

**The Sunday Missive – November 10, 2024**  
**The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Proper 27B**

**Hymn 293**

I sing a song of the saints of God, patient and brave and true,  
Who toiled and fought and lived and died  
For the Lord they loved and knew.  
And one was a doctor, and one was a queen,  
And one was a shepherdess on the green:  
They were all of them saints of God—and I mean,  
God helping, to be one too.

They loved their Lord so dear, so dear, and his love made them strong;  
And they followed the right, for Jesus' sake,  
The whole of their good lives long.  
And one was a soldier, and one was a priest,  
And one was slain by a fierce wild beast:  
And there's not any reason, no, not the least,  
Why I shouldn't be one too.

They lived not only in ages past, there are hundreds of thousands still,  
The world is bright with the joyous saints who love to do Jesus' will.  
You can meet them in school, or in lanes, or at sea,  
In church, or in trains, or in shops, or at tea,  
For the saints of God are just folk like me, and I mean to be one too.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DK0pmGPP7SM>

**The Collect of the Day**

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy  
the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of  
eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as  
he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we  
may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he  
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and  
ever. *Amen.*

### **Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17**

Naomi her mother-in-law said to Ruth, "My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." She said to her, "All that you tell me I will do."

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

### **Psalm 127**

Unless the Lord builds the house\* ***Their labor is in vain who build it.***

Unless the Lord watches over the city\* ***In vain the watchman keeps vigil.***

It is in vain that you rise so early and go to bed so late\* ***Vain, too, to eat the bread of toil, for God gives to the beloved, sleep.***

Children too are a heritage from the Lord\* ***And the fruit of the womb is a gift.***

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior\* ***Are the children of one's youth.***

Happy is the one who has a quiver full of them!\* ***For they shall not be put to shame.***

## Hebrews 9:24-28

Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

### **Lift Every Voice and Sing Hymn 189 Great is thy faithfulness**

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with thee;  
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not,  
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided,  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
Join with all nature in manifold witness,  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow

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

## **Mark 12:38-44**

As Jesus taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

## **Bishop’s Address -- Diocesan Convention 2024**

Welcome to our 44th diocesan convention here in El Camino Real!

At Diocesan Convention, it is our practice to rejoice in what we have done this past year, and to hear some reports from our diocesan leaders. While it is true that we have done much, what is in our hearts and minds as we think about our country and the world is highly important as well.

What I want to talk about today is the particularity of the church as an institution. For it sits in a place that is both in the world and apart from the world. And we, as its members, live in this liminal space.

Let’s be truthful: anticipating the outcome of a general election in a country as divided as we are has been a tough place to be. As Christian peoples, though, grounded in scripture, our church year itself invites us to experiences of Advent and Lent--times where we walk a path of holiness through a hazy landscape. This is our pilgrim journey.

In recent months, I have been asked anxious and also practical questions about how the results of the general election could affect the

work of the Episcopal Church and more specifically our ministry in the Diocese of El Camino Real. It is a question that I want to address clearly today and as we go forward.

Let me speak to you directly from my own experience. As a child in Peru, I grew up in a place of political unrest and uncertainty. At that time, governments were democracies and oligarchies, and then came military coups and dictatorships. I had a front row seat to both the complexities of the political situation, and to the ways in which the faithful continued to serve. Yes, emotions ran high, but the work of the faithful was little altered.

Certainly, God's people did not ignore what was going on in the world, and each had their own opinion about a particular leader and their form of government. Even my parents did not agree politically, and my front row seat included the ensuing discussions at our family dinner table. But things did not end with discussion; my parents chose to engage in ministry differently from each other. Yet, in hindsight, I can see how each was following the Baptismal Covenant and living faithfully.

This experience imprinted itself on me and on my siblings. During that time I came in contact with the great theologian Gustavo Gutierrez. He said repeatedly of his own experience, "I believe in order to understand."<sup>(1)</sup> By this, Gutierrez meant that belief was the lens through which he gained understanding of this complex world and how to live in it.

As Christians, and we should be unafraid to claim that title of "Christians," our personal belief in Jesus' ministry and our hope in the Risen Lord inform how we go through life. Our work as Christian people becomes shaped and reshaped every day by our understanding of the gospel.

The primacy of our focus on the gospel does not mean that we turn our attention away from what goes on in the political situation either here in our country or elsewhere in the world. What it does mean is that our belief grounds us in terms of our words and actions in the world in which we live as it is. People are hungry, imprisoned, sick and

strangers in a strange land. We know what to do. We know that interacting with people on a very simple level to provide the basics of life is hopeful. We know that God brings hope, and we are messengers of that hope. No one can take that hope away.

Hope was palpable last Saturday, as our new Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe, was invested in a ceremony that was viewed on livestream. While I was watching, I was reminded that it used to be that the Episcopal Church would be characterized as place where people went to “see and be seen.” That unfortunate saying was challenged by the simplicity of this investiture, and the directness of Presiding Bishop Rowe’s charge to the Episcopal Church.

As he told us, we need to unbind ourselves from that which holds us back and keeps us from living into our calling. I would add, if we want to be seen, really seen, we need to be seen as followers of Jesus. We need to be known as communities that follow Jesus. Christian community cannot exist on the basis of exclusion of others. As followers of Jesus, in our case as Episcopalians, we belong, not because we all agree, or have the same understanding of God, or voted for the same people. We belong because we connect through faith, sharing joys and sorrows, and always broadening our sense of community to include those who seek to learn and share their own stories of faith. In Biblical terms, belonging has a deep meaning. It means “being fully known and fully loved by God and one another.” And that belonging is what we each hope for—to be known and loved in ways that are limitless.

You probably remember that the Apostle Paul took issue with the Corinthians on their understanding of what it meant to belong to a community. He learned some Corinthians claimed to belong to one leader or another: Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ. (2) Paul reminded the Corinthians rather forcefully that their sense of belonging was not a product of an allegiance to any one human leader, not even himself. Rather, Paul tells them, they are baptized into Christ, and that baptism tells them who they are and whose they are. The Corinthians belong to God and to their ever-expanding community. So do the Episcopalians.

Now, the Corinthians lived along a major trade route, where people from everywhere came along--and some joined the Jesus movement in Corinth. Diversity was both their blessing and their challenge. We in El Camino Real live in a very diverse place as well. We are a diocese of many races and cultures; our diversity is one of geography, socioeconomics, education, age, theology, politics, and so on. I love our diversity. I talk about us to anyone who will listen. We are proud of our diversity, and with that diversity comes challenge. For the gift of diversity keeps issues of race, gender and language at the forefront, and compels us to address our personal issues of prejudice and bias. This requires that not only do I know myself as God's beloved, I also recognize you as God's beloved.

Love, with a capital L, God's love, is way beyond what we can imagine or expect, which is very good news. For being beloved by God exceeds the limitations of our humanity. It extends beyond natural disaster, elections or personal strife. As people who belong to the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement, when we use the phrase "God's beloved," we are including in that circle those toward whom we may not particularly feel love.

As a follower of Jesus, I am to cope with my own judgments, resentments, and biases, and have the courage to step into the place where my heart can seek the heart of one with whom I profoundly disagree. Remember that our former Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry said constantly, "if it's not about love, it's not about God." This is a good guide for us all. Let it be about God. Let love drown out hate. Let gratitude overtake scarcity. Let our fears be behind us.

At the investiture of a Presiding Bishop, this question is always asked "How do you come among us and with what confidence?" The response given by the Bishop is: "I come knowing nothing except Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. I come as a pilgrim to be in prayer with the people of God in order to be strengthened for the journey ahead." (3)

This authentic statement is at our foundation. For there is no program that will save us, no panacea that will cure us, nothing other than this: we are on a journey together, and we have work ahead of us--all of it rooted in our Baptismal Covenant. This work is not new to Christians,

for as followers of the Risen Lord, we were made for times such as these. God created us and formed us for this world.

Believing, belonging and beloved, we are people of faith, in community, and deeply, deeply loved by God. May God in his mercy lead us through these times; and above all, may he lead us to himself.  
(4)

Gutierrez, Gustavo. *We Drink From Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>New Revised Standard Version. 1 Corinthians 1:11-15.

<sup>3</sup>"The Investiture of the Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church," *The Greeting and Welcome*.

<sup>4</sup>Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Denver, CO: Touchstone, 1997).

### **Hymn 618**

Ye watchers and ye holy ones, bright seraphs, cherubim, and thrones,  
    Raise the glad strain, Alleluia!  
Cry out, dominions, principedoms, powers,  
    Virtues, archangels, angels' choirs,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! alleluia!

O higher than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim,  
    Lead their praises, Alleluia!  
Thou bearer of the eternal Word, most gracious, magnify the Lord,

O friends, in gladness let us sing, supernal anthems echoing,  
    Alleluia, alleluia! To God the Father, God the Son,  
    And God the Spirit, Three in One

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5qrvX9eBCw>



**Sonnet LXX (On Being Cautioned against Walking on the Headland Overlooking the Sea, because it was Frequented by a Lunatic)**

Is there a solitary wretch who hies  
To the tall cliff, with starting pace or slow,  
And, measuring, views with wild and hollow eyes  
Its distance from the waves that chide below;  
Who, as the sea-born gale with frequent sighs  
Chills with cold bed upon the mountain turf,  
With hoarse, half-utter'd lamentation, lies  
Murmuring responses to the dashing surf?  
In moody sadness, on the giddy brink,  
I see him more with envy than with fear;  
He has no nice felicities that shrink  
From giant horrors; wildly wandering here,  
He seems (uncursed with reason) not to know  
The depth or the duration of his woe.

Charlotte Smith