



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

October 6, 2021

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



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.”

(Romans 12:6)

Did You Know?

- When Paul wrote his letter to the **Romans**, he was probably at Corinth on his third missionary journey (about AD 57).
- His work in the eastern Mediterranean was almost finished and he greatly desired to visit the Roman church. At this time, however, he could not go to Rome because he felt he must personally deliver the collection taken among the Gentile churches for the poverty-stricken Christians of Jerusalem.
- So instead of going to Rome, he sent a letter to prepare the Christians there for his intended visit in connection with a mission to Spain. For many years Paul had wanted to visit Rome to minister there, and this letter served as a careful and systematic theological introduction to that hoped-for personal ministry.
- Since he was not acquainted directly with the Roman church, he says little about its problems.

(The NIV Study Bible; Romans)

Personal Insight

The Our Daily Bread meditation below speaks about transformation, which enables us to live out our Christian values, and to make a difference in our environment.

Don't we feel that our buildings, homes and wardrobe is in need of 'redevelopment' time to time? Apostle Paul says that our inner self is not that different in this sense, either. However, we can't get off the hook with just a 'cosmetic' paint or change in appearance. This transformation is supposed to be an advancement deep in our souls. And as such, it takes a lifetime of faithful and humble walk with God.

I can see two main characteristics in connection with this call and need for our inner progress. The first is that it is not our making, but God's. If we want to change deep inside, if we yearn for substantial renewal in our hearts and minds, we need God's Spirit for this job. On our own we might be able to squeeze some short-term, superficial 'holiness' out of ourselves, but it wouldn't go to the roots of our being.

But second, our will still matters! It is *us* who need to invite and let the Holy One to carry out this transformation in our lives. God offers us this renewal, but we have to take and accept it. The good news is that we all have been given gifts at our birth. Have you recognised yours? Are you ready to make the most of it as **“true and proper worship”** (Romans 12:1)?

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Joyful Learning

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12:2

READ Romans 12:1 – 3

In the city of Mysore, India, there's a school made of two refurbished train cars connected end-to-end. Local educators teamed up with the South Western Railway Company to buy and remodel the discarded coaches. The units were essentially large metal boxes, unusable until workers installed stairways, fans, lights, and desks. Workers also painted the walls and added colorful murals inside and out. Now, sixty students attend classes there because of the amazing transformation that took place.

Something even more amazing takes place when we follow the apostle Paul's command to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). As we allow the Holy Spirit to uncouple us from the world and its ways, our thoughts and attitudes begin to change. We become more loving, more hopeful, and filled with inner peace (8:6).

Something else happens too. Although this transformation process is ongoing, and often has more stops and starts than a train ride, the process helps us understand what God wants for our lives. It takes us to a place where we "will learn to know God's will" (12:2 NLT). Learning His will may or may not involve specifics, but it always involves aligning ourselves with His character and His work in the world.

Nali Kali, the name of the transformed school in India, means "joyful learning" in English. How's God's transforming power leading you to the joyful learning of His will?
– By **Jennifer Benson Schuldt**

REFLECT & PRAY

Dear God, I invite You to transform me by renewing my mind today. Thank You for all that's possible when I surrender to You. Amen.

Which areas of your thought life are most in need of God's transforming power? How willing are you to act when you clearly understand His will for your life?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

In the Old Testament, propitiatory sacrifices were offered to atone for sin. "The Lord will accept [the animal's] death in your place to purify you, making you right with him" (Leviticus 1:4 NLT; see 7:7). Dedicatory sacrifices (see Leviticus 2–3), on the other hand, were offered voluntarily "as an expression of thanksgiving" to God (7:12 NLT). In response to Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross that gives us new life (Romans 3:25; 6:4–10), Paul exhorts us to offer ourselves as a dedicatory thanksgiving offering to God. We're not all called to die for Jesus but to die to sin and to self (6:2–11; 8:12–13). Instead, Paul calls us to live for Him in His perfect will (12:2), in humility (v. 3), and in unity (vv. 4–8). "[Christ] died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them" (2 Corinthians 5:15 NLT). – By **K. T. Sim**

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