January 23, 2023

TO: Friends of Melrose

FROM: Rev. Sonia Ireson

Greetings in the name of the One who loves us and holds us dear

Hello dear people. January is flying by. The weather has been reasonably good to us. Much less sun than I would like; not a fan of this gloomy weather, but at least my driveway is reasonably clear.

The church is bubbling with activity. I was in yesterday and the parking lot was full – the Duet club is back in full force with their practices. The AV people were in preparing to set us up with our permanent equipment after a long-awaited backlog; Tim was scouting out the church’s needs to prepare us for its arrival; Lorraine is thankfully back from her illness (the office does not run smoothly without her); and our various committees are responding to the deadline for submitting their annual reports.

I have long been a fan of Rabbi Baskin, whose wisdom is unparalleled. He was interviewed by Steven Paikin for the Hamilton Spectator in July of 2022. At that time, he was 102. I have kept his column around for use one day and this is the day. He, of course, being a good Jew, follows the Ten Commandments, but his words to the journalist were to offer a new and more current set of ten laws.

1. *You shall not overpopulate the earth*. Problems – “incalculable problems for food supply and natural resources. Millions will suffer and multitudes will die of starvation and malnutrition.”
2. *You shall share your natural resources with others*. “A vital need and a growing reality.”
3. *You shall not pollute or despoil the earth*. “We must emphasize the importance of preserving God’s earth for our ultimate health and well-being before it is too late.”
4. *Preserve the family to keep it secure*. “When asked if his definition of family is limited to a 1950s Ozzie and Harriet version or could include same-sex couples, he confirms it’s the latter.”
5. *You shall not engage in wholesale murder*. “Admonition aimed both at terrorists and the Russian military…. This is a commandment that should be engraved on the hearts and minds of all world leaders.”
6. *You shall have respect for the elderly*. “There is a desperate need for the elderly to be treated as individuals who have made their contribution to society.”
7. *You shall not pervert the truth*. “We live in an era of the big lie and the subtle falsehood. Could there be a more important commandment in an age of the Fox network’s prime-time lineup and Donald Trump?”
8. *Strive to make your life worthwhile*. “There should be so much more to life than accumulating wealth and having fun. If you want idiot happiness, take tranquilizers, or pray for senility. The purpose of life is to be useful, to be honourable. It is to be compassionate. It is to matter, to have it make some difference.”
9. *Learn to live together as members of the human race*. The world is still filled with hate and division. There is a race between our ability to achieve more rational, gentle understanding and the widespread propensity toward evil that can destroy the Earth and everything that it contains.”
10. ……

He had come to the end of his “sermon.” Paikin said, “Rabbi there seems to be only 9 here.” To which he replied, “I’ve done that just to keep you guessing.”

At 102, he still has so much to teach.

…

Honouring the elderly seems to be a worthwhile pursuit. They have lived through unimaginable hardships, withstood life’s harshest challenges, made errors, recovered, and made their peace with life. They are our teachers in both what is right and what should be avoided. They were never perfect, nor claimed to be. They were privileged to live to an age which many have been denied. They have buried their young, their friends, and many of their dreams. They have, hopefully, learned and lived into their God-given purpose, and in due course, will join the ranks of saints who have breezed through this life before.

God has designed a superlatively wonderful world. It is not a piece of cake that we walk through untouched and unafraid. It is rather, a minefield filled with obstacles that can knock us off our self-serving perches and set us into accepting new perspectives and new ways of being.

Imagine a Jeremy Renner being run over by his own snow blower; a prince whose mental health is plastered on the pages of a best-selling book; a ballerina who dances majestically without both arms; the world is filled with the common and the extraordinarily unusual, no two snowflakes are alike. There is always something to be thankful for regardless of your situation. It is best not to judge, or criticize, or ridicule how others choose to go through their unique circumstances, because we are to do the best with what we have, in thanksgiving for the life God has given us to lead.

May you find joy in each day; light in your own particular darkness; and a reason to celebrate and share the gifts that God has seen fit to offer each one of us.

Be strong! Stay Safe! Be of good cheer!

Together in the Service of Christ

Sonia

[Sonia.ireson@gmail.com](mailto:Sonia.ireson@gmail.com)

226-203-4674 – Please feel free to call or text at any time.