

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

June, 2023

Virtual Adult Bible Study
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Saturday, 12:00

2783 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10465
718-597-6298

Sunday Worship
Sunday 11:00 am

cotm47@verizon.net

WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor



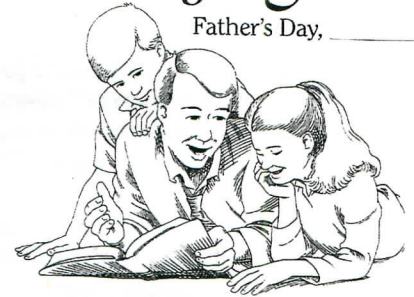
A day in June

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
... Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes but we cannot help
knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing.

—James Russell Lowell,
from *The Vision of Sir Launfal*

Honor Your Father

Father's Day, _____



GRADUATION



SPECIAL DATES*

- Trinity Sunday, June 4th
- Flag Day, June 14th
- Father's Day, June 18th
- First Day of summer, June 20th

News From the Pews



Continued healing for:
Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,
Loretta Byrd & Alice & Alex Rivera

Everyone is invited to join our virtual "**Hour of Prayer Power**" every Friday at 7:00 PM. The conference call-in number is 605-475-4860, code: 371231#

Our virtual **Bible Study** meets Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00. Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273) for information on joining

Reunion Luncheon

On Tuesday, April 4th, a group of 12 from church joined Ellen, Terry & Don McCullough at the Wicked Wolf for a delicious luncheon. It was so good to see Ellen looking so well and so happy to see her old friends. Ed & Michele Bungert even managed to get Allen Ford out of Providence Rest for a surprise visit. Everyone said they'd love to be able to do this again in the near future.

CONGRATULATIONS and our Best Wishes

to:

Alana Ingram who is graduating from St. Rita School. Alana will be attending Holy Cross High School in September.
Nicholas Acevedo who is graduating from PS 14. Nicholas will be attending MS 101 in September.



CHURCH CHUCKLES

En route to church to make his first confession, my nervous seven-year-old grandson asked me what he could expect.

"Confession is where you tell all the bad things you've done to the priest," I told him. He looked relieved. "Good. I haven't done anything bad to the priest."

During our pastor's sermon, a large plant fell over right behind the pulpit, crashing to the ground. Acknowledging his reputation for long-windedness, he smiled sheepishly and said, "Well, that's the first time I actually put a plant to sleep."

When I asked my friend if she was planning to attend church, she just shook her head. "I haven't gone in a long time," she said. "Besides, it's too late for me. I've probably already broken all seven commandments."

After examining the paltry tips left by a church group, our waitress was not pleased. Looking toward my table, she grumbled, "These people come in with the Ten Commandments and a ten-dollar bill and they don't break any of them"



'Well, kiddo, it's you and me!'

T.J., a boy with developmental delays, is featured in *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Children With Special Needs*. T.J. and his father, who'd long yearned for a son, settled into a routine of daily outings.

Stacey, one of T.J.'s sisters, was moved when she realized how much their father loved that together time. One day, as their dad made T.J. laugh, "T.J. stopped and reached up to softly touch our father's face," Stacey writes. "My dad looked down at him and said ... 'Well, kiddo, it looks like it's you and me for the rest of my life.' There wasn't a sense of sadness or burden in my father's voice, only acceptance and unconditional love."

Our Father God says the same to each of us: "Well, kiddo, it's you and me forever!" No matter our weaknesses, our differences or even our tendencies to avoid time with him, God speaks with complete acceptance and love. He loves being with us — just as we are — and rejoices to be our Father forever.

An Ode to Brunch

Have you ever wondered how brunch became a Sunday tradition? The portmanteau of "breakfast" and "lunch" was first seen in 1895 in a lighthearted article titled "Brunch: A Plea," by writer Guy Beringer. He described brunch as "cheerful, sociable and inciting...it sweeps away the worries and cobwebs of the week." It's good to know that some things remain constant even with the passing of time. Now, pile on the eggs Benedict and raise a mimosa to toast Mr. Beringer. Cheers to brunch!

Real prayer

Prayer is a direction of life, a focusing of one's most personal and deepest attention Godward. The purpose is to love God and learn to know him so well that our wills, our actions, will be more and more aligned with his, until even our subconscious reactions and purposes will have the mark of his love, his life, about them. Prayer is no longer an "activity." It [becomes] the continuing language of that relationship God designed to fulfill a human life.

—Keith Miller, *The Taste of New Wine*

Fortunate typo

A pastor had his sermon titles published weekly in the city newspaper. One Monday, he phoned to thank the paper for making an error.

"The topic I sent you was 'What Jesus Saw in a Publican,'" he said. "You printed it as 'What Jesus Saw in a Republican.' I had the biggest crowd of the year."

Beginning ... and beginning again

During the coming weeks, as you or loved ones celebrate graduation, remember it isn't a closed door, an end or a farewell. Instead, it's an entryway threshold, a beginning, a hello — and one of many such opportunities that mark life.

"God wants us to know that life is a series of beginnings, not endings, just as graduations are not terminations but commencements," writes Bernie Siegel. "Creation is an ongoing process, and when we create a perfect world where love and compassion are shared by all, suffering will cease."

Of course, we can "create a perfect world" only by letting God guide our actions. So, dear graduates, may you partner with God to meet suffering with love, kindness and compassion through all the new beginnings of your life!

The winner

A father of five won a toy in a raffle. He gathered his young children to ask who should get the present.

"Who's the most obedient?" Dad asked. "Who never talks back to Mom? Who does everything she says?"

Five small voices answered in unison, "Okay, Dad, you get the toy."

A father's love

In all that you do, a dad's love plays a part.
There's always a place for him deep in your heart.
And each year that passes, you're even more glad,
More grateful and proud just to call him your dad!

—Author unknown

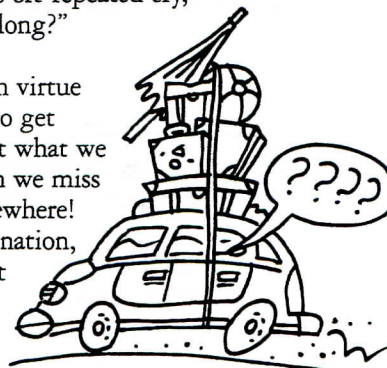
Are we there yet?

This age-old refrain of young travelers is followed by a second question: "How much longer?" How similar those queries are to the psalmist's oft-repeated cry, "How long, O LORD, how long?" (Psalm 6:3b, NIV).

Patience is an uncommon virtue these days. We're anxious to get where we're going or to get what we want. But think how much we miss while wishing we were elsewhere!

In our rush to reach a destination, we fail to grasp lessons that can be learned only along the way. What blessings might you be overlooking in the here-and-now and the right-where-you-are?

—Kari Myers



***It's nice to be important,
but it's more important to be nice.***

The work of a Christian father

Martin Luther taught that God calls all Christians to use their daily work to serve others. Living in the Middle Ages, he used a rather progressive example to illustrate his point:

"[Our natural reason says,] 'Alas, must I rock the baby, wash its diapers, make its bed, smell its stench, stay up nights with it, take care of it when it cries ...?' What then does Christian faith say to this?"

"It says, 'O God, because I am certain that thou hast created me as a man and hast from my body begotten this child, I also know for a certainty that it meets with thy perfect pleasure. I confess to thee that I am not worthy to rock the little babe or wash its diapers, or to be entrusted with the care of the child and its mother. ... O how gladly will I do so.'"



The umbrella of marriage

Lighting a unity candle, a common wedding ritual, symbolizes the bride and groom becoming one. The "I, me, mine" of each individual doesn't disappear entirely, but the two are drawn under the umbrella of "we, us, ours." When troubles inevitably come, the partners can take shelter together.

Many years into marriage, a wife underwent medical tests for troubling symptoms. Her husband accompanied her to the follow-up consultation. Later, when a friend asked how the appointment went, the husband replied, "We have multiple sclerosis."

There was no slow, careful word-choosing. After years under the umbrella of marriage, the man's pronoun selection was automatic: "We have multiple sclerosis."

His wife smiled, even as a tear fell. She would be neither under the umbrella alone nor left out in the rain. They would weather this storm together.

—Heidi Mann

Out of order

A confirmation teacher asked students to list the Ten Commandments in any order.

One girl wrote "3, 6, 1, 8, 4, 5, 9, 2, 10, 7."

Willing recipients

A young graduate longed for a certain sports car and knew his dad could afford it. So on the big day, he was infuriated to receive instead a leather-bound, embossed Bible. He threw it down and left for good.

Years later, after his father died, the son entered his father's study with sorrow and regret. Sorting through belongings, he found the gift and this highlighted verse: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:11, ESV). Suddenly something dropped from the back of the Bible: a key with a tag from the dealer of the car he'd wanted long ago. On the tag was his graduation date and the words "Paid in Full."

How often we miss out on God's generous gifts because they come "packaged" differently than we expect! At graduation — and throughout life — may we be open to every gift God bestows on us with a Father's deep love.

Constant and unchanging

Summer's arrival feels positive to many people but may not be smooth for all. Families who rely on regular school meals for their children must stretch grocery dollars further. Heat poses risks for elderly people who lack air conditioning. Work can be difficult to find in the summer months, and uncertainty looms for recent graduates. Meanwhile, concerns such as wars, natural disasters and health problems don't take a summer break.

St. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) prayed, "May you be blessed forever, Lord, for being constant and unchanging, amidst all the changes of the world." Her prayer is as appropriate today as nearly 500 years ago. When all around us is unstable and unreliable, God's love and faithfulness are constant and trustworthy.





June 2021 Newsletter Article

As we enter the month of June with Father's Day, graduations, weddings vacations and things returning to the semblance of what is normal or the "new normal." We praise God that our nation is slowly coming back from the ravages and losses from the unprecedented Covid-19 or corona virus world-wide pandemic! But there still remains lingering animosity, mistrust, misinformation, and in some instances—disinformation running rampant in our nation! Our political leaders cannot seem to work together in a bipartisan manner because the distrust is so thick between our elected officials. We have shamed those who choose to follow CDC requirements and wear masks. We have gotten into shouting matches and even physical altercations when asked to wear a mask to shop in a particular business or eat in a particular restaurant. Many in our nation have determined they will not get vaccinated which is their personal choice. But those who have chosen to get vaccinated have shamed those who did not. Those who did not get vaccinated have shamed and blamed those who did choose to get vaccinated. With so much vitriol and ill-will following this past election and the unprecedented events of January 6th, our nation cannot seem to agree on what occurred and why.

As I reflected upon the precipice of the reopening our nation, and the current state of our politics and social discourse, I had an opportunity to read the below article in the Spring 2021 edition of *Today's Pastor* titled "Follow Jesus' Example: Ask Questions." The article resonated with me because it speaks so profoundly to our current conditions. Church of the Master received permission to reprint the article from the author and editor of *Today's Pastor*, Bro. Dan Brownell. I pray it will provide food for thought and food for your soul, as much as it certainly did for mine. Happy Father's Day and congratulations to all of our Graduates in the Class of 2021 [2022]!

Shalom to you now,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden
Pastor
Church of the Master

*Corrections to May 2021 edition of the *Master's Message Newsletter*, *The Pastor's Pen* article "When May Day Becomes Mayday—Pray Day!" 1.) Reference to history of "May Day." Should be: (<https://www.history.com>. (Accessed on April 14, 2021)). 2.) Reference to definition of "Mayday." Should be: <https://www.livemint.com>. (Accessed on April 14, 2021)).

Following Jesus' Example: Ask Questionsⁱ

The culture of rage has reached new heights. A significant part of our society is now aggressively attacking those who hold a biblical worldview. But we're called to the difficult challenge of being faithful to Jesus and His Word while defusing conflict when we can. Paul says in Romans, *"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all"* (12:18 ESV).

So how can we face hostility without losing our cool? After all, it's human nature to react to an angry comment with a defensive answer. We need to be Spirit controlled, but there's also a practical strategy we can implement. We can follow Jesus' example of asking questions. We know He used this strategy effectively, but it's easy to forget to apply it because we're immersed in a culture that places little value in this approach. We're trained to give answers, not ask questions.

Questions work well because they can:

- Calm and disarm a person and redirect an attack into a conversation. *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger"* (Prov. 15:1 NIV).
- Get to the heart of a matter quickly.
- Reveal blind spots and make truth resonate.
- Reinforce the Holy Spirit's conviction by helping people recognize truth for themselves.

If we're criticized for our position on an issue, we could recite a list of reasons for our beliefs, but that will likely just elicit rebuttals and counter rebuttals. Or we could respond with a simple question: Whose thought on this topic matters most? Yours, mine, or God's? (Unless the person is an atheist, it would be hard to avoid the obvious answer that God's is most important.)

The next question follows naturally, "So what does God say about the issue?," which provides an opportunity to point out what Scripture says. Of course, there's a chance the person will reject the Bible as the Word of God, but at least then the discussion focuses on what God says rather than winning an argument.

Jesus understood human nature, and we would be wise to follow His lead in lowering walls by asking questions. Now more than ever, we need to be able to engage people civilly to communicate truth.

In Christ,
Dan Brownell, Editor

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