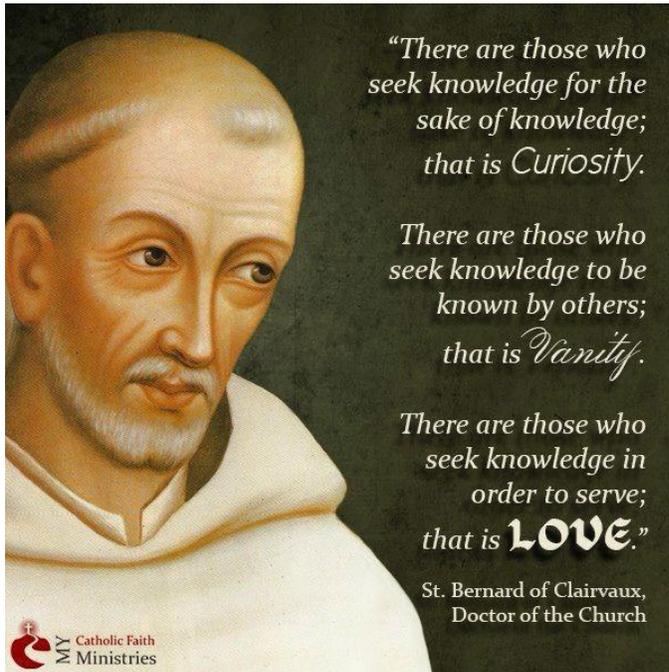


Coop's Scoops #89 Thursday August 20th 2020



This handsome fellow is Bernard of Clairvaux. On this day he is honoured in the Christian church for his service of LOVE in the years 1113-1153. To be remembered and honoured for over 800 years is quite an achievement for anyone. His humble service is a call to us today to, like him, present ourselves to God for whatever mission/ministry He has for us to

do.

He was converted out of the blue, sort of like Saint Paul, riding his steed with a military party including Knights in armour. While passing by the Abby of Citeaux, he heard a bell ring from the tower there. He interpreted the bell as a call to “*conversio*”....which was not a change to a new religious experience, but rather a call to being set aside as a servant. We would think of it as a call to ordination. He and four brothers all went immediately to the Abby and begged the abbot there to let them become monks.

Bernard went from family wealth, military prowess and high reputation to a kneeling servant living in poverty and devoted to finding others to be schooled in the Latin Fathers teachings, then pray and work for the transformation of their communities. St. Bernard did a great job of that, as in the next 38 years, 700 Cistercian monks were in the Abby, and 60 new houses had been established in England, France and Germany. Bernard was an excellent orator/preacher, and was himself, in time, appointed as Abbot over all. His wit and his intellect combined with LOVE to win over so many people to their own “*conversio*”....giving of themselves to service as monks across Europe.

I've begun with him today as I am reviewing surveys about the future of our churches, the paths we wish to follow, the roads we do not seek to take. And through it all, I am constantly reminded by the Spirit that our mission, our work, our service is to continue with fulsome energy and skill whether or not we have a building open for public worship. I am imagining new small groups, people taking on some discipleship practices, helping us all to be able to speak a word of witness when opportunities present themselves. That's enough "preaching" for this opening. Just thought you might like to remember this devoted servant, your brother and mine, who gave his entire life over to serving by LOVING, serving by learning, and serving with knowledge.

The picture of Bernard is a bit dark, so I am going to write the words out here where you can see them clearly. This is what he taught:

There are those who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge. That is PRIDE.

There are those who seek knowledge to be known by others. That is VANITY.

There are those who seek knowledge in order to serve. That is LOVE.

You rock, Bernard of Clairvaux!



HEY everyone, THANKS for sending or bringing in your survey responses. I'll be back to you with a plan during the early days of next week.

Don't forget to get on line on Saturday August 22nd for the service from St. James, Port Cunnington, with Rev. Margaret, Karen, Mike, Joanne, and me choreographed according to protocols in order to lead you in worship. It will be on the Deanery of Muskoka website, St Thomas Facebook Page, and All Saint's Huntsville web site. Anytime....and for a few days....Last time we did this we had over 150 views. That's pretty wonderful.

Some Humour for your day to keep you smiling.... (or maybe start you smiling if this cloudy day is making you cranky!)

A Good Bad Egg: The police called us in the middle of the night. “Where is your son?” the officer asked. “In bed?” we said. “He’s with us,” came the reply from the police officer. Our 10-year-old had unfortunately egged the local school with a friend. How was he caught? He was nabbed running back to the school with the empty cartons because, he told the cops, “There wasn’t anywhere else to recycle them.”

Payday? In church, my three-year-old insists on being the one to put the money into the collection basket. One Sunday, as the basket came toward him, he held out the envelope and asked aloud, “When is God coming to pick up his paycheck?”

Whazz zat? It was a typical noisy dinner at my parents’ home, and Dad was having trouble following the conversations. He kept jumping in with off-topic comments and asking for things to be repeated. I finally told him he needed to get a hearing aid.

Looking at me as if I were crazy, he said, “What would I do with a hand grenade?”

Scripture for Today: No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. If they do, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And people do not pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And none of you, after drinking old wine, wants the new, for you say, ‘The old is better.’ ([Luke 5.36–39](#))

I want to begin by thanking Rev. Margaret+ for sending me a meditation yesterday that spoke about the “NEW” things that churches are doing, or trying to do, with various degrees of success and the “OLD” ways that things have been done for decades if not centuries if not forever right back to the time of Jesus.

Basically it boils down to the idea that many Christians still think of Church as a building. Bricks and mortar, where you Go to...and Listen....and Leave until maybe you come back again. We have seen in this pandemic, that God’s mission does not begin and end at the doors of the church building....God’s mission is continual, and it begins and ends in the hearts of believers who want to live like

Jesus. God's mission is transformation, change, new life....it's all about relationships and not at all about buildings.

There have been times when the Church authorities have said things like "Don't change...Hang on to what has proven fruitful...no new liturgies !...keep the rules strong!" That proved to preserve the ancient teachings, which are wonderful, but did not stimulate creativity, inclusion, Biblical literacy or the importance of the ministry of the laity. The Priest was "IN CHARGE" of everything, except of course the BISHOP!

In my lifetime our Anglican church has CHANGED DRAMATICALLY. Not every one would agree with all of the directions which have been taken, but for me, I have benefitted tremendously. Fifty years ago as a divorced person, let alone a WOMAN, I would have not been allowed communion. I would never even have entertained the notion that God might call me to be a Priest and that the Church might actually affirm that! Most recently we have seen the very big change regarding the provision of same gender marriage. That took over seven Synods to achieve, but it has been done. There is a whole lot of new wine, and it is being poured into new wineskins which can stretch and grow as the newness ferments and bubbles and brings vitality in as yet unknown ways. It was never merely a cerebral choice...one where our minds became convinced in one direction or another, but also a heart choice, where our love became too big to withhold. For those of us in the later seasons of our lives, we sometimes taste the new wine and think "Ah I sure did like the old wine....the BCP for example, the union of one man and one woman, getting "Father" someone, and not having to sort out "what do you call a female priest anyway?" stuff. The old hymns that didn't ever drums or guitars or flutes adding to the organ... Electric pianos....phaw! And yet, we have not only survived, we have come to love the new wineskin too. Well, we're working on it.

As one preacher once said to a long-haired, beard wearing, bandana'd young man bringing up the offering, amongst some scowling faces: "Don't worry Steve...God loves you, and I love you, and the people mostly you, and old Harry there...he's working on it!".

The current young generation and the next generation are now and also will be new wineskins into which God pours His Spirit. And hopefully, there will still be

some “Harry’s” around to say “ I really liked it how it used to be”. But none of us will be confused about what the CHURCH is....not a building....not a liturgy.. but rather a family of people who love each other and have a common goal... bringing the Gospel, the good news about Jesus to their families and friends and neighbourhoods. And let’s be clear; old wineskins are not necessarily old people...youth can also become “unstretchable” ...and older people can be very flexible and creative as well. It’s the “attitude” that is the spiritual wineskin, not the physical body. So much more could be said, but maybe another time. God bless you wherever you are on your journey. Know you are still invaluable to the mission of God in our world, and be brave and courageous and carry on.

Judie+



(So why’s an old wineskin not good for new wine anyway?)

Well, an old wineskin back in the day was made of cloth or animal hide. When the wine began to ferment and bubble, the skin would stretch. Eventually it stretched so far that if it expanded even one more ounce, it would burst. Any additional usage and the wine would be lost.

But if you put new wine into a brand new wineskin, it could bubble up even twice as much as usual, and still hold firm and not lost the wine through tearing. Old wineskins were still greatly valued, because old wine was often better than fresh wine...and so long as only quantities of old wine were put into them, they were fine. The old and the new were both preserved and useful and needed. It’s not so much “either”/ “or” ... it’s more “both”/ “and”. Still don’t get it? You’ll have to ask a winery! That could be fun! So could, um, maybe a little contemporary music sometime, right????????????????????)

Prayer for today: Gracious God we rejoice that some things are not “changeable”...your mercies are new every morning, your faithfulness endures in all generations, and your love never, ever fails. We rejoice also when your Spirit whispers or shouts in our ears that “how” we do things and “what” we do can vary; but the purpose for everything we do remains unshakeable. We live to the glory of You, Lord God, and Your Son, Jesus the Christ, through the power of the

Holy Spirit, and we are to do all things in love. Love always. Love only. Grant us courage and grace to fulfill the mission to which we have been called. Amen.

God's peace be with you, my brothers and sisters! - Rev. Judie+