

Flock Quarterly



Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners

AUTUMN PRAYER

God of all seasons, we thank you for Autumn.
We thank you
for the touch of coolness in the air that gives us a new burst
of energy,
for the coloring of trees that shows the creativity of the Di-
vine Artist,
for the falling leaves that reveal the strength of the branches,
for the hues of fields that bring peace to our souls,
for the smiles on pumpkins that bring joy to children,
for the fall harvest which that brings us gratitude for the
bounty of our land,
for this change of seasons that reveals the circle of life.
God of all seasons, as you transform the earth, transform us
by your Spirit.
Amen

— Rev. Doug Leonhardt, S.J.
(Marquette.edu)



Welcome to the Eleventh Issue of

FLOCK QUARTERLY

Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners

STAFF --- Graphics Editor Laura Rosato --- Content Editor Richard Reid

In our Fall 2023 Issue. Our Parishioner Interview profiles Art Mason and his work with Outreach. Columnist Denise Junker introduces us to a fascinating figure: the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray. Greg Hartline has some sage advice for recent H.S. graduates. Nathaniel Peets writes how music has impacted his life. Richard Reid offers a suspenseful tale about a man's encounter with the supernatural. Jim Morse reflects on spiritual growth through Bible readings. Marilyn McCann considers colors and God. Always something new and different in *Flock Quarterly*.

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Remember: You're never too young or too old to contribute. Material from our children and teens as well as from adults of all ages are always welcome.

Guidelines for Contributors

Types of Material . . . Essays on diverse topics; Humor; Bible Reflections; Interviews with Parishioners; Short Fiction; Original Photos and Artwork; Original Poetry & Prayers

General themes for any issue to inspire your submissions

Family; hobbies; your vocation; religion; the weather; people/things/places you remember; a great day; something/someone you're thankful for; current events (avoid being overtly political)

Special topics & themes appropriate for upcoming issues to spark your creativity

Spring Issue Themes (published in February)

Ash Wednesday; Lent; Easter; Black History & Women's History Months; Valentine's Day

Summer Issue Themes (published in May)

Pentecost; Mother's Day; Father's Day; 4th of July; end-of-school; graduations; summer; vacations

Fall Issue Themes (published in August)

End of summer; Labor Day; autumn; back-to-school; Halloween

Winter Issue Themes (published in November)

Advent; giving; Thanksgiving; Christmas; the new year; the ending old year; winter; Epiphany

Please make text submissions in Word format (never as PDFs) or handwritten and try not to exceed 2,000 words – but don't be intimidated by that number: shorter pieces are always welcome, too.

Unsure of your article or art idea? The Content Editor is happy to discuss and plan it with you.

Always submit original photos in .jpeg format

If your original artwork on paper is 8 ½" by 11" or smaller, it may be submitted for scanning

Issue Deadlines for Material

Spring (by January 28th)

Summer (by April 27th)

Fall (by July 28th)

Winter (by October 28th)

Email material to Richard Reid (writer2363@gmail.com) or telephone (585-347-4839)

You are part of the Good Shepherd flock . . . please contribute to Flock Quarterly!

COLUMN

A Saint's Corner: The Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray

by Denise Junker



The Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray was a woman of great insight with a wide-ranging influence on historical change. Our book of saints, *Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2022*, has a couple of paragraphs that summarize some of her achievements for her feast day of July 1. I am building off those two paragraphs. I want to emphasize a couple crucial things and then highlight some lesser-known items as I read in her memoir, *Song in a Weary Throat: Memoir of An American Pilgrimage* (1987), and other sources. Finally, I will lift up a couple of elements of her legacy.

To be clear, I will refer to the Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray as Rev. Dr. Murray throughout this article but she did not become “the Reverend” or “Dr.” until much later in her life. Her influence was long before her highest-level of education or her ordination occurred. Also, through the documentary “My Name is Pauli Murray,” I learned there is discussion that Rev.

Dr. Murray was transgender but did not have

the terminology at the time to understand her situation. Academics have used the pronoun “they” for Rev. Dr. Murray. Since Rev. Dr. Murray discusses her continued use of, and awareness of alternatives for, “Negro” in her memoir and she utilized the pronoun “she,” I will utilize the pronoun “she” in this article.

Rev. Dr. Murray was born in 1910 and raised in the South. She was aware at a young age of the inequalities and injustices. She was enraged early on but knew to keep quiet for safety’s sake, until she learned from a roommate how to write to government officials. Her first letter happened in 1938. This was to President Roosevelt with her sending a copy to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt replied back. There was further correspondence with Mrs. Roosevelt and due to Rev. Dr. Murray’s involvements, an interaction or two for purely professional reasons. As an apology for one response, Mrs. Roosevelt had Rev. Dr. Murray and a relative, personally, over for tea at Mrs. Roosevelt’s New York City apartment. Eventually, Rev. Dr. Murray and various friends or relatives of hers would have tea at the White House, or would spend a weekend, every now and then, staying with Mrs. Roosevelt at her cottage in Hyde Park, NY.

Rev. Dr. Murray first and foremost wanted to be a writer. It wasn’t until after she graduated from undergraduate school where she realized how naive she had been, stating in her memoir, “In my blind optimism about a writing career, I was ignorant of the fact that only a few thousand people in the entire country were able to earn a living as writers.” The Pulitzer-prize winning poet Stephen Vincent Benét’s epic poem *John Brown’s Body* had been of great importance to her during her college career. She noted in her memoir, this “was my first encounter in American literature with a white poet who acknowledged without condescension the dignity of Negroes.” She learned he lived in New York City, where she was also living, and wrote him. He promptly responded and they met for an interview. They started a correspondence that supported her writing and gave her specific notes and direction. Her two personal books, *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family* (1956) and *Dark Testament: and Other Poems* (1970), came into fruition because of his encouragement and writing directions. For your pondering, I want to include from her book *Dark Testament* one of her poems, “Nazarene”:

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Say that he was legend,
 The dream of slaves and beggars,
 Or hippy poet so charged
 With music of the spheres
 That stones sang beneath his naked feet.
 I care not if he lived
 Or uttered any word,
 Or healed a single leper.
 I know only that his name
 Reveals that gift of pain
 That only love can bear
 And having borne still cry
 "I love."

Rev. Dr. Murray never wanted to go into education. It had been a family position but she had wanted something else. After she realized she could not make a living as a writer, she decided to become a lawyer, which is where she made her longest reaching achievements. She tried to practice law but as a woman and African-American, even in New York City, this was very difficult. She ended up being a professor of law for most of her working years. I must note: she left a tenured professorship to become an Episcopal priest.

The following are brief statements of a few ways she was a part of the fights for equal civil and women's rights.

Rev. Dr. Murray was directly involved in three situations of pushing against discrimination rules and laws. Two involved her applications to different schools. One, in 1938, would not admit her based on race and the other, in 1944, would not admit her based on her gender. She coined the term "Jane Crow" to emphasize the double burden women of African-American descent had to endure. The third incident was an unplanned protest against bus segregation, mainly spurred on by her traveling companion, in 1940, for which they spent a long weekend in jail due to the Easter holiday.

In 1944 while in law school, Rev. Dr. Murray wrote a paper that was put down by classmates and "not thought much of" by those who read it. The paper ended up in the NAACP's reference files. In 1963, she learned that the paper had been used as the foundation for their argument that won the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case. Her first published book, *States' Laws on Race and Color* (1952), was, for the NAACP, a "'bible' during the final stages of the legal attack upon the 'separate but equal' doctrine."

Rev. Dr. Murray worked with not-yet-Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on women's rights cases and projects. In a *Christian Century* article published in 2020, Justice Ginsburg is stated as noting that Rev. Dr. Murray was "the greatest legal mind she had ever known."

Rev. Dr. Murray was essential in the founding of NOW, the National Organization for Women.

In 1977, at age 66, she became the first African-American woman ordained to the Episcopal priesthood. Until her death in 1985, at age 74, she worked as a parish priest and continued as a voice for civil and women's rights. Up to the end, she continued her "confrontation by typewriter" in letters to newspapers and public officials.

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Her legacy was not at first forthcoming. She died destitute and with little fanfare. But she has now been named to our book of saints and multiple memorials to her exist. Two to lift up:

An EfM participant of mine, Paul Ricketts, sponsored a stained-glass window of Rev. Dr. Murray in memory of his parents, Robert and Mary Ricketts. The window is installed at Trinity Episcopal Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. As seen in the accompanying photo, the window includes a quote from Rev. Dr. Murray's poem, "Dark Testament," "Hope is a song in a weary throat."

The U.S. Mint started the American Women Quarters Program with a set in 2022. A new set will happen per year through 2025. Mrs. Roosevelt is in the 2023 set. Rev. Dr. Murray is to be in the 2024 set. The design of Rev. Dr. Murray's coin is currently being decided. If you search for "US Mint Pauli Murray," you can see the current candidate designs.

There is so much I did not mention. If you know anything about Rev. Dr. Murray, I may have missed your favorite fact. If you knew nothing about her, I hope I have intrigued you. Rev. Dr. Murray accomplished much against tremendous odds. I want to end with our *Lesser Feast and Fasts 2022* prayer for the Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray:

"Liberating God, we thank you for the steadfast courage of your servant Pauli Murray, who fought long and well: Unshackle us from the chains of prejudice and fear, that we may show forth the reconciling love and true freedom which you revealed in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

In my next article, I will discuss the Desert Mothers.



Editor's Note: The 2021 feature-length documentary, "My Name is Pauli Murray," was directed by Julie Cohen and Betsy West. They also made the 2018 documentary, "RBG," about Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg which was Oscar-nominated for Best Documentary feature in 2019. "My Name is Pauli Murray," an Amazon original documentary, is currently available on the streaming service Amazon Prime. Rated PG-13, it is an excellent way to spend 93 engrossing minutes with a fascinating figure.

CHRISTIAN STORIES AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

By James Morse

Stories are at the core of our Christian experience. The Bible is full of stories that serve as object lessons and cautionary tales for believers. Bible reading, participation in Bible study classes, hearing the lessons and Gospel read in church, and listening to homilies discussing those readings combine to advance our understanding of those stories. Upon reflection, it's amazing how much my understanding has been enhanced over a lifetime of exposure to these stories. I'll give a handful of examples of what I'm talking about. And then I'll share additional steps I've taken in my quest to further my spiritual growth.

My initial exposure to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) taught me the Samaritan man acted as God would want us all to act towards anyone in need. From revisiting this story many times through the years and reflecting on it, I've learned many things that have enhanced my understanding of the message. Priests were in charge of the temple in Jerusalem that served as the center of Judaism. Levites were responsible for the administration of the temple in support of the priests. Psalm 82:3 "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute." and other passages call for the just treatment of those in need.

Samaritans had been members of the Northern tribes of Israel until they created their own temple and stopped traveling to Jerusalem to make offerings to God. They were labeled then as heretics, no longer considered Jews, and rejected by the tribes of the South. The road between Jerusalem and Jericho where the injured man was found was located in the southern area populated by Jews and therefore potentially a dangerous place for a Samaritan to be.

My interpretation of the parable has evolved. A core tenant of Judaism (and by extension, Christianity) is justice for all, especially the weak and afflicted. As members of the Jewish spiritual leadership, the priests and Levites knew this well and yet chose to turn their back on their beliefs and the injured man. Just walking along the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, the Samaritan man was putting himself at risk. Extending his stay in the area was potentially dangerous. Assisting the injured man, securing continued treatment, and spending his own money for this care demonstrated how deeply he was committed to the just treatment of this injured Jew. The priest and Levite would have risked nothing in service to a Jewish brother while the Samaritan risked everything to help an adversary.

Peter declares Jesus is the Messiah in the story found in (Matt 16:13-20). My early exposure to this story left me merely feeling that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, just as I had been taught in Sunday School. The only confusion was why Jesus insisted that the disciples not tell anyone. I didn't dwell on the fact that people varyingly saw Jesus as the reincarnation of John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets of old. These people were seeing the mysterious link between Jesus and Biblical teachings, but were unable to recognize who and what he truly was. I also missed how Peter's faith had evolved to the point that he was communing with God.

Early on I had no understanding of the distinction between my understanding of what "Messiah" meant to me and what it would have meant to the Jews in Jesus' time. The Old Testament belief was that a strong new leader would rise up, reunite Israel, and cast out foreign domination leading to a new golden age for Israel. It would follow that the disciples hoped this very thing. Jesus obviously didn't want this misconception to be spread. Currently I believe that Jesus was pleased

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to see that Peter had begun to grasp the significance of the role that Jesus was to play. At the same time he realized that more had to be done to explain his role as the Messiah. Since Peter had recognized him as the Messiah, Jesus had to muzzle Peter before he discussed this with other disciples or others leading them to erroneous conclusions.

In the story of the widow's mite, Jesus focused on the offering made by the widow and compared it to the donations made by the rich. In this story I initially saw only the generous nature of this woman. It seemed to me to be an object lesson for the rest of us. Over the years, re-reading the passage, reading commentaries about it and listening to homilies, different elements have become evident. In the two verses prior to this section, Jesus said, "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

This passage demonstrates Jesus' disdain toward the religious teachers and their manipulation of those least able to do anything about it. Interestingly, portions of the offerings should have been earmarked for widows and orphans as they had no property or way to earn a living. Why is this woman being manipulated or encouraged to give everything she has? My current belief is that the story is more about the corruption of the religious leaders and their manipulation of those they were charged to protect than of the generosity of the widow. In many exchanges with disciples, Pharisees and others, Jesus directed them to, "go and do likewise." Notice that Jesus did not tell the disciples to emulate the widow's action in this instance. He isn't condemning the widow, but rather the dynamic at play.

In (Matt. 12:46-50) Jesus was informed that his mother and brothers were outside. Jesus responded that his mother and brothers are those that do the will of his Father in heaven. I initially thought that Jesus had forsaken his family and was relating to only those following his teaching. Likewise, in (John 13:8) Peter refused to have his feet washed by Jesus and was severely rebuked. Here I realized that by not accepting the direction Jesus provided, Peter had put himself in an uncomfortable position.

Over time, I have recognized the similarities between these two events. I think it is obvious that Peter rejected the suggestion that Jesus wash his feet. While less obvious, I believe that family members of Jesus were coming to try and convince him to stop disparaging and challenging religious leaders for fear of charges of heresy by the Sanhedrin or high-ranking priests. In both instances, those close to Jesus were trying to alter his direction and actions.

What is the common thread in these two stories? I believe that in both instances, Peter and members of the family of Jesus had decided to trust themselves and their own thoughts rather than God. As a result, they had distanced themselves from his presence and his favor. The good news is that they had done so while still in communication with him. As a result, we see Peter embraced once he changed his mind, Mary present at the crucifixion, and James as a leader of the early Christian church in Jerusalem later in the New Testament. This is a stark comparison to Judas and his complete separation from God and his death in isolation.

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As much as my faith has benefitted from these stories, they have not replaced my need for prayer and pursuit of a closer relationship with God. But they have served continually to increase my desire for that closer relationship. It has seemed to me that something was still missing in my spiritual life. When I was 11 or 12, I remember asking my Sunday School teacher why all the Christian stories in the Bible were from long ago - why weren't there modern-day stories of walks with God? She told me that stories in the Bible were from a time when God walked with the people, and that those times were over. I accepted her explanation.

Over the years, I have read books such as: No Future Without Forgiveness by Desmond Tutu, The Seven Storey Mountain by Thomas Merton, and Strength to Love by Martin Luther King, Jr. In the pages of those books, I learned that my Sunday School teacher had been wrong. Here I found the Christian stories of modern believers. This got me closer to identifying my own Christian stories. But I needed a technique or tool to guide me.

I eventually came across the Examen meditation exercises developed by Ignatius of Loyola and utilized by the Jesuits. The exercise includes a time of quiet review of the activities and circumstances of the day each evening. Each significant element is then evaluated as either a blessing or evidence of sinful thoughts / behavior. It's obvious that these significant elements of each day contain object lessons and cautionary tales much as the Christian stories we are exposed to in the Bible. The Biblical stories continue to be every bit as important as they serve as guideposts in helping to recognize and interpret daily personal stories. This evening reflection has become an important addition to my prayer life. These daily story elements appear not only in the Examen meditations. They become topics for consideration during traditional prayer and they pop up often during periods of contemplation. In all, these stories have led me to develop a more mature prayer life.

In summary, I'd say that the three pillars supporting my spiritual growth include: the study of Christian stories found in the Bible and other religious tomes, an enriched prayer life that now includes daily Examen meditations, and frequent participation in church services. The action on my part has changed only subtly, but my closeness to God seems greatly enhanced. I guess I'd say that this is the difference between merely being "a Christian" and more actively pursuing God. Perhaps this is what Jesus alluded to when he said, (Matt. 7:21) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven." As inspirational as the Christian stories have been in my walk, it has been infinitely better to meet with the author.



THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC FOR OUR YOUTH

By Nathaniel Peets

As members of the congregation of this church, we all have been fortunate to be touched by the presence of music in our church. Whether you are a musician or not, we can all appreciate the depth that music in our church provides to the worship service. For some of us, its impact extends well beyond the walls of Good Shepherd.

My name is Nathaniel Peets and I have been a parishioner of this church my whole life. Some of you may recognize me from singing in the Teen Choir, as well as singing solos/duets on many occasions. I have been lucky enough to have my journey of musical exploration supported by the congregation of this church, especially by Dr. Karyn Robbins. Karyn, as I'm sure you all know, is an amazingly talented organist, pianist, choral director, and all-around musician. Her musicality speaks for itself, but her ability to reach the youth of this congregation and inspire them is arguably her greatest asset. She does this in a multitude of ways such as teaching private piano lessons, directing the Youth, Teen, and Chime Choirs, as well as encouraging any willing participant to share their talents with the congregation. These achievements are applauded and highly regarded on their own, but these acts of selflessness and generosity often have a bigger impact than many people may know on the lives of the youth of this church.



I often credit my musical beginnings to the opportunities and instruction Karyn provided me. When she first recruited me to the Youth Choir, I was a young elementary school boy with little to no interest in participating in music. My sister, Nicole (also an alumnus of Youth/Teen Choir, now a High School Choir teacher), my parents, and Karyn, all gently guided me toward the path of musicianship. Just like that, a life-long passion was unlocked. After that, I studied piano with Karyn and flourished in the Teen Choir. I would eventually go on to begin singing solos during services which was a terrifying prospect for me, but Karyn supported me the whole way. It was this gentle encouragement that helped me break my shell.

Soon I was off to high school and participating in musicals, All-County Choirs, All-State Choirs, and even All-Nationals Choir in 2019. This whole time, I was also enjoying my time making music with Karyn, whose role turned from a supporter to a mentor eager to challenge me musically and to guide me along the creative process to hone my sense of musicality. Although my time in Teen Choir came to an abrupt end due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, I will always look back on those days with a warm fondness and appreciation not only for Karyn but for the countless members of this parish who go above and beyond to make everyone who takes a chance to praise God through music feel deeply valued and cherished.

Fast-forward to today and I am a rising Senior Music Education major at SUNY Fredonia. I am off, further learning the craft of performance. More importantly, I am deeply fascinated and inspired by the craft of cultivating interest in music in our youth and providing them with the eternally rewarding experience of musical artistry. I often think about the inspiration that Karyn and this congregation were for both me and my sister to become involved in this field and am forever grateful for the experiences I had here at Good Shepherd.

Currently, I am furthering my church music experience at Trinity Episcopal in Fredonia where I sing as a member of a quartet every week. I am also involved in opera and have participated in various productions such as *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (Moore) as Horace Tabor, *Summer and Smoke* (Hoiby) as The Reverend Winemiller, and *Trouble in Tahiti* (Bernstein) as Sam, among others. This coming semester, I am set to give my Senior Honors Recital on December 3rd.

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As I look to the horizon and think about student teaching in the spring and all of my other professional endeavors, I will always hold a place in my heart for everything this congregation has done for me. And just as music at Good Shepherd has forever altered my life for the better, Karyn provides these life-changing experiences every week to the current youth of this congregation. I cannot personally thank you enough, Karyn, for everything that you do to make music an integral part of the experience at Good Shepherd. Your impact is immense and never unnoticed.

“I Started Hitting a Golf Ball When I was Ten Years-Old Because My Mother Thought It Was a Good Way for Me to Stay Out of Trouble”

An Interview with Art Mason by Content Editor Richard Reid

Richard Reid: How did you come to attend Good Shepherd? What drew you here? What keeps you here?

Art Mason: I started coming to Good Shepherd when Father Anderson was at the end of his ministry. I, and three other single guys, rented a house on Plank Road. I wanted to find a church to pray and have peace of mind. I changed churches when I got married but within two-to-three years we had kids and wanted a church with a children's program. We called the Episcopal diocese and they recommended . . . Good Shepherd! We have been members ever since. We find the congregation friendly, the music and worship beautiful and the location is just right.

RR: Was your family originally from Buffalo?

AM: I was born and raised in a suburb of Buffalo, New York called Kenmore-Tonawanda. I have one sister who now lives in Dallas, Texas. My parents were typical of their generation regarding work and home. My father worked as an Assistant VP for a bus company and my mother worked part-time as a secretary. I earned my B.A. degree in History in 1976 from SUNY Fredonia and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Buffalo in 1989.

RR: What was your religious experience growing up?

AM: I have been a lifelong Episcopalian with only a two- year gap. For those two years, my wife and I attended an Anglican church across the street and were married there. Coincidentally, the Episcopal church I grew up in was also named Good Shepherd!!

RR: It sounds almost like Good Shepherd is your destiny. What was life like for you growing up at that other Good Shepherd?

AM: My Buffalo Good Shepherd church was considered a "high church". We dressed up each week - I had to wear tie and pressed shirt- and we could only miss a Sunday if we were sick. We went every Sunday and attended church school (mandatory) till we were in college. My Webster Good shepherd experience has been quite different. I started attending while I was still single and looking for some deeper meaning in my life. Although Robin and I went to an Anglican church for a few years after we married, we came back to Good Shepherd because it had a vibrant children's church school program and there were many other families with young kids like ours.

RR: How long have you been married?

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AM: Robin and I just celebrated our 36th wedding anniversary on June 27th. We met when she became a teacher at the Convalescent Hospital for Children and I was a counselor. We have two children: Elizabeth and Peter. Peter recently got married and is living in Minneapolis. Our daughter lives in Irondequoit and is single. Much to my wife's chagrin, there are no grandchildren.

RR: Let's be optimistic and say, "none yet." Talk about your work experience a bit.

AM: I have had a variety of jobs over the years. My parents required me to work at age 16 at Friendly Ice Cream. After Fredonia, I worked at the Children's Home of Bradford Pa for two years before moving to Rochester. For ten years I did similar work with emotionally disturbed kids at Convalescent Hospital for Children and went to school at night, beginning my Masters. In 1990 I was hired by Lifespan of Rochester as I finished my student placement with them, I stayed with Lifespan for just over 30 years as Director of the Elder Abuse Prevention Program before retiring in 2020.

RR: Why did your parents require you to work at so young an age?

AM: My parents had certain values and this included finding a job and taking responsibility for doing your best. Both my sister and I were expected to work as soon as we turned 16 and also learned to save our money from our paychecks so we could understand the value of money. After I left Friendly Ice Cream for a different job I could not eat ice cream for over a year. I had spent so much time scooping, cleaning up and seeing it each day, I was sick of dealing with it in any way, shape or form!

RR: We have worked together on the Outreach Committee for some time. What are some of your other past and current activities on behalf of Good Shepherd?

AM: Presently, I am on our Vestry for the third time I have not kept track but my guess would be 10 to 15 years on the Outreach Committee. Robin and I just completed our first year of EFM. We both wanted to get a better understanding of the bible and our faith, so we decided to try it. I have to admit, the first year - the Old Testament - was pretty "dry" but we look forward to next year's lessons. I have volunteered on a number of church projects over the years: cleaning, fundraising, food assistance . . . when the need arises and the number of workers is low.

RR: How do you feel your work experience has prepared you for your Outreach work?

AM: My professional work has allowed me to be familiar with a number of organizations in New York State. Many of them have written to Outreach to ask for financial support and I can give our committee members insight regarding their work. I have also been able to help a number of parishioners who needed services or help during a crisis. One older person had very little money but growing medical and utility bills. Through my networking with other professionals, she was able to qualify for Medicaid (not just Medicare- a different program) and heating assistance to help pay her overdue and current utility bills.

RR: Any hobbies, interests, passions beyond the religious?

AM: Currently, my only ongoing passion is golf. I started hitting a golf ball when I was ten years old because my mother thought it was a good way for me to stay out of trouble! As a teenager, I got just good enough to start taking myself too seriously. I was playing "bogey golf" but never had a hole in one. In college, I was playing with members of the school team but was way too competitive. My temper often got the best of me and I would throw my clubs and get very upset. One day, when I was playing with the team's captain, I hit a shot that landed in the water on a short hole. I flung my 9-iron and it landed in the water too. The captain turned to me and said, "Well, that was a \$100+ temper tantrum, are you sure this sport is for you? You aren't having fun." For the next five years I did not pick up a club. Although I had started to play again when I met Robin, she is most responsible for me having a different approach to the game. I still get frustrated, but now it is fun. We don't keep score and we have played in every Bruce Mason tournament the church has run. We take lessons and I finally realized I can enjoy the game and have some fun.

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RR: What would you like the parish to know about you as a person that only a few close friends, or perhaps none, may know?

AM: I have been a member of a local Masonic Lodge for over 35 years. I joined in 1986 after meeting an old college roommate who belonged. I had lost touch with him after graduation and did not realize he also had moved to Rochester from our hometown in Buffalo. As my wife and I were walking out of a movie theater, I turned a corner and there was my old friend and his wife. Wow! My family had been members of the fraternal organization for four generations, so my father was thrilled when I joined. Locally, the Monroe County Masons operate the largest medical supply loan closet in the area. All free. In addition, they give out scholarship money and small grants to not-for-profits that provide services for all segments of the population: kids, older adults, domestic violence victims etc.

RR: You retired in 2020. Do you feel you have about the same amount of time retired as you did when you were working? Did the pandemic affect that decision?

AM: Retirement continues to be an ongoing adventure. Many new things now fill up my day and I often wonder how I got things accomplished at home while I was working. Doing some travel, doing LOTS of yard work, playing golf and helping out our family members are just a few of the things that take up my time. My decision to retire was less based on the pandemic than it was for two major reasons. First, Robin had retired two years prior, and I wanted to spend more time with her. When I was working, I did a fair amount of traveling around the country, doing trainings and presentations for the US Dept of Justice, the Offices on Aging programs and my own agency. It was time to make her a priority. Second, I was the director of my program for almost 30 years. I had 16 bright, talented young women working with me but they could not really advance professionally or get paid more unless I retired and put them on a "fast track" to promotions. It worked!

RR: Thank you for sharing some of your life story with us, and for all that you have done and continue to do at Good Shepherd.



ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

by Greg Hartline

So, you're graduating from high school. You just got done being a senior. A lot of the underclassmen admired you and looked to you as a role model. You survived high school, with all of its hazards and obstacles, academic or otherwise. Congratulations. Enjoy that feeling of accomplishment while you can. It won't last very long. It might last for a couple of weeks, or it might be over in five minutes. Regardless, I guarantee that feeling will be gone before the summer is over.

Let me give you a little perspective. You're about 18 years old. If you don't do something stupid, like kill yourself drunk driving, there's a good chance you'll be around another 75 years.

That hot cheerleader that everybody has been looking at? She's only going to look like that for another five years, maybe 10, tops. For the next 40 years after that she's going to look a lot like her mom.

The captain of the football team? Nobody's going to care about that football trophy 20 years from now. He's probably going to be overweight, and losing his hair, and that won't even matter. For most of you, whether or not you have any athletic talent at all won't matter one bit in 20 years.

It won't matter if you hung out with the popular kids in high school. It won't matter what kind of clothes you used to wear, or who went with you to the prom. In fact, pretty much everything that was really important to you these past four years won't make any difference at all.

Continued

So now I'm supposed to tell you what you ought to be doing with the next 75 years of your life. Am I supposed to be offering sage advice because I'm valedictorian? I'm 18 years old. Whose brilliant idea was that? You should go ask someone a lot older than me. Like maybe your dad.

When my dad was a kid, everyone used to say that if you were smart and worked hard, you could grow up to become president one day. But today, if I were to ask you who is the biggest clown on the planet, chances are you would name one of the two most recent U.S. presidents. So, let's just say that's not the kind of motivation we're looking for.

Apparently, most of us end up becoming our parents in about 25 years. If you think your dad is the most awesome guy in the universe, maybe you should ask him how he got that way. If your dad is more likely to become the next President of the United States, you might want to ask him where he went wrong.

Better yet, talk to your grandparents and ask them what they've figured out. Or go to the oldest guy you know who still talks in coherent sentences, and pick his brain for a while. They all know a lot more about life than any 18-year-old kid. Ask them whatever happened to the prom queen, or the quarterback, or the valedictorian of their high school class. And ask them what still matters 50 or 60 years after high school ends.

It turns out there's a lot of stuff written about this. One prominent theme is that you don't get to take anything with you when you die. Another prominent theme, is that nobody ever lays on their deathbed and says they wish they spent more time at the office. Nobody regrets spending too much time with the people they loved best, or taking off from work to go fishing with their dad. Nobody wishes they had focused on accumulating more things.

A 90-year-old woman asked her priest, "Why am I still here? I'm ready to go to Heaven. Doesn't God want me?" He answered her, "Of course He does. But you're still here because God still has work for you to do. You better figure out what it is, and start doing it, or else you might have to stay here forever."

I have no idea what you're supposed to do with your life. Like I said, I'm just an 18-year-old kid. But the best advice I can give you is to figure out what you're supposed to do and start doing it soon, instead of waiting until you're 90.



I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE SKY-BLUE PINK

By Marilyn McCann

In this lifetime, I am White.

However, I believe that I have lived other lifetimes, and in another time and place I know I was Red and in still another, Black.

So, from the time I was very young, this time around, I believed in the integrity of each and every person.

I had strong feelings about this integrity for one so young. The origins of my belief system neither I nor anyone else understood.

One thing was certain, my soap box was always handy, much to the chagrin of my mother who would roll her eyes all the while muttering, "Here she goes again."

Soap box, indeed! She knew any discussion about Race I participated in was certain to include, "But, Mom! I don't care if they're sky-blue pink!"

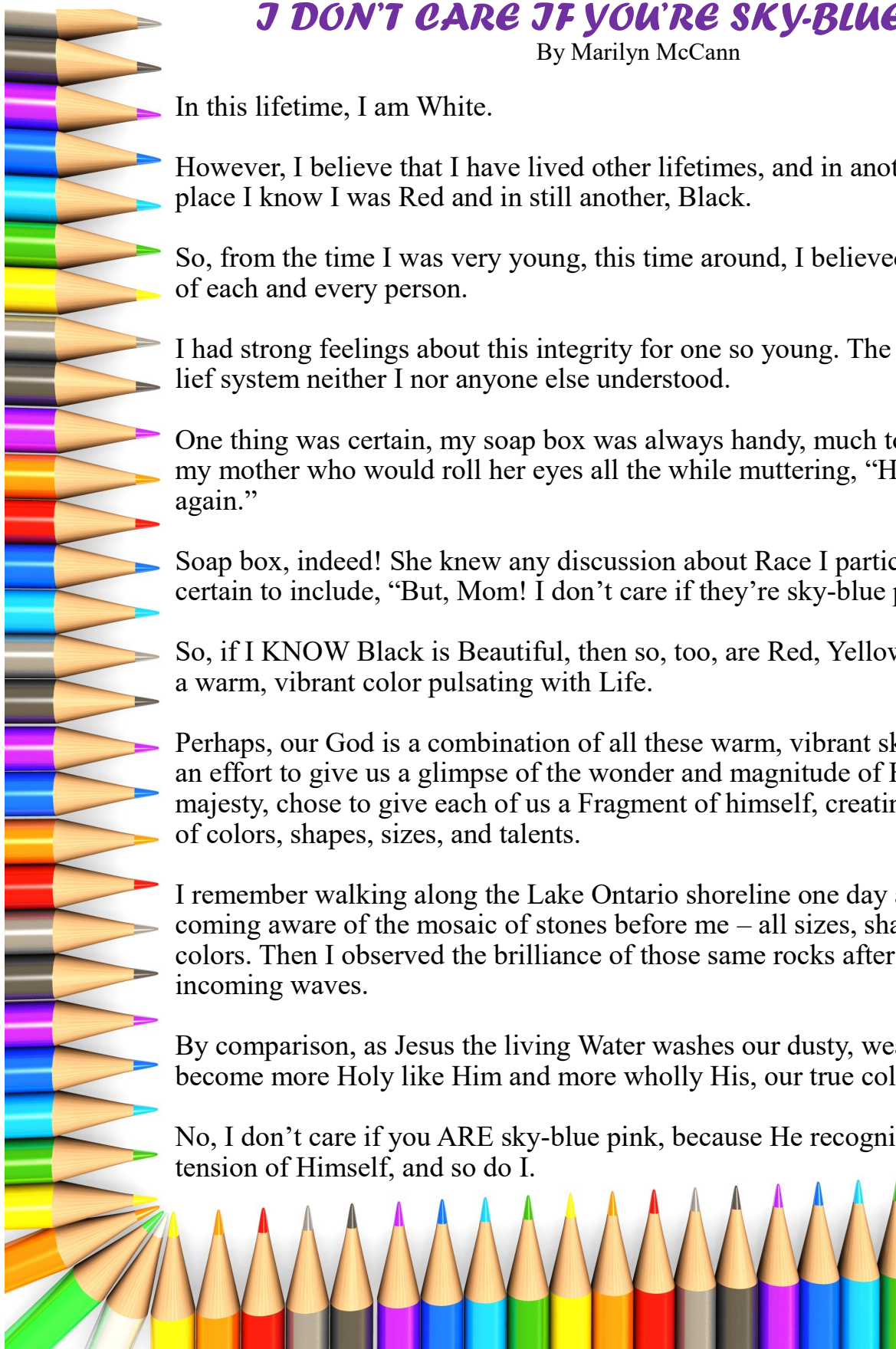
So, if I KNOW Black is Beautiful, then so, too, are Red, Yellow and White; each a warm, vibrant color pulsating with Life.

Perhaps, our God is a combination of all these warm, vibrant skin tones, and in an effort to give us a glimpse of the wonder and magnitude of His/Her love and majesty, chose to give each of us a Fragment of himself, creating a true rainbow of colors, shapes, sizes, and talents.

I remember walking along the Lake Ontario shoreline one day and suddenly becoming aware of the mosaic of stones before me – all sizes, shapes and dusty colors. Then I observed the brilliance of those same rocks after being washed by incoming waves.

By comparison, as Jesus the living Water washes our dusty, weary souls and we become more Holy like Him and more wholly His, our true colors will shine.

No, I don't care if you ARE sky-blue pink, because He recognizes you as an extension of Himself, and so do I.



UNTIL SUNRISE

A tale for Halloween
by Richard Reid

Upon reaching the forest's edge, Lloyd found the soft mud splattering under his running feet. Losing footing, his momentum propelled his body forward, crashing hard into the wet earth as a weak cry of pain escaped his dry mouth. Motionless, he turned over quickly when he heard the bat screech above him. Looking up, his head moved in quick spurts, trying to locate the creature as the moon's rays, breaking through the drifting clouds, revealed where he lay. Quickly, he jerked his head to the right as the diving bat narrowly missed his throat.

Spinning around, his feet and arms pushed him backward as he tried to spot the bat's next lunge but it was nowhere to be seen or heard. Get moving, he told himself as he stood up. But, which way? His eyes darted across the landscape that was once a wheat field. In the distance, he spied a small hut. With each step towards it, he could hear his heart pounding louder. Beating on a door that wouldn't open, he screamed, "Let me in! For God's sake, let me in!" Furiously, he hurled his body against the door until the old lock gave way. Inside, he shut the door, wedged a nearby chair against it, then collapsed to the floor,

Breathing heavily in the darkened room, Lloyd listened for any sound that might tell him he was not alone. I'm sorry if I've scared you, he said to the interior darkness. Silence. I won't hurt you. I just need your help. Again, silence. If you light a lamp, you'll see I have no weapons. Silence still. When a moonbeam fell through a window and onto a fireplace covered with cobwebs, he was on the verge of declaring himself all alone until he remembered what was still out there, in the dark shadows, hunting him.

Desperately, he tried to remember what that man had told him earlier that day when he met him on the path to the old castle that Lloyd had come to see. Vampires, he had warned. Rubbish, Lloyd had scoffed. Local legends of ignorant people. Rudely, he dismissed the man, glad to see him go. Now he strained to recall that conversation. The vampire, a loathsome beast who was once human, needs the blood of the living to prolong his undead existence. The victim of a vampire in turn may become one, joining their satanic, nocturnal family. At times, the evil thing can even assume the form of a bat. Yes, he was remembering it now. It commands all the meaner things of the earth: the rat, the owl, the bat, the fox, and the wolf. What else was there? He struggled with memory. The vampire may not enter anywhere unless bidden to. Afterwards, it can go as he pleases. It rules the night but is repelled by holy things: a cross, holy water, a consecrated wafer. When the sun comes, it must lie on the earth where it was buried or it risks final destruction.

In the near-darkness by the fireplace, Lloyd found a lamp with a little oil in it. With matches from his pocket, a weak bit of light soon flickered in part of the large room. A wave of relief swept over him. Thank God for that traveler, whoever he was, he thought. If all that he said is true, I'll be safe here. It can't come in. Sunrise is only a few hours away. Pulling out his pocket watch, he was dismayed to see it had broken, possibly from that last fall; time had stopped. Tossing it aside, he said aloud, "Doesn't matter. All I have to do is keep my wits and wait for the sun to rise."

Wait. That was all. Just wait.

After a little time had passed, he sensed a growing desire within. Go to the door of the small hut, it said. Remove the chair. Open that door. Bid entrance to . . . "No!" he exclaimed. "I'll fight you. You won't get me." But the pressure of the hypnotic power he felt overwhelming his brain was unbearable. As his body shook, he banged the wall again and again. Through a window, he saw an all-too-close, man-like figure with an outstretched hand, pointing toward the hut, beckoning him to come out. Lloyd screamed, holding his head in pain. He cursed. He even bit his hand. And with one final agonizing scream, he fell to the floor, blessedly unconscious.

Continued

The silence of the room was broken by a gnawing sound. Awakening – after how long? – Lloyd felt something move by his hand. The faint lamplight revealed a running rat. Behind him was another and still another; the room began filling with them. Backing towards the fireplace, he grabbed a poker and thrust it toward the vermin. Without taking aim, he had speared one; its death cry startled him. He kicked the dead rat into the crowd of them. They were hungry and food was food. Striking another, he fed their feeding frenzy once again. The little cannibals, he sneered.

With a flint he spied on the mantle, he started a small fire then wrapped rags by the fireplace around the longest stick of wood he found. Making a torch, he drove many of them back out through small holes by the cabin's floor. But the rats were quick, too; he felt the bite of one at his left ankle. Trying not to be cornered by them, he moved around the room. The rats squealed when he burned them with the torch but not before one bit his outstretched arm. With the poker in his other hand, he bashed several more but again received another leg bite. So great was his struggle with the rats that he had almost run outside to escape them. Had he left the safety of the hut . . . "I've won the second round, Satan's spawn," he yelled triumphantly.

Time passed. Was it a few minutes or an hour? Then he thought he heard a voice. It was -- a young woman's voice, getting louder. Through the window, he saw her in the moonlight as she approached. "Good sir, help me," she implored. "Open the door. Let me in." Inside, he said nothing. "Please, good sir," she pleaded in a sweetly melodious voice, "before he returns. You know what will happen if he gets me." The door did not move but behind it, Lloyd was in agony over what he should do. Urgency now more evident in her voice, she begged, "Please, for my mother's sake, let me in, I beg you, kind sir." She was now hitting the door with her fist. "Open the door, good sir, please! Save me from that monster! Oh, God, please help me," she shrieked!

Slowly, the door opened. He saw that she, dressed in peasant's clothes, was indeed young and most comely. Smiling, she said invitingly, "Let me in and I will do whatever you ask of me." Lloyd raised his right hand which contained a small, golden crucifix, the one that man earlier today had thrust into his hand, entreating him to hold it before the face of any stranger as the only way to be sure someone was still human. At the sight of the accursed object, her smile dissolved into abject terror. Letting out a hissing sound and revealing her fangs, she turned away sharply, moving swiftly into the darkness as Lloyd stood dazed by what he had witnessed. Fortunately for him, he had resisted his first impulse to toss the crucifix away when it was offered. He shut the door.

More time passed; then it started. Owls began to hoot. Bats, more than he had ever seen gathered in one place before, flew around the hut, screeching wildly. In the distance, a lone wolf howled but then a second, followed by other cries. Their howling came closer and closer until he heard scratching at the door. He checked the chair to make sure it was still tightly wedged in place. All around, the walls seemed to vibrate with their howling – and then their digging. The hut was made of logs and dried mud. They could easily dig under and get in, he realized. Frantically, he made his way around the room, the iron poker in one hand, the relit torch in the other since the lamp had given up its last beam almost an hour earlier.

In the corner, by the door, he spied the first wolf's paws scraping the dirt away. The other three weren't far behind on the other walls. Thank God, there were only four, he thought. When the first head appeared, he brought the poker down hard. The animal let out an ugly yelp. He could hear it running in the night. His action was repeated for the second wolf, only harder and with multiple strokes; the beast remained in the grave it had dug for itself. Fire from the torch sent the third one running in pain. A glance towards the fourth hole suggested the wolf had gotten the message for it had stopped digging. He breathed a sigh of relief.

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Behind him, the sound of broken glass suddenly filled the room. Turning, he saw a huge wolf leaping at him in the split second before the animal collided with Lloyd, knocking him to the floor, causing him to drop both the poker and torch. Instinctively, he reached for the wolf's ferocious jaws but he couldn't hold them. He let out a cry of pain and pulled his hands away; one was bleeding badly. With superhuman effort, he managed to throw the beast off him and found the iron poker. The wolf leaped. Lloyd swung hard. The beast fell to the floor, its skull cracked. He struck the body several more times to be sure, then wedged a chair in the window.

And then the smell of smoke filled his nostrils. The dropped torch had sparked a fire! Grabbing a blanket from the room's sole bed, he tried to put it out but the hut was dry and easily encouraged the flames. Despite his efforts, the fire spread to a second wall. The few wolves yet outside panicked at the sight of the flames; he saw them scattering in all directions. Still, Lloyd knew it was fatal to go outside, even with the crucifix, for there were at least two vampires now, if not more, each one thirsty for his warm blood.

When the flames reached the roof, and began lapping along the rafters, he knew it was time to decide: a briefly horrible death in the flames or becoming one of the undead until either the sun's cleansing rays or a stake driven through his heart released his soul from its unspeakable fate. His guardian earlier today had pulled no punches when he warned him what could await Lloyd if he continued along the path to Castle Dracula. Still, Lloyd had gone on, certain that what the man was sprouting was only ridiculous superstition.

Inches from the flames enveloping him, he could feel the dreadful heat. He looked at the hut's door, desperate to see cracks of sunlight around its edges telling him he had won but there were none. Bitterly, he told himself: no exit. As the flames licked his clothes and flesh, the hut's last wall, the one with the door, began catching fire. His final thought before, mercifully, blacking out from the lack of oxygen sucked up by the fire, was that he felt less pain than he had feared.

Due to the hut's west-facing door, Lloyd never knew the sun's first rays of morning had already touched the windowless east wall of the small hut.

