



Our Story of Blessings and Harvest

You would never know by recent temperatures, but the season of Fall is just around the corner. Unprecedented high heat has accelerated the harvests of many crops. *Fall and Harvest . . . they just go together.* At the risk of sounding indelicate, it occurs to me, as I look around the church on Sundays, that our parish family is also aging into our *harvest years*.

Our liturgical year, too, is in the harvest season, as we rapidly approach the end of the liturgical year with the feast of Christ the King on Sunday, November 20, 2022. A new year begins with the First Sunday of Advent on November 27th

Recent scriptures have been concentrated on honing our *focus . . .* to remind us to continually place God first in our lives . . . to remain attentive . . . to remain *ready . . .* Ready for what? Ultimately to be prepared, at each and every moment, to meet Jesus face-to-face. We know that Jesus's disciples expected that he would return very soon after his ascension into heaven. Certainly, they expected him to return within their lifetimes.

Pastoral Council
Mission San Antonio de Padua
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Now, two thousand years later, we begin to understand that our own personal face-to-face with Jesus will most likely come long before the rapture. That said, what should we be doing to get ready or to be ready?

To best answer that question, I suggest a small trip down memory lane. For those of us who are part of the baby boomer generation, we remember the Baltimore Catechism that we were trained with as children in the church.

One of the first questions in the Catechism was, "Why did God make me?" and the answer was, "God made me to know Him and to love Him." Very simple. Very straight forward.

God didn't design me, or you, to become rich or famous. He wasn't looking for us to *build bigger barns* or acquire millions of followers.

To know him and to love him. Simple. God wants a *relationship* with us. He wants us to learn about him, to walk with him, to trust him, to imitate him, to become his hands and feet to others, our brothers and sisters, to love him . . .to want him . . . to seek him. God wants us to realize that *our Creator, our Savior*, has been loving us, inviting us, and pursuing us since the very moment he created us within our mother's womb!

God creates us, each uniquely suited to God's plan for us, and we enter into the human family. Our entire life is about the journey of discovery. We grow, we experience, we learn. We continually discover who we are and how we can use our unique experiences and talents to become the best "us" who God created us to be. This cannot be realized in a vacuum, even if the introverts among us wish it to be so. To become a true

follower of Christ, to be *Christian*, is to be *Christ-like* to others, our fellow travelers on the journey. That means to become and remain an integral part of the Christian Community, the family of God.

Recently, the news channels buzzed with the size of the lottery jackpot, climbing to millions and millions of dollars. People discussed what they would do, should they be the person holding the winning lottery ticket. "I'd pay off my mortgage, I'd quit my job, I'd help my family members, I'd help people who need money for their health needs, etc." So many ideas, so many wishes, so many thought-provoking considerations. Most of us, it is probably safe to say, will never need to decide how to spend multi-million-dollar winnings.

During the weeks that everyone was discussing the lottery jackpot, I heard a person on K-Love (a Christian radio station) discussing this phenomenon. He was saying that although it was not a dilemma most of us would ever face, almost every one of us does have the opportunity, and the responsibility, to manage billions! I actually ran the numbers on my calculator, and lo and behold, he was correct!

There are sixty seconds in every minute, sixty minutes in every hour, etc. I'll spare you every calculation, but given a conservative life expectancy of eighty years, we are gifted with **2,522,880,000** seconds of life! That is over **2.5 billion seconds of life!**

Now, how have you, or how will you, choose to spend your life's precious moments?

How will we explain our usage of life's moments to Jesus when we meet him face-to-face? How do we become and stay ready to meet our bridegroom?

One way would be to begin each morning and end each evening in prayer, thanking God for the bountiful blessings we receive from him daily. An attitude of gratitude is critical to humility and preparedness. It helps us to preserve a *right sense* of order. **God is God, we are not.** The good that we have, the good we enjoy are all gifts from God! Gifts that God gives to us, for us to share with others. We are to accept the gifts with open hands . . . open to receive and open to share. Just like the scripture about the talents, God expects us to use our gifts to grow the kingdom, to enrich the Church, his Bride . . . his family!

We are rich! We are very rich . . . in life, in talent, in blessings.

“God made me to know Him and to love Him.”

How are we doing with that?

I invite everyone to join with me during this *harvest season* to reflect on our richness and to discern how best to spend our bountiful blessings.

Joan Steele, Mission Administrator & Director of Religious Education



God is in This Story

Big Daddy Weave, Katy Nichole

There's torn up pages in this book
Words that tell me I'm no good
Chapters that defined me for so long
But the hands of grace and endless love
Dusted off and picked me up
Told my heart that hope is never gone

God is in this story
God is in the details
Even in the broken parts
He holds my heart, He never fails
When I'm at my weakest
I will trust in Jesus
Always in the highs and lows
The One who goes before me
God is in this story

So if the storm you're walking through
Feels like it's too much and you
Wonder if He even cares at all
Well, hold on tight to what you know
He promised He won't let you go
Your song of healing's written in His scars
God is in this story

God is in the details
Even in the broken parts
He holds my heart, He never fails
When I'm at my weakest
I will trust in Jesus
Always in the highs and lows
The One who goes before me
God is in this story

If it reads like addiction
If it reads like disease
He's the one who frees the prisoner
He's the healer of all things
If it reads like depression
If it reads broken home
He's the One who holds your sorrow
He won't leave you here alone

God is in this story
God is in the details
Even in the broken parts
He holds my heart, He never fails
When I'm at my weakest
I will trust in Jesus
Always in the highs and lows
The One who goes before me
Always in the highs and lows
The One who goes before me
God is in this story (You're in this story)
God is in my story (right here in my story)

Source: [Musixmatch](#)

Songwriters: Jeff Pardo / Ethan Gregory Hulise / Katy Nichole
God Is In This Story lyrics © Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Songs, Meaux Mercy Publishing, Be Essential Songs

SOON

One of my favorite songs is "Soon and Very Soon" written by Andrae Crouch. I'm not sure why this song resounds so strongly for me. The lyrics recite how soon it will be until we see the King. A song about death but with a melody and tempo that is upbeat and joyous. In every recording I have heard you can feel the happiness and hope in each verse.

**"Soon and very soon, I am going to meet the King.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, I am going to meet the King".**

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As I have aged, I have realized a different awareness about death. It seems I am more concerned about the 'being ready' than I am about the dying. In James (4:13-15) I am struck by the verse that tells us how foolish we are to make plans for the future, as we are not even promised or assured that we will live out that very day.

In Matthew 25:1-13 we hear the parable of the ten bridesmaids and only 5 that brought enough oil to greet the Bridegroom. The punch line of the parable - "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

So, what does 'being awake' mean? What am I not doing, or for that matter doing, that needs to change? I think Father Dennis' last sermons about "who or what" do we center our lives around is a good starting point for finding answers.

Is God our center? Have we put other 'worldly' things ahead of Him? Is family, work, health, happiness or possessions more important? Is our worry of dying more about losing those things instead of about gaining the One thing that should be our goal?

Is God our center? Are we living the days we have in the way that will assure for the day when we will meet the King?

As uncertain as this world can be, one thing is deadly certain - Soon and very soon we are going to meet the King.

I want to be ready for that meeting. I want to hear: My child, welcome home.

Georgia, Parishioner

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Outreach Ministry

Mission San Antonio de Padua supports several outreach programs. We are looking for someone to help us grow this ministry. It won't take a lot of time; you do not need any training and you will be answering God's call to minister to your brothers and sisters.

Programs:

Communion Service for the Homebound: Please let us know if you need communion brought to you. Receiving the Eucharist is fundamental to our Catholic beliefs.

Prayer Circle: Are you willing to pray for those in need? Do you need special prayer? The prayer circle is a great way to reach out and reach up! You don't need to be able to travel; prayer requests can be shared within the group via the telephone or email. A scheduled prayer time of 8 a.m., 12 noon and 8 p.m. unites those offered prayers. Join in any time or all times to add your united voice of prayer for those in our parish family who are in need.

Meals during a family illness/hospitalization: Would you be able to provide a meal for someone who is in need? Are you in need of some help while you deal with health issues?

Carpooling services for Mass: If you need a ride to Mass or if you can provide a ride, this might be the ministry for you.

If you are interested in lending a hand or would like to be remembered in any of these ministries, please contact Joan at the office.

Mission San Antonio

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