Mercy Drops and a Flood...

I am indebted to Dr. Richard Pratt, my Old Testament professor in seminary. He taught a grid to understand and read the Old Testament prophets with greater clarity and comprehension. The prophets were raised up as Prosecutors of the covenant. When Israel was disobedient; breaking covenant promises, a prophet would emerge to warn the people calling them to repentance. So when we read the prophets we can distinguish Oracles; pronouncements in various forms. There are oracles of judgment; lament and repentance; restoration and more.

In the prophet Joel in chapter 2 it begins with an oracle of judgment; ending with an oracle of restoration. Look at an amazing verse in this chapter... “So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the LORD your God; For He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.” (Joel 2:23)

Over my life I have witnessed miracles. I have seen circumstances change, healings, provision, revival occur. I see in this one text that as a part of the restoration an early rain of God’s blessing. I might even call them Mercy Drops that renew, refresh and cause growth. However there is a greater pouring out, a torrential downpour of mercy, grace and love coming.

To switch metaphors it might be the strike of a match in comparison to a bonfire; both burn, give heat and light, they share the same properties but a match can die out quickly unless it finds tender. Some folks settle for a match when there is a greater fire to be had. Some settle for mercy drops when there is a downpour coming that will renew the face of the earth. It will produce provision for people and there is an abundance.

I believe we stand at the cusp of something magnificent. I feel the early rain, the mercy drops, I am refreshed, but I wait with anticipation for the abundance of God’s mercy, grace, peace and power poured out on all things. We can tend toward minimalism. Just enough to sustain us, enough to make us feel good and to squelch any anxiety we might experience. There is so much more. I pray for the flood gates of heaven to be opened and for the Gospel to be preached in all places. Do not settle for mercy drops; set your vision higher to see the abundance of God’s restoration to creation and to all people.

At Canterbury we are seeing the mercy drops in these days. Canterbury is a conduit, a place where people are refreshed, renewed and experience the Glory of God’s presence. Through retreats and prayer, conferences and fellowship the rains are coming down at Canterbury to see the world transformed and to see more and more of God’s Kingdom in this world. May we see it, feel it and know more and more of this restoration in the days to come!

The Rev. Jon Davis PhD
Executive Director
A Canterbury Tale – Sue Grosso / Director of Guests Services

I left Pennsylvania in 2009. I belonged to a small Episcopal congregation there, and had been a dental assistant to the same dentist for nearly 20 years. Both my church and my job were family to me as well as our small but Pennsylvania centered real family. When a job offer for my husband came through in Florida, the only hesitation was family. Still, we felt we were being called to something more in Florida, so we said our goodbyes, packed up the husband, wife, daughter, grandmother, parrot and dog, and drove south!

We found a great little church and settled in. When Fr. Jon was asked if I wanted to participate in the life of Canterbury as the “front desk person” I jumped at the opportunity! After all, it is mostly just “scheduling people” like I did at the dental office. It has turned out to be so much more! While the ‘scheduling’ itself is much more challenging, with details, meals, lodging, meeting rooms, staff, etc., the work itself is more rewarding. I get to meet all sorts of folks on their life journeys. What a blessing it is for me, to be able to speak Life and Love into those just starting a journey, well into a journey, or just tired of the journey.

One woman in particular, a professor at a local university, came in one day, looking weary, and asked, “Is there a place here where I can just be still and pray? I am so tired.” Now, if you know me, I am not one to burst into spontaneous out loud prayer, but I felt called to do so here. Reminding her of God’s unending grace and peace, and asking that to be given to her in that moment asking that her burdens be lifted and rest be restored to her. She smiled and said that was just what she needed to hear. We spoke a bit more as I led her to the small, beautiful and quiet Oratory Chapel where she spent the day in the Word and in Sacred Space.

Canterbury offers this to everyone; rest, peace and quiet. I can truly say that I love working here, being part of the ministry and helping people to achieve their goals… be they spiritual, secular, or educational. My new family is here, and has welcomed me with open arms, both in Canterbury, the Diocese, and the community at large. I am grateful for my work here every day and knowing we make a difference in the building of God’s Kingdom daily is a perk you don’t find in every job!

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.

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