



 PASTORAL SHARINGS

Dear Friends,

Growing up I never had a dog. Having a pet and living in a third floor tenement house in Providence was not very practical. The only pets we had were goldfish and a blue parakeet. The goldfish had short life-spans. Grandma, who owned the house, had a cat. It wasn't until my mid 50's that I acquired a dog. Now I wouldn't be without one. I preface the following, "*Cheyenne*", sent to me by a parishioner with a thought from my favorite *Bits and Pieces*:

Pets: You can learn these things from your dog: to love children, to drink plenty of water, to be a dependable friend, to express pleasure when treated well, to guard faithfully the interests of those who care for you, and to be faithful until death.

CHEYENNE by Catherine Moore

"Watch out! You nearly broadsided that car!" My father yelled at me. "Can't you do anything right?" Those words hurt worse than blows. I turned my head toward the elderly man in the seat beside me, daring me to challenge him. A lump rose in my throat as I averted my eyes. I wasn't prepared for another battle.

"I saw the car, Dad. Please don't yell at me when I'm driving." My voice was measured and steady, sounding far calmer than I really felt.

Dad glared at me, then turned away and settled back. At home I left Dad in front of the television and went outside to collect my thoughts. Dark, heavy clouds hung in the air with a promise of rain. The rumble of distant thunder seemed to echo my inner turmoil.

What could I do about him?

Dad had been a lumberjack in Washington and Oregon. He enjoyed being outdoors and had reveled in pitting his strength against the forces of nature. He has entered grueling lumberjack competitions, and had placed often. The shelves in his house were filled with trophies that attested to his prowess. The years marched on relentlessly. The first time he couldn't lift a heavy log, he joked about it; but later that same day I saw him outside alone, straining to lift it. He became irritable whenever anyone teased him about his advancing age, or when he couldn't do something he had done as a younger man.

Four days after his sixty-seventh birthday, he had a heart attack. At the hospital, Dad was rushed into an operating room. He was lucky; he survived.

But something inside Dad died. His zest for life was gone. He obstinately refused to follow doctor's orders. Suggestions and offers of help were turned aside with sarcasm and insults. The number of visitors thinned, and then finally stopped altogether. Dad was left alone.

My husband, Dick, and I asked Dad to come live with us on our small farm. We hoped the fresh air and rustic atmosphere would help him adjust. Within a week after he moved in, I regretted the invitation. It seemed nothing was satisfactory. He criticized everything I did. I became frustrated and moody. Soon I was taking my pent-up anger out on Dick. We began to bicker and argue. Alarmed, Dick sought our pastor and explained the situation. The clergyman set up weekly counseling appointments for us. At the close of each session he prayed, asking God to soothe Dad's troubled mind. But the months wore on and God was silent. Something had to be done and it was up to me to do it.

The next day I sat down with the phone book and methodically called each of the mental health clinics listed in the Yellow Pages. I explained my problem to each of the sympathetic voices that answered. In vain. Just when I was giving up hope, one of the voices suddenly exclaimed. "I just read something that might help you! Let me go get the article">" I listened as she read...The article described a remarkable study done at a nursing home. All of the patients were under treatment for chronic depression. Yet their attitudes had improved dramatically when they were given responsibility for a dog.

I drove to the animal shelter that afternoon. After I filled out a questionnaire, a uniformed officer led me to the kennels. The odor of disinfectant stung my nostrils as I moved down the row of pens. Each contained five to seven dogs. Long-haired dogs, curly-haired dogs, black dogs, spotted dogs all jumped up, trying to reach me. I studied each one but rejected one after the other for various reasons, too big, too small, too much hair. As I neared the last pen a dog in the shadows of the far corner struggled to his feet, walked to the front of the run and sat down. It was a pointer, one of the dog world's aristocrats. But this was a caricature of the breed. Years had etched his face and muzzle with shades of gray.

His hipbones jutted out in lopsided triangles. But it was his eyes that caught and held my attention. Calm and clear, they beheld me unwaveringly.

I pointed to the dog. "Can you tell me about him?" The officer looked, then shook his head in puzzlement.

"He's a funny one. Appeared out of nowhere and sat in front of the gate. We brought him in, figuring someone would be right down to claim him, that was two weeks ago and we've heard nothing. His time is up tomorrow." He gestured helplessly.

As the words sank in I turned to the man in horror. "You mean you're going to kill him?"

"Ma'am," he said gently, "that's our policy. We don't have room for every unclaimed dog."

I looked at the pointer again. The calm brown eyes awaited my decision. "I'll take him," I said.

I drove home with the dog on the front seat beside me. When I reached the house I honked the horn twice. I was helping my prize out of the car when Dad shuffled onto the front porch.

"Ta-da! Look what I got for you, Dad!" I said excitedly.

Dad looked, then wrinkled his face in disgust. "If I had wanted a dog I would have gotten one. And I would have picked out a better specimen than that bag of bones. Keep it!! I don't want it" Dad waved his arm scornfully and turned back toward the house.

Anger rose inside me. It squeezed together my throat muscles and pounded into my temples...

"You'd better get used to him, Dad. He's staying!" Dad ignored me. "Did you hear me, Dad?" I screamed. At those words Dad whirled angrily, his hands clenched at his sides, his eyes narrowed and blazing with hate.

We stood glaring at each other like duelists, when suddenly the pointer pulled free from my grasp. He wobbled toward my dad and sat down in front of him. Then slowly, carefully, he raised his paw.

Dad's lower jaw trembled as he stared at the uplifted paw. Confusion replaced the anger in his eyes. The pointer waited patiently. Then Dad was on his knees hugging the animal.

It was the beginning of a warm and intimate friendship. Dad named the pointer Cheyenne. Together he and Cheyenne explored the community. They spent long hours walking down dusty lanes. They spent reflective moments on the banks of streams, angling for tasty trout. They even started to attend Sunday services together, Dad sitting in a pew and Cheyenne lying quietly at his feet.

Dad and Cheyenne were inseparable throughout the next three years. Dad's bitterness faded, and he and Cheyenne made many friends. Then late one night I was startled to feel Cheyenne's cold nose burrowing through our bed covers. He had never before come into our bedroom at night. I woke Dick, put on my robe and ran into my father's room. Dad lay in his bed, his face serene. But his spirit had left quietly sometime during the night.

Two days later my shock and grief deepened when I discovered Cheyenne lying dead beside Dad's bed. I wrapped his still form in the rag rug he had slept on. As Dick and I buried him near a favorite fishing hole, I silently thanked the dog for the help he had given me in restoring Dad's peace of mind.

The morning of Dad's funeral dawned overcast and dreary. This day looks like the way I feel, I thought, as I walked down the aisle to the pews reserved for family. I was surprised to see the many friends Dad and Cheyenne had made filling the church. The pastor began his eulogy. It was a tribute to both Dad and the dog who had changed his life. And then the pastor turned to Hebrews 13:2. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers."

"I've often thanked God for sending that angel," he said.

For me, the past dropped into place, completing a puzzle that I had not seen before: the sympathetic voice that had just read the right article.

Cheyenne's unexpected appearance at the animal shelter...his calm acceptance and complete devotion to my father.. and the proximity of their deaths. And suddenly I understood. I knew that God had answered my prayers after all. Life is too short for drama & petty things, so laugh hard, love truly and forgive quickly. Live While You Are Alive!! Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity. Forgive now those who made you cry. You might not get a second time.

Dogs: One of the attractions for dog owners is that "man's best friend" is ever loyal, no matter how badly one behaves in the world. Dogs don't care how you look, or about the stupid things that you say. And they never have to forgive you because they don't get mad at you. One pet owner offered the following prayer: "Lord, please make me the kind person my dog thinks I am." (The Preacher's Illustration Service)

Hope you enjoy my light summer column this week. Although light it is true - just ask any pet owner. Have a good week!

J. Martin



Monday, July 27
 ZACHARY & GABRIELLA CAUSIN PIKE.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Tuesday, July 28
 LUCILLE DEMBINSKI.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Wednesday, July 29
 AGUSTIN de la CUESTA.....7:30am - Fr. Martin

Thursday, July 30
 FRANCES TALARICO.....7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

Friday, July 31
Special Intentions for
 MR. & MRS. ROBERT HAY.....7:30am - Fr. O'Keefe

Saturday, August 1
 LISA THOMAS.....9:00am - Fr. O'Keefe
 JOAN HOFFMAN.....5:00pm - Fr. Wilson

Sunday, August 2
 PARISHIONERS.....7:30am - Fr. Martin
 JACK LANDES.....9:00am - Fr. O'Keefe
 RUDOLPH GARCIA.....11:00am - Fr. Martin
 ELEANOR SMITH.....12:45pm - Fr. Wilson

PRO-LIFE CORNER



Some babies die from sickness and disease. Some babies die from accidents. But no baby should die from "choice". Choose Life Today. Choose Life Tomorrow. Pray Always. We Must Do No Less.

A WOMAN'S CHOICE is a Crisis Pregnancy Center that provides free pregnancy testing, referrals for medical treatment, housing, social service assistance and tangible support for pregnant women, including clothing and equipment. (703-538-4305).

Pro-Life Rosary-A prayerful, peaceful and public gathering of friends and neighbors who pray the rosary for one hour takes place on Saturdays at 10:00 am on Rolling Road across from Kings Park SC Giant Food. Please call Jane Hamilton, 703-646-5051 for more information.

Crisis Pregnancy Centers Phone Numbers

Catholic Charities National: 1-800-CARE-002
Catholic Charities Local: 703-425-0100
A Woman's Choice: 703-538-4305
Gabriel Project: 1-866-444-3553

The Story of Luke –



The last of the three Gospel writers, Luke actually wrote his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles around the year 75 AD. He is the only writer to have written two books. While Luke was not one of the 12 apostles, he was a good friend of Paul, one who attempted to know all the traditions concerning Jesus and the experiences of the Christian communities. In Luke's writings we find a faith that was open to all men, (10:25-37). He wrote of our Savior's concern for humanity and his identification with the poor, (12:13-21), outcasts, (17:1-19), and the criminal, (19:1-10). Luke's writings are ever optimistic and the words of Jesus about loving our enemies are seen to triumph over all evil. Luke was a physician who accompanied St. Paul on his 2nd missionary journey in the year 51. He stayed at Phillippi as leader of the Christian community until approximately 57 AD. He also was with Paul during Paul's imprisonment in Rome. St. Luke is the patron saint of painters and physicians. The Church celebrates his feast day on October 18th



Hey!! We need your help!!!

Please call the Religious Education Office at 703-455-0372 to volunteer. Catechists and Catechist Assistants are still needed to teach Nativity's children about the Catholic Church and God's Good News of salvation.

Students enrolled in the Religious Education Program by August 31, begin classes the week of September 20.

Students enrolled in the Religious Education Program after August 31, begin classes the week of September 27.

Student Registration forms should be turned in to the Religious Education Office along with the student's baptismal certificate (unless it has been previously submitted) and payment. Forms are available in the Religious Education Office, on the community board in the church vestibule, or at www.edu.nativityburke.org; on the Nativity CCD tab click on Student Registration.



cyo@nativityschool.org 703-455-2400 ext 115.

Summer of Service and Laser tag!

Wednesday July 29th:
SOS 9:00AM – 3:00PM
Lasertag 5:00PM – 8:00PM

Kings Dominion!

Friday, July 31st
8:00AM – 10:00PM
WE need DRIVERS!!!

This Week!

Mon. July 27th:	Core Meeting	8:00PM – 9:00PM
Wed. July 29th:	Summer of Service Lasertag!	9:00AM – 3:00PM 5:00PM – 7:30PM
Fri. July 31st:	King's Dominion	8:00AM – 10:00PM
Mon. Aug 3rd:	Core Meeting	8:00PM – 9:00PM

White Water Rafting Retreat!

Aug. 7th - 9th
Forms in back



Altar Flowers

In Loving Memory of
Our Deceased Mothers
From
Chuck and Jill Heagy
And
In Loving Memory of
Cunny Arias
From
The John T. Anderson Family

Engaging Spirituality to be offered at Nativity

Engaging Spirituality, a program of *JustFaith Ministries* (www.justfaith.org), will be offered by the Parish starting at the end of September. The program includes 21 weekly sessions and highlights the linkage between spirituality and compassionate engagement by emphasizing personal and communal prayer, reflection on the writings of spiritual masters, personal encounters with vulnerable people, and contemplative dialogue in a small faith community. An insert in today's Parish Bulletin gives further information. More information will be available outside masses on August 1 & 2 and on the bottom shelf of the table marked "Social Justice Directory" between the doors of the Church lobby next to the Gift Shop. Further information is available from Joe Pettit, 703-455-4937, pettit@georgetown.edu.

Food collection for ECHO and the POOR

CLARE SISTERS.....The monthly food collection will take place next Sunday, July 5th. Please bring non-perishable foods to the foyer of the church. In this time of need, food pantries are being rapidly depleted. Canned fruits and vegetables, canned meats, dry products (cereal, pasta, pancake mix, etc.), pancake syrup, vegetable oil, tuna helper, powdered milk, crackers, concentrated juices, quick oats are much need items. ECHO also accepts small appliances such as toasters, blenders, table lamps, pots and pans, microwaves, new and used clothing. For more information pick up a brochure in the bookrack by the sacristy or call 703-569-9160. ECHO Center is located at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road.



The monthly peer support group for survivors of clergy abuse and others affected by the abuse will meet on July 29 from 6:30 to 8:00pm in the conference room of the Tysons-Pimmit Hills Regional Library, 7684 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA. This group is co-sponsored by Voice of the Faithful-Northern Virginia affiliate and meets on the last Wednesday of every month. Free. Confidential. No registration required. For information or directions, contact Ellen Radday at 703-538-6128.

Thought for the Week

"A life without love is like a year without summer."

Swedish Proverb

CALLING ALL GIRLS!!!

Fun and adventure await your daughter in a Nativity Girl Scout troop! Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. So come make new friends, try new things, go camping - be part of the amazing sisterhood of nearly 5 million Girl Scouts. Troops will be forming or registering new members soon for the 2009-2010 school year at all levels, Daisy through Senior (Grades K-12). All parishioners from Nativity Church and students from Nativity School are encouraged to join. Adult volunteers are always appreciated - free training is provided. Please contact Nativity's troop organizer, Becky Chaves, at (703) 425-4965 to register or to get more information. Flyers are also in the Scouting Folder on the bulletin board in the church vestibule.



THANK YOU! THANK YOU
VERY MUCH!

The Church of the Nativity Annual Yard Sale for Charity sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Father Sikora Council 7992 was held on July 25, 2009 and it was a very successful event. Thanks go out to all who participated in the yard sale through their donations and purchases. And special thanks to the women and men of the parish who volunteered and were so generous with their time at the yard sale and the days leading up to the yard sale. All these efforts will have a profound effect on those who are less fortunate and will once again affirm Nativity as "The Caring Parish".

**THE WEEK AHEAD
IN OUR PARISH**

Monday, July 27

8:00 pm.....AA Meeting (APR)

Tuesday, July 28

9:30 am.....Bible Study (APR)

Wednesday, July 29

8:00 am to 5:00 pm.....Life Line Screening (PH)

9:00 am to 3:00 pm.....viBE S.O.S. (APR)

7:00 pm.....Hispanic Prayer Group (SC)

7:30 pm.....Legion of Mary (APR)

Thursday, July 30

9:30 am.....Craft Group (APR)

7:00 pm.....V.O.I.C.E (APR)

7:30 pm.....Venture Crew (RM. 4)

7:30 pm.....Prayer Group (APR)

7:30 pm.....BSA Troop 1100 (PH)

Saturday, August 1

9:00 am.....Mass (CH)

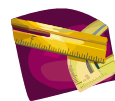
9:30 am.....First Saturday Devotion (CH)

10:00 am.....Dog Obedience Class (PL)

7:00 pm.....Hispanic Mass (CH)

WOMEN OF NATIVITY CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST

The Women of Nativity will be collecting school supplies after all Masses during the weekend of August 8-9 for its annual Christmas in August Project. Items needed include: loose-leaf paper, 3-ring binders, spiral notebooks (single and multiple subject), pens, #2 pencils, fiskar scissors, large glue sticks, thin Crayola markers, 12" rulers, pencil cases and school backpacks. Supplies will only be collected on the scheduled dates because of delivery arrangements. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. For further information or questions, please call Kathy McHugh at 703-239-2198 or Debby McLernon at 703-250-6869. Thank you in advance for your generous contributions.



"For your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich." Are you among those being called to be rich in Christ's poverty as a priest, deacon or in the consecrated life? Call Father Brian Bashista 703-841-2514, or write b.bashista@arlingtondiocese.org