

Enough
All Saints Sunday, 2022

I woke up with a song in my head this week,
It's the line of a pop song whose chorus goes;
it will never be enough, never be enough
never, enough, never, never, never

I know why it was on my mind,
Someone had very explicitly made a comment
about whether I'd earned my keep,
and believe me its something every pastor
worth their stole, wonders about,
We know that we and all our staff and this whole enterprise
keeps going by your giving.

I am so aware of my shortcomings
in my work, my family, for myself,
I am sure you are too,
And no matter what we do,
how hard we work over our lifetimes,
we wonder as came the words of our anthem
was I faithful?
with the life I've been given, Is it enough?

That anthem is drawn from Matthew 25, verses 31-39
that offers a vision of the last day,
when people will appear before the king,
and faithfulness will be judged
not by what we have believed
but how we cared for those in perilous need
for in them, says, the King, I live.

*I was hungry and you fed me, or fed me not
I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, or did not,
I was without a home and you gave me shelter,
or did not.
Naked, and you clothed me, or clothed me not.*

It is a moving, and haunting vision
Christ is in humankind
and caring for them is caring for
the divine heart of the universe

it has inspired the church for thousands of years,
it inspired this congregation
for all its 102 years,
all that you and those who came before
have been able to do here
because we have pooled our resources
and offered ourselves, and this place,
and have supplied food, clothing, and shelter,
monies to those enduring war and flood and wind
and crises of health.

And we carry on that mission – in addition to all the education,
and recovery groups and children
that have been cared for this week
on Wednesday, 10 Ukrainian American women
used our kitchen to make hundreds of perogies
to feed those in line for food at CRC.
and yesterday Ugandan Christians met here to organize
their new, more inclusive congregation.

And there's more,
This past winter, we ran a warming center and
provided meals for the unhoused and those in line for food.

And in the new year we hope we can put our remodeled kitchen
to use and provide a weekly meal for anyone who needs
the warmth of food and friendship

It's inspiring!

This passage has inspired me for as long as I remember
it propelled me into working with the very poor and oppressed,
here and abroad, meaningful, soul lifting work.
and became the banner for my ordination ceremony

And yet, I'm haunted by the ways I have fallen short,
particularly the poor I could not help
Irene, who died from breast cancer without me next to her,
Quan, who I couldn't save from a brutal abusive mom,
Wesley, who succumbed to his addiction
Our friend on the patio here who lost his toes to frostbite
for my father for whom I did not get morphine in time
before he died in agony.

These and so many others for whom I have not been enough.
it seems, and you may feel this, too, it is never, never enough.

I heard a veteran combat nurse who served in Vietnam
looked back on her time

*The only ones I remember
are those that died.*

The ones she couldn't save.

Then she went to the Vietnam Wall in Washington,
for a reunion of the unit she served with,
and someone came up to her,
spoke her name, it was a soldier she'd treated.
who said: *I came today to see **you***

She was seen,
because she had been there,
willing to look into the face of suffering
to do what she could.

it's a word of grace,
and if there is grace in that soldier, in us
surely that reflects the grace of God.

When we doubt we are enough.
When we ponder what will happen at our death
when our life flashes before our eyes
and it is all somehow summed up
will we be found wanting,
scolded or enfolded into glory?
Will our obvious shortcomings affect
God's love for us?

To that, Paul says to the struggling church in Rome and to us:

No.
Nothing can separate you from the love of God.
nothing in life, nothing in death
The Lord of heaven and earth sees us
comprehends us

The God in whom we live and move and have our being.
who has nudged us
into every act of compassion
every effort made with friend
or family or stranger,
with the earth, and sky and sea
with all creatures here below.

Divine Love that has given us eyes to see that
the Christ who is present in every person
of every station, every status, every condition.
lives, also, in us

And will bring our hearts to even greater compassion
even more fulsome seeing in the days we have
and when our days are done.

It is a good word. It is one to share:

This week, a miracle happened.

After searching for 30 years,
The son of one of our unhoused friends
found her.

He did many things for her,
but there was a limit to what she let him do,
and he had to leave, for now,
to go home to wife and children

He longed to do more, worried he hadn't done all that she needed.
and it was my turn our turn to say, *it is enough*.

And I imagine the King of kings saying the same
Remember, behind every good work
every loving action, received or not
successful or not, I am.

Together, faithful servant, we are enough.