Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! 3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! 8 Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; Why do I go to church, any church? 13 I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you- 14 vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble. Why do I go to church, any church? to learn from the Word of the Lord Proverbs 12 for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; 3 for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; 4 for prudence, knowledge and discretion This is why every one should go to church- 5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance- 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:52

Friday, August 19, 2005

QT Thots

I didn't have time to post this earlier this morning. It is a prayer based on Psalm 51 I spent time talking with a Pastor friend about "church" yesterday. As always, it was a "bummer". Along with recalling the joy and blessings of pastoral work, old anger, disappointments, hurts and regrets came to the surface. Ugh! Not again, Lord. Lord have mercy-Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. This morning, I need a fresh sense of God's presence and a new filling of the Spirit-Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me. I know I am useless and ineffective in ministry, and put people off, when I am down, irritable, critical and go around grumbling-Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Only then, I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you. If my words come only from my intellect and I speak only to persuade by my arguments, my efforts are in vain. Lord, what I teach must come from You and be anointed by You and must lead to your Glory, therefore-Open my lips, O Lord, and [may] my mouth... proclaim your praise. Amen

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 12:20

Monday, August 15, 2005

Today's QT Thot

The Church Calendar today commemorates Mary, mother of Jesus. James Kiefer's sketch of her life and ministry, what the Bible says about her, is very good. <http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?fMr> Kiefer says, "Little is known of the life of the Virgin Mary except insofar as it intersects with the life of her Son, and there is an appropriateness in this. The Scriptures record her words to the angel Gabriel, to her kinswoman Elizabeth, to her Son on two occasions. But the only recorded saying of hers to what may be called ordinary, run-of-the-mill hearers is her instruction to the servants at the wedding feast, to whom she says simply, indicating her Son, "Whatever he says to you, do it." This we may take to be the summation of her message to the world. If we listen to her, she will tell us, 'Listen to Him. Listen to my Son. Do what He tells you.'" I preached yesterday for 35 minutes. Lots of good content. I had worked on the message over 3 weeks. Mary's one line is a wonderful sermon in a few seconds. It is my Thot for today.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 11:00

Friday, August 12, 2005

QT Thots

The Psalm in Oremus today is #38-To hear many tell it, Christians do not have problems; certainly they do not suffer inner anguish and torment. This Psalm of lament illustrates that they can.6 I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning.8 I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.I know about mental disorders and that they can have a physical origin or component that must be addressed; but, here we have a man who sees his suffering as both physical (some disease) and spiritual- he has grievously sinned and is under great conviction and remorse about that. 4 My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.5 My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly.7 My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body.Further, he sees himself as being disciplined by God. Yes, God does that!1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.2 For your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down upon me 3 Because of your wrath there is no health in my body;In his pain and with repentance he turns to God for forgiveness and healing9 All my longings lie open before you, O Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you.15 I wait for you, O LORD; you will answer, O Lord my God.17 For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me.18 I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.21 O LORD, do not forsake me; be not far from me, O my God.2 Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Savior.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:16

Monday, August 8, 2005

QT Thots

Today, the Church Calendar commemorates Dominic, a Spanish Priest. Traveling in France in the early 13th century, he encountered a group who considered themselves Christian, but were really heretics. They were dualists, believing the spiritual realm was good and that the material, physical world is evil. God had not created, could not have created, this evil material world. His discussions with these heretics convinced him that his calling was in the field that is known today as Apologetics: the Defense of the Faith, of Christian Truth. Reading about him and his work- he started a school and trained others to defend the Faith (the Dominicans)- inspired and encouraged me this morning. Several times, he was urged, being a priest, to take on church related ministries and give up his passion to spend his life teaching Truth. Likewise, others have urged me to return to pastoring. Thank you, Lord, for reminding me through the story of Dominic, of my vocation in these remaining years of my life.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:23

Friday, August 5, 2005

QT Thots

There are many well-meaning people in the world, who sincerely seek an end to suffering and violence and hunger and disease. Many of them seem to be folks like Jim Wallis or writers in secular magazines like the Utne Reader.

Confronted by crises, as we are in Sudan or Niger, people naturally want to take action and do something now. Usually, we seek massive amounts of money from private donors, but especially from Nations. Calls for cancelling international debt are frequently heard. There is the tyranny of the urgent. I emphathize. I, too, want to help in immediate, practical ways. I have done just that through the years; but, reading today's Psalm keeps me focused on what is really needed: ChristPsalm 72

4 [Christ] will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor. 7 In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound ...12 For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.

13 He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

14 He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight Shalom will come only when Christ comes. The Kingdom we seek is not a Society of Health and Wealth for All. The Kingdom we seek is the Reign of Christ in the hearts and lives of All. When He comes, and rules in the lives of people, then, by His authority, we shall see the world we long for. Without that Rule, it will not happen! 8 He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. Every one, all nations, all peoples, all ethnic and cultural "tribes" must first come to Christ. The Utne writers are dead wrong. 9 The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust.10 The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts.11 All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. Jesus Christ is the key to "world peace". Salvation, Shalom, comes through Him alone 17 May his name endure forever; ...All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. 18 Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, 19 may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:50

Monday, August 1, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 116 [abridged] A Testimony

1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. 3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. 4 Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, save me!" 5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. 6 ... when I was in great need, he saved me. 8 ... you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, 12 How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? 13 I will [take] up the [gift] of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. 14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD... 16 O LORD, truly I am your servant;

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:44

Friday, July 29, 2005

QT Thots

I often think of Jesus as now the exalted King, enthroned above, reigning in Heaven and on Earth. In today NT reading <http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f> I am reminded that Jesus had close personal friends, women and men whom he visited in their homes and with whom he could relax. As a man, Jesus needed companionship, even as he needed food and sleep. He was, after all, human. We hear much about his public life, his ministry. We know he was a people-person; not living as a hermit or recluse. He had his solitary Quiet Times of prayer and devotion, but most of the time he was with people, on a mission. He often talked with individuals, like the woman at the well and Zaccheus, but that is not the same as enjoying friendships. It is said that the Apostle John was his closest friend- not just an Apostle, but a friend, the closest. There were others. Jesus stayed with Peter, at his home, on occasion. But the friends mentioned most are Mary, Martha and Lazarus: two sisters and a brother. Jesus spent time with them at their house. We learn a lot about them. They shared sorrow and joy. They lavished attention on Jesus and he accepted that. Jesus cried when Lazarus passed away. Meditating on all this, I am moved to think of people in my life who are my friends. I know a lot of people. I can be a very out-going, social person; but, I have few real friends. I am very grateful for them. My best friend is my wife. This morning I am giving extra prayers of thanksgiving to God for them [they are His gifts to me] and asking Him to bless each of them in a special way. I must seek ways to bless them, too.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:44

Monday, July 25, 2005

QT Thots

We have been horrified when we read about beheadings in Iraq by Terrorists. Beheading was the fate of James, the Apostle. He was the first of the Twelve to suffer martyrdom. This is the day in the Church Calendar when we remember him. At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. (Acts 11-12) This was a tough time in the history of our Church. I purposely write "our"- it is very important to know and remember our Heritage and History and to keep continuity with the Church that goes back to the Apostles. [An epitaph on a tombstone said, "I want to thank my parents. Without them I would not be here."] On Patriotic Holidays we rightfully are thankful for those who gave their lives to secure and protect our freedoms as Americans. We should be even more thankful for those Brothers and Sisters in Christ who have given their lives to preserve and pass on the Gospel, through ages past, so that we can have our freedom in Christ today. Are we willing to do that for the next Generation?

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:22

Friday, July 22, 2005

QT Thots

The first person to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, the first person to see the Resurrected Jesus and the first person to witness to the truth of the Resurrection was a woman- Mary Magdalene: , considered by many to have once been a demon possessed prostitute See

<http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f>Today she is honored in the Church Calendar: a very unlikely "Apostle to the Apostles" It is always encouraging to know that God can and does use all kinds of people to serve Him- often the most marginalized or lowly, whom society does not value. The aspect of Mary's story in today's Gospel reading that especially struck me was that, while Jesus stood next to Mary, she did not at first recognize him, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They came to recognize him in the breaking of bread. Mary recognized him in the sound of his voice as he uttered her name. I wonder how many times the Lord has been with me and I did not know it. Oh Lord, give me eyes to see, ears to hear and a heart to receive You today.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:59

Monday, July 18. 2005

Q T Thots

Today's Hymn from Oremus <http://www.oremus.org/hymnal/e/e038.html>

Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep its own appointed limits keep:

O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea. When we think of those serving our country in the Navy, this is a wonderful prayer to use on their behalf. But, also for all who work on the sea (far more commercial fisherman die on the job than firefighters and police officers combined).

O Christ, whose voice the waters heard and hushed their raging at thy word,
who walkedst on the foaming deep, and calm amid the storm didst sleep;

O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea. Of course, many others traveling by ship need our prayers, too

Most Holy Spirit, who didst brood upon the chaos dark and rude,
and bid its angry tumult cease, and give, for wild confusion, peace:

O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea. But I am especially thinking this morning of those whose lives are like storm-tossed ships. Of those whose minds and hearts are in wild confusion- Make their inner tumult cease, O Lord. Grant them your peace.

O Trinity of love and power, our brethren shield in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe, protect them wheresoe'er they go;
thus evermore shall rise to thee glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:36

Friday, July 15, 2005

QT Thots

Matt 12:43-45 Jesus said, "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting-place, but it finds none. Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came." I am thankful for those experiences of deliverance, in which some dark thought or feeling leaves my mind or heart. Pheww, good riddance. Thank you, Jesus! enjoy having a mind or heart that is swept and in order- the way its supposed to be. To my dismay, the Dark Powers can, and do, return. And are worse than ever. Why? Why didn't the deliverance last? Why am I defeated again by more of the old dark thoughts and feelings? When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. Because my swept out and now orderly mind is "empty". To move on, to grow beyond, we must replace the negative stuff- and do that with its opposite: love in place of hate, faith in place of fear, pro-action instead of re-action and, yes, constructive thoughts in place of the destructive. I must do this replacement, unless I want to end up more troubled than I was before I had my "victory in Jesus".

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:21

Monday, July 11. 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 15 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? who may abide upon your holy hill? What does this mean? If it is about Heaven (Salvation), the answer is "Whoever comes to saving faith in Christ." But that is not the answer written here. The question is a literal one- "Who will be allowed into the Temple to enjoy the presence and blessing of the Lord- now, in this world?" To that question the answer is-

Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, who speaks the truth from his heart.

There is no guile upon his tongue; he does no evil to his friend; he does not heap contempt upon his neighbour.

In his sight the wicked is rejected, but he honours those who fear the Lord.

He has sworn to do no wrong and does not take back his word.

He does not give his money in hope of gain, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. We are used to thinking that "whosoever will may come": that the only expectation God has of those who would worship is that they approach Him through faith in Christ. Not according to this Psalm. The experience of God's presence and blessing on our lives requires practical personal holiness on our part. As this truth sinks in, I am convicted of my sin and driven to the cross for mercy, forgiveness and God's grace to amend my life accordingly. I want that experience.

Whoever does these things shall never be overthrown.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:46

Saturday, July 9, 2005

QT Thots

Sometimes I hear Christians say God will never allow tragedy to strike them or, at least, they act very shocked when painful times come and, sometimes, turn from God with bitterness because something terrible has happened to them. The reality is that sometimes, in His good will for us(Psalm 60) You have made your people know hardship; you have given us wine that makes us stagger. One reason, God may do this is to drive us to our knees- (Psalm 63) O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a barren and dry land where there is no water; Certainly, this is what we must do if we are to get through. But there is more: I have found that, when I am under attack by dark thoughts and feelings or by evil forces, the best defense is an offense. I begin first with praise and then I go on the attack, using the Word against the Enemy (like Jesus did in his wilderness)(Psalm 149) Let the praises of God be in their throat and a two-edged sword in their hand;(<http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f>)

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:30

Tuesday, July 5, 2005

QT Thots

Isaiah 2:3-5 Come, let us go up to the mountain of God, to the house of the God of Jacob; We seek to be faithful and go to church every Sunday. We go to offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. (We hope the music and prayer time will enable us to do that meaningfully.) We go because we expect that the law shall go out from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. We expect to hear the Word of God preached effectively. We do this so that God may teach us his ways, and that we may walk in his paths. We want to learn the ways of the Lord, so we can live as He wants us to. Yesterday's July Fourth seemed to have a military theme. Fly-overs, uniformed bands playing, troops marching. We rightly appreciate all who have died to preserve and protect our Country. We heard alot about Freedom and our right to "life, liberty and [particularly] the pursuit of happiness". But, soldiers have not sacrificed for us to be a society sated with self-indulgence. The Nation was not birthed in blood for us to be a people of perversity. God shall judge between the nations, and shall mediate for many peoples. They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. The States of American were meant to be united "under God", under His Law, that we are learning in His House every Sunday. Then we shall be independent, not from King George, but from our Enemies in spiritual places. Then, only then, our world will be free at last from hate, fear, violence and war. O people of Jacob, come: let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:19

Friday, July 1, 2005

QT Thots

Heavenly Father, I recoiled at reading of the anguish of David just now (in Psalm 38). He loves you and serves you, but he is struggling and suffering so- in every way. I am thankful I do not feel like him this morning. Have mercy on all who do. Come to their rescue, deliver them and heal them in their bodies and souls. Thank you, Lord. My heart goes out to David as he mourns the loss in battle of his dear friend, Jonathan. He is beside himself with grief. (2 Sam 1) And my thoughts go to the families of the 16 friends and loved ones, whose bodies were recovered yesterday from the helicopter shot down in Afghanistan. Three times David says "How the mighty have fallen". This weekend is a major holiday, with people making great plans for fun- I'm thinking about those troops and those who love them. Today's reading (from Song of Solomon) says that love is stronger than death and nothing can quench it. These men volunteered to fight and are now fallen, while the rest of us enjoy our blood bought freedom to play. Lord have mercy on their families who love them. grant them peace. Help the rest of us to remember and honor their sacrifice this weekend. Amen

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:59

Wednesday, June 29, 2005

A Perfect Psalm & Prayer for a Grey-Headed Man like Me Today

Psalm 71 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; you are my crag and my stronghold. For you are my hope, O Lord God, my confidence since I was young. I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength; My praise shall be always of you. but you are my refuge and my strength. Let my mouth be full of your praise and your glory all the day long. Do not cast me off in my old age; forsake me not when my strength fails And now that I am old and grey-headed, O God, do not forsake me, till I make known your strength to this generation and your power to all who are to come. Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens; you have done great things; who is like you, O God? You have showed me great troubles and adversities, but you will restore my life and bring me up again from the deep places of the earth. You strengthen me more and more; you enfold and comfort me, Therefore I will praise you upon the lyre for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing to you with the harp, O Holy One of Israel. My lips will sing with joy when I play to you, and so will my soul, which you have redeemed. My tongue will proclaim your righteousness all day long,*

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:01

Tuesday, June 28. 2005

More QT Thots

Today's readings in Oremus

<http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f> are all on target and full of blessing to me today (in contrast to yesterday) I am reading a lot of material about Racism. Much of it is very disturbing, to say the least. It does not edify my spirit at all, quite the opposite. How good then to meditate on Psalm 27 and to be reminded, again, to keep my heart focused on the Lord and to engage in worship. The Psalm reminds me that God seeks my seeking. Wow! On these hot, humid days, I have caught myself wondering how my Mother is doing in her room at the Home. Then I remember that she is no longer there. My father passed away many years ago. It is strange to realize that my brother and I are orphans. For 67 years one of our parents (mostly Mom) was always here for us, available. The Psalm promises that, though our parents leave us, the Lord never will. I can always talk with Him and get counsel or a hug. I will never "lay Him to rest" Isaiah 11 promise me that the Kingdom I seek will one day, surely come. Some days that seems like it will never happen. I can get very discouraged. But it will come- in God's own time and fashion. Psalm 146 encourages me to shout and praise the Lord. He is among us, doing "His thing" for those with the eyes of faith to see. The reading from 1 Samuel continues the story of David and Jonathan and I am moved to remember fondly those (few) who have been soul-brothers to me through the years. God has been with me through them, in our friendships. I miss them these days, but the memories warm my heart. And then there is the lesson about Irenaeus (pronounced ear-a-NAY-us) who was probably born around 125 and served the Church as a Teacher and Defender of Apostolic Doctrine. Ahh, good stuff here. I'm ready for the day. Thank you, Lord!

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:59

Monday, June 27, 2005

QT Thots

An odd set of readings today at Oremus. I mulled over them almost three hours ago and didn't get much. That happens. Looking at them now, the personal application still seems odd. What does the Lord have for me here?, I asked. The second Psalm is about conflict with enemies. They have really been getting to David. He is fearful for his life. He is an emotional wreck- and that is tearing down his health. He pleads with God for help. Finally, he has assurance God has heard his cry and will rescue him from those enemies. The OT reading continues the story of David and Jonathan (in 1 Samuel). Saul is jealous of David and seeking to kill him. He has fled and is in hiding, fearing for his life. I can imagine him praying to God, as he did later in Psalm 6. David was a Man of God, a Man of Faith. He also struggled with temptation and sin. He was subject to all human weaknesses and very bad judgement. Still, God loved, preserved and used him, in spite of his flaws. The Church Calendar today commemorates Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria in the early 5th Century. Cyril had a very difficult time getting along with people, especially those who disagreed with him. His personal life was filled with conflict. And yet, Cyril of Alexandria is very important in the history of the Church, as a Teacher and Defender of orthodox Doctrine, especially the dual nature of Jesus, insisting that he was fully God as well as fully Man. Both at the same time. Thus he defended calling Mary "The Mother of God". That title is often repugnant to Protestants. But, it is accurate in one important sense: Mary was the mother of Jesus. Jesus was God. Therefore, Mary was the Mother of God. To say that she was not the mother of God is to deny that is who her child was. On one level, this is an argument about semantics and definitions. On another level, this is about one of the most important and essential doctrines of our Faith. That is what Cyril argued about. The application in these readings for me today? Of course, I want to grow in grace and be the kind of person I should be. If I was convinced that God could not use me until I was, and only then, I'd hang it all up now. I'm thankful- it encourages me- that God can and does (often) use imperfect or flawed people, who sometimes struggle to get along with others, to advance the work of His Kingdom.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 10:53

Friday, June 24, 2005

QT Thots

Today the Church remembers John the Baptist. He is different than Franklin Graham. This weekend is Billy Graham's last Crusade in America. His son, Franklin, has been responsible for preparations for his father's arrival in NYC and then he will take a back seat for the elder Graham to preach the Gospel. In all of this, Franklin could be compared to John. But John's preparation for the coming of Jesus was not administrative and logistical, as is Franklin's. John came preaching- calling for Israel to prepare for Jesus' arrival by repenting of their sins. If Billy Graham, because of his frail health, can not carry out his mission of preaching repentance, calling for a "Decision for Christ", then Franklin will step in and do that, too. John never stepped in for Jesus. But then, he never needed to and he couldn't. He had one mission only- to prepare the People of God to meet their God. His recorded message sounds harsh. It is judgemental. But it is really Good News. Isaiah 40:9-11 As applied to John (Mark1, Matt 3), God says-Go up to a high mountain, herald of good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, herald of good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift up your voice, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!' See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. God will feed his flock like a shepherd, and gather the lambs in his arms; He will carry them in his breast, and gently lead those that are with young. I hear in this a call to me (and other Preachers) today. God says to us: "Lift up your voice and say to Zion, to Jerusalem, the Church: Behold your God! The Lord is coming to rule with might. His Kingdom is arriving. Focus on God and His Kingdom. This is Good News- He is bringing his reward and recompense. Justice will prevail! He will gather the Faithful and feed them. He will carry them and feed them. He will hold and keep them, secure and protected in His Everlasting Arms." Not all of us can or should be Billy or Franklin Graham. Many of us are called to be as John the Baptist was.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 08:36

Tuesday, June 21. 2005

Reviving the soul

I often become discouraged with the way the world is, especially as I drive and walk a lot around cities and read a lot of newspapers and books that critique our American culture and watch TV and an occasional movie. I also read Christian magazines and attend a variety of churches and all that also discourages and depresses me. This morning's reading reminded me again of what revives my soul- time with the Lord in His Word. (Psalm 19) The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent. The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes. The judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb. By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:18

Monday, June 20, 2005

QT Thots

Psalm 90 Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another. Lord, I worshiped you in a congregation of older people yesterday. The only thing I know about them is that they have been faithful for many years, keeping the Faith, through hard times and good. Thank you for the mercy and grace you have given them and for the encouraging testimony they were to me about faithfulness. Thank you for all the generations that have gone on ahead of me and passed on the Faith to me. Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, from age to age you are God. For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past I sit here in awe of this truth this morning. People around me are into the rush of the moment, the ever changing, the disposable. Help us, instead, to be grounded today in You and that which is unchanging and eternal- the same yesterday and forever. The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty; yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. Lord, I am very mindful that my years (?) here are limited and will soon be gone. Yes, Lord, please grant me wisdom to know how best to spend them and not to waste them on concerns that really do not matter in the long run....be gracious to your servant.. Help me to remember that when I allow you to Satisfy [me] by your loving-kindness in the morning; so shall [I] rejoice and be glad all the days of [my] life. And whatever it is You direct me to do today, I pray, Lord, that you will prosper the work of [my] hands; prosper [my] handiwork. May it please You and bring You glory.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:47

Friday, June 17, 2005

QT Thot

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him; in his word is my hope. My soul waits for the Lord, more than the night-watch for the morning, O Israel, wait for the Lord- Psalm 130 Waiting, Watching, Looking, Seeking are verbs that jump out at me from the Psalms in today's Reading (Oremus) They all describe the attitude we are to have toward the Lord: waiting on Him, looking and watching to see Him or His hand in our circumstances, seeking His Presence. They all call for patience and quiet and alertness and curiosity- an inquiring mind and heart. They all require faith, expectation and hope. They require ears that hear and eyes that see. They require a humble, even broken, spirit. They call for being open and receptive. They involve thinking and pondering and wondering- for reflection and meditation. But- we live in a fast pace, high pressure world which demands instant knowledge. Such a world is the enemy of all that is required to really know the Lord. We must find ways to drop out of the world in order to tune in to the Lord. We must intentionally plan our day to have a Quiet Time Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near- Isaiah 55:6

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:47

Wednesday, June 15, 2005

Spiritual Food

John 6 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, ...Then Jesus said to them, ...' it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' In the Church Calendar, today is the day to commemorate Evelyn Underhill [yesterday was the Puritan, Richard Baxter] Ms Underhill, an Anglican, is known for her books on Mysticism. During the Anglican Eucharist, the Priest holds out the Bread and says, 'The Body of Christ- take and feed on Him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.'" This is the heart of Holy Communion and of Biblical Spirituality- feeding on the Lord, in our hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving. This is what Jesus was admonishing us to do in his words, quoted in John, chap 6. We are wise to heed Him. We pray 'Sir, give us this bread always.' It is His delight to do just that. The verb tenses in chapter 6 about eating and drinking are present participles- Our delight is to be continuously feeding on Christ, who continuously offers himself to us, in our hearts by faith, through out the day.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:59

Tuesday, June 14, 2005

Feel Like Throwing in the Towel?

Psalm 121 Again, in the unrelenting press of trucks and cars flying along the Interstates of New York and New Jersey and in the press of sweating bodies streaming through the Men's Rest Rooms and fast food lines in the Service Areas, I lift up my eyes to the hills; and ask- from where is my help to come? The reminder is- My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved and he who watches over you will not fall asleep. Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep; The Lord himself watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand, So that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; it is he who shall keep you safe. The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for evermore. These have been comforting words for many of us for many years. I want to believe them. God did, indeed, watch over us on this last trip, as He always has. I want to believe He will do the same for our daughter, who flies to California tomorrow; our 16 year old grandson, who takes his first solo plane trip next month; and, of course, for our grand daughter, who goes off to college in August. We want to claim the Promise of this Psalm for our son and his family traveling from Singapore in a couple of weeks and for the son of friends, now serving as an Army helicopter pilot in Iraq. But- we all know, "bad things happen to good people". Christians do get hurt and suffer. My wife is talking to a dear Christian friend right now, on the phone. Our friend has just fallen and broken her wrist- the latest in a string of miserable mishaps in her life. Maybe, sometimes, God does fall asleep. The text say, no, He does not sleep. He is ever vigilant, preserving us from evil. Our theology says when we suffer, that is God's permissive will. He is always on the Throne. At the very least, what the promises of this Psalm do, is give us courage to face danger- to keep on keeping on in the face of possible set backs. We will not stay home. Mostly, this Psalm assures us that God watches, sees, knows what we are going up against. [and therefore is with us, to help us] It does not promise we shall never experience set backs or hardship. It does promise that we shall have His grace to persevere. We shall over come. Tragedy in our life can happen, but does not need to triumph. We won't have to do what boxer Mike Tyson did last week- he sat down during the fight. He quit. He threw in the towel, defeated.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 12:14

Saturday, June 4, 2005

Feeling swamped lately?

the Gospel reading today[www.oremus.org] is Matt 8:23-27 And when Jesus got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A gale arose on the lake, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!' And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, you of little faith?' Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?' The boat of my life sometimes seems as though it is being swamped and I am overwhelmed. I have complained to the Lord, "Don't You care, Lord? Where are you? Come, Rescue me!" Ever so patient and merciful, Jesus has often done just that. Typically, after the storm is over, I move on, thankful for what the Lord has done for me. But the focus of the story is not on what the Lord does for us- the rescue. The focus in the story is on the One who rescues-They were amazed, saying, 'What sort of man is this? God's miraculous work in our lives should always lead to worship: standing amazed in the Presence of the Miracle Worker

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 09:01

Thursday, June 2, 2005

Jesus cares

Matthew 8:14-22

When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. That evening they brought to him many who were possessed by demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.' In the phrase, Jesus "bore our sins", we usually understand that Jesus atoned for our sins- he died for [because of] them. But, the phrase, Jesus "bore our diseases" has a different meaning. The context is the story of actual physical and spiritual healings. Here the phrase "Bore our diseases" means Jesus took them to heart personally and did something about them- healed them. 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.' means Jesus cares and helps and heals when he sees us suffering and in pain. He identifies with us, empathizes with us and comes to our rescue. The Sovereign of the Universe & History has time for us, like he did for Peter's mother-in-law. Amazing Grace, oh, how sweet the sound. Thank you, Jesus.

Posted by Cal in QT Thots at 07:16