

**An Address given at the 243<sup>rd</sup> Diocesan Convention of  
The Episcopal Diocese of New York by  
The Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool  
Saturday, November 9, 2019 at the Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown, New York**

One day this past week I turned on my computer and a message appeared on the screen that read “Welcome to the future. Try not to break it.” And my first thought was “Too late.” But my second thought was, “Come on, Glasspool, where’s your *hope*? Where’s your *faith*? Where’s your *Love*?” And then I recalled French essayist and philosopher Charles Péguy, who wrote, in 1911, *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*, in which Péguy reflects on the often neglected second theological virtue of *hope*.

It is a beautiful and now classic poem, in which *Faith, Hope, and Charity* are personified as three sisters. *Faith* is depicted as a Cathedral: built on strong foundations, ancient, venerable, lasting for centuries. She is a married woman of unquestionable fidelity. *Charity* is also an adult woman, depicted as a Hospital. She welcomes the wounded, suffering, sick, and oppressed. She is a mother, full of compassion, kind and gentle.

*Hope*, however, is seen as a little girl, innocent, trusting, vulnerable. She walks along the road to salvation between *Faith* and *Charity* almost unseen. Because she carries no heavy burdens, she skips along between the other two, carefree and joyful, and no one takes much notice of her. In the poem, God is not surprised by *Faith* and *Charity*. “They are quite natural, God says, they go without saying.”

“But hope, says God, that is something that surprises me. Even me. ... And I can’t get over it.” “Faith sees what is. In time and in eternity. Hope sees what will be. In time and for eternity.” “Charity loves what is. In Time and in Eternity. But Hope loves what will be. In time and for eternity.” That’s from Charles Péguy, *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*.

My sisters and brothers of the Diocese of New York, God is calling us, especially in this time, to nurture within ourselves the vulnerable child which is named *Hope*, both individually and as the Church. And one way to begin to do that is to look around before we leave, and remember what has happened here, and share it with others to the best of our abilities.

It continues to be an honor and a privilege for me to serve this Diocese with two wonderful bishops: Bishop Andy and Bishop Allen – both of whom are recognized as visionary leaders in the larger Church. I take daily nourishment from the oversight of a number of areas of our life together, which others most ably lead and execute. The Rev. Nils Chittenden chairs the Campus Ministry Committee and has a passion for its life and growth in the world. The Rev. Nigel Massey and the members of the Global Mission Commission likewise serve in producing the Global Mission Fair; awarding Sustainable Development Goal Grants; nurturing our Companion Diocese Relationship, and networking and resourcing for the entire Diocese. Judi Counts continues to organize and coordinate the multitudinous efforts of the Global Women’s Fund. The Rev. Winnie Varghese coordinates and sparks a huge variety of efforts under the spacious umbrella of the Social Concerns Commission. The area of that umbrella I find myself most engaged with is the Reparations Task Force co-chaired by the Rev. Richard Witt and Cynthia Copeland, and the Anti-Racism Committee chaired by Carla Burns. The Rev. Curtis Hart draws together a talented group of people to serve as the Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission, also engaging the New York State Council of Churches and the Interfaith Center of New York. The Rev. Yamily Bass-Choate works with me as Liaison for Global Mission and again with Bishop Enrique Treviño Cruz and his wife, Maru to support building our relationships in Christ through the Cuernavaca Program. These Servants of God, and so many others, deserve our heartfelt thanks.

In these last two days we have each and all together been privileged to see and hear and discern and talk and vote and share and enjoy each other's company while we continue to engage God's Mission through the work and service of the Diocese of New York. We have at long last voted on a resolution condemning slavery that was tabled 159 years ago. In doing so, many of us have had to come to terms with our past, a past many of us – particularly white folk – did not want to acknowledge. And we continue to examine, learn, and memorialize our history, so that we may all engage the holy work of reparations for a more just society.

We have passed a balanced budget for the year 2020, and in so doing committed more resources to congregational development, sustainable development throughout the world, and the many outreach efforts engaged by our Diocese. In response to our Bishop Diocesan's address, we have designated 1.1 million dollars to reparations, with a process and plan to be worked out in the next year. Also in response to Bishop Andy's address, we have committed ourselves to do our part in minimizing our carbon footprint and trying to address the crisis of climate change and its related disasters. We have declared strongly the inclusive nature of our church in responding to the Lambeth Conference Invitations and non-invitations. We have taken the next steps in working toward racial reconciliation by working through a year of Apology and recommitting ourselves to reparations. We have elected our Deputies to General Convention and the Provincial Synod, as well as members of the Standing Committee, the Diocesan Council, the Diocesan Trustees, and the Disciplinary Board. We have heard a fabulous sermon in Spanish and welcomed our honored guests: the Rt. Rev. Enrique Treviño Cruz and his wife, Maru of the Diocese of Cuernavaca. We have heard stories and reports from our own diocese, and stories about other times and places and peoples. We have honored and recognized among us a few of the saints, who have modeled for us selfless giving and service.

We have done a lot. We have more to do. And it's time to go home. Before we do, I invite you to reflect briefly with me on the theme of this convention: *Redeeming the Time*. Of course the full context of this theme, as it is seen on the cover of the Calendar of Business, is to *Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, Redeeming the Time, because the days are evil.* (Ephesians 5:16)

According to the text, we first need to be wise and not foolish! And I would suggest, with respect to redeeming the time, that first, a wise person has a sense of *timing*. **Kairos** is an Ancient Greek word meaning the right, critical, or opportune moment. The ancient Greeks had two words for time: *chronos* and *kairos*. You all have heard sermons on this – half of you have preached them! *Chronos* refers to chronological or sequential time, while *kairos* signifies a proper or opportune time for action. In the prophetic tradition, a consistent mark of the authentic prophet was his ability to discern the time: the right time to speak, the opportune moment to act. He knew, in short, when the *kairos* (God's time) had arrived. Foolishness manifests itself most vividly in its misjudgment of, or insensitivity to the right time. Even a right word at the wrong time, as many of us have experienced, misses the mark.

Second, the wise person knows herself. Simply said. Perhaps not so simply done. We must know ourselves, our own inner rhythms and timings. We must know who we are without pretensions or illusions. We are children of God, *sealed as Christ's own forever*, forgiven, beloved children – all of us.

And third, a wise person discerns what God's will is and then, does it. With respect to redeeming the time, I would say it this way: The will of God emerges out of the matrix wherein we, knowing who we are, engage the *kairos*. Knowing who we are, we *redeem the time*. The engagement will certainly demand risk. At the same time it will reveal any pretensions and arrogance we have - but that is part of what it means to discover or discern the will of God. Timing is everything. And when we each engage God's time together, unity will occur. Redeem the time!

I close with a poem by Alastair Reid, who is speaking to a child playing the piano:

Play the tune again; but this time  
with more regard for the movement at the source of it,  
and less attention to time. Time falls  
curiously in the course of it.

Play the tune again; not watching  
your fingering, but forgetting, letting  
flow the sound till it surrounds you. Do not count  
or even think. Let go.

Play the tune again; but try to be  
nobody, nothing, as though the pace  
of the sound were your heart beating, as though  
the music were your face.

Play the tune again. It should be easier  
to think less every time of the notes, of the measure.  
It is all an arrangement of silence. Be silent and then  
play it for your pleasure.

Play the tune again; and this time, when it ends,  
do not ask me what I think. Feel what is happening  
strangely in the room as the sound glooms over  
you, me, everything.

Now,  
play the tune again.