



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

October 1, 2021

**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces**



Source: unsplash.com

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.”

(Romans 8:26)

Did You Know?

- We learned before, that scholars have never raised a voice against the authorship of apostle Paul regarding **Romans**, and that they date this book about AD 57.
- Paul's purpose for writing this letter were varied:
 - He wrote to prepare the way for his coming visit to Rome and his proposed mission to Spain.
 - He wrote to present the basic system of salvation to a church that had not received the teaching of an apostle before.
 - He sought to explain the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God's overall plan of redemption. There was evidently tension in the church between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, in part over the question of whether to keep dietary laws and sacred days. The Jewish Christians were being rejected by the larger Gentile group in the church due to this issue.

(The NIV Study Bible; Romans)

Personal Insight

The technology referred to in this Our Daily Bread devotion is probably not used by all of us. Most members of my generation and the ones before don't feel comfortable using smart devices in the way that is 'natural' for the younger folks. And as Anne's story tells, even those clever gadgets have their imperfections.

The Scriptures teaches us that it is not so with the Holy One, who **“is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything”** (1 John 3:20) and **“who does not change like shifting shadows.”** (James 1:17)

While we are far from “all-knowing” - although sometimes we behave as if we were – we have a promise of a Guide, who *“both searches our hearts and understands God's will”*. This Person is the **“Advocate”** - our counsel, supporter and defender - assured by Jesus. When we yearn for this Gift, God provides **“the Spirit of truth” “to help [us] and be with [us] forever”** (John 14:16)

This is why we can pray with confidence in all circumstances, and can face our every challenge knowing that *“We are not alone”*. (New Creed) Thanks be to God!

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



No Misunderstanding

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.

Romans 8:28

READ Romans 8:26 – 30

Alexa, Siri, and other voice assistants embedded in smart devices in our homes occasionally misunderstand what we're saying. A six-year-old talked to her family's new device about cookies and a dollhouse. Later her mom received an email saying that an order of seven pounds of cookies and a \$170 dollhouse were on their way to her home. Even a talking parrot in London, whose owner had never bought anything online, somehow ordered a package of golden gift boxes without her knowledge. One person asked their device to "turn on the living room lights," and it replied, "There is no pudding room."

There's no such misunderstanding on God's part when we talk with Him. He's never confused, because He knows our hearts better than we do. The Spirit both searches our hearts and understands God's will. The apostle Paul told the churches in Rome that God promises He'll accomplish His good purpose of maturing us and making us more like His Son (Romans 8:28–29). Even when because of "our weakness" we don't know what we need in order to grow, the Spirit prays according to God's will for us (vv. 26–27).

Troubled about how to express yourself to God? Not understanding what or how to pray? Say what you can from the heart. The Spirit will understand and accomplish God's purpose. – By **Anne Cetas**

REFLECT & PRAY

Thank You, God, that You know my heart. I love You for that and many other reasons. Help me to express my thoughts to You and to trust You to understand. Amen.

What's on your mind right now that you should share with God? How are you encouraged by the truth that He knows and understands what you're facing?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul to the believers in Christ in Rome most likely during his third missionary journey (around ad 57). He wrote this letter while in Corinth for a short while before heading to Jerusalem to deliver the offerings gathered by the churches of Asia to help the needy church in Jerusalem. Paul hadn't planted the church in Rome, nor had he ever met its members, but he'd heard of their faith, which was "being reported all over the world" (Romans 1:8). Therefore, Paul longed to visit to encourage and help make them strong in their faith (v. 11). Thus, we have this wonderful explanation of the gospel: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (v. 16). – By **Alyson Kieda**

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