

The Elizabethan



The Newsletter of St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church Burien, Washington

October 2015

Issue 2015-10

From Fr. John: Prayer and work

For somewhere there is an ancient enmity between our daily life and the great work. Help me, in saying it, to understand it. ~ Rainer Maria Rilke

The outward work can never be small if the inward work is great, and the outward work can never be great or good if the inward is small or of little worth.

~ Meister Eckhart

Recent statistics show that Americans are working longer hours and getting less satisfaction from it. An alarming number of people are trapped in the relentless cycle of near-obsessive work in the pursuit of material accumulation that feeds only the desire for more; a cycle that by definition can't produce satisfaction. People of faith have also been caught up in the trend, but they have another option.

Regardless of the work we do, we can choose to dedicate our work to God, which changes the character of our work-life marvelously because it is directed at following God's will. The practical method for doing this is to combine our work with prayer. This is the meaning of the adopted Benedictine motto: *Oro et Labora*, or "prayer and work."

Prayer as an expression of a habitual union with God means not simply praying from time to time, but directing one's whole life to union with God. The resulting sensitivity to God's presence leads us not only to contemplate with wonder and gratitude on the gracious deeds that God has already wrought in our lives. This is also the way we can begin to discern God's yearning, specifically, for the work we have chosen or been called to do. The Benedictine attitude of prayer includes a sense of expectant waiting for the mysterious coming of God from moment to moment, so that we seek to greet God as She comes in Her own often surprising way in each circumstance.

We can undertake our work, then, not so much as a means of gaining material wealth, but rather as an opportunity to share in God's own creative love and Christ's ongoing redemption of all creation. We can take up our daily work as a task full of hope and promise and as a service to others in family, community, Church and world.

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Susan Vorthman Gagey Purrington

Sue was born July 11, 1956 in Omaha, Nebraska. With her husband, mother and best friend at her side, she lost her battle with colon and liver cancer on September 10, 2015.

She is survived by her loving husband Donald Purrington, her mother Laura Vorthman, brothers John and Bill (Linda) Vorthman, niece Nicole Vorthman, nephew Michael Vorthman, the Gagey family, BFF Linda Woodall, numerous friends, aunts, uncles, cousins and her cat Run Away.

She is predeceased in death by her father George Vorthman, brothers Carl and Robert Vorthman, husband Carl Gagey and far too many friends and family members.

Her family would like to thank our friends and Sue's United Way family for their unending love and support over the last 1.5 years.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society, 3120 McDougall, Suite 100, Everett WA 98204; St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church, PO Box 66579, Burien WA 98166; or United Way of King County, 720 2nd Ave, Seattle WA 98104.

There is a Celebration of Life service at St. Elizabeth on October 3rd at 11am.
1005 SW 152nd St. Burien, WA 98166

HOW DOES CHILDREN'S MINISTRY HELP FAMILIES?

8 Ways Children's Ministry Benefits Families

- 1. It supports godly parenting.** The church was never meant to be the exclusive faith teacher of children. Instead, God's plan was for the two institutions (church and family) to form a partnership.
- 2. It helps nudge some parents into more faithful attendance.** Usually parents become more involved in the church when their kids become more involved in the children's ministry.
- 3. It brings unchurched families in contact with the Gospel.** In our culture, reaching children is one of the most effective ways to make contact with unchurched families.
- 4. It helps new families get connected with the church.** Even when a new family comes into the church, they still need help to get plugged in.

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The Latin phrase *Oro et Labora* is very close to *Oro est Labora*, or prayer is work. Combining that with the reference to the daily offices of prayer as the *Opus Dei*, the Work of God has led many to the mistaken conclusion that St. Benedict has said that work is prayer. In fact, *Ora et Labora* is found nowhere in the Rule of St. Benedict and, doesn't appear in Benedictine history before the 19th century. Granted, Benedictines have ever since cheerfully plastered this motto on everything from their napkins to the front gate. Where Benedict does comment about work specifically, in RB 48, he sets up a rather precise daily schedule that is really a three-part structure: *Ora, Labora et Lectio*, or prayer, labor and spiritual study.

This vital separation of activities has roots in Jewish tradition: The purpose of the Sabbath is to free the people from work so that they might give themselves entirely to God for one day a week. One of Benedict's gifts was the establishment of this balance for each monastic day. To maintain our spiritual center at work, we must also find time to free ourselves to God's presence each day. If we define prayer as time devoted exclusively to God, then it becomes something we can do along with work. If we try to short-change our prayer by giving it only the dregs of our time and energy, we will not be successful. Of course, our ability to connect the will of God with the work we do relies primarily on God's grace, but prayer is absolutely necessary.

Many professional people believe that they are realized as persons through their work or that they are called to a certain kind of work, which is fine as far as it goes. Obviously, not everyone can find this kind of work, but for those who can, it is hard to imagine that they are not "working as prayer."

People who feel called to a vocation often expect to invest themselves more completely than others in their work, perhaps even to give their lives for it. Unquestionably, these vocations make heavy demands on people, and sometimes they even seem to preclude other aspects of life. Many doctors and lawyers, for example, seem to find it difficult to find time for their families. Some people with special vocations, such as Gandhi, have been notoriously dreadful family people. Here was work that literally took over a life, and yet who would say he should have cut back? It is partially a matter of balance; work should not be, and indeed is not intended to be, the entirety of human life. Where it has become everything, life is truncated and diminished, whether we realize it or not. Prayer is part of the essential centering.

It is also partially a matter of separation of concentration. Years ago, monks prayed while they worked, which was simple when they did simple work, and where simple tasks are still involved, prayer can be a fruitful companion. But modern work typically requires such a high degree of concentration as to make prayer impossible. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this. In fact, we need to be fully present to each in their balance: Prayer *and* work: Mary and Martha; sisters living in the same house and both present to Jesus in very different ways. Work can be accompanied by prayer and prayer is itself often work to do, but they are different things. To transform our work into an offering to God, we must make time for and be fully mindful of both work and prayer to ensure that we are, in fact, continuing to seek God's will and glory. How are you feeding both Mary and Martha in your house?

Tidbits at St. Elizabeth

- ⇒ John & Sandy Stonhouse have moved and also have a new phone number. If you would like this information please call Christine in the office or ask John or Sandy.
- ⇒ We will be putting the "Gardening envelopes" in the pews on the third Sunday of each month.
- ⇒ We have been given a newer dishwasher for the Zechariah room kitchen by Patti McGowan and Bob Knutson installed it. If anyone would like the old one it is available free of charge. Please contact Christine in the office to make arrangements for pick up.

Hospitality House News

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Do you have old jewelry you no longer want to keep dusting!

How about odds and ends of cuff links, earrings, pins with missing pieces etc? If you want to clean out your jewelry box and do a good deed too, then please drop off your "jewels" at Burien Art Gallery, 826 152nd St. or at St. Elizabeth's, and a group of jewelers will remake them into new and beautiful pieces for the women of Hospitality House ,and other shelters.

The recipients of the new jewelry are free to do with it as they choose, wear it for an emotional boost on a job interview, give it as a gift, or sell it to benefit the shelter. Thank you for your consideration .

The Elizabethan

The Elizabethan is published monthly by St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church. The deadline for articles is the fourth Friday of each month.

Articles, calendar items and ideas may be mailed or emailed to the addresses below or left in *The Elizabethan* box in the Parish Office.

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Rector: Father John Forman

Sr. Warden: Gabriel Grant

Jr. Warden: Gwynne Taylor

Treasurer: Linda Knutson

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Events around Burien

- ◆ October 2nd 6pm to 8pm

Seahurst Beach Family Campfire

- ◆ October 4th Noon to 2pm

Burien Brat Trot in Olde Burien

- ◆ October 24th 10am to 3pm

Boo in Burien in Downtown Burien on 152nd Street, Safe treats for children

- ◆ October 30th 6:30 to 9pm

Night of the Pumpkin at Burien Community Center

- ◆ December 5th 10am to 5pm

Winterfest in Downtown Burien

- ◆ December 5th 10am to 3pm

Moshier Holiday Pottery Sale at Moshier Art Center

Have you seen the new shuttle buses around Burien? Route 631 replaces the Route 139 and is meant to link Highline Medical Center, Gregory Heights and Seahurst neighborhoods, downtown Burien and the Transit center. For more information call Metro Rider information at 206-553-3000.

If you chase two rabbits you will lose them both

Native American Proverb

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.

Stephen Covey, Author

The more good we find to say about anyone, the more good that person will become.

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5. **It helps identify families that may benefit from biblical counseling.**
6. **It helps dads get involved in the church.** For various reasons, fathers have a difficult time getting connected with the church family.
7. **It provides families with meaningful shared experiences.** This is true especially when the whole family can participate in events like VBS or summer camp.
8. **It helps answer those hard questions.** Almost every week a child will have a religious question that may stump their parents. Even while answering the question, parental teaching authority is reinforced. Parents can be helped in finding resources that will answer future hard questions.

<http://ministry-to-children.com/benefits>