

Sunday Missive – May 24, 2020



The Seventh Sunday of Easter

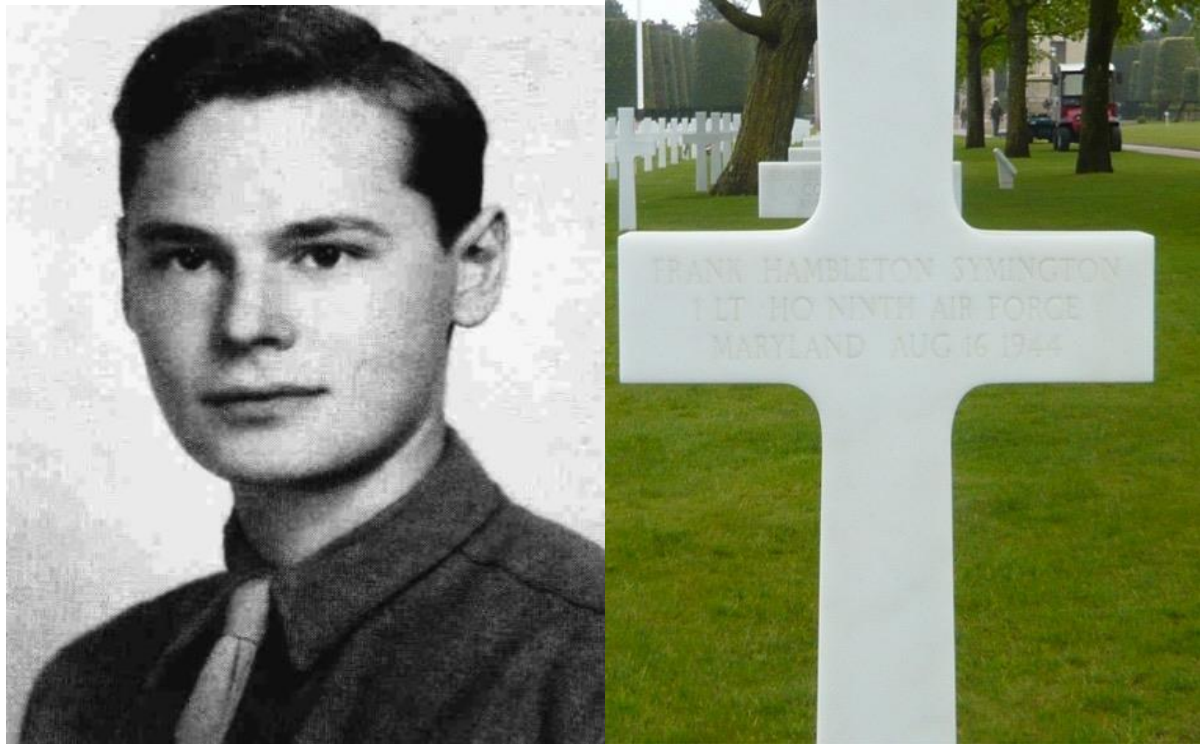
Grace to you, and peace from God the author of all Creation and from God's incarnate self, Jesus, the means and minister of our salvation.

Collects of the Day

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

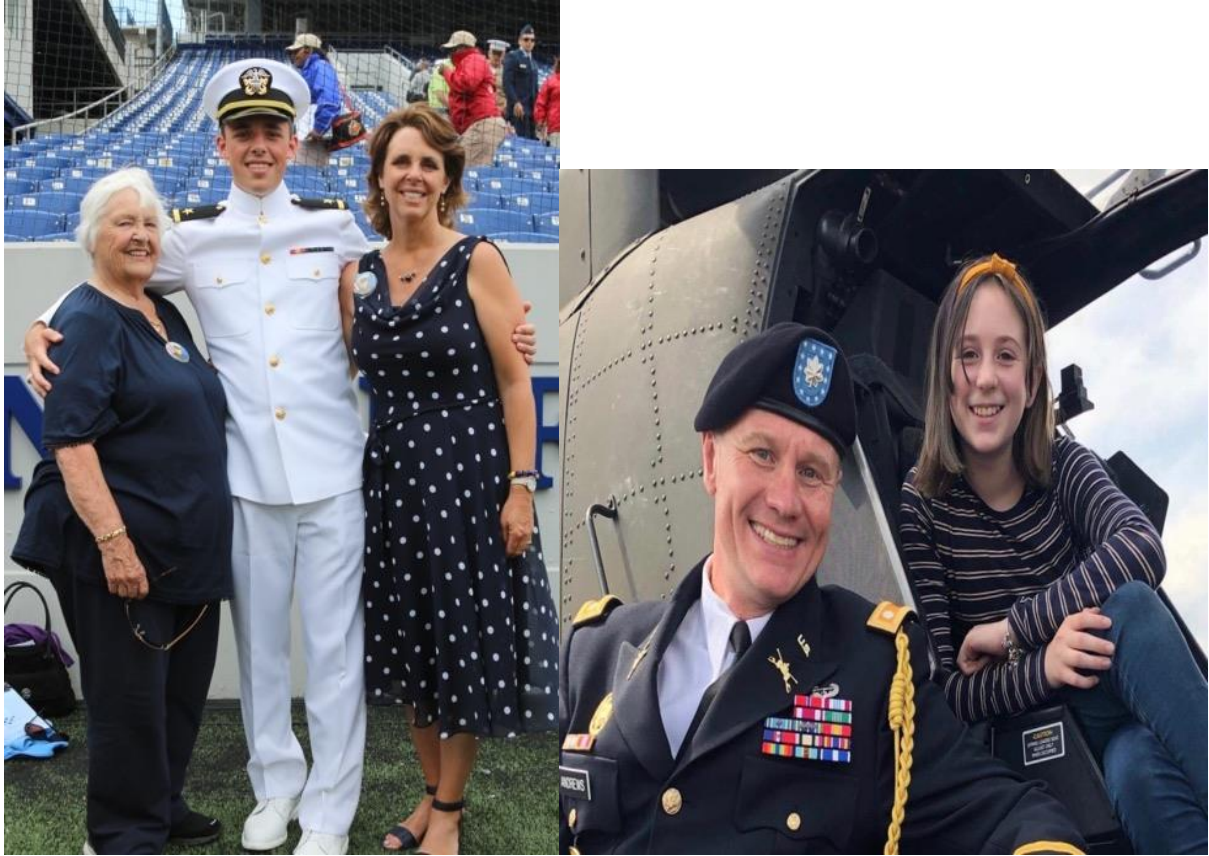
Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

“A nation reveals itself not only by the people it produces, but by those it remembers. We do so not just by hoisting a flag, but by lifting up our neighbors. Not just by pausing in silence, but by practicing in our own lives the ideals of opportunity and liberty and equality that they fought for.”



This Memorial Day is unlike any we have known. Certainly, there have been more painful times, when our losses have far outnumbered those of today. But never has there been a time when we faced such an unseen enemy, whose defeat required most of us to do nothing except embrace forbearance, mutual respect and humility. When we raise our flags today, it cannot be in triumph or defiance of an oppressor. Triumph is unattainable, and defiance only makes things worse. Today, we lift up our neighbors by respecting them and staying apart until it is safe to do otherwise. Today, we pause in silence to remember those who have given their lives that others of us may live. And we honor them with our humility, not our power. If nothing else, this Memorial Day can teach us that our ideals of opportunity, liberty and equality must be grounded, not in loud and belligerent bombast, but in wisdom, moderation, judiciousness and self-

awareness. Without these, our national pride is empty and useless, and the young people who choose to serve us are betrayed by those they serve.



Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lord God Almighty, who has made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Hymn 718

God of our fathers, whose almighty hand
leads forth in beauty all the starry band
of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,
our grateful songs before thy throne arise.

Thy love divine hath led us in the past,
in this free land by thee our lot is cast;
be thou our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay,
thy word our law, thy paths our chosen way.

From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence,
be thy strong arm our ever sure defense;
thy true religion in our hearts increase,
thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh thy people on their toilsome way,
lead us from night to never-ending day;
fill all our lives with love and grace divine,
and glory, laud, and praise be ever

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8V6VJLIC6M>



A Reading from the First Letter of Peter – Chapter Four

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.... If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly? Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good. I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. When the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

When Jesus left his followers, never again to appear in human form, they prayed for guidance and strength and then, while they waited for the words of the angels to come true: "He'll be back." they went out to do the work of God. We are still waiting. Yes. And we're still praying. Amen. And praise God we're still going out to

fight the good fight when and where we can. It's not – pick your cliché – a stroll in the park, a bed of roses, or a bowl of cherries, however. Because, as Peter wrote, “Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil is prowling around, looking for someone to devour.” And don't let's kid ourselves; Satan, like God, works through other people, and them hurting us is him devouring us, quite a lot of the time. But Satan also devours us from within, working fifty ways from Sunday to keep us from the work of God. Satan is forever trying to convince us that, despite the toll we take on others, despite the violence and inequity and injustice our activities entail, the best criteria for determining the godliness of a feeling or action is our own interest. That is the lie that devours us.

The Holy Gospel according to John – Chapter Seventeen

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Jesus himself prays for us in today's Gospel. He knows that Satan prowls in the darkness. He knows it is in encountering Satan in the darkness that we learn and grow. Jesus knows we need protection and prays to God for our sake: "Holy Father, this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. That's me. And now I am no longer going to be in the world, but they are in the world, and so, as I leave them to come be with you, protect them in my name so that they may be one as you and I are one." He knows we need help in freeing ourselves for love.

When struggling through encounters with Satan in the dark, these things will help us: Humility, a true belief that we are all indeed one, which means that nobody is singled out for better treatment by God than anybody else, neither are they more likely to be doomed. Stuff happens. Peter expounds: "And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God. Also discipline yourselves; keep alert, praying over and contemplating the words of Jesus.





What to Do in the Darkness

Go slowly – Consent to it -- But don't wallow in it
Know it as a place of germination -- And growth
Remember the light – Take an outstretched hand if you find one
Exercise unused senses -- Find the path by walking it
Practice trust -- Watch for dawn
Trust love

Marilyn Chandler McEntyre

A Prayer for Humanity

O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence we are all Thy servants; all humankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle, all gather together at Thy Table of Bounty, all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

O God, Thou conferest life upon all. Thou hast provided for all and shelter all. Thou hast endowed each of us with talents and faculties, and all of us are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy. Unite us! Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May we live together in harmony.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of humankind.
Establish the Most Great Peace.
Cement the hearts of all together.
Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love.

Brighten our eyes through the light of Thy Guidance.
Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word.
Shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

For Thou art the Mighty and Powerful.
Thou art the Forgiving.
Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all.

This prayer was written by Abdu'l Baha in early 20th century in the time of World War I, and translated from the Farsi by Shoghi Effendi in c. 1940, during the time of World War II – two other eras in which the entire human community needed to pray for the good of the whole world, as we do once again.

Presiding Bishop to Preach Today

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will offer a brief sermon for a [virtual memorial service](#) for the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic hosted by the National Council of Churches on May 24 at 6 p.m. Eastern time (3 P.M. Pacific Time)

Over 325,000 people worldwide [have died of COVID-19](#), including more than 92,000 in the United States. The NCC noted in a [press release](#) announcing the memorial service that “the nation has not had a public moment of collective grief to acknowledge and mourn the impact of losing so many lives in such a short period of time.”

“Every life deserves to be remembered and properly acknowledged in the most meaningful way possible,” said Jim Winkler, president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches. “Religious ritual is an incomparable way to do just that. We’ve planned a program we hope Christians of all traditions will feel comfortable joining in — as well as those of other religions and no religion at all. This is as much about human dignity as it is about faith.”

Titled “A Time To Mourn” (a reference to [Ecclesiastes 3](#)), the service will include reflections of “lament, comfort, encouragement, and hope” from Curry and other leaders from NCC member churches, as well as music and Scripture readings.

Have a peaceful, healthy and love-filled week. Stay in touch with friends and loved ones. Reach out if you need anything. Know that you are beloved.

And the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier be with you and yours this day and always.

The Rev. Sidney Symington (203) 209-2339 sssymington@gmail.com

Online Church Services

Trinity Wall Street

<https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/blogs/watching-trinity-live-streamed-worship-services>

The National Cathedral, Washington, DC

<https://cathedral.org/online/>

All Saints Church, Pasadena

<https://allsaints-pas.org/live-stream/>

Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, Texas

<https://incarnation.org/digital-worship/>

St. Barnabas, Arroyo Grande

<https://www.facebook.com/StBarnabasAG/> Sunday at 10:00

To see the worship bulletin, or recording of the service later:

<https://saintbarnabas-ag.org/>

...AND REMEMBER, BOYS
AND GIRLS, YOUR SCHOOL—LIKE OUR
COUNTRY—IS MADE UP OF AMERICANS OF
MANY DIFFERENT RACES, RELIGIONS
AND NATIONAL ORIGINS. SO...



... if YOU hear anybody talk against a schoolmate or anyone else because of his religion, race or national origin—don't wait: tell him THAT KIND OF TALK IS UN-AMERICAN.

HELP KEEP YOUR SCHOOL ALL AMERICAN!