

LUMUNOS

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How Much is Enough?

Prayer of Confession

O God, forgive us when we answer your grace upon grace with grumble after grumble about cutbacks, shortfalls and limited resources. Forgive us when we answer your grace upon grace with grim predictions and grudging giving. Forgive us when we grip reality so tightly, we cannot loosen up to receive your surprises and possibilities, for we pray with our open hands and hearts. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

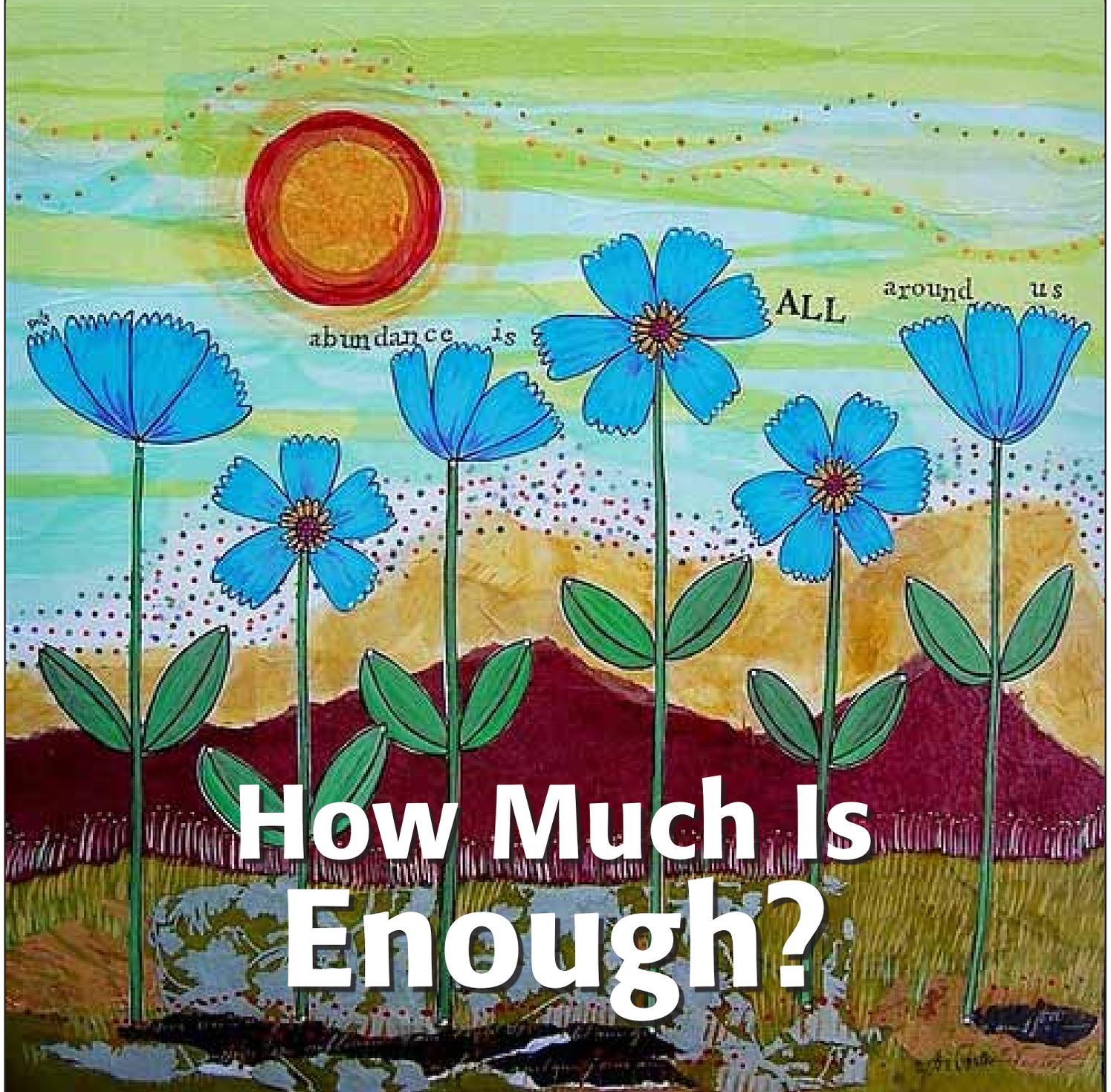
Christ's love is in small details – two coins, one mustard seed, all of our missed sparrows and chances. We are forgiven and made new. Thanks be to God. –Maren C. Tirabassi



ON THE COVER: A former counselor and educator, fine artist, Lori Portka delights in the favorite things that inspire her: nature, traveling, animals, yoga and friends. She lets her art pour out in boldly rendered images that burst from each canvas via saturated paints, chinks and inks to form a visceral connection between artist and viewer. "I make artwork that is a reflection of gratitude and joy in the world," says Portka, whose expressive works fill her mission of spreading happiness through art.

View the artist's portfolio and follow her blog at www.LoriPortka.com

 **LUMUNOS**
FAITH & LIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY



How Much Is Enough?

Vol. 4 No. 1 2012

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Executive Director's Corner

The (Garage) Doorway to God

Most of my friends have some level of concern about money these days, as do I. We are trying to figure out how to save for or pay for college; we are trying to figure out how to come up with the money for work that needs to be done on the house; we are digging out of a debt hole; or wondering if we will outlive our savings; or struggling with the out-of-pocket portion of our health care. I have some version of all of the above.

These friends are not overly materialistic, nor am I. We are neither poor nor rich (Always with the major caveat that anyone with food on the table and a roof overhead is rich by world standards.) We are not living extravagantly. We are not irresponsible. I don't know if it is the stage of life I am in, the economy or what, but everyone I know is worried about money.

My friend, Bill, actually did something quite remarkable about it. He stopped worrying. More specifically, he gave up anxiety for Lent. As a spiritual practice, as a way to draw closer to God, Bill chose not to worry about money. I asked him if it were possible to simply "stop worrying." He said,

Well, yes. Sort of. Anxiety about money still comes. But when it does, I try the "fake it till I make it" strategy. I remind myself that I am letting go of my anxiety during Lent. More than anything, I use my anxiety as a prompt to remind me to turn to God. So I guess it is less about the money anxiety, and more about turning to God.

Becoming less anxious is a huge step. It is a game changer. But it doesn't add any zeros to the bank account. As with all of life, there is the internal work and the external work. Jesus changes hearts; then he says, "Go and **act** differently."

Making Do

Now that Lent has come and gone, Bill and I have decided we will try to act differently in this one simple way: We will not buy or fix or spend money on the things we were planning on buying or

fixing or spending money on right away. We will try to make do. Rather than add to the credit card balance, we will wait and see what it is like to live with the things we thought we needed to address. We will make do.

At the risk of dragging you into the most mundane recesses of the Wysockey-Johnson household, here is what it means for me. Our garage door opener is broken. Turns out that the motor is burned out, and we don't have the money right now to fix it. So rather than adding to our credit card debt, we are doing what the early pioneers did with their garages: We are getting out of the car and opening the garage by hand.

As with most change, there is some sacrifice involved. The winter and "spring" in Vermont is not for wimps. On days when it is sleeting and the water drips down my neck, I wish we had an automatic door opener. But in some small way, we are making do. We are getting by. And (surprise!) having less credit card debt is making me less anxious.

A Prompt and a Prayer

In her new book *Still: Notes on a Mid-faith Crisis*, Lauren Winner writes about yogurt and the Desert Fathers. She says,

But the Desert Fathers say something more: After noticing a thought, replace it with a prayer. So if your colonizing distraction is about food-it is 2 p.m., and you ate lunch 90 minutes ago, but you find yourself daydreaming about the muffins you baked last night or the cookies 'n' cream yogurt you have sitting in the refrigerator-one thing you can do is notice the thought and then tell yourself you can't think about the yogurt. The other thing you can do is replace the yogurt with prayer. That is what I try to do to my anxiety this Lent-not just ignore it for quarter-hour increments, but sidle up alongside it with a prayer. (Still: Notes on a Mid-faith Crisis, just published by HarperCollins)

Hearing Your Call through a Prompt and a Prayer...

Following his call over 40 years ago, Bob Murphy founded Broken Vessels Renewal Ministries. This organization is a ministry of pastoral care and counseling, offering recovery training for people suffering with panic anxiety disorders. With much prompting and prayer, many hundreds of people have been helped by Broken Vessels Ministry, because Bob followed his call. Bob and his wife, Carole, continue to support Lumunos and recently gave a gift in memory of one of their dear friends from Lumunos, Nancy Boyle.

Please join Bob and Carole and all the many donors listed in our Annual Report in supporting Lumunos in 2012. A giving envelope is provided for your convenience or you may give online at www.lumunos.org.

(For more information, go to www.brokenvesselsministries.org.)

Following the lead of Lauren Winner and my friend Bill, I now use the opening of my garage door as a prompt and a prayer. I give thanks that I have arrived safely at home; I give thanks that I have a home; and I give thanks for the wondrous family that inhabits my home. With all that gratitude, there just isn't much room for resentment about a broken garage opener.

Some day when we can afford it, the garage opener will be fixed. I am not a martyr after all. But until then, I will make do and give thanks.



Doug Wysockey-Johnson is the Executive Director of Lumunos. He lives with his family in Richmond, VT, and can be reached at doug@lumunos.org

To stay connected, read our newsletter and blogs, make sure we have your e-mail address.
E-mail us at info@lumunos.org.

Loaves & Fishes

Loaves & Fishes gives you the opportunity to remember or honor those you love with a special gift to Lumunos in their name.



In Honor of Rev. Jessica McClure Archer

Bill & Mary Mason

In Honor of Marjory & Peter Bankson

Susan & Carl Johnson

Scott Fischer

Mike & Mary Murray

Amy Glass

In Memory of Nancy Boyle

Broken Vessels Renewal Ministry

Mrs. Calvert Klopp

Heidi Frost Heard

In Honor of Dick Broholm

John & Amy Anderson

In Memory of Nancy Carey

Katy Vess

In Honor of Bonnie Jean Clark

Betty Wade & Boyd Perry

In honor of Betty Ann Cody

Nils & Emelie Liebendorfer

In Memory of Suzanne Comeau

Nils & Emelie Liebendorfer

In Honor of David Cabbage

Stan & Louise Jones

In Memory of John Cabbage

Caralee Cabbage

Ken & Sharyn Kok

In Memory of Rev. Dr. Bill Curtis

Fran Curtis

In Honor of Dan DeWeese

Liz Wells

In Honor of Sarah Maker Deyst

Susie Allen

In Memory of Jo Dunbar

Jean Dunbar

In Honor of Amy Eiss &

Megan Eiss-Proctor

Peggy & Michael Eiss

In Memory of All Our Departed

Friends of Faith@Work:

Andrew & Martha Bennett

In Memory of Robert Filer

Emily Harkins Filer

In Honor of Susan Fischer

John & Carolyn Twiname

In Memory of Susan Fischer

Bill & Marianne Johnson

Amy Glass

Wini White

Ken & Sharyn Kok

Martha Resotko

In Honor of Steve Gehring

Linda Lavelly

In Memory of Jonathan Harwood

Jacqueline Harwood

In Honor of Craig Heddesheimer

Jon & Janet Heddesheimer

In Honor of Marianne Johnson

Steve & Mary Hazard

In Honor of Mr. & Mrs. Fred Knopp

Nils & Emelie Liebendorfer

In Memory of Bruce Larsen

Tom Simon

Janet & Lloyd Larsen

In Memory of Bro Lemen

David Lemen

Heidi Frost Heard

In Honor of Marty Lemen

David Lemen

In Honor of M.J Lentz

Allan & Nancy Kramer-Moyer

Jim & Bonnie Reifentahl

In Honor of Emily Mallory

Nils & Emelie Liebendorfer

In Memory of Rev. Dick Marceau

Lucinda Clark

In Honor of Haylee Marie

Jane Hassel

In Memory of Pat & David Minard

Elmorine McKiernan

Heidi Frost Heard

In Honor of Karen Nachtigall

Deb Geiger

In Memory of Mary Helen Nippard

Mary Ka Kanahan

In Memory of Virginia Nyquist

Curt & Donna Nyquist

In Honor of Dwayne & Kathy Odvody

Linda Lavelly

In Memory of Karl Olsson

Lloyd & Janet Larsen

In Honor of Ralph Osborne

Tom Simon

Jody Berge

Steve & Carol Wolf

Heidi Frost Heard

In Honor of Turner Peters

Nils & Emelie Liebendorfer

In Memory of Mary & Dick Roberts

Eric & Judith Wetzig

In Memory of Rachel Scott

Marcia Paladino

In Memory of Richard Siebrasse

Tom & Diane Siebrasse

In Memory of Ginger Sharp

Christi Franklin

In Honor of Meg Turner

Nils & Emelie Liebendorfer

In Honor of Laurel Van Ham

Susan Steinegger

In Honor of Tom Pappas & Laurel Van Ham

Linda Lavelly

In Memory of Mary E. Van Kirk

Phil Van Kirk

In Memory of Lee & Irma Whiston

Andrew & Martha Bennett

In Honor of Wini White

Carol Schmidt

In Honor of Libby Woodward

Betty Serow

In Honor of Doug Wysocky-Johnson

Peggy & Michael Eiss

**Bestow an honor today by
calling 1-800-245-7378 or going
to www.lumunos.org**

Bible Study

Wake up and Live Honorably with Enough

By Susanne Adele Schmidt



Photo by Gale Gibbs

Besides you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep... Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, Let us live honorably! Romans 13:11a and 12b-13a, NRSV

"Many wealthy people are little more than the janitors of their possessions."

Frank Lloyd Wright

It's probably not the best time for me to be writing this bible study because I need a new car, honestly. My current car was my mother's, and it is over 11 years old with a ton of miles. It has been my old faithful friend, but it is no longer reliable. To make it so would require a hefty investment. So I have entered the surreal zone of car buying.

I ask myself how to choose a car that reflects a desire to "live honorably." I wonder, "What kind of car would Jesus buy?" It's tempting to consider all the bells and whistles that a new car (even if it's slightly used) brings with it. What about heated seats and a navigation system? Are these things I need or want?

How much in a new car is enough, really? This question of enough is not just about a car. There are a myriad of "enough" questions that those who are living comfortably in the US can ask themselves. How much is enough money, clothes, cars, bottles of scotch, leisure time, college debt, fresh "designer" vegetables, career advancement, veterinarian bills, books, 4-star restaurants, vacations, or bathrooms in one's home? Sometimes it feels as if our society ignores the fact that a portion of us are living with a non-functioning "enough meter" and have become "janitors of our possessions."

LISTEN: Read out loud Romans 13:11-14, NRVS and The Message

As you read, listen for which words or phrases "stir you up." We are told in verse 12 to lay down the works of darkness and provided in verse 13 with specific behaviors in which we are not to engage. The list of prohibited behaviors includes reveling and drunkenness, debauchery and licentiousness, quarreling and jealousy. This list causes a reaction in me. For crying out loud, some of

these words are not in common usage today. Plus they seem like extreme acts of bad behavior.

For clarity, read the same list in The Message. We are to avoid frivolity and indulgence, sleeping around and dissipation, bickering and grabbing everything in sight. Oh yeah, now here's a list which is closer to terms that we modern day folks get.

Q: Which phrases in the Romans passage "stir you up"? Why?

REFLECT: Listen More Deeply to Romans 13:11-14

In rereading the passage, think about the time in which Paul and the early Christians lived. They expected Christ to return soon. Speaking of Paul in this Romans passage, Frank Stagg writes in *The Knox Preaching Guides*, "Paul's concern was not to set a date for the return of Christ, but to recall a moral quality of life suited to the presence of Christ, expected at any time."

As I think about living a moral life suited to the presence of Christ, thoughts of my material possessions—my passion for clothes and books and my beloved's extensive Scotch collection—bombard me. If Christ came to the Schmidt Davis Home today, would we receive the Moral Quality of Life Seal of Approval? I can imagine the two of us trying to hide my books, clothes, and Dan's scotch.

Q: In what ways do your possessions and passions reflect the presence of Christ? In what ways, do they not?

CONNECT: Identify your link with the story

In The Message, the first verse of this Romans passage reads, "But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God."

Two years ago, I took on the question of "how many clothes is enough?" I participated in the Great American Clothes Diet. Its guidelines are simple, no new clothes

purchases for one year; although new shoes are permitted if absolutely necessary. This was not easy for me. It is almost as if I was born to love clothes. After all, my mother chose my middle name based on her favorite women's clothing shop, Adele's.

This experiment (which still impacts my decisions about clothes purchases today) was a spiritual wake-up call for me. I would be lying if I said I don't still enjoy clothes. But I am working on being less absorbed in them. As a result of sharing my experience, other women have told me that they are examining their clothing purchases more closely, too.

Q: *Is there something in your life in which you are so absorbed that it makes you doze off (spiritually)?*

ACT: Take a first step!

The last verse of this passage talks about "putting on Christ" as a remedy for laying aside those acts of darkness mentioned in Romans 13:13. It is my contention that putting on Christ does not require us to take a vow of poverty or to completely deny ourselves all the comforts of this world.

But we are to guard against becoming so distracted by the material things of this world that we forget God and others. By putting on the "armor of light" as mentioned in Romans 13:12, we can protect ourselves—protect ourselves so that the material things of this world will not have the same significance for us as that our culture assigns them.

Think of a way to remind yourself of the "armor of light." Display something on your desk or in a place where you will see it daily. Mine is a yellow magnet on my desk lamp which reads "Shine brightly." It is a reminder that my commitment to "Shine brightly" is also a commitment to pay attention to what is "enough."

Q: *What is one step that you can take to put on the "armor of light" and protect yourself from the material pull of our culture?*



Suzanne Adele Schmidt graduated from Wesley Theological Seminary in May 2011 and has been approved for ordained ministry pending call in the United Church of Christ. As she awaits her "formal call" she follows her passions on a part-time basis of writing, facilitating, tending to her "grands," and living out her call as a couple with her beloved, Daniel Davis. And soon she hopes to buy a new car to replace her old but faithful friend!

A Letter in Memory of Susan L. Fischer, Board Member, 1995-2011

Dear St Peter:

Is there a Board of Directors in heaven? If so, I have a name for you.

Susan Fischer served on the board of Lumunos for 16 years. She was an elder at Marble Collegiate Church; was on the Collegiate Churches Consistory as well. Beyond that she served as the CFO at the Healthcare chaplaincy. If Susan was able to deal with our nonprofits, I'm sure she could handle the Board of Directors of Heaven.



What you will find with Susan is a person with unique eyesight. What do you call a person who has 20/20 vision, regardless of whether you are looking at the forest or the trees? Susan could spot an error on cell J-54 of the 4th tab of an Excel spreadsheet. She can also tell you when you are veering from your mission or core values.

At Lumunos, Susan modeled for us that we could be deeply relational and say hard things when they needed to be said. I'm sure you never deal with this in heaven, but down here on earth we can get a little caught up in a culture of "nice" in our churches and on our nonprofit boards. Susan showed us that it was possible to non-anxiously disagree with a person, while still respecting him or her. Maybe it was the New Yorker in her. Being the good Midwestern boy that I am, I stood in awe at the way she spoke so directly. When Susan disagreed with a person, we knew it was about an issue, not the other person, and not about herself.

But Peter, here is the real reason that you want Susan on your board. Maybe you will get lucky like I did, and Susan will become a friend. And if that happens — if Susan is your friend — then you have won the lottery. Then You have a pearl without price. Because when Susan is on your board and is your friend, you have a steady companion. You have someone you can count on to be there for you...

It wouldn't surprise me if Susan has already contacted you, St. Peter. Susan believed passionately in volunteering down here. She believed in giving her time and energy to things that mattered. I don't see why that would change up there. Maybe she is already helping you figure out what is fair for your employees, or setting up your budgeting process, or volunteering to go through the database.

When you see her, will you tell her that we miss her? We miss her wisdom. We miss her friendship. We even miss those sappy pictures of cute animals she used to forward on to us. Tell her that her spirit lives on, and we look forward to seeing her again.

Doug Wysockey-Johnson

Are you doing what you love? Are you living your call?



“Call makes you think of a voice from outer space, which it is not. These voices are in us already. They are drowned out or muffled. Discernment is about clearing up the clutter to find the thread.”

Nora Gallagher in *Practicing Resurrection*

Light for Your Journey—A Lumunos Mini-Retreat

- Pause:** The importance of paying attention . . .
- Connect:** How does this question/event/feeling I am having connect with other aspects of my life?
- Clear:** If I say yes to this new call, what will I set down?
- Trust:** Is it time to move forward or time to “wait on God?”

- Call is for all people, and it is about more than career.
- Call is about what we say yes to and what we say no to on a weekly basis.
- Call is about where we give our time and energy, including work, relationships and volunteer efforts.
- Call can be about big things—should I leave this job or commit myself to that person?
- Call is about smaller things—how do I spend my precious free time this weekend, or what kind of purchases do I make.

“Pause spoke exactly to me. It may sound trite, but I feel I was meant to be here today to consider exactly this. And this is what this workshop has allowed me to do . . . pause. Thank you.”

~A Light for Your Journey participant, Lincoln NE, October, 2011

Join with Lumunos in our 4-hour retreat. For more information, contact Doug Wysocky-Johnson at doug@lumunos.org or call the Lumunos office at 800-245-7378 or 603-876-4121.

Is Enough Really Enough?

by Tom Pappas

I shopped for our church's pantry food drive last week. Laurel and I had picked up two paper grocery sacks each with a list stapled to it. For some of the items (potato flakes, syrup, bar soap), I included the minimum. For other items (canned tuna, canned vegetables, soup-not creamed) I bought extra. While I shopped, I put the pantry goods in the front of the cart and things for our own use toward the back. Hopefully for the right reasons (Jesus said to) I felt pleased with helping families suffering hard times.

With the pantry list and our personal list complete, I searched for the shortest check-out line. I would pay twice to keep a record. An ineffable sense of sadness, that I am still having trouble understanding, came over me as I looked at and compared the pantry items with what would stay in my kitchen.

Cans and boxes of really nice food could wait in my trunk to be taken to the chancel Sunday. The rest of the



trunk would be disastrous for what we would keep for ourselves. Among other things, fresh artichokes and asparagus were on the belt to be scanned. Do the poor get to know how awesome these can be? I'm guessing not.

Really nice canned and boxed food is perfect when the cupboard is bare. But I've become accustomed to a culinary "abundant life". Most of our kitchen waste is the sort that goes to compost, not landfill or recycling. Since I'm not giving up fresh vegetables until they pry them out of my garden-gloved fingers, I need to ponder how to make God's gifts available to those who rarely or never get to enjoy them.

Even with a sore knee, I am called to crawl around in my vegetable beds to individually plant leeks and eradicate the yellow wood sorrel (What was God thinking?). And I am simultaneously called to share. I need the community of faith to help me with this one. Any ideas? Know that I'm thinking and praying hard on this one.

Guatemala Pilgrimage Good News for the Next Generation July 14-24, 2012

Join two dozen others in July 2012 for our 11th annual work pilgrimage in the highlands of Guatemala. In 2012 we will once again be working with the Mayan organization 'Programa de Ayuda a los Vecinos del Altiplano' – PAVA (Aid Program for Highland Communities). PAVA has been exploring the possibilities of helping communities that already have a school to establish a library. Village libraries provide a place where all residents of the village can have access to books and computers even when the school is not in session.

This year, we will return to Paxixil, where we helped the villagers expand their school last year. Using a fabulous new "green" design, we will invest ourselves in building a model library/computer center for use by adults



and children. This could be your chance to experience community in a new way and make a difference for the next generation of indigenous Guatemalans. Marjory and Peter Bankson (Seekers Church) will lead the pilgrimage.

To register, visit the Seekers Church web site (www.seekerschurch.org) and click on the "Guatemala Pilgrimage" button or e-mail pilgrimage@seekerschurch.org.