Exodus 34:33. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.


Veils have a long history. They’ve shielded skin and embodied beliefs. They’ve served and been used. Most often, they mark transitions. Coarse meets fragile in a sandstorm. A bride lifts her veil.

Some sense the “veil is thin” when life meets death, unhallowed meets holy, and water meets shore. Did the people around Moses sense this?

Moments of transition can prove the most dangerous and rewarding experiences of our lives. They change us. I wonder at Moses’ and Jesus’ faces today in our readings from Exodus and Luke. The veil is thin with these two. They encounter God and are noticeably changed. If I look upon God’s unveiled glory, will my face change too? Is that what the Israelites fear when they see Moses?

God, thank you for the veils enabling me to sit in your presence comfortably. Please lift them one by one, that I may see you more clearly.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Mbaise and Warri (both in Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: Do a little research on the history of veils. How does this help you understand them as a metaphor?

John 4:38. I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.


Genetic memory is a vague tendency to encode reactions. Common experiences of a species become incorporated into its genetic code. A seed grows into a plant. We eat the plant, and it tastes good. We share the good news with our friends.

We are raised by people who were raised by people who were raised by people who parented the best ways they knew how. We are raised poor. We are raised rich.
We are raised witnessing fear and gratitude and rage and reconciling love.

We reap what others sow.
As we learn, we can change.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Medak (South India) and West Lango (Uganda)

MOVING FORWARD: Have you entered into another person’s labor? How can you thank them for the work they have done, even if you don’t understand it?

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**THURSDAY, August 20**

*Bernard of Clairvaux*

Job 1:10. Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.


Job’s story is set in an obscure place and time, filled with foreign characters and written by an anonymous author. There are no disputable facts to distract us from the truth at hand. The story opens with Job’s earthly abundance.

Before we have time to get comfortable, we are transported to a celestial courtroom. The Adversary argues Job has only been “blameless and upright” because he has not suffered. The Adversary makes a good point. Privilege is sneaky.

Some people are born into money. Some are born to parents who want to be with each other. Some folks live in places where healthcare needs are met. Some have beautiful views. Some are free of mental health challenges.

Some enjoy education and freedoms.
Some people have nothing to lose.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Minna (Nigeria) and Western Kansas

MOVING FORWARD: Make a date with Job this weekend. Spend some time with his story and see where you can find your own.
Job 8:10. Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding?


Prayer may be the most intimate practice we ever learn. In my years of praying I learned to do it with my eyes closed and open, kneeling, standing, sitting, swimming, and cooking. For years I practiced prayer with yoga positions. I practice it while I fold laundry and when I lay my hands on a child’s head in passing.

I am sometimes tempted to teach others how to pray. I feel like I understand the practice and want others to feel the relief I’ve found in it. Then I remember all the different ways we learn and the value of drawing our own conclusions.

God, please teach me. Keep me mindful to respect the dignity of others, their teachers, and teaching moments. Still my tongue but for the building of your beloved. Remind me that ore will be revealed—that it’s not my job to curate or initiate the revelations of others.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Mombasa(Kenya), Western Newfoundland (Canada), and Western North Carolina

MOVING FORWARD: What is your favorite method of prayer? Use it with wild abandon today.

THURSDAY, September 3

Job 16:16-17. My face is red with weeping, and deep darkness is on my eyelids, though there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure.


Approximately one in five adult Americans live with a mental illness. Anxiety and depression rank highest in prevalence among those illnesses. I live with both of them, and sometimes I can name them—but often I do not.

While Job found his voice and named the pain to seek the solace of his God, many who live with mental illness remain quiet and unnamed. People who suffer fear they will be castigated, blamed, or told to “snap out of” these incredibly complex sets of feelings and symptoms. The invisible nature of their suffering can leave people feeling
helpless and alone.

Whose pain might we see and acknowledge, putting aside blame and provocation to accept its reality and our charge to soothe it? How might we come to know that suffering is not antithetical to faith but is a soul-deep call to the faithful to minister and to be ministered to?

PRAY for the Dioceses of Morogoro (Tanzania), Wulu (South Sudan), and Ijesa North East (Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: Where do you see pain—unspoken, unattended, unrecognized—in your life and community?

THURSDAY, September 10

Alexander Crummell

Acts 15:8. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us.

Ps 50 * [59, 60], or 93, 96 | Job 29:1; 31:1-23 | Acts 15:1-11 | John 11:17-29

As a manager and a spouse, I never fail to be surprised by the ways my direct reports complete a task or the way my spouse gets things done for our common good. It is often not the way I would have done it or the end I would have arrived at, and I have to ask myself before I correct or question: “Is this a matter of importance or just my personal preferences?”

Peter speaks to the leaders of the early Christian community when they question whether new Gentile believers must be circumcised. God knows the heart of each individual and his grace manifests itself in each human heart and body in new ways. We must celebrate this just as we celebrate our own salvation.

How can we see the grace in God’s diverse goodness being expressed in those around us? How can we gracefully put aside wanting to see our own experience validated? Our preference for what grace looks like will always be smaller than what God can make possible.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Mukono (Uganda) and Yewa and Ikara (both in Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: Where does diversity in your own life make you smile? Where does it challenge you to stretch yourself?
THURSDAY, September 17

Hildegard of Bingen

Job 28:12. But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?


Chapter 28 of Job provides a beautiful reflection on the search for wisdom. The author seeks it in all corners of the earth but cannot find it, not in the oceans or the markets or the mines of the earth. This reflection rejects the very idea that wisdom can be “obtained” as an object—it’s a journey.

Wisdom is a dynamic set of postures—turning from and turning to, one of reverence and trepidation, humility and vulnerability. I so often forget to ask questions of the leaders with the greatest experience so I might better understand their accumulated wisdom—get a download of their insights.

But I could also watch how they approach their work and how they approach others, what they turn from and what they turn toward. Those actions bear witness to embodied wisdom.

PRAY for the Anglican Church of Korea

MOVING FORWARD: Read all of Job 28 this weekend.

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THURSDAY, September 24

Anna Alexander

Luke 4:24. And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown.”


The people who have known us longest can struggle most to see our adult gifts. We are forever a poorly timed soiled diaper, a mischievous smile, a reckless first love, or a cringeworthy moment—loved but not the star. This has been a hard reality for me to face with my own family. They want me to be their son, brother, or nephew, not their consultant, their coach, or teacher.

Jesus confronts his hometown with his whole adult self. His visit takes a hard turn for the worse. He tells them he hasn’t come for them; he will not heal them or perform miracles They threaten to throw him off a cliff.

How is facing our adult realities a source of grace?
Where can drawing boundaries free us to move forward, even when it is hard and carries some sense of loss?

PRAY for the Anglican Church of Melanesia

MOVING FORWARD: How can you acknowledge that despite the gifts we may bring to other spaces, our role with each other is to be family?

THURSDAY, October 1

Therese of Lisieux

Psalm 105:1. Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name; make known his deeds among the peoples.


Honestly, I remember very little from Sunday School. I dutifully attended every week and about the only thing I remember are the first verses of Psalm 105. We memorized them one year, and they stuck.

Memorization and recitation have played a powerful role in both Jewish and Christian tradition. Memorizing psalms, scripture verses, and communal prayers was a way for everyone to pray along in the temple, synagogue, or early church. Without bulletins and PowerPoints to guide them, generations of worshipers memorized liturgies, songs, and scripture passages in order to fully participate in worship.

Over the course of many years, I unconsciously memorized Compline. To this day, that liturgy is on my mental bookshelf, available whenever I need it. In the midst of crisis or joy, pain or pleasure, I turn to God using those words.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Nasir (South Sudan), Agra (North India), and Indianapolis

MOVING FORWARD: Commit to memorizing the first five verses of Psalm 105 this week.
THURSDAY, October 8

Psalm 134:1. Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.


Compline is my favorite liturgy of the Daily Office—it’s an awesome way to conclude a busy day. For me, the service also played a role in my love story.

My husband and I met at the Society of Saint John the Evangelist’s monastery in Massachusetts. We lived near each other, and he had a car, so he offered me a ride whenever I wanted to attend a liturgy there. We most frequently attended Compline because of our schedules. The chapel’s candlelit dimness, chanting the psalms, repeating prayers of release and trust—all put us in a restful and peaceful frame of mind.

The Daily Office is a rich part of our heritage of faith. For generations of monastics, it formed the core of their daily lives. For modern Christians, it’s an opportunity to slow down and touch base with God. I invite you to pray Compline tonight.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Nebraska and Akot and Isiala-Ngwa South (both of Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: Compline can be found on page 127 of The Book of Common Prayer or at prayer.forwardmovement.org.

THURSDAY, October 15

Teresa of Avila

Psalm 18:33-34. It is God who girds me about with strength and makes my way secure. He makes me sure-footed like a deer and lets me stand firm on the heights.


There are no established paths along the rocky heights. If we tread there, we must forge our own way. We must step out in faith and negotiate the journey step by step, leap by leap. We cannot always grasp and hold; sometimes we must leap and trust in God for our security.

Life’s journey is like this. When I was studying astronomy in high school, there’s no way I could have imagined I would be a spiritual writer and editor forty years later. As we wend our way through rocky heights
(and the valleys of the shadow of death too), God keeps our feet secure, even—perhaps especially—when we can’t see around the next corner.

PRAY for the Dioceses of New Jersey, Amazon (Brazil), and Jabalpur (India)

MOVING FORWARD: Read along with the psalm today. Where do you see your own spiritual journey in this psalm?

THURSDAY, October 22


Modern science tells us that our skin cells last a mere three weeks; colon cells survive only four days. In contrast, brain cells usually last a lifetime.

How does such scientific knowledge connect with the spiritual life? This verse ponders how dust and ashes can be proud. In today’s language, we might wonder how atoms and cells in one human body can think of themselves as any better than atoms and cells in another human body, or animal, or cactus, or stone, or tree.

The constant turnover of cells in our bodies reveals that we are indeed what we eat. I would further extrapolate that we are what we breathe, sing, and pray. While we have learned much about the physical world, there is so much we don’t know about the workings of the spirit. Let us humbly give thanks to God for both our bodies and our spirits.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Ngbo and Jalingo (both of Nigeria) and Antananarivo (Indian Ocean)

MOVING FORWARD: Do a little research on Ecclesiasticus (also called Sirach). Why do you think this book is important for us to read?

THURSDAY October 29James and his Companions

Psalm 50:24. Whoever offers me the sacrifice of thanksgiving honors me; but to those who keep in my way will I show the salvation of God.

Ps 50 * [59, 60] or 103 | Ecclesiasticus 31:12-18,25—32:2

Consider which of your friendships are sincerely relational, as opposed to merely transactional. Do you have deep discussions, wrestle with challenging ideas and issues, struggle to discern a way forward together—or do you chat about the latest trends and bemoan what other people are doing?

A sacrifice is meant to acknowledge that all of who and what we are comes from God. Ideally, we offer portions of our time and our treasure in thanks to God because we believe that all we have belongs to God anyway. The best of what we have is what we offer back, because God has offered the best to us.

Over time, however, this kind of sacrifice can become transactional—and this grieves God’s heart. God wants relational interactions—heart-to-heart talks—full of thanks and praise.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Nimule (South Sudan), Arkansas, and Jerusalem (Israel)

MOVING FORWARD: How might you express the importance of your relationship with God to God in prayer or action, today?