

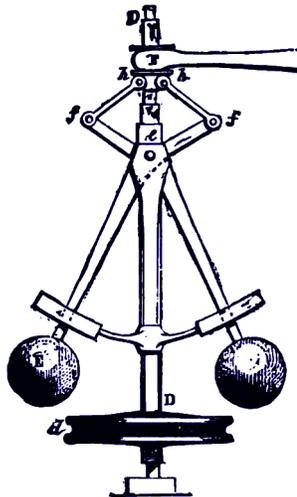
THE ANGLE

September
2019

The Way of Love - Turning

At the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Austin in the summer of 2018, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry offered his vision of a Jesus-centered life, which he “packaged” as the Way of Love. It has seven stages – Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest. I don’t think that any wise – or sane – person would say that this is the only recipe for holy living, but I would like to suggest that it is a power strip (a modern metaphor!) into which the parts of our life might be plugged. For the next few months, I will offer you some thoughts on what each stage might mean when viewed through the lens of love. This month – Turn.

To one trained in the language of Christian theology, the immediate association with turning is repentance. The Greek word *μετάνοια*, which is commonly thought of as the original Christian term for repentance, can have this sense of turning or changing.



No doubt, love demands this at times. Those who have been in (or out of!) love will testify to the need to change, apologize, begin again. And, clearly, the way of love that

leads to God also requires frequent and honest evaluations of our lives and the sort of prayerful course corrections that keep us headed in the right direction.

But I would like to suggest a couple of additional meanings of turning that may help us see it more

clearly in the light of love. The first is turning as motion. Turning implies movement – whatever and whoever turns cannot be still.

In the Bible, God is often imagined as being in motion. The Psalmist sees God “riding on the wings of the wind.” The writer of Job says that God “stretches out the north over the void.” And the writer of Amos sees in a vision that God “builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth.” Later theologians, grasping for a way to describe the Trinity, sometimes pictured it as a dance (*περιχώρησις*, which is best translated as “rotation”!).



Every action and movement of God brings light and matter and spirit into being. Even God’s words have creative power. So one who would love as God loves must also begin with inner and outer movement. We have to look around us to recognize what is lovable and what is in need of love. We have to stir inwardly to find the impulse



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to love that grows quietly in our hearts. And in our motion we may even cast a pale reflection of the creative movement of God.

The second is a bit more mechanical.

Every turn, every curving motion has within it a real or imaginary axis, the still center around which the curve is formed. A wheel turns on an axle. A traffic circle has a middle point that is equally distant from all the roads around it. Whether visible or invisible, the center defines and governs all the curving movement around it.



When we envision turning as the first step in the way of divine love, we are acknowledging that God is the center point around which we live and move and have our being. Having God as our anchor

keeps us from veering away from the path when the emotional energy of turning pulls us in many directions. The love of God is strong enough to keep us in His orbit, even when we – or He – may feel very distant.

We often hope that our paths will be straight and uneventful. That may sometimes be what God intends, but perhaps

we should be less worried about the twists and turns, knowing, believing, that God is at the heart of them.

Blessings

Howie+

Five-Minute Devotional

The Gospel lesson appointed for Labor Day:

Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” [Matthew 6:19-24]

About twenty years ago, there was a very successful anti-smoking ad campaign based on the claim that if smoking made one look on the outside the way it makes one look on the inside, many people would quit.

Something similar might be done with just about anything that we have or use or desire. Everything that we come into contact with changes us inwardly, and this is especially true of the things we love.

If greed or anger – or gentleness or compassion – were visible on our faces, would we flaunt them or try to hide them? Psychology and theology teach us that sooner or later our inward nature overcomes all attempts at concealment, so perhaps the location of our hearts is revealed in our actions, if not always in our looks.

In this Gospel passage, Jesus calls us to consider our loves and how they shape us, inwardly and outwardly. Doing this sort of inventory is a first step toward deciding what truly is our treasure and what is best left behind on our journey to God.

September Saints

1	Giles	<i>Patron of:</i> Beggars, Protection against fear of the night
2	Agricola of Avignon	Storks
3	Gregory the Great	Teachers, Protection against gout
	Marinus	Deacons
6	Magnus of Füssen	Protection against caterpillars
7	Cloud	Nail makers
	Gratus of Aosta	Protection against fear of insects
9	Peter Claver	Inter-racial justice
10	Nicholas of Tolentino	Mariners
11	Pulcheria	Protection against troublesome in-laws
12	Guy of Anderlecht	Animals with horns, Protection of outbuildings, sheds, and stables
	Ailbe of Emly	Wolves
13	John Chrysostom	Lecturers
14	Notburga	Waiters and waitresses
16	Cornelius	Protection against twitching
18	Joseph of Cupertino	Pilots, air travelers, test takers
19	Januarius of Naples	Blood banks, Protection against volcanic eruptions
20	Eustachius	Hunters, firefighters
21	Matthew	Bookkeepers, perfumers, stock brokers
	Cadoc of Llancarvan	Protection against cramps
22	Maurice	Infantrymen
26	Cosmas & Damian	Physicians, barbers
27	Vincent de Paul	Hospital workers
28	Wenceslaus	Brewers
	Bernardino	Pawnbrokers
29	Gabriel	Diplomats, stamp collectors
	Michael	Soldiers, police, milliners, radiologists
30	Jerome	Librarians, opticians

Why We Do That -- Holy Water

You may have noticed the glass bowl in the baptismal font. What it contains is holy water.

Symbolic washing is part of our spiritual inheritance from Judaism. Water has been used in Christian rites of baptism and blessing since the early days of the Church. Our Lord was baptized and commanded his disciples to “baptize all nations” (Matthew 28:19). In our own time, baptism is usually a sacrament received in infancy, leaving us with little clear memory of it. The presence of holy water in the church – especially at the place where we enter the church – is a reminder of our baptism and of our call to live our lives as baptized people.

For some, the “visual” is enough to bring that to mind. For others, dipping fingers in the water, with or without making the sign of the cross, is a cherished gesture of remembering and blessing.

For those wondering about practicalities, the water is changed about once a week, so it should always be a pure and clear symbol of the life-giving spirit of God.

