



Well, the weather has turned chillier and it's rather dreary today, but nature doesn't seem to mind. These two daffodils are the very first of about a hundred that fill my yard on the left shoulder of Fraserburg Road. Welcome sunny ones! Hope you hang around for a bit!

As Kathryn Mansfield wrote:

A Very Early Spring

The fields are snowbound no longer; There are little blue lakes and flags of tenderest green. The snow has been caught up into the sky— So many white clouds— and the blue of the sky is cold. Now the sun walks in the forest, He touches the bows and stems with his golden fingers; They shiver, and wake from slumber. Over the barren branches he shakes his yellow curls. Yet is the forest full of the sound of tears.... A wind dances over the fields. Shrill and clear the sound of her waking laughter, Yet the little blue lakes tremble And the flags of tenderest green bend and quiver, *cheered first by happy daffodils.*

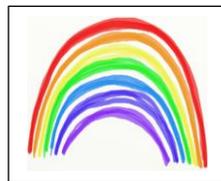
Speaking of young things.....

There is lots of praise on offer these days for heroes. And well deserved it is. We see the signs around town and on the news thanking our medical workers, and hospital teams, long term care homes, police and paramedics and firefighters. We've thought of our military heroes with much sadness this week as we prayed for the families of six helicopter naval personnel tragically crashing into the sea losing their lives. I would add that our Prime Minister and our premier have also

been working and acting heroically, sacrificing and pushing themselves hugely in order to help us all. I think our Archbishop Anne should have a big thankyou sign outside Bishophurst. Tracy May sent me a piece that really broadened my heroes list, and I pass it on so that we will pray for the tender shoots...the little children, babes, and toddlers right teens. I call them heroes too. Now from Tracey.....



“ Everyone is applauding everyone but our children. These little heroes have stayed indoors more than they’ve ever known in their lives. Their whole world has been turned upside down and they don’t know why. All these rules they’ve never known. Not being able to see family or friends (or special boyfriends and girlfriends, no dating, no sweet kisses). No hugs for grandmas and grandpas. Vacations, sports, activities, sleep overs, play dates, regular dates, and school cancelled. Adults talking about others becoming unwell, news reporting death after death. Yet every day their young resilient bodies get up and carry on and bring happiness wherever they go. So here’s to our youngest heroes! Today, tomorrow and forever.”



FIRST HOMEWORK RESPONSE: REV. MARGARET+

Yesterday I asked folks to consider the Scripture about Jesus sitting a child in the midst of His disciples and saying that the child was the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. First to respond is **Rev. Margaret+** and her words are wonderful:

“The Passage chosen has been an inspiration for me in developing and leading the services for the developmentally disabled. The still developing Disciples, gifted with physical, emotional, and mental capacities were in a competition, desiring pre-eminence. They wanted to know the “pecking order”.

Jesus proceeded to give them an object lesson using a child to make His point that dependency, need, vulnerability and humility and the welcoming of Jesus' approach to him or her...are models that teach us about welcome citizens of the Kingdom.

I see our developmentally disabled as being dependent and vulnerable and greatly open to Jesus. I have faith that they are very valued citizens of the Kingdom."

I'd still love to get some more homework responses! If you don't want me to quote any part of what you write, just tell me that in your response. Otherwise, I'm sure I'll find lots of golden nuggets to pass along.

Scripture for Today:

Psalm 25: vs 15-17 " My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart, and bring me out of my distress"

Certainly we should read the Psalm in it's entirety....it is all about trust and mercy and instruction and forgiveness....and it contains these three nugget verses for those who are lonely and/or afflicted. Many people live much of their lives in loneliness and in this covid time those numbers are being magnified many times over. Amongst us in our congregations there are people who are indeed lonely even when in the company of other people.

Perhaps you've been born, like me, in a large family and learned the art of making friends easily. Perhaps you've actually had to work at it...many of my best friends are folks who took the Toastmasters Courses to hone up public speaking and conversational skills. Perhaps your attempts at making friends have failed, or been rebuffed. Maybe you've done everything you can, and still find yourself without true friends; many acquaintances maybe, but not a circle or even one friend on whom you can totally rely, speak your truth, offer your gifts, share your pain as well as your hopes. If so, then you are actually in a bigger company of people than you may realize. It was Mother Teresa who said : "The world's greatest disease is not Aids or cancer or any similar thing (like covid) – it is loneliness." A poet by the name of Rupert Brooke once set sail from Liverpool to

New York City. He felt very lonely because no one had come to see him off, yet all around him folks were hugging goodbye, and shouting “I Love You’s”. Looking around, he noticed a small child who’s name was William. “William, he said, “if I give you six pence when I board the ship will you wave to me?” The child agreed and took a very dirty rag from a torn pocket. Later as the ship moved out, Rupert could see amongst the hundreds of white handkerchiefs one dirty brown rag waving furiously to send him off.

If you think that is a silly, melodramatic story, perhaps you’ve been blessed to never be so lonely as that. Others will truly identify with it.

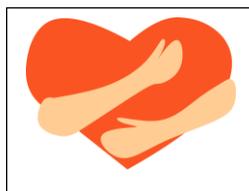
David, almost certainly the writer of Psalm 25, experienced extreme loneliness at several points in his life...when his newborn son died, when his wife Bathsheba grieved and felt anger for her loss,



when he had to hide in a cave as others were seeking to find and kill him...and in those times, he turned to God for help. He spoke out his true feelings, and asked God to help him, to understand, to relieve and comfort him. God did deliver David and he died as a beloved man.

Jesus said “Come unto Me all you who carry heavy burdern’s and are brokenhearted, and you shall have rest for your souls ”. (Matt 11:28) Paul said: “ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God “ (2 Cor 1:4).

Please pray especially today for those who live alone, and at this time cannot be with either friends or family, can’t even go for a drive in a car with someone else, can’t have human championship for a meal. Look for ways in which you may be able to reach out to them. Isolation is very difficult for families and children, and couples living together. imagine how it is magnified for those truly alone. (I do realize that too much togetherness can be as stressful too much aloneness, but the aloneness leaves no room for temporary relief). And if you are one of those people all alone know that you are being prayed for by your brothers and sisters in your church. May God touch all hearts with His comfort. Amen.



Prayers for the Day:

This prayer was written by poet Richard J. Foster while feeling alone in the midst of a busy, large convention in Winnipeg.

Today, O Lord, I feel the loneliness of anonymity. No one here knows me and no one cares. At least it seems that way. And so I am left to myself and my own thoughts.

My loneliness, of course, is quite comfortable. It is not the loneliness of the truly abandoned or always alone. But perhaps it can help me to have fellowship with all those who are marginalized:

When I eat alone, help me to pray for those who have nothing to eat.

When I walk alone, help me to remember those who do not have the strength to walk.

When I feel on the outside of every conversation, help me to see the nameless people to whom no one pays attention.

When I speak and am ignored, help me to hear those people whose voices fall on deaf ears.

And whenever my circumstances are devoid of familiar voices, may I always be able to hear the voice of the true Shepherd. Amen.

A Hymn Prayer written by Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819-1886)

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry every thing to God in prayer
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials or temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged...take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care/
Christ the Saviour is our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do our friends despise, forsake us? Are we tempted to despair?
Jesus strength will shield our weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

That was a pretty long bit of thinking and praying...so a little humour to close us out,

What do you call a three legged donkey? A wonkey! (sent by Caroline)

At our weekly Bible study, the leader asked an elderly gentleman, Walt, to open the meeting with prayer. Walt did so in a soft voice. Another man, straining to hear, shouted, "I can't hear you!" Walt replied, "I wasn't talking to you." — Richard Steussy -Reader's Digest best jokes.

You know you're a mom when you're up each night until 10 PM vacuuming, dusting, wiping, washing, drying, loading, unloading, shopping, cooking, driving, flushing, ironing, sweeping, picking up, changing sheets, changing diapers, bathing, helping with homework, paying bills, budgeting, clipping coupons, folding clothes, putting to bed, dragging out of bed, brushing, chasing, buckling, feeding (them, Not you), PLUS swinging, playing baseball, bike riding, pushing trucks, cuddling dolls, rollerblading, basketball, football, catch, bubbles, sprinklers, slides, nature walks, coloring, crafts, jumping rope, PLUS raking, trimming, planting, edging, mowing, gardening, painting, and walking the dog. You get up at 5:30 AM and you have no time to eat, sleep, drink or go to the bathroom, and yet ... you still managed to gain 10 pounds.

