

PASTORAL PRAYER: April 27, 1997

ETERNAL SPIRIT...Father of our spirits and the Father of all mankind. We have come to Your house this day from different backgrounds and for different purposes.

SOME OF US are here because we're feeling the pressure and stress of life in the city...crowding in on us...and we have come to know from past experience that we cannot always handle the "bumps and bruises" of life entirely on our own...that things seem to go so much better for us when we slow down, think of You, and pause to see life from the "higher ground" of worship.

SOME OF US are here because we're lonely. We walk the crowded streets of this city...people pass us by...no one seems to notice...to care. We have "low" moments when we feel that no one loves us, but then deep in our hearts we feel that tug from You that reminds us that You care, that You love us, that our lives are precious in Your sight.

OTHERS OF US are here because at other times and in other places we have felt close to You...we have had a "mountain top" experience, a fleeting glimpse, an inner vision of what life could be if only all people took You seriously and lived by the Words You have given us in the Bible.

AND SO WE ARE HERE....anxious, but uncertain...seeking always to hear Your voice and to put our convictions into action.

LORD, GOD, whatever the reason may be that has brought us here this day, may each of us feel and experience something that will work a miracle in our lives, something that will permit Your peace and power to flow through us into the lives of others.

Help us to slow down that our "restless spirits" may grow quiet and serene as we feel the gentle invasion of Your love.

MAY WE DEPART from this sanctuary of worship spiritually refreshed - with renewed insight, a better perspective, with courage and also with compassion, with faith and also with trust to do battle with the stress and struggles of another week in this city.

May we carry away from here something of Your love for all mankind, and help us to share that love with others - the hurt, homeless, and hungry - the tempted and the troubled - the sick and discouraged and the dying.

All of this we ask in the strong name and the loving spirit of Christ, our Lord.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

TODAY Today is most special for us as we pause to celebrate the baptism of LUCIE MAEVE MC CARTHY...infant daughter of Daniel and Ann Kilbride McCarthy.

Lucie was born on May 1st...last May....at the Overlook Hospital in Summit, New Jersey. Five years ago last May 15th, I had the joy and privilege of sharing in the wedding service for Ann and Dan....on a farm over in Huguenot, New York. Most special....as two families shared in the joy of this union, this marriage.

And some have been able to come and be with us today...to share in this celebration of Baptism of Lucie. Dan's brother, Kevin, is a God parent, as is Karan Monaghan.

The Kilbrides have meant much to this church across the years and how wonderful to see some of Ann's family present....brothers....Ann's mother, Muriel....and how I remember your dear husband. I always tried to have us sing a good Welch melody whenever he was with us...."Hyfrodol" was his favorite tune.

JOIN ME I invite you to join Michael and me at the Baptismal font as we now share in this precious and special moment together.

TELEPHONE: 973 -744 -4442

Call and confirm on Saturday.....

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Sunday, April 27, 1997

GREETING / VISITORS

- A. We welcome the visitors in today's congregation...delighted to have you with us and we hope that.... Be free in the sharing of your name....fill out a visitor card. Sign a guest book. Come, worship....come, work with us....
- B. Doing the Lord's work here at this busy corner since 1837. Minister here in the name of Christ, and it is in His loving spirit that we greet all of you.....
- C. Members: wear name tags....go out of your way to welcome the new members. Make some new friends...

PARISH CONCERNS

- A. Parish concerns are lifted up for you in your bulletin. Note that today at one o'clock the annual meeting of the UMW will be held, with Fran Ellison, presiding. Come and voice your concern for the various allocations to be voted from the receipts of last November's Church Fair. Refreshments provided, I believe.....good news...
- B. Two weeks from today we'll be holding something special as a part of the coffee hour. We're calling it ART CONNECTION NO. IV.... feature the artistic gifts and talents of our church members....some paintings, some sculpture, some music....be in touch with Jean Laupus who is coordinating our Art Connection for us.
- C. May approaches...always a good month in our church...with baptisms coming along....special appeal for the Health Care Agencies of our NY Conference. May 13th is the date of the Annual Meeting of the United Methodist City Society, and of course - May 17th is the Saturday of our SPRING RUMMAGE SALE....
- D. You would want to know that Dr. Lyndon Woodside is to be interviewed by Dr. Jean Lloyd on Tuesday at 1 pm on the "NEW VENTURES" TV Show. Tuesday, this Tuesday, 1 pm....NEW VENTURES....Speak to Jean Lloyd at the coffee hour for further information...

OFFERING

- A. Jesus said:

"It is more blessed to give than
it is to receive". In this spirit...

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O THOU who art the SOURCE of all things good, grant that we who are so often inclined to remember what we LACK may not forget what we have!

WE BLESS THEE for the warming quality of Spring: for green grass, budding trees and longer days; for parks and paths and bicycles, and for all the scents and colors that edge us each day toward the days of Summer...

AND WE THANK THEE for the interflow of ideas, for the sharing of convictions, for man's ability to receive and to infuse hope, and the lifting play of Divine Truth on the human spirit.

OUR HIGHEST PRAISE we reserve for YOU - our God - whose mercy is the same from age to age, and whose life-giving grace has been declared and revealed to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

CENTER OUR far-ranging lives in YOUR eternal love, O God, that in whatever time or circumstance in this city we may know and feel and celebrate Your PRESECNE, Your POWER, and YOUR PEACE.

TO LOOK at us as we sit here this morning, Lord, it would appear that our grip on life is firm and that we're managing things quite well, that we have come to terms with our fears, our failures, our frustrations....

AND YET, in our eyes as in Your sight, we are not the masters of our fate that we so often pretend to be.

LORD, we are anxious, deeply anxious about the well-being of our loved ones - children, parents and grandparents. Our jobs, our wives, our husbands, our health. We worry, too, about...

THE NUMBER and the power of our sins and the tug of these temptations with which we constantly wrestle behind closed doors.

AND SO IN THIS HOUR OF PRAYER THIS MORNING, show us each once again the connection between our anxious, restless minds and our lack of faith in YOU.

MAKE REAL in us the glorious, risen life that Jesus brought, lest the cares of either self or society rob us of the joy of life.

AND ANXIOUS though we be about the long view, help us to take without fear the short step immediately before us, knowing that of such the story of life is so often written. All this we now dare to pray in the name and spirit of Christ.

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