

"FROM FOOLISHNESS TO POWER"

A Sermon By

Philip A. C. Clarke

Park Avenue United Methodist Church  
106 East 86th Street  
New York, New York 10028  
January 24, 1993

## "FROM FOOLISHNESS TO POWER"

### INTRODUCTION

There it was in large print on the front page of the magazine tempting me to pick it up as I sat there in the dentist's office waiting my turn. "Why Is Japanese Baseball So Dull" it said. I read it in about five minutes. It wasn't about baseball at all. It was about business. The author was pointing out some differences between the Japanese and the American way of doing business.

He told of interviewing a well-known Japanese political scientist who became very excited when he discussed American meetings. The source of his enthusiasm came out of the fact that in American meetings he could jump up and down and call out, "I disagree! I disagree!" But in Japan, it is considered rude to disagree with someone outright. Japanese men must sit through meetings without expressing positive or negative emotions for fear of offending someone.

### DEVELOPMENT

I think that St. Paul would have preferred a Japanese Church to the little Church that he was involved in at Corinth. The Church at Corinth obviously had some people who didn't mind shouting, "I disagree! I disagree!" That little Church experienced some problems after Paul left the scene. Cliques formed. Feelings were hurt. Some of them in the church apparently thought of themselves as "super" Christians who had some special gift that made them better than others. Paul wanted them to see the error of their ways and to work together as the body of Christ.

Thus, he sought to focus their attention once again on their primary mission. He didn't want them focusing on personalities but upon God's central plan for that Church. He wanted them to see the dangers of division and the desirability of unity and harmony. The negativity was heavy. And it was bothering him.

### PRIDE IS A CANCER

In today's scripture, Paul is dealing, first of all, with the root cause of conflict in any church. And that is pride. Pride is a cancer that can tear Christians from one another.

A bit of background here. The Corinthians were a sophisticated group of people, or at least they thought they were. They were influenced by Greek thought and philosophy which gave them an inflated view of worldly vision. The Corinthians thought they could "think" their way to God and here Paul is telling them that they are mistaken. All the earthly wisdom they could obtain would not lead them to God or salvation. This wisdom that they held so dear had neither led people to Christ nor delivered them from their sins. According to Paul, what led people to Christ and salvation was the power of the cross. Here is one of the "key" lines, memorable lines written by Paul.

"For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God."

Paul is seeking to divert them from a faith based on knowledge to a faith based on the gracious love of God. He is seeking to divert their attention from their own accomplishments to what God has done in their behalf. He is seeking to help them overcome the feelings of pride that are causing them to be alienated from one another. Thus, he puts the focus on God and not upon people.

That's always a good idea, isn't it? I think that pride causes us to do some foolish things. I was reading a story recently about John Holliday, the founder of the Indianapolis News. It seems that John Holliday was quite upset, quite irate one day to find that someone had misspelled a simple word in his newspaper. He questioned everyone in the office in order to find the fool who had spelled the word "height" - H E I G H T - as "H I G H T" - omitting the letter "e". This interrogation revealed that Holliday himself had written and even proofread that particular article. Holliday said,

"If that's the way I spelled it...then that's correct!"

and for the next thirty years, the Indianapolis News spelled the word, "height" according to their founder's wishes - with no "e".

Pride can cause us to do some silly things. It can cause us to do some sad things, too - like divide a church. Paul proclaimed that the power of the cross of Christ leads people to God - not to human wisdom. None of us can boast in God's eyes, says Paul. We are all sinners saved by grace. He writes,

"For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe."

Paul is dealing with the root cause of division whether in church or in other places - pride. It lurks there in all of us and can rear its ugly head and cause pain and discord. When I was first starting out in the ministry, an older brother - colleague - happened to remark,

"It really is amazing how much 'Kingdom building' you can do if you don't have to always worry about who is going to get the credit for it."

#### THEIR SENSE OF INADEQUACY AND WEAKNESS

point. Notice, however, that he deals not with their sense of pride but with their sense of inadequacy and weakness.

Pride is a cancer in the body of Christ. Let's move on to a second

I guess you could say that if there is anything more deadly than pride, it's that low feeling that we just don't count. Paul says to them,

"Consider your own call...not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth."

By the world's measure of success, the Corinthians congregation was not a promising lot, but God saw what the world could not see. Have you ever noticed that some rather ordinary people sometimes achieve extraordinary success? How do you account for it. What's that special ingredient that makes it happen.

As a child, Lawrence Welk, was fascinated by his father's accordion, an heirloom which had been brought from Europe. The summer after he had made it through fourth grade, Lawrence Welk suffered a ruptured appendix and nearly died. He spent seven weeks in the hospital and three months at home in bed. And during the time at home, his parents let him play his father's precious accordion as much as he wanted. Within that time he taught himself many tunes.

In his teen years, he somehow managed to buy a "mail order" accordian for \$ 15.00. One writer comments that this purchase..."unequal to his enthusiasm, soon broke!" He then told his father that in return for the \$ 400.00 he needed in order to buy a good accordian he would work on the family farm until he was twenty-one and give his father all the money he earned playing his prized musical instrument. He played at weddings, birthdays and dances while always keeping his promise to his father. More than once he returned from a playing date as day break just in time to attend to his chores on the farm.

The worst moment of his life, he once said, occured after a dance in South Dakota when he overheard one of the other band members say,

"Did you get a load of that fella playing the accordion?  
If I had to play every night with him, I'd go back to  
jerking sodas."

Measured by normal standards of success, Lawrence Welk seemed like a failure who would go nowhere. But Lawrence Welk never gave up. Soon he was playing on a couple of radio stations and building a small following. Before long his band became popular on radio stations across the country. Then in 1955, the Lawrence Welk Show came on to our television sets. Now most people would probably rate Lawrence Welk as a somewhat ordinary musician, yet forty million people were soon watching his program every Saturday night and in 1957 - believe it or not - the Lawrence Welk Orchestra played at President Eisenhower's Inaugural Ball. Life magazine once called him the "most popular musician in the history of the United States."

Perhaps Lawrence Welk wasn't a great musician, but he provided many people with an abundance of pleasure. I think he would have fit in well with the disciples of Jesus. If we had to pick disciples for Jesus, we would be tempted to choose "the brightest and the best." The sad thing is we would probably not even consider ordinary fishermen.

But fortunately - for the salvation of milliions of people - our way of thinking is not God's way. Those fishermen turned the world "upside down" proclaiming and even dying for the Gospel message. Remember this: God is able to see potential in people that we so often miss! So, on the one hand, He keeps us from pride over our religious inclination, but on the other hand, He tells us that everyone last one of us is a "building block" for His Kingdom.

#### GOD IS INTERESTED IN OUR LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

In essence, God is not interested in our level of sophistication, but in our level of commitment. Bishop Richard Wilkie of our United Methodist Church (whom Lynn and I met a couple of Summers ago on our trip to Greece and Turkey) tells a story that is worth sharing. It caught my attention because it involved Bishop Wilkie.

Sang Kyoo Lee and his wife, Young Gum, visited Bishop Richard Wilkie in his office one day. Pastor Lee wanted to start a new church for Koreans and he said to Bishop Wilkie,

"We have been praying for one hundred nights...one, two three hours every night...asking God to give us power and victory". "Yes?" added his wife, "every night, faithfully for 100 nights before coming to see you."

"We believe God wants us to begin new work with Koreans in Arkansas" said Pastor Sang Kyoo Lee. "And we need much power".

Bishop Wilkie sensed their dedication and their commitment, but he also knew of their struggle to learn English as well as their financial problems in completing seminary. The Bishop asked them a question, "We don't have many Koreans in Central Arkansas, do we?" Sang Kyoo Lee replied,

"Oh, yes...we think as many as three or four hundred. We can travel fifty miles in every direction and organize class meetings in different towns."

The Bishop then asked if these Arkansas Koreans were Christians? Both wife and husband answered enthusiastically,

"No...not most...but we must lead them to Christ. We will hold Sunday afternoon worship in First Church, Jacksonville. Also Friday night prayers and Saturday Bible study."

"Let me know when you hold your first worship service" said the Bishop somewhat casually.

"Our first service will be the day we move into the parsonage" said Sang Kyoo with a big smile. "My wife, Young Gum, our son, John and our daughter, Susan, and I will kneel down and pray. We will have a congregation of four" he said, lifting up four fingers.

Bishop Wilkie went on to say that their spirit was contagious and that he kept thinking of practical things like a refrigerator and clothes for the children and automobile tires. He asked them "Is there anything at all that I can do to help you?" And back came the answer,

"Oh yes there is...would you pray for us? We will need much power" And the three of them held hands and prayed together.

Several months later this young Korean couple once again knocked on the door of the Bishop's office. Said Sang Kyoo Lee to Bishop Wilkie,

"We now have 20 converts. We have started three home Bible study groups in three different towns. We are growing. People are coming from 50 miles away. God is answering our prayers".

The good Bishop concluded with this word of hope. "As they spoke I felt the hand...the mighty hand...of God at work in this endeavor." It was not in their level of sophistication, but in their level of commitment that made him feel the mighty hand of God. They were a living testimony to the power of our faith, the power of the Cross, as Paul put it. Their enthusiasm would look like so much foolishness in the minds of most of us. Naive, we might say. But such consecrated naivete can move mountains. We need to remember that. Faith - the size of a tiny mustard seed...is the way Jesus spoke of it.

CLOSING ILLUSTRATION AND WORD

The Olympic Games of last Summer were filled with tragedies and triumphs. In most of the games, there was a clear distinction between the two, but in one competition - the 400 Meter Race - the distinction between tragedy and triumph became blurred. Let me recall the moment with you.

At the start of the race, Englishman Derek Redmond popped his right hamstring. This is a severe and excruciating injury that ends most runner's chances of finishing the race. But not Derek Redmond. Redmond got back up and started hopping toward the finish line. The other runners had all finished the race in a matter of seconds. Redmond - in tears - slowly and painfully kept hopping. It appeared as if he would fall down at any moment. But suddenly...remember what happened...a man appeared beside Derek. His father had run down from the stands and pushed his way through the security guards to reach his son. And Redmond's father put his arm around his son and let him cry on his shoulder for a second and then - with his father holding him up - he hobbled to the finish line and finished the race.

And therein, dear friend, is a word of hope for you and for me. We are not saved by our wisdom, nor are we saved by our good works. We are saved because we have a Father who is willing to come out of the stands and to carry us over the finish line.

Paul was struggling with the Church in Corinth that had people who were not afraid to say, "I disagree". They were in danger of coming apart at the seams. And so, first-off, he dealt with their pride, then on to their sense of inadequacy. What the Corinthians needed to see was that God was not that interested in who we are or where we've been or what we've done....that He is interested only in one thing....our level of commitment.

Are we ready to "take up" the Cross of Christ...think about it and put the question to yourself. If so, there is ONE coming out of the stands...who though that road, that path grows hard...ONE who will not allow us to falter, fail or fall. And what a "blessed assurance" that can be to each of us. Remember that. And take that word out of here with you.

PRAYER

"FROM FOOLISHNESS TO POWER"

A Sermon By

Philip A. C. Clarke

Park Avenue United Methodist Church  
106 East 86th Street  
New York, New York 10028  
January 24, 1993

## "FROM FOOLISHNESS TO POWER"

### INTRODUCTION

There it was in large print on the cover of the magazine tempting me to pick it up as I sat there in the dentist's office waiting my turn. "Why Is Japanese Baseball So Dull" it said. I read it in about five minutes. It wasn't about baseball at all. It was about business. The author was pointing out some differences between the Japanese and the American way of doing business.

He told of interviewing a well-known Japanese political scientist who became very excited when he discussed American meetings. The source of his enthusiasm came out of the fact that in American meetings he could jump up and down and call out, "I disagree! I disagree!" But in Japan, it is considered rude to disagree with someone outright. Japanese men must sit through meetings without expressing positive or negative emotions for fear of offending someone. In Japan, it's different.

### DEVELOPMENT

I think that St. Paul would have preferred a Japanese Church to the little Church that he was involved in at Corinth. The Church at Corinth obviously had some people who didn't mind shouting, "I disagree! I disagree!" That little Church experienced some problems after Paul left the scene. Factions formed. Feelings were hurt. Some of them in the church apparently thought of themselves as "super" Christians who had some special gift that made them better than others. Paul wanted them to see the error of their ways and to work together as the body of Christ. Nothing wrong with that!

Thus, he sought to focus their attention once again on their primary mission. He didn't want them focusing on personalities but upon God's central plan for that Church. He wanted them to see the dangers of division and the desirability of unity and harmony. The negativity was heavy. And it was bothering him. It was hurting the church, I'm sure.

### PRIDE IS A CANCER

In today's scripture, Paul is dealing, first of all, with the root cause of conflict in any church. And that is pride. Pride is a cancer that can tear Christians from one another.

A bit of background here. The Corinthians were a sophisticated group of people, or at least they thought they were. They were influenced by Greek thought and philosophy which gave them an inflated view of worldly vision. The Corinthians thought they could "think" their way to God and here Paul is telling them that they are mistaken. All the earthly wisdom they could obtain would not lead them to God or salvation. This wisdom that they held so dear had neither led people to Christ nor delivered them from their sins. According to Paul, what led people to Christ and salvation was the power of the cross. Here is one of the "key" lines, memorable lines written by Paul.

"For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God."

Paul is seeking to divert them from a faith based on knowledge to a faith based on the gracious love of God. He is seeking to divert their attention from their own accomplishments to what God has done in their behalf. He is seeking to help them overcome the feelings of pride that are causing them to be alienated from one another. Thus, he puts the focus on God and not upon people.



That's always a good idea, isn't it? I think that pride causes us to do some foolish things. I was reading a story recently about John Holliday, the founder of the Indianapolis News. It seems that John Holliday was quite upset, quite irate one day to find that someone had misspelled a simple word in his newspaper. He questioned everyone in the office in order to find the fool who had spelled the word "height" - H E I G H T - as "H I G H T" - omitting the letter "e". This interrogation revealed that Holliday himself had written and even proofread that particular article. Holliday said,

"If that's the way I spelled it...then that's correct!"

and for the next thirty years, the Indianapolis News spelled the word, "height" according to their founder's wishes - with no "e". "H I G H T"

Pride can cause us to do some silly things. It can cause us to do some sad things, too - like divide a church. Paul proclaimed that the power of the cross of Christ leads people to God - not to human wisdom. None of us can boast in God's eyes, says Paul. We are all sinners saved by grace. He writes,

"For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe."

Paul is dealing with the root cause of division whether in church or in other places - pride. It lurks there in all of us and can rear its ugly head and cause pain and discord. When I was first starting out in the ministry, an older brother - colleague - happened to remark,

"It really is amazing how much 'Kingdom building' you can do if you don't have to always worry about who is going to get the credit for it." (How true it is!)

#### THEIR SENSE OF INADEQUACY AND WEAKNESS

Pride is a cancer in the body of Christ. Let's move on to a second point. Notice, however, that he deals not with their sense of pride but with their sense of inadequacy and weakness.

I guess you could say that if there is anything more deadly than pride, it's that low feeling that we just don't count. Paul says to them,

"Consider your own call...not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth."

By the world's measure of success, the Corinthians congregation was not a promising lot, but God saw what the world could not see. Have you ever noticed that some rather ordinary people sometimes achieve extraordinary success? How do you account for it. What's that special ingredient that makes it happen.

As a child, Lawrence Welk, was fascinated by his father's accordion, an heirloom which had been brought from Europe. The summer after he had made it through fourth grade, Lawrence Welk suffered a ruptured appendix and nearly died. He spent seven weeks in the hospital and three months at home in bed. And during the time at home, his parents let him play his father's precious accordion as much as he wanted. Within that time he taught himself many tunes.

In his teen years, he somehow managed to buy a "mail order" accordian for \$ 15.00. One writer comments that this purchase..."unequal to his enthusiasm, soon broke!" He then told his father that in return for the \$ 400.00 he needed in order to buy a good accordian he would work on the family farm until he was twenty-one and give his father all the money he earned playing his prized musical instrument. He played at weddings, birthdays and dances while always keeping his promise to his father. More than once he returned from a playing date as day break just in time to attend to his chores on the farm.

The worst moment of his life, he once said, occurred after a dance in South Dakota when he overheard one of the other band members say,

"Did you get a load of that fella playing the accordian?  
If I had to play every night with him, I'd go back to  
jerking sodas."

Measured by normal standards of success, Lawrence Welk seemed like a failure who would go nowhere. But Lawrence Welk never gave up. Soon he was playing on a couple of radio stations and building a small following. Before long his band became popular on radio stations across the country. Then in 1955, the Lawrence Welk Show came on to our television sets. Now most people would probably rate Lawrence Welk as a somewhat ordinary musician, yet forty million people were soon watching his program every Saturday night and in 1957 - believe it or not - the Lawrence Welk Orchestra played at President Eisenhower's Inaugural Ball. Life magazine once called him the "most popular musician in the history of the United States."

Perhaps Lawrence Welk wasn't a great musician, but he provided many people with an abundance of pleasure. I think he would have fit in well with the disciples of Jesus. If we had to pick disciples for Jesus, we would be tempted to choose "the brightest and the best." The sad thing is we would probably not even consider ordinary fishermen.

But fortunately - for the salvation of millions of people - our way of thinking is not God's way. Those fishermen turned the world "upside down" proclaiming and even dying for the Gospel message. Remember this: God is able to see potential in people that we so often miss! So, on the one hand, He keeps us from pride over our religious inclination, but on the other hand, He tells us that everyone last one of us is a "building block" for His Kingdom.

#### GOD IS INTERESTED IN OUR LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

In essence, God is not interested in our level of sophistication, but in our level of commitment. Bishop Richard Wilkie of our United Methodist Church (whom Lynn and I met a couple of Summers ago on our trip to Greece and Turkey) tells a story that is worth sharing. It caught my attention because it involved Bishop Wilkie.

Sang Kyoo Lee and his wife, Young Gum, visited Bishop Richard Wilkie in his office one day. Pastor Lee wanted to start a new church for Koreans and he said to Bishop Wilkie,

"We have been praying for one hundred nights...one, two three hours every night...asking God to give us power and victory". "Yes" added his wife, "every night, faithfully for 100 nights before coming to see you."

"We believe God wants us to begin new work with Koreans in Arkansas" said Pastor Sang Kyoo Lee. "And we need much power".

Bishop Wilkie sensed their dedication and their commitment, but he also knew of their struggle to learn English as well as their financial problems in completing seminary. The Bishop asked them a question, "We don't have many Koreans in Central Arkansas, do we?" Sang Kyoo Lee replied,

"Oh, yes...we think as many as three or four hundred. We can travel fifty miles in every direction and organize class meetings in different towns."

The Bishop then asked if these Arkansas Koreans were Christians? Both wife and husband answered enthusiastically,

"No...not most...but we must lead them to Christ. We will hold Sunday afternoon worship in First Church, Jacksonville. Also Friday night prayers and Saturday Bible study."

"Let me know when you hold your first worship service" said the Bishop somewhat casually.

"Our first service will be the day we move into the parsonage" said Sang Kyoo with a big smile. "My wife, Young Gum, our son, John and our daughter, Susan, and I will kneel down and pray. We will have a congregation of four" he said, lifting up four fingers.

Bishop Wilkie went on to say that their spirit was contagious and that he kept thinking of practical things like a refrigerator and clothes for the children and automobile tires. He asked them "Is there anything at all that I can do to help you?" And back came the answer,

"Oh yes there is...would you pray for us? We will need much power" And the three of them held hands and prayed together.

Several months later this young Korean couple once again knocked on the door of the Bishop's office. Said Sang Kyoo Lee to Bishop Wilkie,

"We now have 20 converts. We have started three home Bible study groups in three different towns. We are growing. People are coming from 50 miles away. God is answering our prayers".

The good Bishop concluded with this word of hope. "As they spoke I felt the hand...the mighty hand...of God at work in this endeavor." It was not in their level of sophistication, but in their level of commitment that made him feel the mighty hand of God. They were a living testimony to the power of our faith, the power of the Cross, as Paul put it. Their enthusiasm would look like so much foolishness in the minds of most of us. Naive, we might say. But such consecrated naivete can move mountains. We need to remember that. Faith - the size of a tiny mustard seed...is the way Jesus spoke of it. Don't overlook it.

CLOSING ILLUSTRATION AND WORD

The Olympic Games of last Summer were filled with tragedies and triumphs. In most of the games, there was a clear distinction between the two, but in one competition - the 400 Meter Race - the distinction between tragedy and triumph became blurred. Let me recall the moment with you.

At the start of the race, Englishman Derek Redmond popped his right hamstring. This is a severe and excruciating injury that ends most runner's chances of finishing the race. But not Derek Redmond. Redmond got back up and started hopping toward the finish line. The other runners had all finished the race in a matter of seconds. Redmond - in tears - slowly and painfully kept hopping. It appeared as if he would fall down at any moment. But suddenly...remember what happened...a man appeared beside Derek. His father had run down from the stands and pushed his way through the security guards to reach his son. And Redmond's father put his arm around his son and let him cry on his shoulder for a second and then - with his father holding him up - he hobbled to the finish line and finished the race.

And therein, dear friend, is a word of hope for you and for me. We are not saved by our wisdom, nor are we saved by our good works. We are saved because we have a Father who is willing to come out of the stands and to carry us over the finish line.

Paul was struggling with the Church in Corinth that had people who were not afraid to say, "I disagree". They were in danger of coming apart at the seams. And so, first-off, he dealt with their pride, then on to their sense of inadequacy. What the Corinthians needed to see was that God was not that interested in who we are or where we've been or what we've done....that He is interested only in one thing....our level of commitment.

Are we ready to "take up" the Cross of Christ...think about it and put the question to yourself. If so, there is ONE coming out of the stands...who though that road, that path grows hard...ONE who will not allow us to falter, fail or fall. And what a "blessed assurance" that can be to each of us. Remember that. And take that word out of here with you.

PRAYER

Move in our hearts, O God....strengthen that measure of faith that is now ours. Lift our level of commitment to Him in whom we have come to see life's highest hope as well as its deepest meaning. In the spirit of Christ, we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Sunday, January 24, 1993

VISITORS / GREETING

- A. A word of welcome to the visitors who have joined us in worship...pleased you're here and we hope we'll have opportunity to greet you in.....
- B. Be free in the sharing of your name...fill out...sign one of the Guest Books. Come, worship with us on other Sundays...
- C. Doing the Lord's work here since 1837 at this busy corner of God's kingdom. Fourth building out of which this ministry has been carried on. Like to say that we minister here in the name of Christ and it is in His loving spirit....
- D. Members...be sure to wear your name tags...make a point of greeting some new friends in these moments we're together.

PARISH CONCERNS

- A. Our parish concerns are there in the bulletin...review them on your own, noting the spiritual growth and study opportunities offered as well as the meetings that have been called.
- B. Review the flyers there...a new opportunity this Thursday evening for those of you who enjoy reading serious works of fiction and talking about them with others...
- C. Next Sunday is Bake Sale Number One - the "super bowl" bake sale for the benefit of the All Church Picnic of late June. Support it with a contribution as well as a purchase. And let's all get involved with this Super Bowl benefit for the Yorkville Common Pantry and sign up to bring in cans of soup...again, we're having some fun with this drive...support it and score some points.
- D. Winter Rummage Sale. Saturday, February 6th....less than two weeks away....be in touch with Dianne Keller if you can lend a hand. Note, too, the new DONATION bin in the west vestibule... we want to fill it many times over between now and February 6th.
- E. The 1993 canvass is essentially over except for those late, late pledge gifts....we're up and over 200...and still have a ways to go to reach our goals of 250 pledges and \$160,000. I'd like to see us up to 225 pledges by mid-March and I'll be calling some of you in the next few days to see if you can renew a pledge or perhaps help us with a new one. "If you believe in something...." you put it into your budget...I'm sure you agree!

SECOND HYMN: "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"  
Number 474.

( over )

Composter, Thomas A. ~~Arney~~ - died last night...age 93.

SUPER BOWL PREDICTION

A. I know some of you are present this hour to receive the Annual Super Bowl prediction...let me share it with you...listen carefully....spoken once but copies will be available...

"I went to the 'mountain-top' one day of this week,  
And the message I heard is that which I speak.  
Super Bowl 27 has already begun....

Who runs the ball better will have all of the fun!

'Are you ever going to win a Super Bowl?'

Is the question you'll hear up in Buffalo.  
The HEART tips to this TWO TIME loser... (FOR  
There's redemption for all is the 'kick' from the Lord!)  
But the HEAD sends a signal that the heart cannot hear,  
It's the COWBOYS by 10 - that's the message, I fear!

SO - 'go' with the BOYS...and pray for the BILLS. Don't  
Fumble this game with all DALLAS thrills!  
You heard it first here. And those bets that you win,  
A tithe to the Lord will be pleasing to HIM!"

(January 24, 1993)

(Maya Angelou and I worked on this together Wednesday afternoon and we think some of you would appreciate it.)

OFFERING

Jesus said,

"It is more blessed to give than it  
is to receive...."

SUPER BOWL PREDICTION

"I went to the 'mountain-top' one day of this week,

And the message I heard is that which I speak.

Super Bowl 27 has already begun....

Who runs the ball better will have most of the fun!"

"'Are you ever going to win a Super Bowl?' they say...

That's the big question up Buffalo way.

The HEART tips to this TWO TIME loser....for

(There's redemption for all is the 'kick' from the Lord!)

But the HEAD calls a play that the HEART cannot hear...

'It's the COWBOYS by 10' - that's the message, I fear!"

"SO - 'go' with the BOYS...and pray for the BILLS.

Then tackle this game with all of your skills.

You heard it first here and from those bets that you win,

A TITHE to the Lord will be pleasing to HIM!"

(January 24, 1993)

ETERNAL SPIRIT - WHO...whether we walk through green pastures,  
beside life's still waters, or  
through the valley of the shadow of death,  
canst be our guide and our helper -

BEHOLD US NOW - here in this sacred place of worship,  
seeking in a common prayer, light upon our  
separate ways, and strength and illumination  
within our individual lives.

SEEK US OUT - one by one - in those special circumstances of  
individual need that have drawn us here to this  
sanctuary on this cold January Sunday morning.  
Remind us once again: that more things are wrought by prayer than  
this world has ever dreamed.

AND HERE - lift up the unhappy souls into joy...the discouraged souls into  
encouragement...the defeated souls into victory - and thus  
enable each of us:

"To fight the good fight,  
To keep the faith,  
To finish the course".

BREATHE into our hearts, dear God, goodwill and generosity.

BREAKDOWN our stubborn prejudices.

SAVE US from letting un-Christlike attitudes and actions take  
hold within us.

FORGIVE US that at times we can be such a part of the problems of  
this world and such a small fraction of its solutions.

COMFORT US, LORD, where we are hurting.

GUIDE AND UPHOLD US through the days of this week that is ahead that we may  
be more than conquerors in the inner struggle against  
all that is cheap, hurtful, degrading in ourselves and  
in society.

HELP THOSE GATHERED HERE IN WORSHIP and who take Jesus seriously and who  
try to follow in His footsteps always to be:

Agents of His love....pure in thought, and  
gracious in speech, kind, charitable and  
courageous in judgements of others and in  
their own actions...willing to bear the burdens of others.

AND FINALLY, DEAR GOD, FATHER OF US ALL...

"Grant us the SERENITY to accept the things we cannot  
change; the COURAGE to change the things we can; and  
the WISDOM to know the difference."

In the name and spirit of Christ, we pray.



ANNOUNCEMENTS: Sunday, January 24, 1993

VISITORS / GREETING

- A. A word of welcome to the visitors who have joined us in worship...pleased you're here and we hope we'll have opportunity to greet you in.....
- B. Be free in the sharing of your name...fill out...sign one of the Guest Books. Come, worship with us on other Sundays...
- C. Doing the Lord's work here since 1837 at this busy corner of God's kingdom. Fourth building out of which this ministry has been carried on. Like to say that we minister here in the name of Christ and it is in His loving spirit....
- D. Members...be sure to wear your name tags...make a point of greeting some new friends in these moments we're together.

PARISH CONCERNS

- A. Our parish concerns are there in the bulletin...review them on your own, noting the spiritual growth and study opportunities offered as well as the meetings that have been called.
- B. Review the flyers there...a new opportunity this Thursday evening for those of you who enjoy reading serious works of fiction and talking about them with others...
- C. Next Sunday is Bake Sale Number One - the "super bowl" bake sale for the benefit of the All Church Picnic of late June. Support it with a contribution as well as a purchase. And let's all get involved with this Super Bowl benefit for the Yorkville Common Pantry and sign up to bring in cans of soup...again, we're having some fun with this drive...support it and score some points.
- D. Winter Rummage Sale. Saturday, February 6th....less than two weeks away....be in touch with Dianne Keller if you can lend a hand. Note, too, the new DONATION bin in the west vestibule... we want to fill it many times over between now and February 6th.
- E. The 1993 canvass is essentially over except for those late, late pledge gifts....we're up and over 200...and still have a ways to go to reach our goals of 250 pledges and \$160,000. I'd like to see us up to 225 pledges by mid-March and I'll be calling some of you in the next few days to see if you can renew a pledge or perhaps help us with a new one. "If you believe in something...." you put it into your budget...I'm sure you agree!

( over )

SUPER BOWL PREDICTION

"I went to the 'mountain-top' one day of this week,

And the message I heard is that which I speak.

Super Bowl 27 has already begun....

Who runs the ball better will have most of the fun!"

"'Are you ever going to win a Super Bowl?' they say...

That's the big question up Buffalo way.

The HEART tips to this TWO TIME loser....for

(There's redemption for all is the 'kick' from the Lord!)

But the HEAD calls a play that the HEART cannot hear...

'It's the COWBOYS by 10' - that's the message, I fear!"

"SO - 'go' with the BOYS...and pray for the BILLS.

Then tackle this game with all of your skills.

You heard it first here and from those bets that you win,

A TITHE to the Lord will be pleasing to HIM!"

(January 24, 1993)

PASTORAL PRAYER: January 24, 1993.

ETERNAL SPIRIT - WHO...whether we walk through green pastures,  
beside life's still waters, or  
through the valley of the shadow of death,  
canst be our guide and our helper -

BEHOLD US NOW - here in this sacred place of worship,  
seeking in a common prayer, light upon our  
separate ways, and strength and illumination  
within our individual lives.

SEEK US OUT - one by one - in those special circumstances of  
individual need that have drawn us here to this  
sanctuary on this cold January Sunday morning,

AND HERE - lift up the unhappy souls into joy...the discouraged souls into  
encouragement...the defeated souls into victory - and thus  
enable each of us:

"To fight the good fight,  
To keep the faith,  
To finish the course".

BREATHE into our hearts, dear God, goodwill and generosity.

BREAKDOWN our stubborn prejudices.

SAVE US from letting un-Christlike attitudes and actions take  
hold within us.

FORGIVE US that at times we can be such a part of the problems of  
this world and such a small fraction of its solutions.

COMFORT US, LORD, where we are hurting.

GUIDE AND UPHOLD US through the days of this week that is ahead that we may  
be more than conquerors in the inner struggle against  
all that is cheap, hurtful, degrading in ourselves and  
in society.

HELP THOSE GATHERED HERE IN WORSHIP and who take Jesus seriously and who  
try to follow in His footsteps always to be:

Agents of His love...pure in thought, and  
gracious in speech, kind, charitable and  
courageous in judgements of others and in  
their own actions.

AND FINALLY, DEAR GOD, FATHER OF US ALL...

"Grant us the SERENITY to accept the things we cannot  
change; the COURAGE to change the things we can; and  
the WISDOM to know the difference."

In the name and spirit of Christ, we pray.

PASTORAL PRAYER: January 24, 1993

ETERNAL SPIRIT - WHO...whether we walk through green pastures,  
beside life's still waters, or  
through the valley of the shadow of death,  
canst be our guide and our helper -

BEHOLD US NOW - here in this sacred place of worship,  
seeking in a common prayer, light upon our  
separate ways, and strength and illumination  
within our individual lives.

SEEK US OUT - one by one - in those special circumstances of  
individual need that have drawn us here to this  
sanctuary on this cold January Sunday morning,

AND HERE - lift up the unhappy souls into joy...the discouraged souls into  
encouragement...the defeated souls into victory - and thus  
enable each of us:

"To fight the good fight,  
To keep the faith,  
To finish the course".

BREATHE into our hearts, dear God, goodwill and generosity.

BREAKDOWN our stubborn prejudices.

SAVE US from letting un-Christlike attitudes and actions take  
hold within us.

FORGIVE US that at times we can be such a part of the problems of  
this world and such a small fraction of its solutions.

COMFORT US, LORD, where we are hurting.

GUIDE AND UPHOLD US through the days of this week that is ahead that we may  
be more than conquerors in the inner struggle against  
all that is cheap, hurtful, degrading in ourselves and  
in society.

HELP THOSE GATHERED HERE IN WORSHIP and who take Jesus seriously and who  
try to follow in His footsteps always to be:

Agents of His love....pure in thought, and  
gracious in speech, kind, charitable and  
courageous in judgements of others and in  
their own actions.

AND FINALLY, DEAR GOD, FATHER OF US ALL...

"Grant us the SERENITY to accept the things we cannot  
change; the COURAGE to change the things we can; and  
the WISDOM to know the difference."

In the name and spirit of Christ, we pray.