



August 2025



BIBLE SAFARI:

The Power of God

by Fr. David St. John

As some of our readers know, I am originally from Seattle, and in the Pacific Northwest is what's left of one rather notorious mountain. In May of 1980, Mt. St. Helens became the focus of the world's attention. And for those of us who lived there, it became a force to reckon with. When Mt. St. Helens blew, it was an incredible explosion which was estimated to be 500 times more powerful than the force of the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. This explosion was so powerful that it ripped 1,200 feet off the top of a 9,700 foot mountain.

Although Mt. St. Helens had been dormant for 123 years, within a few days, an incredible power was unleashed. Thousands of tons of volcanic ash were thrust into the atmosphere. The cloud of ash literally turned day into night in the surrounding communities. In our area, we woke up the following morning to a thick coat of ash; on our houses, on our cars, everywhere. It was like a night of black snow. Some communities were virtually immobilized with an accumulation of four to six inches of the powder.

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What was once considered prime hunting and fishing country was decimated. One magazine reported that 26 lakes, 154 miles of streams and rivers, and 195 square miles of wildlife habitat were destroyed.

But even at that, Mt. St. Helens was not very powerful compared to a volcano which erupted in Indonesia in 1883. Mount Krakatoa erupted with a force estimated to have been over 60 times more powerful than Mt. St. Helens. During the eruption of Mount Krakatoa, tidal waves killed 36,000 people in Java and Sumatra, and a cloud of ash, which hung in the atmosphere cooled the earth's climate of almost two years.

But even the power of these natural occurrences only gives us a clue to what the real power behind this universe is like. The truth is that we haven't begun to comprehend the limitless power of God.

As Christians, we celebrate a display of His power in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This power is not destructive power as we see in the power of a volcano. It is creative power. And, it is unlike any other power you have ever experienced.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, which we celebrate every Easter, is the fundamental issue upon which Christianity either rises or falls. Our faith is based on it. In Romans 1:4, Paul says that Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead".

Absolutely, the power of God as demonstrated by Christ's resurrection is the key issue of Christianity. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then He was a fake, what He said was not true, and we might as well believe something else. The Apostle Paul said that without the reality of the resurrection, our preaching is vain, and our faith is vain. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then we are believing a fairy tale. The truth of Christianity is verified by God's power.

Because the power of God was manifested in the resurrection of Christ, we now can have confidence in the power of God to save us. This is why Paul could speak of the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Because of that first Easter, we can know that there is power in the message of the Gospel - power to save us from our sins. It is the power of God. Paul says the power of the Gospel is for everyone who believes. No person is too sinful. No person is beyond the power of God.

Along with all of this, though, is our responsibility. The call of the Gospel is to believe in Christ. And to believe in Christ means that we have to live that belief. To paraphrase one of Aurore's favorite sayings: "What we DO speaks so LOUDLY, that people cannot hear what we SAY!" ♦

Journaling is Something Everyone Should Do

by Abbess Aurore Barrett

I have been journaling in one way or the other since I was about 12 years old. My first journal was a Commonplace Book in which I pasted all my movie star photos I had collected. Most of them were autographed and I still have that large sized journal, it now lays against a book case in our bedroom. My second journal, created at the same time as my first journal, was also a common place book in which I pasted articles from magazines and newspapers on my favorite actors and actresses. Sadly that journal did not survive. My collection of journals now takes up over 5 shelves in the various rooms of our house.

Through the years I have taught journaling of all kinds to individual women, and groups of women, and a few men, in many different locations. I am always happy to receive requests from groups and individuals who want to learn how to really journal for joy, for fun, and to read on a regular basis.

Currently, I am writing in several different journals: a “Not Really Morning Pages Journal”, an “Everyday Journal”, a “Note



Taking Journal”, three “Commonplace Journals”, and an “I Am Journal”; plus miscellaneous ones that I use each day. Pieces of paper do not work for me, if I don’t write it down in a permanent place, I will lose the paper, and worst all, the thoughts. The “I AmJournal” is a very important journal, and one of the most requested classes. I’ll explain in our next newsletter.

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Special Note: I recently overheard a child of about 8, when asked to write her name at the top of her paper, state quite loudly that she didn't know how to write cursive as it was no longer taught in her school.

This shocked me as it has been proven that cursive writing is very important for all children to learn. Cursive writing offers several benefits when taught in schools, including improved fine motor skills, enhanced cognitive development, and the ability to read historical documents and signatures. While some argue it's a relic of the past, proponents highlight its unique contributions to brain development and literacy.



One way to help your child to continue writing in cursive is to give them a journal as soon as they are old enough to learn how to write, and then teach them how to keep an everyday journal. Believe me, you will be glad you taught them how to write cursive and they, in the future, will thank you for this. Studies suggest that learning cursive can stimulate different parts of the brain, improving memory, language processing, and the connection between the left and right hemispheres.

In our next issue of Solleone I will discuss the importance of “Daily Prayer Journaling” and how this practice has helped me to overcome disappointments and sadness in my own life. ♦

Slow Living

by Fr. David St. John

In the Spring of 1986, a brand new McDonald's opened in the Piazza di Spagna in Rome, near the bottom of the famous Spanish Steps. Many people were horrified as the famous golden arches appeared in this centuries-old square. Not only were they concerned about the lack of aesthetics, but they were also worried about the intrusion of American style fast food on



the more laid back Italian manner of eating good Italian food. *(continued on next page)*

While activists were unsuccessful in preventing the opening of the McDonald's restaurant, their efforts did lead to the establishment of a movement promoting the idea of slow eating and, by extension, slow living. Led by activist and author Carlo Petrini, this group intended to defend regional food traditions, and, according to their original manifesto, "to escape the tediousness of fast food and dine on the rich variety of local cuisine with slow and prolonged enjoyment".

As the Slow Food movement grew, it inspired the creation of other Slow movements. Included among these "subcultures" was Slow Living, which in many ways has eclipsed all the others. Slow Living saw its beginnings in 2004 with the publication of "In Praise of Slow" by Canadian author Carl Honoré.

Before I mention some of Slow Living's benefits, let's look quickly at some of the things it is not.



Slow Living is not the same as being lazy.

By slowing down, you can do things better, and you can prioritize those things that are truly important.

Slow Living is not failure. It helps you define what success means for you and how you can achieve it in any area of your life.

Slow Living is not anti-technology. It doesn't mean giving up your computer or smartphone. It means using technology in ways that serve us, rather than control or distract us.

So, what are the benefits of Slow Living?

It prioritizes a less hurried pace in our lives. It allows us to take time to enjoy the present moment.

- It improves our health
- It saves money
- It gives us time to build stronger relationships
- It helps us find purpose in life
- It enhances our lives in many ways - leading to enchantment, appreciation, gratitude and joy

Here are the ground rules as I see them:

1. Start your day slowly
2. Set intentions for the day
3. Do one thing at a time (as opposed to multitasking)
4. Eat slowly
5. Limit tech time
6. Get some fresh air
7. Plan good meals
8. Adopt a calm mindset
9. Learn to say "no"
10. Say "no" to the news!

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In no particular order, some of the ways Slow Living can be manifested in your life are: mindful eating, decluttering and adding flowers or plants to your home, getting enough sleep, daydreaming and manifesting your dreams, trying new things, crafting, listening to good music, journaling, cooking, and working smart rather than hard.

In a future article, I will be going into more detail about some of these subjects. In the

meantime, think about ways in which you can learn to love and respect yourself, to be grateful for all your blessings, and to find great joy in all that you do.

Plan. Don't cram. Slow down, breathe, and live with gratitude. ♦

Special First Person Article: A Note on Aging

Dame Patricia Routledge is best known for her comedy role as Hyacinth Bucket in the popular BBC sitcom “Keeping Up Appearances” (1990–1995), for which she was nominated for the BAFTA TV Award for Best Light Entertainment Performance in 1992 and 1993.

One month before her 95th birthday, (born February 17, 1929) Patricia Routledge wrote something that still gently echoes:

“I’ll be turning 95 this coming Monday. In my younger years, I was often filled with worry — worry that I wasn’t quite good enough, that no one would cast me again, that I wouldn’t live up to my mother’s hopes. But these days begin in peace, and end in gratitude.

“My life didn’t quite take shape until my forties. I had worked steadily — on provincial stages, in radio plays, in West End productions — but I often felt adrift, as though I was searching for a home within myself that I hadn’t quite found.



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“At 50, I accepted a television role that many would later associate me with — Hyacinth Bucket, of *Keeping Up Appearances*. I thought it would be a small part in a little series. I never imagined that it would take me into people’s living rooms and hearts around the world. And truthfully, that role taught me to accept my own quirks. It healed something in me.

“At 60, I began learning Italian — not for work, but so I could sing opera in its native language. I also learned how to live alone without feeling lonely. I read poetry aloud each evening, not to perfect my diction, but to quiet my soul.

“At 70, I returned to the Shakespearean stage — something I once believed I had aged out of. But this time, I had nothing to prove. I stood on those boards with stillness, and audiences felt that. I was no longer performing. I was simply being.

“At 80, I took up watercolor painting. I painted flowers from my garden, old hats from my youth, and faces I remembered from the London Underground. Each painting was a quiet memory made visible.

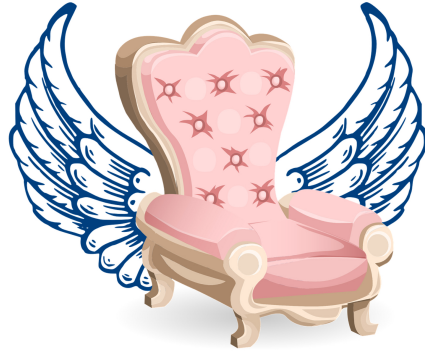
“Now, at 95, I write letters by hand. I’m learning to bake rye bread. I still breathe deeply every morning. I still adore laughter — though I no longer try to make anyone laugh. I love the quiet more than ever.

“I’m writing this to tell you something simple: Growing older is not the closing act. It can be the most exquisite chapter — if you let yourself bloom again.

“Let these years ahead be your treasure years.
You don’t need to be famous. You don’t need to be flawless.
You only need to show up — fully — for the life that is still yours.”

With love and gentleness,

Patricia Routledge



Flying Armchair Adventures

Coming in September!

In addition to our newsletter, “Solleone” - The Newsletter of Lions Gate Abbey, and all of our associated departments and guilds; including Bible Safari, Art Safari, Music Safari, “Notes from the Abbey”, “Poetry Corner”, “Books, Coffee and De-Lites”, among others, we are starting a new adventure!



It's a book club, but it's way beyond a book club. Flying Armchair Adventures will transform the pages of our monthly book selections into an experience delighting all of your senses. It defines our belief that you can travel anywhere in the world, effortlessly, and problem-free, from the comfort of your own armchair. It's the ultimate Staycation every month of the year.

Your life will be enhanced by virtual visits to the actual locations described in the books we read. From the comfort of your own home, you will walk into the actual locations described by the authors - breathing the same air and seeing the same sights that they do.

There will be occasional interviews with the authors of our chosen books and opportunities for you to ask them questions about the settings of their books.

You'll be immersed in the local history, culture and cuisine of the varied places we visit.

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In your Flying Armchair Adventure, you will also receive playlists of music, movie recommendations, and extra reading choices, including travel guides.

In some locations, there will be virtual tours available from local hotels, restaurants and museums.

You'll have the opportunity to connect with other virtual travelers, to share stories of trips, real or virtual, that you have taken.

In the meantime, we'd like you to share some stories with us. Where have you traveled and what places did you like best? Where's the one place you dream of returning to in a hot minute? What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you? What is the most exciting thing you've ever done? What's a fascinating bit of trivia concerning one of the places you've visited? Email us at lionsgateabbey@gmail.com (You can also email us anytime to tell us how wonderful we are!).



Flying Armchair Adventures will be designed and curated for older adults, some of whom can't travel, some of whom don't want to travel anymore, and even those who still do some traveling, but are limited as to where they can go. We will all be able to visit exotic, historic, and romantic places that, perhaps, we would not be able to visit in any other way.

So stay tuned. Don't bother with passports, security checks, botched reservations, or any other travel headaches. Just pour a cup of tea, coffee, or your favorite beverage - sit back, and relax in your own flying armchair for some of the best adventures of your life. ♦

Poetry Corner

By Aurore Leigh Barrett

The Wind and You!

The wind touched your lips
and cheeks
And covered them with
rosy peaks
It whistled through your
hair so fine
Brushed it gently to make
it shine
It filled your eyes with
tears of joy
And lifted up your skirts
so coy
It twisted and turned about
your feet
And then it traveled
down the street.

(This poem won first place, and was published in a Newspaper Competition when I was 14 years old. It was reprinted in my book, "The Touch", copyright 2013)

