

Devotions – November 16-22, 2014

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Sunday, November 16

Text: Acts 2: 1-4 (NRSV)

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”

We know the verses above: the rush of wind, the tongues of fire, the Holy Spirit giving the ability to speak in many languages. Those experiencing that first Pentecost were able to preach and minister to people as never before. The Season of Pentecost in our times is devoted to the church's everyday person-to-person ministry in the name of Jesus.

The word Pentecost in the verse from Acts referred to the Jewish Feast of Weeks, a celebration of the wheat harvest which occurred 50 days after Passover. Likewise, our Pentecost occurs 50 days after the Resurrection. In Greek, the word means "50th".

The Season of Pentecost is soon coming to its end. Today is the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost; next Sunday will be the last Sunday of Pentecost, celebrated as Christ the King Sunday. The liturgical year ends - and begins anew, with Advent.

Let us pray: May we be aware of the Seasons of the Church Year, which can give rhythm and meaning to our lives. Amen.



Monday, November 17

Text: I Timothy 6: 17-18 (NRSV)

“As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share...”

ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

Today we celebrate a Renewer of Society, Elizabeth of Hungary, who died in 1231.

She was born a princess, living most of her life in east central Germany, and thus is often called Elizabeth of Thuringia. She married a duke, was part of the royal court, and gave away her dowry and large sums of money to feed the hungry and care for the poor. She founded two hospitals, and many more carry her name.

When her husband died, she was evicted from the court, and joined the Franciscan order where she continued her charitable works. She accomplished a lot in her short life, dying at the young age of twenty-four.

Let us pray: May we too respond to the needs of the less fortunate in our world as Elizabeth did long ago. Amen.



Tuesday, November 18

Text: Exodus 20:12 (NRSV)

“Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

It is about this time of the year that my husband John and I remember two every-day saints, now in glory, his parents Chester and Eva Kiltinen. They both died in mid-November, Chester in 1982 and Eva in 2006. They were solid members of St Mark's in Marquette, carrying on the work of Christ's Kingdom on Earth through worship, study, leadership, and many, many contributions of time, talent and treasure. They were a loving couple, and we and our son Eric were fortunate enough to live only a mile away during the last three decades of their lives.

Let us pray: We gratefully remember our parents, all they have done and all they have meant to us. Especially, we remember their Christian faithfulness, and pray that we might live up to their example. Amen.



Wednesday, November 19

Text: Psalm 136: 1 (NRSV)

“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.”

TO PRAY IS TO TAKE A T.R.I.P.

I give credit to Mount Carmel Ministries and the Moravian Brothers for this method of praying. There are many ways to pray, but this one seems to work well for me. During the next four days, I'll be giving you my interpretation of the four aspects of this way of praying.

To Pray is to Take a T.R.I.P. T = THANKS

I tend to pray at night, and my prayers begin with thanks for the day's activities, those little successes we cherish, the good things that happened. In a general way, I have found myself using the words "I thank you for family and friends, food, shelter and raiment ..." Raiment?! There's an old word, from Middle English "arrayment", meaning attire or clothing. Well, there is a lot to be thankful for, all things considered!

Let us pray: Each day, there is something, or many things, to be thankful for. Help us to see clearly, Lord. Amen.



Thursday, November 20

Text: I John 1: 7 (NRSV)

“...but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

To Pray is to Take a T.R.I.P. R = REGRETS

Hardly a day goes by when we are not touched by mistakes, forgetfulness, unfortunate conversations, angry words, and the list goes on. Remembering them in prayer is a way to acknowledge them, ask (and receive!) forgiveness, and try to learn from the experiences. It is so good to know that we can carry on in the knowledge that God loves us, warts and all, and that with his help we can resolve to lead better lives.

Let us pray: What a wonderful feeling to know that we are loved by an understanding and all-powerful God. Amen.



Friday, November 21

Text: Jeremiah 33:3 (NRSV)

“Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.”

To Pray is to Take a T.R.I.P. I = INTERCESSIONS

Ah, this is my favorite part of praying! I start close to home, asking for well-being for my husband, stamina and a clear-mind for our son in medical school, and branch out from there to family, friends, acquaintances, others.

Sometimes a list of people develops, with many needs presenting. That's when I envelop them with these words: Be With and Bless them, Guide and Protect them, with your Love, with your

Strength, with your Wisdom, Lord. (Somewhere in my head there is a melody to go with these words.)

Let us pray: May be we mindful of the needs, great and small, of others. Amen.



Saturday, November 22

Text: Jeremiah 29: 11

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”

To Pray is to Take a T.R.I.P. P = PLANS

The final part of the prayer looks forward, usually to the next day, only rarely beyond that. I focus on something started today, or something new tomorrow, keeping our lives moving along smoothly, asking for help in the day (and days) to come.

To bring this week to a close, we can focus on tomorrow's celebration of Christ the King Sunday - there are some marvelous hymns to sing! - and then look forward to the New Year, the beginning of Advent on Sunday the 30th of November. Life, in all its amplitude, goes on. Praise be to God!

Let us pray: Be with us, Lord, as we move through life, blessing us, guiding us and protecting us as only you know how. Amen!

