

LOGOSOPHIA

A Pilgrim's Journal
of Life, Love & Literature



Issue #5
Winter 2021



Acts of Mercy: Corporal Works of Mercy



Greetings, fellow pilgrims!

Welcome to our fifth issue of LogoSophia Magazine! This is our second year of seasonal issues, and we're glad to have you joining us. This issue is based on the Corporal Works of Mercy (a list of the Works may be found on page 4). Within these pages we have personal accounts from people who have opened their homes to others, from people who minister to the imprisoned, and from people who have received mercy from others. We have movies to inspire and stories to make you think, and much more. Please enjoy, and let us know what you think!

Sarah Levesque
Editor in Chief

WANTED

- Readers of any faith to interact respectfully with writers and other readers through book/media suggestions and letters to the editor, as well as comments on LogoSophiaMag.com and social media
- Writers of Christian faith to augment the works of our Staff
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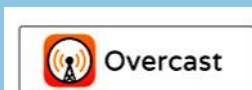
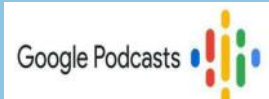
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*Happy
Winter!*



Letters to the Editor & Others

This is where we will be putting anything you send in - letters to the editor, notes to authors, questions, agreements and disagreements... we can't wait to see what you have to say! Just be sure to tell us what article you're responding to!

To contact us, email
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Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry - Give drink to the thirsty -
- Clothe the naked - Shelter the homeless -
- Visit the sick - Visit the imprisoned -
- Bury the dead -

Matthew 25:31-48

(NRSV)

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Corporal Works of Mercy: An Introduction

By Sarah Levesque

The corporal works of mercy are taken from the end of Matthew 25, where Jesus is explaining to His followers who will get into Heaven and why. He says that he will separate the people then say to those on his right, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 23:31-46 NRSV). These actions have been named “corporal works of mercy” because they are actions to help others physically. Thus, every Christian has a duty to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and the imprisoned and bury the dead.

How can one do all of these things? Perhaps it's not as hard as it seems. If you have children, do you not provide them food, water, shelter, and clothes, and tend them when they are sick? Perhaps you have an elderly relative or friend who you take care of. Perhaps you volunteer at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, prison, or other organization. Perhaps you help fund an organization that provides for the needy.

Perhaps none of this seems to apply to you. Perhaps you are the one who needs to be fed, clothed, visited, or welcomed. If this is the case, I pray that God gives you the assistance you need and puts the right people in your life. Perhaps you are physically incapable from assisting others in this fashion. If this is the case, I do not believe God will fault you for not doing something you are physically incapable of, and you can always help others by providing spiritual works of mercy (which is the topic of our next issue).

But maybe you, like many of us, are capable of helping and haven't given it too much thought. Maybe you'll give a couple bucks to the homeless guy on the

corner on your way to work, or maybe you'll donate to charity when the cashier asks you if you want to add a couple dollars to your bill to help the children's home, or maybe you tossed some coins into a Salvation Army can at Christmas time. But God wants us to do more than give some extra money if someone directly confronts you. He wants us to go out of our way to help people, to think of others first, to care for the plight of others.

In 2019, an organization I am involved with began planning a series of events, one for each of the corporal works of mercy. In August of that year we handed out peanut butter sandwiches and water to anyone in need on Boston Common, walking around to offer these to the homeless. In October we returned to Boston Common with more sandwiches and water but also with thermal sleeping bags, socks, mittens and personal hygiene supplies. Though we started with quite a lot, they were all gone less than half an hour, gratefully received by those spending the already-cold nights out in the open. Many of the recipients were also grateful to be given a listening ear, for far too many of them don't get to talk to many people, as most people avoid the homeless. Our next event was planned for March—a memorial Mass for those lost to abortion, which was as close as we could get to burying the dead. Then Covid-19 hit, and we were forced to put things on hold.

Before I had done these events with my friends, I had not thought much about the corporal works of mercy, though I had given fast food gift cards to homeless people on the side of the road from the safety of my car. Because I attended those events, I noticed when a small tent was set up in a park between my house and my job, with a full grocery cart parked outside. Because I noticed, I looked for it each day, and finally concluded someone was living there. Because I came to this conclusion, I went to a nearby sub and pizza shop (a small, local business) and got a gift card. The next time I drove through the area, I didn't just drive by. I parked and dropped that gift card into the grocery cart. Not long after, the tent disappeared. I only hope its occupant



found a warmer home.

Of course, I have no idea how that story ended, as I only had a small part in it. But let me share another story with you, one I heard not long ago, though unfortunately I cannot remember exactly where. I believe it may have come from a homily by Fr. Mike Schmitz. A woman took the same route to her job every day, and one day she noticed a man at a corner with a sign asking for money. The first day she drove by. After a few days, she realized that the man was likely going to be there every day, and she wanted to help him. Not wishing to fund any addictions, she decided to share her lunch with him. Splitting it hurriedly into two, she handed half to him and drove on. The next day she made two lunches – one for herself, and one for the man on the corner. She continued doing this until her job transferred her to another section of town and her commute changed. She thought nothing of it for some time, then one day, while she was at a restaurant, a waiter came up to her and said, “You don’t know me, but I know you. You gave me your lunch every day. And that spark of hope kept me going, kept me looking for jobs, until I found one here. Thank you.” A small, regular act of mercy can change someone’s life.

I know that with the pandemic things are complicated, but we need to help people now more than ever. How many people lost their jobs and are having difficulty



putting food on their tables? How many people are estranged from family and friends due to social restrictions? How many people are imprisoned in their own homes out of sickness or fear? How many people are unburied or buried hurriedly, without giving family and friends the closure of a funeral?

Let’s try to help these people. Reach out to those who are having difficulty, whether they are obviously struggling or drowning silently. Invite a family or an individual for dinner. Schedule a visit with someone who is lonely, whether in-person or outside and six feet apart. Even talking over a video chat or a simple phone call can be so beneficial. Send a letter or a greeting card to someone in a locked down facility. Load up on gift cards to local businesses and distribute them anonymously. Offer to watch the children of a family member or friend for a day so the adult can have some peace and quiet (remote learning is hard on parents, teachers and students alike). Pray for the dead and the mourning. Frequent small businesses and mom-and-pop shops, for these businesses are hit the hardest. Talk to your church, homeless shelters and other local organizations and see what they need help with. You might be surprised how little means so much to the people who are receiving. Go out of your way to show you care, for “what you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me.”

Writers Wanted!

**LSM is looking for more writers
to contribute to**

- Controversy Corner -**
- the magazine at large -**
- the blog -**



The Invisible Family



By T.K. Wilson

Throughout much of my teen years, my mother was chronically ill. She still is, that being the whole point of chronic illness. One thing that people tend to forget about the chronically ill or handicapped is they usually have a family around them who are equally affected by the illness or disability. Unfortunately, the church doesn't do a great job of acknowledging the chronically ill, the disabled, or their families. This results in veritable invisibility and walking wounded in the Body of Christ who often fade away.

My Mom must have heard every sort of hurtful critique, ignorant suggestion, and scripture bomb known to man.

"You must have some unconfessed sin in your life."

"You must've taken Communion unworthily."

"Have you tried (insert medication or alternative treatment here)"

(I'll have you know that my Mom was giving me homeopathic remedies while it was still considered tantamount to voodoo, thanks very much.)

"My relative/friend/friend of a friend had that too and they're fine!"

"You need more faith."

"You're not trying!"

People always assumed Mom had done something wrong to deserve God's wrath. Often it is for God's glory and their good that people are given certain things in life, not as a punishment.

"As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (John 9:1-3 RSVCE).





People are quick to sympathize when you say someone has cancer. Cancer can potentially be cured. Cancer has an end in sight either way. When you say someone is chronically ill and try to explain what it is that's wrong with them, you see a lot of people start to glaze over. At least that was my experience. My family, both for my Mom's illnesses and our refusal to toe the party line were slowly forced out of our church. No, it wasn't right, and it led to a lot of wounds that are still healing.

What does all this have to do with visiting the sick? I feel that the chronically ill have every right to be involved in the life of the church as anyone else, and part of that may be people packing their trash up and heading over to visit the chronically ill and disabled. No, it's not comfortable. I live with it every day and have for most of my life, and I don't find it comfortable all the time! But no place in the Bible did God say doing his will would be comfortable. In fact it says the exact opposite! But... sorry to say that's the whole point.

So what can you do to help the chronically ill and their families?

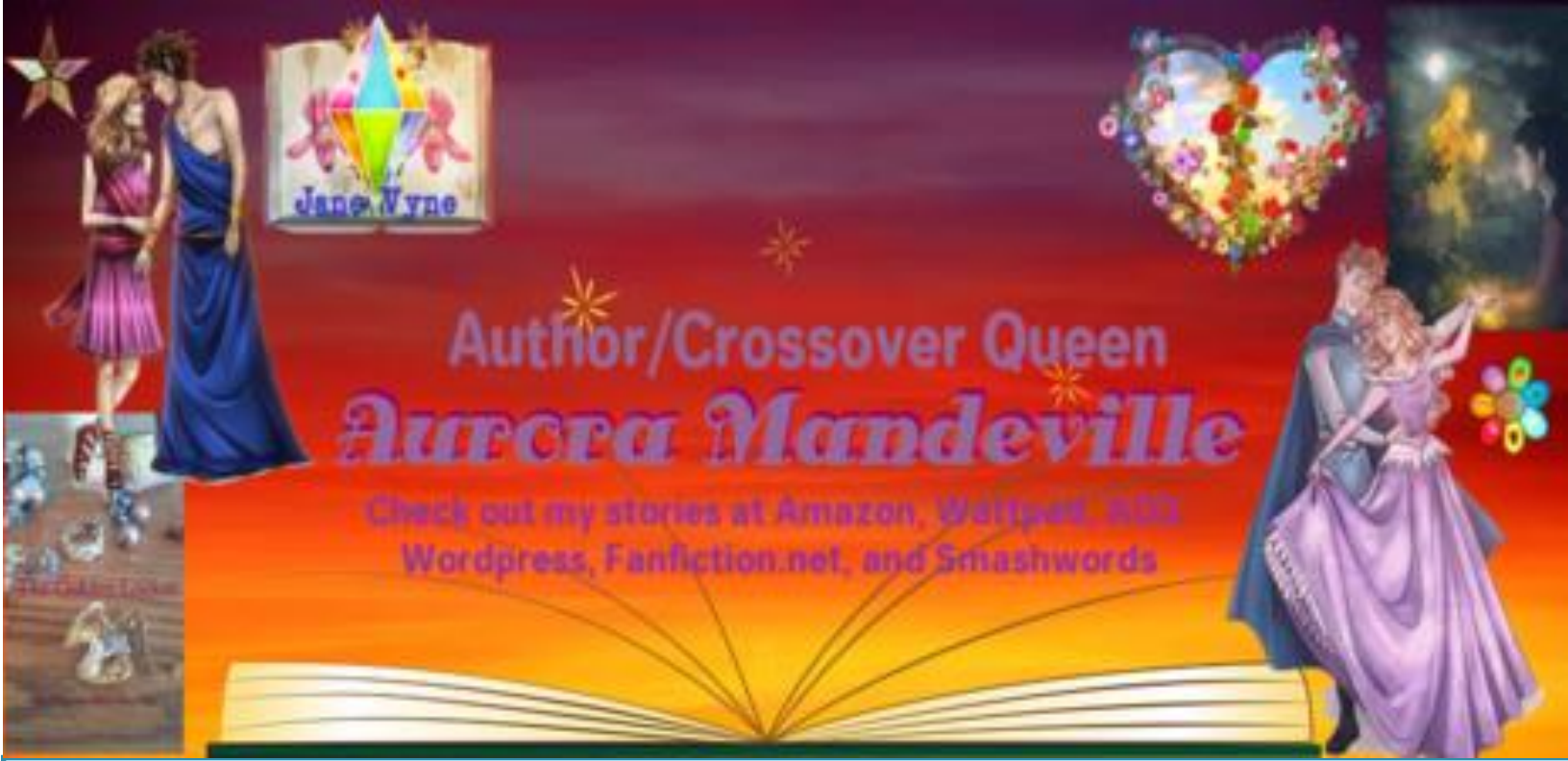
Tip number one:

VISIT US! (But call ahead first.) Because of the medical needs of many disabled or chronically ill people, calling ahead is imperative. Don't just drop by unannounced.

Another thing you can do is spend time with some of the other members of the family, maybe offer to take one of them out to lunch, or something else nice. However, unless you're sure of what the parameters of food allergies and whatnot are, meals may not be the best idea. Gift cards are acceptable substitutes. The chronically ill and their families do a lot of travelling to appointments, and gift cards come in handy for these times. National chains like Walmart, Wendy's, Red Robin, and fun stuff like Google Play or Amazon are most appreciated.

What the chronically ill want most is to feel like they are remembered by the church. A phone call, or a card, even an email goes a long way (and may currently be the only option in this time of Coronavirus). I learned the hard way why visiting the sick is important. Please, please remember us.





Scripture Search

1. “The generous will be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.”
2. “On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink.”
3. “Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
4. “Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

A. Matthew 25:44-46

B. Proverbs 22:9

C. Matthew 7:21

D. John 7:37



THE INSANE MERCY OF GOD



BY TAN WILSON

I think all of us know the story of Adam and Eve. According to Holy Scripture, Adam and Eve were the first people that God created. They were tempted by the serpent and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so God cursed them and their offspring and banished them from the garden. At least, that's what we're told. This story makes God seem harsh, and judgemental, but once you understand the context you will realize the incredible act of mercy God performs for Adam and Eve.

First, you have to understand how important Adam and Eve were to God and to the rest of creation. God made man in His own image and after His likeness (Genesis 1:26). These same words are found in the dedication inscriptions of idols from the ancient Near-East, denoting that the idol is made in the image and likeness of the deity it is meant to represent. Humans are Jehova's "idols." We are His representatives in the physical universe.

God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them dominion over all living things (1:28), meaning Adam and Eve were the king and queen of all creation. He also told them to tend the garden and keep it (2:15); these words "tend" and "keep" are often used in reference to the work that priests did in the temple and the tabernacle. So you see that the garden of Eden was the holy of holies of God's cosmic temple, and Adam was the first priest-king.

In the center of the garden, there stood two trees: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge (2:17). Adam and Eve were commanded not to eat from the tree of knowledge, lest they be doomed to die. The tree itself was not evil; God cannot abide evil in his presence, especially not in the most holy place in all of creation. Furthermore, Scripture extolls the knowledge of good and evil as a positive attribute. It is the belief among many scholars that God fully intended Adam and Eve to eat from the tree when the time was right. There are certain activities that children should not be allowed to undertake; they are not ready for driving or for drinking alcohol, for example. So it was with Adam and Eve. They were not yet ready for the knowledge that the tree contained, so God in His wisdom kept it from them until they could handle the responsibility.

Then the serpent entered the garden (3:1). This was no ordinary reptile; the identity of this being is beyond the scope of this article, but know that it was no garden variety snake. The serpent approached Eve and asked her a question about the tree: "Did God really say that on the day you eat of it, you would die?" (3:1) To which Eve responded "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (3:2-3). This was the first error; Eve added to the words of God. Now, it is unclear if Eve herself added those words, or Adam simply taught her incorrectly. Either way, he did not correct her. I believe it is likely that Adam taught her incorrectly, trying to keep her "safe." He added extra rules to God's commands in order to remain safe, instead of trusting in God's protection for them. We very frequently do the same; we make up rules and rituals to stay "safe" instead of resting in God.

Eve, having touched the tree, and finding herself still whole, decided to go ahead and take the fruit out of a spirit of self-will. This was their sin; knowledge in and of itself is good in the eyes of God, but self-will and self-determination are evil. They tried to be like God in their own strength, without His help, instead of surrendering to God's will for them.

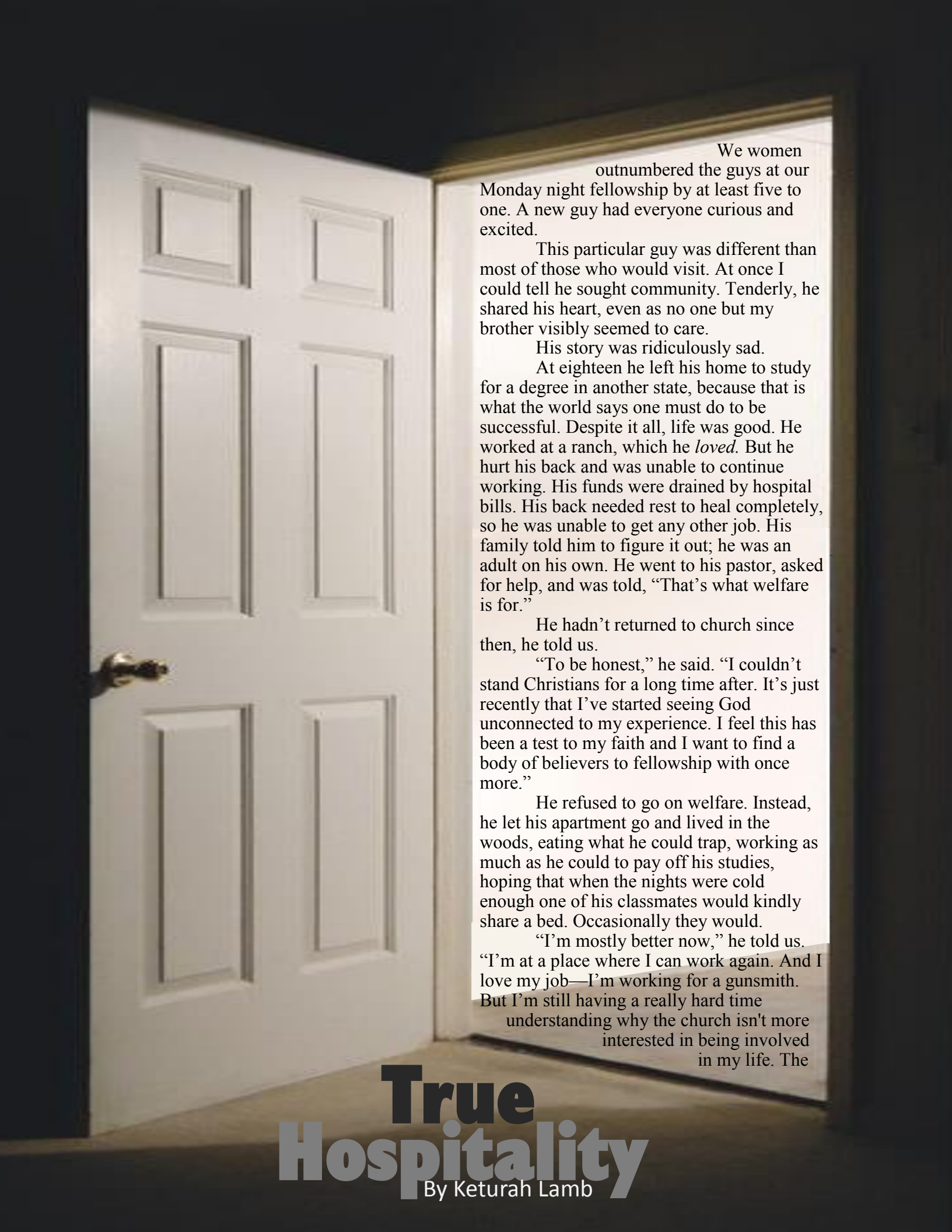
Once they had eaten the fruit, they realized the full gravity of what they'd done. In an effort to hide their shame, they made clothes out of leaves and concealed themselves in the garden (3:7-8). But you cannot hide from God. God came looking for them. This is what God always does; even in the midst of our sin, even when we've hidden ourselves in shame, He seeks us out. He asked them what they'd done, not because He did not know, but because He wanted them to repent (9-13). If they repented, He would shower His mercy on them. Instead, they shifted blame: Adam to his wife, and Eve to the serpent.



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For their act of self-will, God cursed them. This is not the same as when humans curse. When we curse, we desire something evil to happen to the one whom we curse. When God curses, He simply removes His protection from an individual, place, or thing, and allows the natural consequences to take effect. He did not change the substance of the earth, or their bodies; He simply removed the protection of the garden from them. This in itself is a mercy; if Adam and Eve continued eating from the tree of life they would live forever. Imagine living with their shame, watching the world descending into wickedness forever. By cutting them off from the tree of life, God showed mercy toward them. He further showed them mercy by providing them with clothing to protect them from the elements (20-24). He took care of them even after they rebelled against Him. And we are to do the same. When we feed the hungry, clothe the naked and forgive our enemies we imitate God, and become more like Him. We take back our role as God's representatives to His creation, we become His image and His likeness.



We women outnumbered the guys at our Monday night fellowship by at least five to one. A new guy had everyone curious and excited.

This particular guy was different than most of those who would visit. At once I could tell he sought community. Tenderly, he shared his heart, even as no one but my brother visibly seemed to care.

His story was ridiculously sad.

At eighteen he left his home to study for a degree in another state, because that is what the world says one must do to be successful. Despite it all, life was good. He worked at a ranch, which he *loved*. But he hurt his back and was unable to continue working. His funds were drained by hospital bills. His back needed rest to heal completely, so he was unable to get any other job. His family told him to figure it out; he was an adult on his own. He went to his pastor, asked for help, and was told, "That's what welfare is for."

He hadn't returned to church since then, he told us.

"To be honest," he said. "I couldn't stand Christians for a long time after. It's just recently that I've started seeing God unconnected to my experience. I feel this has been a test to my faith and I want to find a body of believers to fellowship with once more."

He refused to go on welfare. Instead, he let his apartment go and lived in the woods, eating what he could trap, working as much as he could to pay off his studies, hoping that when the nights were cold enough one of his classmates would kindly share a bed. Occasionally they would.

"I'm mostly better now," he told us. "I'm at a place where I can work again. And I love my job—I'm working for a gunsmith. But I'm still having a really hard time understanding why the church isn't more interested in being involved in my life. The

the friends that supplemented my food and offered me shelter while I was in the woods were not Christians.”

At that time I was such a shy girl and could hardly speak a sentence to a guy. I’ve always regretted not telling him “thank you” for sharing his story, especially as I watched the rest of the crowd laugh at his vulnerability.

All they could say was, “We are so glad you are finding your faith again!” with a hint of disapproval that he’d blame the church for any of his issues.

As if his pain mattered not at all, and as if he should have just accepted government aid.

He never came back to our fellowship, as far as I know.

“If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother.” Deuteronomy 15:7

“God helps those who help themselves.”

“Give a hand up, not a hand-out.”

The tragic thing is that Christians quote these secular proverbs most.

A study was done a few years back on our local homeless, saying how well they did, and how some of them were able to afford *fancy* homes with the money they begged. Statistics showed that the homeless population increased dramatically after that.

It’s unfair to say that Christians didn’t help the homeless after that. They continued to have what we call “safe charities,” organizations where people must come for certain types of offered help. But as for actually reaching out and inviting the poor into our homes?

“Yeah, most of the homeless don’t actually need our help. Did you see that article that came out last month?”

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” Isaiah 58:7

I’m not advocating we give five dollars to every man or woman begging. Rather, I’m suggesting that instead of saying, “Most of them don’t really need help,” we should be asking ourselves, “What am I doing to help those who truly need?”



If my father owns anything, it is absolute generosity.

I know only one other man, a dear friend, who matches my father’s unconditional, complete love for his fellow man. I have not always had the capacity to appreciate this self-sacrificing virtue. Sometimes I’ve even wondered, as others berated us and my father for his willingness to give to *just anybody*, if it really were a virtue.

Growing up we rarely had our house to ourselves.

One of the first people I remember is a hitchhiker dad brought home for a single night. I was six or seven. We lived in a mobile home next door to our landlord. To all outside appearances, we had nothing and were just starting out in life ourselves.

The guy wanted work, and so he stayed on, sleeping on our couch.

I remember loving to sit on this hitchhiker’s lap as he told stories. Mom told me I

couldn't do that anymore, that it was very naughty. I said I wouldn't. But the next day I promptly forgot and let him pick me up. After a few moments, I saw Mom glaring at me. Ashamed, I jumped off of his lap and ran to my room, unsure why it was so wrong, hoping only Mom wouldn't think to give me a whipping later.

Even so I loved having people live with us.

Some of my most fond memories are during such times.

All of us children shared a single room. Our numbers grew from six to nine as the time progressed. A family of six shared my brothers' old room. An uncle stayed in our pantry. Two young couples and their babies each had campers parked out back. There was another single fellow that stayed wherever there was room, sometimes on our couch. We all lived in a mobile home that we now owned on land we had bought until we moved to a duplex in a nearby city. Some of the people came along with us. And there were always new additions before, during, and after.

I knew Dad gave the men work, that we were giving these people a place to stay because they had nowhere else to go. I vaguely knew what we did wasn't normal. But I also knew we were better at getting along with strangers than most. In fact, that's how we met some of those who stayed with us. They'd been living with someone else, but hadn't been able to mesh. As a kid I thought this ridiculous. How hard was it to just work things out?

I loved having a constant variety of people to share my stories with, or learn new things from. One lady taught me some Spanish. I was encouraged to do great things through these people who were barely getting by. And so in my mind they were great.

And yet, I would sympathize with my Mom when she didn't like the people. Even as she said, "I don't like her," I'd think, "Mom is right. But it's okay for me to still like her."

I think I started hating it in my mid-teens, when the majority of the men staying with us were no longer so much older than me. As a fifteen year old, I still thought them too old.

And yet I was no longer a friendly child, but often accused of flirting.

I grew so self-conscious I would hide when Dad brought people home, the only way I could think to restrain myself from speaking too much or not acting in a way that might be thought provocative. I found all the men so interesting and wanted to hear all their stories. And yet, I didn't like what my mother said, and if I were honest, the men were starting to look at me in ways that didn't make me feel comfortable.

Dad told Mom she was being silly. Until I had *two* marriage proposals.

Out of that grew my extreme shyness toward men, to such a point that I wouldn't be able to talk to any man for years to come. Thankfully, I've mostly grown out of that. Yet it returns at such strange times.

As I started working and pitching in, I began to see what Dad did as an extreme evil. Our family was always hurting. No one ever helped us as much as we were killing ourselves to help everyone else. I grew to crave privacy. I found the men Dad brought home repulsive. I judged the families harshly. I hated the women, who I saw cry to my Dad only to snarl at my mother. If someone stepped over their bounds, I'd snap at them and tell them to stay, remember we were helping them and they didn't deserve to demand *anything*.

The cute girl everyone had adored was now feared.

When we had unsavory people show up at our door and Dad wasn't home, Mom would send me.

I would be the one that said, "No, you can't come in. And no, you can't take Dad's tools. I don't care if you think they belong to you. I don't care if you want to call the Sheriff. Use your own phone. I'm sorry. You are harassing me. I said don't come in. Don't you dare even try. Goodbye."

Even my own family seemed terrified of me. Inside, I was scared and hurting. I didn't really hate these people. Part of me did feel bad. But a larger piece of me was so worried for my own family and my inability to change the path I thought we were stuck on.

We were taken advantage of, I thought, and yet, so many people left angry because we didn't do enough, or didn't do something right. Dad received death-threats. We girls were threatened. But Dad contacted the necessary authorities, and we continued to live, fearlessly, doing right.

We barely got by some months, and yet, we never told anyone no when they asked for help.

And I hated this.

I just wanted to say no for all of us.

To all the ladies who played my father. To those that forced Mom or Dad to have to keep a careful eye on us kids. To all the capable men who begged so Dad gave what was meant for our rent. To all the people who I *felt* could do more, as we were stretched beyond our limits, I wanted to tell them all to leave us alone.

I told Dad, "It's not right for you to be helping others before us."

He said, "Have we never not been able to make ends meet? Yes it's been hard. But we've managed. And we never know what problems, even emotional, these people are facing."

Still, selfishly, I persisted. "But what about us?"



Then I met that boy at our Bible study and saw my friends laugh at him. And I knew that my father would have understood and that we would have given him everything he needed, no conditions attached.

I was ashamed. I saw there was no love in my heart, only fear.

I started thinking of all the men who'd stayed with us, who I'd once liked and who I now avoided. Men who hadn't known the blessings I took for granted, with beautiful minds, who only wanted *something* good. Rather than being upset they'd wanted something else for me, I found empathy for them.

I remembered the families we'd helped. Some of them started contacting me on Facebook. And I saw the good that had been worked through us.

I still couldn't stand some of the witches (just switch w to b, thank you) that had stayed with us. But I learned that I could still show them love. In fact, I realized I *must* show even these women respect and love.

I've come to a place where I am so glad my father is who he is.

Recently we had a nazi-woman, a hitchhiker, a father and his grown son, among others living with us. I do still find myself struggling with bitter feelings, asking if each of these people really *need* what they ask for. But I've finally had to accept that it doesn't really matter.

It doesn't matter if they are undeserving.

What matters is if I'm doing right. We are specifically told to feed and clothe the poor, and to invite them into *our homes*. Yet how many of us do it? There is a whole chapter on loving, a whole *book* on it, to be honest. And yet, we have so many excuses to *not* love those we don't like.

Yes, some of these people *are* undeserving.

But my begrudging attitude is never, *ever* justified.

I'm told to give, not interrogate. Who cares if I'm misused? What does it really matter? That is their sin. My stinginess, my fear, my unwillingness to love and share, *those* are my sins and the things I must worry to do something about.



It is only in the times where I've let go of myself and my needs and my wants that

I've been able to see the situation clearest. During these times I know best when to say *no*, and have been able to recognize that my father did not always say yes. After all, he is the one that rejected the marriage proposals and sent those men far, far away. And our rent has always been paid, our stomachs filled.

And somehow, there was often a new movie to watch together as a family. And year round, Dad gave us gifts. He made sure I had a car. He paid for my phone; still pays for it. He provided me with my own home. And so much more.

Sometimes it was very hard. And yet, looking back, there were times it was *very good*.

The only difference had been that before I'd been younger, more innocent, and joyfully willing to love *everyone*.

I just had to learn how to do that once more with grown up eyes in a world that says, "You mustn't love that way. Surely, even God doesn't expect so much."

I'm not so sure about that.

I think God expects us to wish to do *more* than He asks of us, and to do so in a way that exemplifies his unconditional, rich, inclusive love. How I love the parable of the feast where all the poor outcasts were invited! How well my father has taught me what that looks lived out in *real life*. How much I yearn to be she who,

**"... opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy"
(Proverbs 31:20).**

It's not always pleasant sharing your home.
But let it never be said that we are like Sodom:

**"This was the guilt of your sister Sodom:
she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease,
but did not aid the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 16:49).**

It's not always pleasant not being able to have what you want because someone else *needs* something. It's even less pleasant doing without what you might need as you give to another.

But when are we told to seek our own pleasure and comfort?

And why would I want to even do such a thing when someone has shown me they are suffering? Even if their suffering is their own fault?

Should I excuse away my duty because the majority of Christianity has given me permission? Why would I want to continue promoting such uncharity?

This last year has taught me so much of what it means to love:

To open my home to the lonely, whether by hosting parties or offering tea to a tired guest of my father's; to write a letter to a young woman in prison who's been awaiting trial for nearly two years; to engage conversation with the neighbor woman who only speaks of distasteful things; to continue serving, and finding ways I might serve.

And let it never be from some twisted sense of ego, but from a closer walk with my Heavenly Father who says I must reflect His light and bring His love to His children.

Let it be so.

Let me love.

My home is open. My heart is ready. My hands are turned. My lips are ready to say, "I will hand out and help up whatever it is you ask of me. I have many coats, I have much food. I have many books and couches and tea."

And if none ask, let me be ready to ask, “What do you need? How might I help?”

“And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” Luke 3:10-11

A young woman sent me a friend request a few months ago. Because I’m just as blunt as friendly, I asked, “Do we know each other?”

She said, “No! But I’ll be moving to the area soon and was told you’d be a good friend to have.”

“How nice! Do you have a place to stay?”

“I do not . . .”

“You’re more than welcome to live with our family.”

People have since asked me, “And what did your parents think about it all?”

I actually forgot to tell them until the day before she arrived. But I knew they wouldn’t care.

This girl has become like a sister to all of us. Even though she no longer lives with us, we see her all the time. Sure, opening your home is hard, and maybe strange. But, oh, how blessed it is to share God’s love!



Ubi Caritas

A Traditional
Latin Office Hymn

The Latin
translates to
“Where [there is]
charity and love,
God is there.”

Written in neumes,
an early form of
music notation

From the 2020
Ignatius Pew Missal

Ant.
6.

U - bi cá- ri- tas et a- mor, De- us i- bi est. *∇* By the love of Christ

we have been brought to- geth- er : *∇* let us find in him our gladness and our plea-
sure; *∇* may we love him and re- vere him, God the liv- ing, *∇* and in love respect each
∇ o- ther with sin- cere hearts. *Ant.*

∇ Therefore when we are gathered all to- geth- er, *∇* let us strive to keep our minds
free of di- vis- ion ; *∇* may there be an end to mal- ice, strife, and quar- rels,
∇ and let Christ our God be dwell- ing here a- mong us. *Ant.*

∇ May your face thus be our vis- ion, bright in glo- ry. *∇* Christ our God, with all
the bless- ed Saints in heav- en: *∇* such de- light is pure and faultless, joy unbounded,
∇ which endures through count- less a- ges world with- out end. *Ant. A- men.*

“I was in prison...and you came to see me.”
-Saint Matthew 25: 34-26

Dostoyevsky is possibly the best writer of narratives of redemption, probably because of his time in prison. I first read *The House of the Dead* along with other of his novels some years ago. Recently I was "guilted" by Fr. Ron (I did not want to go) into volunteering at prison, which has proven to be one of the few experiences in my life in which I felt - one cannot know, of course - that I was doing exactly what God expected of me. This volunteer work with the chaplain, a sturdy Baptist, and with wise and experienced volunteers and mentors, especially Al and George, led me to re-read Dostoyevsky's semi-autobiographical prison novel.

As a young man Dostoyevsky was drawn into the Petrashevsky Circle (1) in Saint Petersburg, which may or may not have planned the violent overthrow of the government. The group was arrested in 1849, held in the Peter and Paul Fortress in Saint Petersburg, tried, and sentenced to death. The Czar's pardon of the conspirators even as they faced a firing squad is well known.

Dostoyevsky spent four years in a Siberian prison camp and then a term as a soldier until he was permitted to return to Saint Petersburg in 1859.

The parallels between the prison unit I visit and Dostoyevsky's prison are remarkable, even to the general layout of the prison and to the diverse characters and nationalities of the inmates. In the local prison, though, prisoners are respected and treated with dignity in preparation for their return to freedom. Successful completion of anger management and other counseling programs are mandatory for release.

But please note that I know almost nothing about penology or psychology, and my two hours each week visiting the lads are as nothing. I am neither a Pollyanna nor a Darwinian, but only a sympathetic if naïve observer.

First, about that famous cable TV: there are in fact two of them, rather small, high up on a wall in the common area, and remotely controlled by the duty officer. No prisoner has much time for watching TV, though, for everyone has a work detail. A man might be dozing on his bunk in the early evening, but that's because his work assignment begins in the kitchen at 0300 and he must also attend classes. There are no private rooms; all live in dorms that very much resemble my recruit training barracks in the long-ago.

Prisons do not exist so that visitors like me can write sappy articles about "What I learned in prison" because prison is about the prisoner, about helping him learn about himself and his place in civilization. Dostoyevsky would say that learning is a part of a man's redemption, on either side of the

Dostoyevsky's
House of the Living
By
Lawrence "Mack in Texas" Hall

the shiny wire.

But I have learned this: the difference between a man behind the wire and a man outside the wire is often only that one man is behind the wire and the other is outside the wire.

Okay, that's a bit precious, but a reality is that there are far more criminals on the outside than on the inside.

Another reality in the unit I visit is the diversity of individuals with regard to faith traditions, race, intellect, accomplishments, education, and skills. I have met once-wealthy businessmen who admitted that their success in life led them to a feeling of arrogance and immunity. I have met twenty-somethings who did stupid stuff because popular culture and their local subcultures led them to existential despair. The CPA is in a bunk next to the low-level drug dealer. Someone conversant in seven languages and who holds a master's degree is bunked next to the kid who helped himself to someone else's car on a dare.

In his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, C. S. Lewis wrote that in the army, "Every few days one seemed to meet a scholar, an original, a poet, a cheery buffoon, or at the least a man of good will." And so it is in prison as it is in the army or on the job.

My prison is a transit unit, with folks coming and going constantly, either on their way to a long-term sentence at one of the large units, serving a short sentence here, or, happily, cycling through the various programs and consultations in preparation for release. I regret that I seldom get to know anyone very well, but in the context of the mission that's probably for the best.

Unfortunately, all prison visits in my state are now forbidden during the coronavirus time. I do miss the guys, and hope I have been of some small service in their rehabilitation. I pray for them daily, and hope to be permitted to resume working with them soon.

Author's Notes:

Footnote 1: <http://encspb.ru/object/2804022508?lc=en>

More about Dostoyevsky and his character Raskolnikov.
newyorker.com/magazine/1997/02/24/dostoyevskys-unabomber

Some People Are Not in Prison
By Lawrence "Mack in Texas" Hall

"What are we here for? We are not alive though we are living
and we are not in our graves though we are dead."
— Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The House of the Dead*

The difference between people in prison
and people who are not in prison
is that some people are in prison
and some people are not



A Soup

By Lawrence "Mack in Texas" Hall

A soup is just a little can of soup
Available in the prison commissary
A little warmth to get you through the night
If there is anything in your account

A little jar of powdered instant coffee
Available in the prison commissary
A ceremony of innocence, as Yeats would say
If there is anything in your account

And wakefulness at 0200, a hope -
If there is anything in that account

What Does Jesus Look Like?
By Lawrence "Mack in Texas" Hall

What is His image, accurate and true?
Well, as for me, just now, He looks like
You



CONTROVERSY CORNER

What is your denomination's stance on war?

What is Controversy Corner?

Controversy Corner is the section of LogoSophia Magazine where people of different faith traditions discuss controversial topics in a succinct manner.

If you would like to submit a topic for discussion, please let us know!

Don't see your denomination represented? Help us fix that! We're always looking for new writers!

Disagree with the representative of your denomination? Write in and tell us why in a respectful manner, and we'll publish it in our next magazine under "Letters to the Editor & Comments"!

For these and any other questions, comments or suggestions, email us at Editors.LogoSophia@gmail.com.

Confessional Lutheran: J.C. Ellis

Confessional Lutheranism has historically believed in "just wars". A just war being one that is an absolute last resort for the defense and protection of the innocent. We believe in the vocation of the soldier and that there is a difference between murder and lawful killing. Murder is lawless killing, killing out of malice and selfishness. Whilst lawful killing is killing for the sake of justice and defense. Murder can also be done out of a desire for vengeance which belongs to the Lord alone.

CONTROVERSY CORNER

What is your denomination's stance on war?

Presbyterian Church in America: Joshua David Ling

John Knox, The Scottish Covenanter, had an audience with Mary Queen of Scots that included a discussion of conflict. We pick up in the middle of the conversation with John.

John Knox: "If their princes exceed their bounds, Madam, no doubt they may be resisted, even by power. For there is neither greater honor, nor greater obedience, to be given to kings or princes, than God hath commanded to be given unto father and mother. But the father may be stricken with a frenzy, in which he would slay his children. If the children arise, join themselves together, apprehend the father, take the sword from him, bind his hands, and keep him in prison till his frenzy be overpast: think ye, Madam, that the children do any wrong? It is even so, Madam, with princes that would murder the children of God that are subjects unto them. Their blind zeal is nothing but a very mad frenzy, and therefore, to take the sword from them, to bind their hands, and to cast them into prison, till they be brought to a more sober mind, is no disobedience against princes, but just obedience, because it agreeth with the will of God."

The whole conversation may be found here: <http://www.reformation.org/john-knox-interview.html>

Roman Catholic: Sarah Levesque

The Catholic Church instructs her members to avoid war if possible, as Jesus preached peace and mercy, but she recognizes that even Jesus braided together a whip to correct the injustice of the merchants in the temple area, as well as recognizing a nation's right to self defense. With this in mind, the Catholic Church gives the following boundaries on whether or not a war is just:

- the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain
- all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective
- there must be serious prospects of success
- the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2309).

In addition, the Catholic Church recognizes that even during war, such things as torture, killing the innocent and mistreating prisoners of war are immoral. She understands the soldier's duty to carry out orders and reminds combatants that immoral acts are not made moral in war, even when these acts are ordered.

7 MOVIES

That Will Inspire You to do the Corporal Works of Mercy

List compiled by Killarney Traynor

1. Feed the Hungry – No Reservations (2007)

When we think about feeding the hungry, the first thing to come to mind is usually food pantries. It's easy to forget that sometimes hunger is closer to home. In this romantic comedy, prickly, perfectionist chef Kate (Catherine Zeta-Jones) unexpectedly becomes a mother when her sister dies and leaves her daughter Zoe (Abigail Breslin) in her care. At first, Kate is unable to connect with the grieving little girl and can't even figure out how to tempt her to eat — 9-year-olds not being fond of exotic dishes. Kate begins to fear for Zoe's health when her new sous chef, Nick (Aaron Eckhart), enters the scene. In a seriously touching moment of kindness, Nick makes a simple plate of pasta and sauce and restores Zoe's sense of normalcy and hope, beginning a healing process that affects all of them. Sometimes hunger requires more than simply donating canned goods (but keep doing that because, trust me, we need it!).

2. Give Drink to the Thirsty – Legend of the Lost (1957)

This one is a bit of a stretch, but as the last act of the film finds John Wayne and Sophia Loren desperately digging for water in the desert, I'm going to include it. This is chiefly an action adventure wherein a surly, uncouth Wayne guides an idealistic Christian (Rossano Brazzi) and a reformed woman through the Sahara on a treasure hunt. But what sets this apart is Rossano Brazzi's character, a man characterized by two things: his zealous search to save his beloved father's legacy and his Christianity. His zeal for the Gospel and his unrelenting faith in the salvageability of the human soul saves Sophia Loren and, eventually—against the odds—converts John Wayne as well. Legend is an interesting blend of action and thought and the ultimate message of mercy—whether towards the person in front of you or the memory of the person you left behind—is a terrific takeaway.

3. Clothe the Naked – Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (1954)

Wait, what? I hear you say. What does a politically incorrect musical from the 1950s have to do with clothing the naked? Didn't they have the Motion Picture Code in those days? The answer is, yes, they did, and yes, this movie actually is a great example of clothing the naked. Clothing protects the body against the elements, but it's also about dignity. Enter Millie (Jane Powell), who, having impulsively married the man of her dreams, finds herself outnumbered by his uncivilized (in a 1950s way, relax!), unkempt, and shoddily dressed brothers. Rather than run for the hills, Millie takes it upon herself to reform and civilize the brothers and introduce them



into the society of the neighboring town. And, yes, in the process, she gives them all a major make-over, from trimmed hair and beards to eye-catching new duds to go barn-raising in. This movie is more fun than serious, but it's a colorful, toe-tapping example of how one good deed can really change lives for the better.

4. Shelter the Homeless – Defiance (2008)

While I was considering *Boys Town* for this slot, *Defiance* is a far more action-packed example. Set in modern-day Belarus (sandwiched between Russia and Poland), this movie tells the true-life story of the Jewish Bielski brothers who defied their Nazi occupiers during World War Two. Living in the woods and constantly moving to avoid capture, they harassed, killed, and obstructed Nazis wherever they could. But what sets them apart from other partisans is elder brother Tuvia's (Daniel Craig) insistence that they shelter Jewish refugees, an extremely dangerous act of kindness that nearly tears the brothers apart. The suspense is unrelenting, as the band of refugees, caught between Nazis on one side and anti-Semite Russians on the other, struggle to survive in the elements with food in constant short supply. Riveting, violent, and occasionally dark, *Defiance* more than deserves its R rating for violence, but ultimately, this is an uplifting and encouraging story. They may not look or act like your typical saints, but the Bielski brothers saved over 1200 lives—that record is hard to beat.

5. Visit the Sick - The Princess Bride (1987)

Hey, who said that acting in mercy couldn't be fun? If you've been living under a rock and haven't seen *The Princess Bride*, make room for it on your schedule. Peter Falk plays the grandfather who visits his sickly, bed-bound grandson and helps him pass the time by reading him the epic (and epically hilarious) medieval tale of adventure, courage, and romance. Yes, there is kissing in this movie—but more importantly, it's a story about how illness can also be an opportunity to bond with the important people in our lives. Not all of us can be Mother Theresa or Damian of Molokai. But we can all take care of the people right next door.

6. Visit the Imprisoned – Amazing Grace (2006)

Starring Ion Gruffund and a pre-Sherlock Benedict Cumberbatch, this well-acted, beautifully shot movie follows William Wilberforce's decades-long crusade against the slave trade in Britain and the rag-tag group of reformers that support him along the way. It's well-written and a reminder that we all can do something to help fight injustice—even if it's only refusing to use sugar. I'll admit, this movie is less about visiting the imprisoned than it is about fighting for them, but I think it's a terrific message all the same. If you love historical dramas, political maneuvers, and Christian heroics, definitely give this movie a try.

7. Bury the Dead – Dead Man Walking (1995)

Based on a true story, *Dead Man Walking* follows Sr. Helen Prejean (Susan Sarandon) as she becomes a spiritual advisor to convicted killer and death-row inmate Matthew Poncelet (Sean Penn). This searing and unflinching look at the death penalty questions the ethical nature of the death penalty, but also explores what violent death leaves behind. I debated whether this was better suited for "Visit the Imprisoned," but this movie speaks volumes about burying the dead (metaphorically and emotionally) so that the survivors can move on and heal. Sr. Helen is a prime example of how we can be asked to step in and serve during the worst periods of someone's life. This isn't an easy movie to watch—but it is well worth the time invested.

BONUS! Les Miserables (1998 or 2012)

If you only have time for one movie and you want to maximize your virtues, look no further than *Les Mis*. Jean Valjean is a man on parole, having just served 20 years for stealing a piece of bread. On his release, he is given shelter, food, and water by a kindly priest, only to repay his kindness by stealing from him. When the priest saves Valjean from being tossed back into prison, Valjean reforms and vows to live an upright life. Through the movie/musical/book are numerous examples of Corporal Works of the Mercy in action, all woven together by a master storyteller. This epic works both as a musical (2012 with Hugh Jackman) or in the shorter, non-musical version (1998 with Liam Neeson). (Note: purists may take issue with where this one ends). You'll weep either way.



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NGUYEN

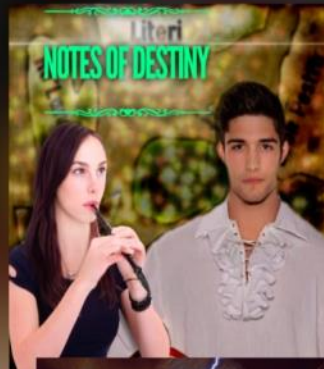
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Book & Media Recommendations

Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand- The quintessential swashbuckling tragi-comedy and a seminal work of historical fiction that sometimes veers off into magical realism. This is the story of the valiant and good, but comically deformed Cyrano who wishes to woo the woman of his dreams, but feels unworthy of her because of his looks. This play has it all, comedy, sword fights, romance, tragedy. There are many fine translations available, my personal copy is from Signet Press. -TK

The Psalms of David in Metre (1650): This is a wonderful poetic translation of the psalms and is great for singing, prayer and memorization.

-TC Ellis

Overly Sarcastic Productions- YouTube Channel. The good people of Overly Sarcastic Productions have created trove of easy-to-understand lectures about literature, history, and writing. Beware of some not-so-complimentary opinions about Christianity, some sexual content, and a little harsh language (but nothing too bad). -TK

Come to the Stable starring Loretta Young: Two French nuns are faced with a series of obstacles when they set out to build a children's hospital in New England. -Amanda

Doctor Who (BBC TV series) and Star Trek (various TV series). The Doctor moves through time and space while the crew of the Enterprise and other starships and space stations (usually) just move through space, but aside from the action- and alien- packed fun, the main characters of each of these shows tend to have a strong urge to preserve life. The Doctor is always doing his darndest to keep every person in the situation alive. The Star Trek characters tend to focus more on their own crews, but also refuse to give up on getting their people out alive, though they have far less inhibitions about killing their adversaries. And it is (in part) for that sheer stubborn drive to keep everyone alive that I love them. - Sarah

Mother Teresa: In the Name of God's Poor (1997): An excellent movie that follows Mother Teresa (Geraldine Chaplin) from her days teaching school girls to running a religious order dedicated to caring for the poorest of the poor. -Sarah

more

Book & Media Recommendations

Bible in a Year Podcast with Fr Mike Schmitz: Just as the title says, Fr Mike Schmitz reads sections of the Bible every day and gives a reflection on them. Over the course of the year, he will work through the entire Bible. January gave us Genesis, Job, and selections of the Psalms and Proverbs. February promises Exodus, Leviticus, more Psalms and Proverbs, and more. - Sarah

Letters From Father Christmas by J.R.R. Tolkien: Tolkien's imagination shines in this collection of letters he wrote for his children depicting the adventures of Father Christmas and the Polar Bear at the North Pole.
-Amanda

What do YOU want to suggest?

Let us know at [Editors. LogoSophia@gmail.com](mailto:Editors.LogoSophia@gmail.com)

Anne of Green Gables (1908) by L.M. Montgomery:

A novel telling the tale of a very charming orphan girl with a very wild imagination.
- JC Ellis

Another Kingdom by Andrew Klavan. This half suspense thriller-half fantasy adventure is the story of Hollywood never-was Austin Lively who walks through a door and finds himself in a medieval fantasy world in the middle of life that he doesn't remember living. Another Kingdom is the first installment in a trilogy; book two, *The Nightmare Feast*, is also available and book three, *The Emperor's Sword*, will be published in March. -Monica

The Just and Sinner podcast by Dr Jordan Cooper: This a Confessional Lutheran theology and apologetics podcast and it's brilliant! Dr Cooper covers everything; it is a great source to learn theology for free.

- JC Ellis

Howl's Moving Castle Film by Studio Ghibli. The anime movie for people who don't like anime, Howl's Moving Castle is the story of Sophie Hatter and her quest to solve the mystery around the Wizard Howl. Intrigue, romance, sparkling animation, and stellar vocal work by luminaries like Christian Bale, Billy Crystal, and Lauren Bacall are standouts in this wonderful movie. - TK

Saint Joseph, Worker of Mercy

By Sarah Levesque

Saint Joseph is a very important man in the Bible, but unlike most of the important figures found there, Saint Joseph does not speak a single word. That's not to say he was mute – it is doubtful that he could have accomplished the things he did without being able to speak given the time and culture – but not a single word of his has been recorded. Yet we still know a good deal about him from the few verses that talk about him. He was a righteous man (Matthew 1:19), a humble man who trusted God (Matthew 1:24, 2:13-14, 20). He was devout and willing to go to any length to protect his family (Matthew 2:14, 21). Considering his incredibly important role as the earthly father of Jesus, there is no doubt in my mind that Joseph was a hard worker. He provided for Mary and Jesus through his work as a carpenter (Matthew 13:55 NRSV), a trade that takes strength and skill.

How do these facts about Joseph fit in an issue about corporal works of mercy? Simple – in providing for his family, Joseph observed five of the seven works. The only two of the seven corporal works of mercy we don't have record of him doing are burying the dead and visiting the imprisoned. This might seem a bit of a stretch to some, so let's walk through them. Through Joseph's work, the Holy Family had food, drink, shelter and clothing. He first welcomed into his home the Holy Infant who was not his own flesh and blood, and later welcomed shepherds and magi alike. He ministered to Mary in her pregnancy and after Jesus' birth – not an illness, of course, but it still demonstrates Joseph's love. I would expect that Joseph had also buried the dead when his parents died, though there is no record of this.

Even before all this, Joseph was shown to be a merciful man. Consider things from his view. One day his fiancée goes off to visit her cousin. Okay, all fine, well, and good. She stays for three months, then comes back. That might be an absence of closer to four months, depending on how long the journey took. And when she comes back, she's pregnant. The Bible doesn't tell us whether Mary managed to tell him before rumor got around, but obviously Joseph knew it wasn't his child. He must have felt surprised, angry, betrayed, perhaps confused, for the Mary he knew would not have given herself to someone who was not her husband. According to Jewish law, the just thing would have been to stone her. But despite all the feelings that must have welled up in him, Joseph was unwilling to do that, and instead made up his mind to show mercy and divorce her quietly (Matthew 1:19). Perhaps he planned to send her back to her cousin's house, where presumably the child's father would be. But we don't know exactly what was in his mind, for that was when an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream to tell him what had happened and what his part was to be in the future of Mary and her child. The Gospel tell us “When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife...” (Matthew 1:24).

May we all be as merciful as Joseph, and as quick to respond to the will of the Lord.

Joseph & Jesus by Ian Wilson





FOR THE LEAST OF THESE IS ME

BY AMANDA PIZZOLOATTO

THE LEAVES WERE FALLING ALL AROUND, CARPETING THE SIDEWALKS AND STREETS IN REDS AND ORANGES THAT CRUNCHED BENEATH WHEELS AND FEET. CARS AND PEOPLE WERE GOING BACK AND FORTH, ALL IN A RUSH TO GET SOMEWHERE AND LOST IN THEIR THOUGHTS. MARTIN PULLED HIS COAT TIGHTER AS HE WALKED BRISKLY THROUGH THE CHILLING WIND AND AROUND PEOPLE. HIS BREATH CAME OUT IN SHORT, WHITE WISPS AS HE BREATHED INTO HIS HANDS BEFORE RUBBING THEM TOGETHER. HE GLANCED UP, LOOKING FOR HIS DESTINATION. HE SMILED WHEN HE SAW IT. THE BERRIES N' CREAM SHOPPE WAS BECKONING TO HIM, KNOWING HE NEEDED JUST THOSE FEW MINUTES OF PEACE AWAY FROM WORK. THE BELL RANG OVER HIS HEAD AS HE WALKED IN.

THE BARISTA WAVED TO HIM AS HE APPROACHED THE FRONT. "THE USUAL, MR. TRAVERS?"

MARTIN SMILED. "YES, PLEASE, ROMAN. THANKS."

ROMAN GAVE HIM A SALUTE. "AYE AYE, SIR." MARTIN CHUCKLED. ROMAN WASN'T A SOLDIER, BUT HE COULDN'T HELP BUT SALUTE MARTIN EVERY TIME HE CAME ONCE HE FOUND OUT MARTIN WAS A SERGEANT. MARTIN TRIED TO PUT A STOP TO IT AT FIRST BUT AFTER A WHILE IT BECAME ENDEARING. ROMAN PLACED A LARGE LATTE WITH WHIPPED CREAM ON THE COUNTER. "HERE YOU GO, MR. TRAVERS."

MARTIN QUICKLY PAID HIM AND GAVE HIS USUAL TIP. "THANKS, ROMAN."

ROMAN SALUTED. "NO PROBLEM."

MARTIN WENT TO A TABLE IN THE CORNER AND SAT DOWN, HIS BACK TO THE WALL. HE PLACED THE CUP DOWN AND REACHED INTO HIS JACKET, PULLING OUT A COMIC TITLED CLOAK AND DAGGER, ONE OF THE FEW THINGS HE ENJOYED READING THESE DAYS. HE SAT THERE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, READING THE COMIC AND ENJOYING HIS LATTE. WHEN HE WAS FINISHED WITH BOTH, HE TOSSED THE CUP IN THE TRASH CAN AND TOLD ROMAN GOODBYE. NO SOONER THAN HE STEPPED OUT THE DOOR THAN HE WAS WISHING HE WAS BACK IN THE STORE AGAIN. THE TEMPERATURE HAD DROPPED A FEW DEGREES. IT SMELLED LIKE SNOW WAS IN THE AIR, CRISP AND COLD. MARTIN SHIVERED AND PULLED HIS SCARF TIGHTER AROUND HIS MOUTH. HE WALKED AWAY FROM THE STORE, BUT PAUSED ONLY A FEW FEET AWAY FROM IT. THERE, SITTING IN THE CORNER BETWEEN SHOPS, WAS A MIDDLE-AGED MAN, THIN, FRAIL, AND SHIVERING. A CAN WITH A TINY FIRE PUT UP A STEADY STREAM OF SMOKE, BUT IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE IT GAVE OFF ENOUGH WARMTH. MARTIN AND THE MAN'S EYES LOCKED; THE PLEADING WAS STRONG IN THOSE SHALLOW EYES. MARTIN'S HEART ACHED FOR THE MAN, AND ACHED FOR HIMSELF. HE HAD NO CASH TO GIVE. HIS FINGERS PULLED AT HIS SCARF TO WRAP IT TIGHTER, AND PAUSED. PERHAPS HE DID HAVE SOMETHING HE COULD GIVE THE MAN, JUST TO HELP FIGHT OFF THE COLD. HE HAD ANOTHER AT HOME. MARTIN PEELED OFF HIS SCARF AND HIS COAT AND GAVE THEM TO THE MAN.



"HERE," HE SAID, "I THINK YOU NEED THIS MORE THAN I."

"ARE--ARE YOU SURE?" ASKED THE MAN.

MARTIN NODDED.

TEARS WELLED UP IN THE MAN'S EYES. "WHY, WHY THANK YOU, SIR, YOU'RE TOO KIND!"

"I WISH I COULD DO MORE, OR GIVE YOU MORE."



THE MAN SHOOK HIS HEAD. "YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MORE THAN I EVER DREAMED POSSIBLE. NO MATTER WHERE I SIT, MOST JUST WALK BY AND IGNORE ME. YOU SAW THAT I WAS IN NEED AND AT LEAST GAVE ME SOMETHING."

MARTIN GAVE HIM A SAD SMILE. "YES, AND AGAIN, I WISH I COULD GIVE YOU MORE, BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, I LIVE ON BASE, OTHERWISE I WOULD OFFER YOU A ROOF AS WELL."

"YOU HAVE GIVEN ME WHAT YOU COULD, MORE THAN MOST, AND I AM VERY GRATEFUL. MAY GOD BLESS YOU!"

MARTIN SMILED. "THANK YOU, AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU AS WELL." HE PATTED THE MAN'S SHOULDER AND TOOK A STEP TOWARDS THE BASE, AND PAUSED AGAIN. MAYBE THERE WAS STILL MORE HE COULD DO! HE TURNED BACK TO THE MAN. "HANG ON A SEC!" HE DASHED BACK INTO BERRIES N' CREAM AND ORDERED A LARGE HOT CHOCOLATE AND A CROISSANT SANDWICH.

THE MAN'S EYES GREW WIDE WHEN MARTIN HANDED HIM THE SANDWICH AND THE HOT CHOCOLATE. "TH—THANK YOU! THIS...THIS IS GREAT!"

MARTIN BEAMED. "YOU'RE WELCOME. NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I NEED TO GO."

"YES, YES, OF COURSE! AGAIN, MANY THANKS, AND MY GOD BLESS YOU!"

MARTIN JUST CHUCKLED AND WAVED AS HE DASHED AWAY. YES, THE TEMPERATURE HAD DROPPED, BUT IN A WAY, HE FELT WARMER THAN HE HAD THE WHOLE DAY. HE EVEN BEGAN TO HUM. IT DID FEEL GOOD HELPING ANOTHER PERSON. HE WONDERED IF THE MAN WOULD BE THERE AGAIN TOMORROW. PERHAPS HE COULD SIT AND CHAT WITH HIM AWHILE INSTEAD OF READING HIS COMIC.

MARTIN GOT BACK ON THE BASE AND WENT STRAIGHT TO WORK.

"MARTIN, WHERE'S YOUR COAT?" ASKED GEORGE LYON, MARTIN'S CLOSEST FRIEND AT THE BASE. "IT'S PRACTICALLY FREEZING OUT THERE!"

MARTIN JUST SMILED. "I GAVE IT TO SOMEONE WHO NEEDED IT MORE THAN I DO."

GEORGE RAISED AN EYEBROW. "REALLY? WHO?"

MARTIN SHRUGGED. "A HOMELESS GUY SITTING NEAR THE COFFEE SHOP. I KINDA HOPE HE'LL BE BACK TOMORROW. I WANT TO GET TO KNOW HIM, SEE WHAT OTHER WAYS I CAN HELP."

GEORGE PATTED HIS BACK. "GOOD LUCK WITH THAT, OR DID YOU FORGET THE KING IS COMING TOMORROW?"

MARTIN'S EYES WIDENED AS HE LET OUT A GASP. "OH SHOOT, I DID! WELL, MAYBE THE DAY AFTER THAT, THEN. MAN! I WISH I HAD SOME CASH TO GIVE TO HIM SO HE WOULDN'T GO HUNGRY TOMORROW!"

"MAYBE SOMEONE ELSE WILL NOTICE HIM AND MAKE SURE HE GETS FOOD. RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE A KING TO PREPARE FOR."

ALL THE REST OF THAT DAY AND THE MAJORITY OF THE NEXT MORNING WAS TAKEN UP IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE KING. MARTIN HAD NEVER SEEN THE BASE SO CLEAN IN A WHILE. BUT HE ONLY GOT A FEW MINUTES TO ENJOY IT AS THE GATES OPENED AND THE PARADE OF CARS CAME THROUGH, THE KING IN THE LIMOUSINE.

THE TROOPS GATHERED IN THE AUDITORIUM, EVERYONE EAGER AND NERVOUS TO SEE THE KING. THE LIGHTS WENT ON, AND A MAN WITH DIRTY, TATTERED CLOTHES SAT ON THE STAGE. MURMURS RUMBLED GENTLED THROUGH THE CROWD AS THEY WONDERED WHO THIS MAN WAS. IT TOOK MARTIN A MOMENT, BUT HE STOOD UP, RECOGNITION ON HIS FACE.

"It's you!"

THE MAN SMILED AT HIM AS HE ROSE. "AH, THERE YOU ARE. I WANTED TO RETURN YOUR COAT, AND TO THANK YOU FOR THE FOOD AND DRINK. IT WAS GOOD. WILL YOU PLEASE COME TO THE STAGE?" MARTIN WALKED TO THE STAGE, DAZED. WHAT WAS THE HOMELESS MAN DOING HERE?

GEORGE GASPED. "THAT'S THE KING!"

MARTIN'S HAND WAS ON HIS COAT WHEN HE PAUSED. HE LOOKED CLOSER. GEORGE WAS RIGHT, IT WAS THE KING. MARTIN KNELT. "YOUR—YOUR MAJESTY! I—I DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE YOU!"

THE KING CHUCKLED. "THAT WAS THE POINT. I KNEW MY TROOPS WERE GOOD AT FIGHTING, BUT I WANTED TO SEE HOW KIND THEY WERE. YOU WERE ONE OF THE FEW WHO SHOWED ME THAT KINDNESS." THE KING TOOK OUT A LIST AND CALLED NAMES. THE MEN WHO WERE CALLED WENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE STAGE AFTER HEARING THEIR NAMES. "THESE ARE THE MEN I WILL HAVE AS MY PERSONAL GUARD." THE MURMURS WENT AROUND THE AUDITORIUM AGAIN. THE HIGHEST HONOR, TO BE ONE OF THE KING'S PERSONAL GUARDS! "I EXPECT THE REST OF YOU WILL WORK ON YOUR KINDNESS TOWARDS OTHERS BEFORE MY NEXT VISIT. THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING. GOOD DAY."

GEORGE CLAPPED MARTIN ON THE BACK. "LOOKS LIKE YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM GETTING FOOD TODAY AFTER ALL."

"YEAH, BUT WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHAT DID YOU DO TO BECOME A PERSONAL GUARD?"

GEORGE SHOT HIM A SHEEPISH GRIN. "LET'S JUST SAY I DEFEATED A DRAGON."

"HUH?"

GEORGE CHUCKLED NERVOUSLY. "I'LL TELL YOU LATER. COME ON, WE HAVE A NEW JOB TO DO!"

"AMEN I SAY TO YOU, AS LONG AS YOU DID IT TO ONE OF THESE MY LEAST BRETHREN, YOU DID IT TO ME."
(MATTHEW 25:40)



You are the Daily Good - Thank You

By Lawrence "Mack in Texas" Hall

"What good shall I do this day?"

-Benjamin Franklin



So much good is being accomplished today:
Women and men going about their daily work
Food pantry volunteers stocking the shelves
Retirees prepping meals for everyone else

So much good is being accomplished today:
Little children study (and clean their plates)
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So much good is being accomplished today:
And you and I are going to be a part of that





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Bible Trivia!

Answers on the following page

1. When Jesus fed the 5000, what did the meal consist of?
 - A) Five loaves of bread and two fish
 - B) Fish and chips
 - C) Latkes
 - D) Seven loaves of bread and 5 fish
2. After Jesus' resurrection, Peter healed a lady named Tabitha. Where was she from?
 - A) Jerusalem
 - B) Antioch
 - C) Joppa
3. What was Tabitha's job?
 - A) Seamstress
 - B) Shepherd
 - C) Tentmaker
4. How many lepers came to Jesus together for healing?
 - A) 5
 - B) 10
 - C) 20
5. What did God give Adam and Eve for clothing?
 - A) Leaves
 - B) Animal skins
 - C) Denim
6. What do angels look like?
 - A) Like humans
 - B) Like wheels with eyes
 - C) Like creatures with many heads and eyes
 - D) All of the above
7. When Elijah ran for his life from Ahab and Jezebel, what did the Angel of the Lord give Elijah to eat in the wilderness?
 - A) Bread and water
 - B) Fish
 - C) Latkes

Bible Quiz Answers!

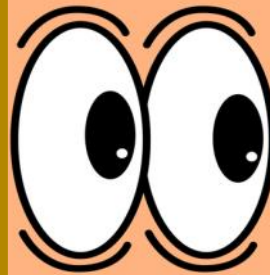
Questions on the previous page

1. A: Jesus fed 5,000 men (not including women and children) with just five loaves and two fish, and when all were finished, there were twelve wicker baskets full of leftovers (see Matthew 14:13-21).
2. C: Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) lived in the city of Joppa. When she died, Peter was asked to come. He prayed and told her to rise, and she obeyed (see Acts 9).
3. A: Tabitha was a seamstress who often made clothes for poor people (see Acts 9).
4. B: Ten lepers came to Jesus for healing, but only one of them returned to thank Him (see Luke 17).
5. B: God killed an animal and gave its skin to Adam and Eve to wear as clothing (see Genesis 3).
6. D: Angels can take on many forms. Abram/ Abraham and Tobias each met angels that looked like men (Genesis 18; Tobit 5). Ezekiel describes two different types of angels: "Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body... I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like topaz, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went. Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around " (Ezekiel 1:10-11, 16-17).
7. A: The Angel of the Lord brought bread and water for Elijah to eat so that he had enough strength to make his next journey.

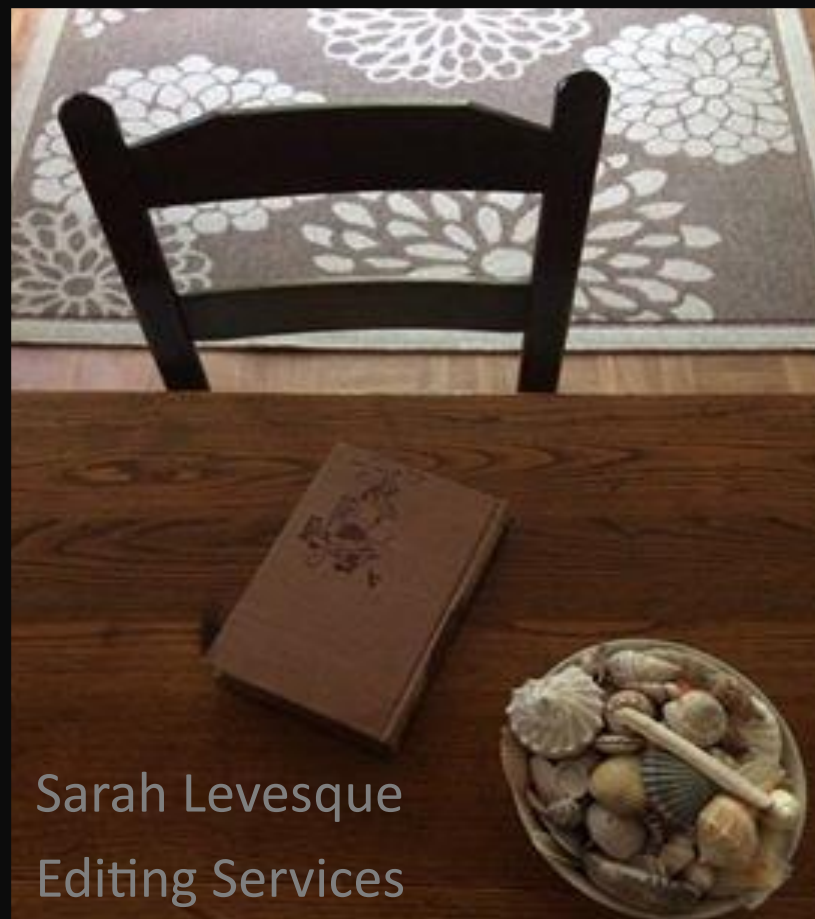
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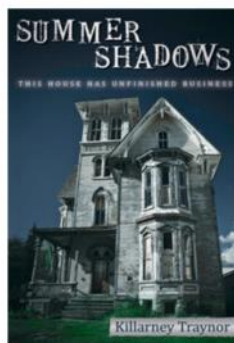
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