

Offering #46, April 9, 2021. The week after Easter. Hallelujah, Hallelujah and again Alleluia, Alleluia. We will enjoy some reflections from Br. Curtis Almquist of SSJE on Hallelujah to start, then, follow my journey to the mansion with David, followed by some “Aha” light wisdom advice. A new addition to the offering from a “Crazy” (as in fun) County Gardener – forward questions and comments. Shwetha Jayathirtha, St. Thomas’ Youth and Family Co-ordinator has sent in two recipes to enjoy.

With affection and blessings, Deacon Kate Ann

What can God have that gives him greater satisfaction than that a thousand times a day all his creatures should thus pause to withdraw and worship him in the heart.

Brother Lawrence

The following is taken from a sermon by Br. Curtis Almquist

“Hallelujah” is a Hebrew word that means “praise the Lord.” The word does not appear in the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. The word “Hallelujah” does not appear anywhere in the New Testament except in the last book. In one chapter of the Revelation to John it’s like the last word.

You might find it inviting to say “Hallelujah” under your breath throughout the day as you take in life, and as you take on life. Notice the panoply of spring buds on the trees, look at the brave little flowers peeping up from the cold earth, listen to the birds singing their solos; savor the fragrances and aromas of creation; revere what God has created in human life – all of us so different from one another – in age, in skin color, in gender, in abilities and vocations and preferences of every kind – all of us so different, and yet so much the same. Saying “Hallelujah” under your breath a myriad of times throughout the day is claiming your voice and claiming your part in what God is up to which, if you stand back and take it in, and step up to take it on, is wonderful, is absolutely amazing, this gift of life. Who could have imagined what God has imagined? Hallelujah.”

A Journey to the Mansion by Rev. Kate Ann Follwell
(with permission from David's Aunt and Uncle)

A few days before Christmas 2020, I was called to the ICU in the hospital. On entering the room there was a man who was in a coma. I was struck by how young he was. I wondered what was his story as he slept peacefully in a comatose state? My heart went out to him as I prayed for him at the ending of his life for peace and transition from this world. Within a short time, his aunt and uncle arrived. It was obvious by their grief they loved this young man they called "David".

They were there to say good bye. The medical staff was there too, as David had agreed to donate his organs. There was such an overwhelming presence of heartache, we wept tears in silence.

What I then learned David was only 44 years old. He had been a gregarious youngster, and had good friends growing up through his school years. During high school, he began to slowly slip into the abyss of drugs. He lost his way. He lost contact with his friends and family. For the past 20 years he lived on the city streets in Ontario. We do not know the circumstances that brought David to the ICU or what caused his death.

Recently, we were able to inter David's ashes. There were only four of us on a beautiful day full of warm sunshine. David's aunt brought two beautiful bouquets of flowers, one of roses to be placed with his ashes and the other to be placed over the grave site. The song "Spirit in the Sky" was playing from his aunt's tablet.

We began, John 14:1-3, "Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions..... I go to prepare a place for you."

The familiar prayers continued with the addition of the following used in this circumstance,

“Redeeming God, we from the Christian tradition remember that our leader was a homeless man. Jesus Christ said, “Foxes have holes, but the son of Man has no place to lay his head.” Nonetheless, he promised us that his Father’s mansion has many rooms. He told us that he goes ahead of us, and he prepares a place for each one of us.”

“May we all, regardless of the faith we profess, or the way in which we pray, have eyes to see you in and among our homeless sisters and brothers. So that all people may find the place you have prepared for us.”

We committed David’s ashes to the ground. My thoughts were what are we committed to? What am I committed to? Not to make assumptions about people living on the street? David might have been someone I walked by, but someone who in death gave two people life. The grieving aunt and uncle want us to remember. “The Spirit in the Sky” was playing softly as we left the cemetery. We all felt the spirit. There was a solemn but joyful, Hallelujah!

The next day it was announced that we would be in a lock down. A stay at home order. Stay at home order and we complain, moan, and lament our predicament. There is an irony to all of this. We are baffling creatures.

Holy God *unknown*

**In the midst of the pandemic
In difficult times, we come to you in prayer.**

**We grieve this day for all those
who have died
experiencing homelessness.
No one should live a third world life
in a first world country,
we ask your forgiveness.**

**Be a source of comfort
for those of us who struggle.
Be a source of inspiration
to those of us who are comfortable.**

**We seek a “newer world” where
homelessness and poverty are ended.
Together we remember
your son Jesus, born homeless,**

**This child brought light to dark places,
We pray for that light now
to illuminate our hearts.**

The lowest and the worst have a claim to our courtesy.
John Wesley

“Aha” Words of Wisdom

**Don't let negative and toxic people rent space in your head.
Raise the rent and kick them out .**

Nothing great was ever achieved with enthusiasm. *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Time is precious make sure you spend it with the right people.

Worry is like a rocking chair it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere. *Irma Bomback*

Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory. *Doctor Suess*

When you meet someone who tries their hardest to stick by you regardless of how difficult you are keep them at all costs because finding someone who cares enough to look past your flaws isn't something that happens every day.

Fall in love with the process of becoming the very best version of yourself.

Don't be disappointed if people refuse to help you remember the words of Einstein “I am thankful to all of those who said no, because of the, I did it myself. “

My mission is life is not merely to survive, but to thrive and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style. *Maya Angelou*

What you do speaks so loud I can't hear what you say” *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

As long as you don't give up nothing is over. *Unknown*

I am a Crazy County Gardener always defying nature and planting my garden early. I just can't wait, I take my chances. Spring has arrived!!

Let's get excited together: Everything is new and fresh and we are ready for it! We can plan our gardens, whether it be in pots or plots or raised beds. We can dig in the dirt remotely together. We can enjoy the great outdoors right through to preserving our produce in the fall. Sharing recipes and ideas would be very interesting and fun. Spring is pure and good for the soul, especially in these troubled times..

I get very excited at what pops out of the ground in the spring. Outside is my happy place. If I am feeling low or tired, that is my go to. I find just getting outside and enjoying nature and what God created is the perfect medicine. Just some thoughts running through my mind. It's best not to get me started. My excitement is jumping onto the page.

My vegetable garden already has a lot planted in it. I am always defying nature and taking my chances there won't be more frosts. Some of my experiments are planting the root end of celery in the garden, the same with a slice of the bottom of an onion, or the top of a carrot. All are great for salads- greens.. Since my garden is very small, I grow things in it that climb to save space.

My garlic is up and will be ready in August. Ever wonder what to do with the scapes from the garlic? I will grind them with some good oil for garlic paste to use over winter. See, I should never get started.

Last fall I planted rhubarb roots (corms). I am excited to see if they made it through the winter. I see them peeking through, fingers crossed I will have lots for rhubarb crisps.

I left parsnips in the ground and dug them up this spring before the tops started to grow, why? you ask, I understand it makes them sweeter, but what I liked was I didn't have to store them.

More fun together to come. God Bless and be Safe.

Shwetha's Tomato Chutney

Ingredients:

- **1 medium sized onion roughly chopped (any colour)**
- **2 Tomatoes roughly chopped**
- **2-3 Dry whole red cayenne pepper (optional)**
- **2 tbsp oil**
- **1 tsp Honey (optional)**

Method:

- **Sauté onion in a pan with 1 tbsp of oil until onion softens.**
- **Add salt to release more flavour from the onions.**
- **Add dry red cayenne pepper and chopped tomatoes. Mix well.**
- **Reduce the flame to the lowest gas mark and cover the pan with the lid.**
- **Cook it for 3-4 minutes until tomatoes are all soft and mushy.**
- **Turn the flame off and cool**
- **Transfer the mixture to a blender and make smooth sauce.**
- **Transfer into a serving bowl or a jar.**

Tempering:

- **In the same pan, heat 1 tbsp oil and add cumin or black mustard seeds.**
- **Let it crackle and turn off the flame and pour the hot tempering over the chutney.**
- **Serve hot or cold with pita chips or as aside with rice or flatbread.**

**Optional: Add honey to the chutney before you serve.
Refrigerate not more than a week or freeze them**

Easter Ma'amoul (Cookies stuffed with pistachios) from Shwetha

Christians regard them as an Easter specialty and Muslims eat them during Ramadan. Usually they are filled with walnuts or pistachios, or with a paste made of softened dates. The Pistachio-filled *ma'amoul* are considered the most desirable.

Makes roughly 20 cookies. Preparation time 30-40 min Cooking time- 25 min.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all -purpose flour
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 tbsp- sugar
- 1 tbsp- orange flower or rose water
- Roughly 1 tbsp milk

Confectioner's sugar for dusting.

For the filling:

- 1 cup finely chopped pistachios
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp orange flower or rosewater

Preheat the oven to 325 deg. F

1. Mix together the ingredients for the filling and put it aside.
2. Sift the flour into a bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture looks like fine bread crumbs.
3. Stir in the sugar and the orange flower or rose water; then bind with enough milk to form a soft malleable dough
4. Take a walnut-size lump of dough in your fingers and shape it into a little pot with thin sides.
5. Fill the pot with the chopped nuts to about three-quarters full, then pinch the top edge together to close the opening and form a ball.
6. Flatten the ball slightly in the palm of your hand and place it on a baking sheet with the smooth side on top.
7. Repeat with the rest of the dough. Prick the tops with a fork to make a pattern and bake for about 25 minutes. They should come out of the oven soft and pale, not brown.
8. Leave them on the baking sheet to cool until firm, then transfer them to a wire rack or plate and dust with confectioners' sugar before serving.

Recipe taken from the book - "the middle eastern kitchen" By Ghillie Basan

(sorry had to shrink the font to fit it all in!)