



Praise God!

Patsy McGregor *reflects on* Psalm 8, 2 Corinthians 13:11-end and Matthew 28:16-end

Toddling to the kitchen, my three-year-old nephew opened the refrigerator and pulled the bottom drawer. Grabbing a handful of chocolate chips he lifted them high, singing the doxology, offering them to God: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise God all creatures here below..." Today's psalmist reminds us that God elicits praise from the mouths of children and infants. Maybe praise is the key to living in peace and unity with one another.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul says goodbye and sends final guidance: "Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace." His final words echo those with which we end our worship: "the God of love and peace will be with you".

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus says that all authority in heaven and on earth have been given to him. In turn, he tells his followers to go and make disciples, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It's a God-given mission to them and us, sealed with a promise: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Since God gives us the authority to make disciples, baptise and teach others, we are also given the grace to live in peace and loving fellowship with our neighbours. We have an incomparable God. Don't you agree? ☺

Thank you, Lord, for eliciting praise from the mouths of children and infants. We will worship you and give thanks, for you have worked wonders, forming plans long ago with perfect faithfulness. You are amazing! Amen.

Plants of the Bible

The anemone coronaria

by Caroline Fletcher

One of the best-loved sections of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is his appeal to learn from the lilies of the field (Matthew 6:28-30). These were unlikely to have been what we call lilies. Many think they were anemone coronaria, known to most only from their gardens. However, in Israel these grow wild, forming stunning blankets of mainly scarlet flowers which have even become tourist attractions.

It is clear to see why Jesus could describe these opulent flowers as more beautifully clothed than King Solomon in all his grandeur. The anemone's silky, scarlet petals open to reveal a bold, black centre. This is encrusted with scores of striking stamens encircled in a ring of pure white.

Jesus teaches that as God cares enough for the short-lived anemone to clothe it so stunningly, we can be confident in God's love and provision for us, for we are the Almighty's beloved children. ☺

“God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves.”

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), American evangelist and publisher

Your spiritual journal

A treasure trove of words

by Katharine Smith

Do you have a favourite psalm? Are there verses in hymns that you find especially moving or challenging? Perhaps you wish you could remember words of beauty and wisdom that you read in a book or magazine. A spiritual journal can give us somewhere to keep words that mean a lot to us. In our journal we can also write down why these words are

important to us, respond to any challenges they set for us or use them in our personal prayer time. We could illustrate them with photos, postcards, pictures from magazines or perhaps even our own sketches to help us reflect on what the words are saying to us about God and our relationship with God and others.

Our spiritual journal can be the place where we keep these treasured words so that we can return to them often and ponder them in our hearts. ☺