Ready for Battle...

In many ways we are in a battle. We have minor battles everyday, with rush hour traffic, diets, getting things done. There are major battles in terms of things that effect us for years to come. The profound moments of choosing education, a vocation or career, getting married, having kids, raising a family are monumental and each can have seasons of struggle and questions.

There are local to national contests over education, defense, justice, economics and morality. Are you ready for the battles of life? Military metaphors can make people feel awkward or threatened but in reality they help us to put into context the moment we find ourselves in as spouses, parents and children, workers and bosses, leaders and followers.

There is a picture that is helpful in understanding the posture we should take in times of conflict. It comes from the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah was an Old Testament leader for the nation of Israel. Israel had been in exile carried off to a foreign land. It was time for them to return and yet there was a need. The wall around Jerusalem was in ruins and the city was under constant threat from raiders as they had no defense. Nehemiah took the mission to go and rebuild the wall.

The surrounding tribes doing the raiding were not happy about this and resisted and tried to thwart the endeavor. So Nehemiah stationed people around the wall in this manner...

*From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail... Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.* (Neh. 4:16–17)

I believe this speaks to us of a posture we should have in life: A trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. We are to build up, encourage, support and make something valuable out of our labor. Secondly, we are to defend people, fight off those who tear down, steal, kill and destroy.

This is the posture we have taken at Canterbury to see it emerge from a season of calamity to a season of growth and bearing fruit. We made significant changes as we built Canterbury up. We realized we were a ministry under attack and we called people to pray for Canterbury to be victorious; in many ways to do spiritual warfare to see Canterbury set apart. We work this way as a staff and as does the Canterbury Board. This has become part of the Canterbury Tale and a part of Canterbury’s mission it to be a place that teaches people how to build and how to defend; to carry a sword and a trowel.

Often when we think of walls in a personal sense, it feels negative but here lets see that building walls is a good thing of setting boundaries, setting up defenses and keeping safe those precious things of life.

The Rev. Jon Davis PhD
Executive Director
My name is Peggy Bedford and I work with Sue Grosso in the front office at Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center. Canterbury and I go back a few years as some of you may remember my husband Steve and I worked here under Marvin Kelly, who was the original Executive Director. Steve was the first official food service manager and I was his assistant for the first eight months. Then, as was part of Marvin’s dreams for Canterbury, I opened and ran the Canterbury Book Shoppe. In everything I have done at Canterbury, I considered it a ministry and not a job because this place is so special and we met a lot of very special people while here. I loved serving people and helping them in their journey.

Steve and I both felt that we were meant to be at Canterbury due to the circumstances (i.e. –God was in control) that led us to be here. He was in the food service industry and was getting to the point that he wasn’t sure he was supposed to be where he was. After talking to our priest in Atlanta, Steve realized he needed to be in a food ministry and that happened at Canterbury! We were both blessed to minister and be a part of the mission that Canterbury is.

When I retired a few years ago, I ran into Fr. Jon at St. Luke’s Cathedral, whom I had known when he was the Diocesan Youth Minister and had events at Canterbury. I reintroduced myself – and one thing led to another. I am again blessed to be ministering here as a part of the Canterbury team. I know God is in this place, by personal experience and by watching wonderful things happen in the lives of people who come on the campus. Canterbury is a haven, a refuge and everyday we discover the JOY that Canterbury is!

A Prayer for the Mission and Ministry of Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center:

Almighty God, bless Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center; make it a lively center for sound learning and in the course of this busy life, a place of spiritual renewal, refreshment and peace. Give wisdom to the Board and Staff; to make wise decisions, to be good stewards of all resources. Lead us we pray to strength and stability. Inspire us by your Holy Spirit with a vision for greater mission and effectiveness for the expansion of your Kingdom in this diocese and beyond; that people would come to know you as Lord and Savior; grow in their knowledge of you by the work done here. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ who modeled for us the need for retreat to be strengthened and renewed. Amen.

1601 Alafaya Trail / Oviedo, Florida 32765
Ph. 407-365-5571 / Web. www.canterburyretreat.org

(Is a designated 501-C3 non-profit corporation and all contributions are tax deductible)