

Thought for the Day

January 23 – January 27, 2012

January 23, 2012

THE LAST QUESTION

A veteran nurse recalled this significant experience: “During my second year of nursing school, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and breezed through the questions, until I read the last one: ‘What is the first name of the woman who cleans our school?’ Surely, I thought, this is some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired, and in her 50s, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our grade on the quiz. ‘Absolutely,’ said the professor. ‘In your careers you will meet many people. Each one is significant. Each one deserves your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello.’

“I’ve never forgotten that lesson,” said the nurse, “and I learned that the woman who cleaned our school was Dorothy.”

January 24, 2012

ISSUING INVITATIONS

A man came out of his house one Sunday morning headed to church just as his neighbor came out of his house carrying his golf clubs. The golfer said, “Henry, come play golf with me today.” Henry, with an expression of self-righteous disdain on his face, replied, “No, this is the Lord’s Day and I’m going to church.”

After a moment’s embarrassed silence the golfer walked over to Henry and said, “Henry, I have noted with admiration your faithfulness to your church. But, you know, this is about the fifth time I have invited you to play golf with me, but you have never invited me to go to church with you.”

January 25, 2012

*T*HE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

A cathedral in Florence, Italy was built in an unstable area. Engineers chose therefore to construct its great dome with a slit in it. Many feet below the dome, a brass plate was fixed in the floor. The alignment of the slit and the plate is such that on June 21st of every year the sunlight streaming through the slit should cover the brass plate in the floor. If it does not, engineers spring into action because they know that the foundation has shifted and the entire edifice is endangered.

Worship is our weekly check to see if our foundation is intact or if it has shifted.

January 26, 2012

*A*SAD WORKAHOLIC

Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in his book “Go East, Young Man,” recalls a co-worker named H.A. Moore. “He was an excellent lawyer of the old school, completely dedicated to the law. He wore a green eyeshade and smoked incessantly. One night the telephone rang and he answered in an angry voice because he resented the interruption. His wife was on the line. He said, “What? The house is on fire? Why bother me? Call the fire department!”

Douglas remembers seeing H.A. Moore several years later. “He was gaunt and gray, only a shadow of the man I once knew. He had never had the time to get to know the flight of Canadian geese or the thrill of a taut fishing line. He had given his all to the law and it had squeezed every other interest out, even listening to the music of Mozart which he loved.”

Beware of any false god that can squeeze the life out of you.

January 27, 2012

ATONEMENT

Several years ago at the Congress on Evangelism, Bishop Will Willimon told of going with a group of United Methodists to visit death-row inmates in Alabama. Bishop Willimon sat down for a private conversation with one of the inmates. The Bishop said to him, "I would like to hear what is on your mind. Is there a question you would like to ask me?"

The inmate replied, "I would like to know why preachers don't talk more about the Atonement."

Bishop Willimon was surprised, almost shocked. Perhaps he thought the man would want to discuss the rightness or wrongness of capital punishment or the misery of living on death row. Instead, he had Atonement on his mind.

Surely this condemned inmate could identify with Jesus who was executed. Perhaps he could identify even more with the thieves who died on either side of Jesus. They, like him, were paying the penalty for their crimes. But Jesus was an innocent man. Maybe this inmate was longing to hear that Jesus' death had not been in vain. Perhaps he yearned to believe that Jesus had died for all sinners, even death-row inmates, who repent and claim him as Savior and Lord. Why don't preachers talk more about the Atonement?