

Reflections

“Ever living God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son, Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that we may grow both spiritually and in numbers so that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

As we open 2012 together, first of all let me thank you for your generous Christmas gifts. It is amazing to me that I have been with St. Davids for four months. We have made a good start together with two baptisms, an informal Wed. visit from Bishop Barker, a history-sharing afternoon, many getting-to-know-you appointments with me, a growing Wed. evening program, hosting the Chili Challenge, a Blue Christmas service, Lessons and Carols, and a wonderful Christmas Eve together to close out 2011. Plus all the ministry that we do in our Monday through Saturday lives and the outreach such as Matt Talbot and our ingathering for St. Monicas.

Each Sunday service that we have worshipped together, the deacon has closed the service with the above prayer and dismissal. Each time I say it with you, I wonder what each of us is prayerfully hearing from God when we pray that collect. I wonder which part of the prayer stands out for you?

For me it is the growing spiritually which usually happens when I strengthen (return or renew) my relationship with God through prayer. For me prayer is an ongoing conversation with God in which I attempt to do equal parts of asking and listening. Richard Foster in his classic book Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home says that “Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love.”

Prayer is simply offering up to God where we are, what is going on in our life, where we need help, where we have made mistakes, and in essence all of our hopes and dreams. The hardest part is then leaving space to hear God's answer. For years, I believed that I wasn't good at prayer because I never “heard” from God. And then a wise person pointed out that God doesn't always speak audibly but definitely offers possible answers to prayer when we pay attention to what other people say, what the scriptures might say, and which parts of the sermon seem to resonate with us. Once the pressure was off to “hear” God, I was amazed at the opportunities that presented themselves in answer to my prayers.

So each time you say the prayer above on Sundays or even as part of your weekday prayers, see where God is leading you and through you the community of St. David's. As we move through January with a visit from our Bishop on Consecration Sunday, Jan. 15th and our annual meeting on Jan. 29th, may we be

inspired to follow the Holy One in new ways. I'll be interested to hear what part of our closing collect inspires you.

Blessings and peace! Ruth+