

# GO, BUILD MY CHURCH

## called to be living stones

1 Peter 2:5

St Francis by the Sea Church, Hilton head  
Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008

### For further reading

- Juan Aries, The God I don't believe in
- Jack Kornfield, After the Ecstasy, the Laundry
- Gerard W. Hughes SJ, God of Surprises
- Barabara Johnson, Fresh Elastic for Stretched out Mums
- Carlo Carretto, I sought and I found
- C. S. Lewis, The four loves
- Dawna Markova, I will not die an unlived life
- Matthew, Denis and Sheila Linn, Don't forgive too soon
- Matthew, Denis and Sheila Linn, Sleeping with bread
- Macrina Wiederkehr, A tree full of angels. Seeing the holy in the ordinary
- Eugene Peterson, The Message [this is a modern translation of the entire bible. It can be found in its entirety on line at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)]
- Anne Lamott, Plan B
- Anne Lamott, Travelling Mercies
- Anthony de Mello SJ, Sadhana. A way to God

[some quotations from the Saturday retreat | workshop](#)

## THE RUNAWAY BUNNY

Once there was a little bunny who wanted to run away.  
So she said to her mother, "I am running away."  
"If you run away," said her mother, "I will run after you."  
For you are my little bunny."

"If you run after me," said the little bunny,  
"I will become a fish in a trout stream  
and I will swim away from you."  
"If you become a fish in a trout stream," said her mother,  
"I will become a fisherman and I will fish for you."

"If you become a fisherman," said the little bunny,  
"I will become a rock on the mountain, high above you."  
"If you become a rock on the mountain high above me,"  
said her mother, "I will be a mountain climber,  
and I will climb to where you are."

"If you become a mountain climber," said the little bunny,  
"I will be a crocus in a hidden garden."  
"If you become a crocus in a hidden garden,"  
said her mother, "I will be a gardener. And I will find you."

"If you are a gardener and find me," said the little bunny,  
"I will be a bird and fly away from you."

"If you become a bird and fly away from me,"  
said her mother,  
"I will be a tree that you come home to."

"If you become a tree," said the little bunny,  
"I will become a little sailboat,  
and I will sail away from you."

"If you become a sailboat and sail away from me,"  
said her mother,  
"I will become the wind  
and blow you where I want you to go."

"If you become the wind and blow me,"  
said the little bunny,  
"I will join the circus and fly away on a flying trapeze."

"If you go flying on a flying trapeze," said her mother,  
"I will be a tightrope walker,  
and I will walk across the air to you."

"If you become a tightrope walker  
and walk across the air,"  
said the bunny,  
"I will become a little girl and run into a house."

"If you become a little girl and run into a house,"  
Said the mother bunny,  
"I will become your mother  
and catch you in my arms and hug you."

"SHUCKS!" said the little bunny.

"I might just as well stay where I am  
and be your little bunny."  
And so she did,  
"Have a carrot," said the mother bunny.

- Margaret Wise Brown [Harper Collins, 1991. Board Book Edition]

## THE GOD I DON'T BELIEVE IN

No, I shall never believe in:

- the God who catches man and women by surprise in a sin of weakness,
- the God who condemns material things,
- the God who loves pain,
- the God who flashes a light against human joys,
- the God who is a magician and a sorcerer
- the God who makes Himself feared,
- the grandfather-God whom one can twist round one's little finger,
- the lottery-God whom one can find only by chance,
- the judge-God who can give a verdict only with a rule book in his hands,
- the God who is incapable of smiling at many of humanity's awkward mistakes,
- the God who "plays at" condemning,
- the God who "sends" people to hell,
- the God who always demands 100% in examinations,
- the God incapable of understanding that children will always get themselves dirty and be forgetful,
- the God who does not accept a seat at our human festivities,
- the aseptic God thought up by so many theologians and canonists in their ivory towers,
- the God for whom it is sinful to enjoy the sight of a pair of pretty legs
- the God who condemns all sex,
- the God who says "you will pay for that",
- the God who is interested in souls but not in people,
- the God of those who want their parish priest to sprinkle holy water on the whited sepulchres of their dirty deals,
- the God who is preached by priests who believe that hell is crowded and heaven is almost empty,
- the God of those priests who say that everything and everybody can be criticized except themselves,
- the God who regards war as good,
- the God who puts law before conscience,
- the God who prefers the rich and the powerful,
- the God who "cause" cancer or makes a woman sterile,
- the God to whom one can pray only on one's knees, whom one can find only in a Church,
- the God who does not save those who have not known Him, but who have desired and searched for Him,
- the God who has never wept for men,

- the God who prefers purity to love,
- the God insensitive to the beauty of a rose,
- the God who cannot find Himself in the eyes of a child or a pretty woman or a mother in tears,
- the God who destroys our flesh eternally instead of resurrecting it,
- the God who is not love and who does not know how to transform into love everything it touches, flowers as well as manure heaps,

No, I shall never believe in such a God. Yes, my God is the OTHER God.

*Free translation and adaptation from Juan Arias, The God I don't Believe In (St Meinrad, Indiana : Abbey Press, 1973), pp. 196-199.*



### some quotations from the retreat

## MORE THAN AN ORGANIZATION.

A man who injured his thumb on the job. His foreman sent him to a clinic. He stepped into a room with only a desk and two chairs. In the back of the room were two doors, one marked "Illness" and the other "Injury." He went through the door marked "Injury" and found himself in a second room with only a desk and two chairs. At the back were two doors—one marked "Internal" and the other marked "External." Walking through the "External" door, he found himself in yet another room with one desk and two chairs. Again, he had a choice of two doors. These were marked "Therapy" and "Treatment." Through this fourth door, he discovered the same situation, except with two doors marked "Major" and "Minor." He walked through the door marked "Minor" and found himself on the street. He returned to his job, and his foreman asked him if they were able to help. He responded that he wasn't sure, but it was the best-organized outfit he had ever seen.

## THREE DOLLARS WORTH OF GOD

I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.  
 Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep,  
 but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk  
 or a snooze in the sunshine.  
 I don't want enough of God to make me love a black man  
 or pick beets with a migrant.  
 I want ecstasy, not transformation.  
 I want warmth of the womb, not a new birth.  
 I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack.  
 I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.

— Wilbur Rees

## FRANCISCAN BENEDICTION

May God bless you with discomfort  
At easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships  
So that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger  
At injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,  
So that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears  
To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,  
So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and  
To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness  
To believe that you can make a difference in the world,  
So that you can do what others claim cannot be done  
To bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Amen.

## FULLY ALIVE

I will not die an unlived life.  
I will not live in fear  
of falling or catching fire.  
I choose to inhabit my days,  
to allow my living to open me,  
to make me less afraid,  
more accessible,  
to loosen my heart  
until it becomes a wing,  
a torch, a promise.  
I choose to risk my significance;  
to live so that which came to me as seed  
goes to the next as blossom  
and that which came to me as blossom,  
goes on as fruit.

- Dawna Markova: *I Will Not Die an Unlived Life* . Conari Press 10/00

## ON BOREDOM

It is the sin that believes in nothing,  
cares for nothing,  
seeks to know nothing,  
interferes with nothing,

enjoys nothing,  
hates nothing,  
finds purpose in nothing,  
lives for nothing,  
and remains alive  
because there is nothing for which it will die.

- Dorothy Sayers

## THREATENED WITH RESURRECTION

i am no longer afraid of death  
i know well  
its dark and cold corridors  
leading to life.

I am afraid rather of that life  
which does not come out of death  
which cramps our hands  
and retards our march.

i am afraid of my fear  
and even more of the fear of others,  
which do not know where they are going,  
which continue clinging  
to what they consider to be life  
which we know to be death!

i live each day to kill death:  
i die each day to beget life,  
and in this dying unto death,  
i die a thousand times and  
am reborn another thousand  
through that love  
from my people  
which nourishes hope.

*From Threatened with Resurrection by Julia Esquivel (Brethren Press, 1982)*

## ON BEING EMPTY

We join spokes together in a wheel,  
but it is the center hole  
that makes the wagon move.

We shape clay into a pot,  
but it is the emptiness inside  
that holds whatever we want.

We hammer wood for a house,

but it is the inner space  
that makes it livable...

*Tao Te Ching, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p.11*

## IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE ALL OVER AGAIN...

If I had my life to live over again,  
I would try to make more mistakes next time...  
I'd try not to be so damned perfect;  
I'd relax more, I'd limber up,  
I'd be sillier than I've been on this trip;  
In fact, I know of very few things  
I'd take quite so seriously;  
I'd be crazier ... and I'd certainly be less-hygienic;  
I'd take more chances ... I'd take more trips ...  
I'd climb more mountains ... I'd swim more rivers ...  
And I'd watch more sunsets;  
I'd burn more gasoline,  
I'd eat more ice cream - and fewer beans;  
I'd have more actual troubles  
and fewer imaginary ones,  
You see, I was one of those people who lived prophylactically and sensibly,  
hour-after-hour and day-after-day;  
Oh, that doesn't mean I didn't have my moments,  
But if I had it to do all over,  
I'd have more of those moments,  
In fact, I'd try to have nothing  
but wonderful moments, side-by-side.  
I was one of those people  
who never went anywhere without a thermometer,  
a hot water bottle, a gargle,  
a raincoat and a parachute;  
If I had it to do all over again,  
I'd travel lighter next time.  
If I had my life to live all over again,  
I'd start barefoot earlier in the spring  
and I'd stay that way later in the fall;  
I'd play hooky a lot more;  
I'd ride more merry-go-rounds, I'd pick more flowers,  
I'd hug more children,  
I'd tell more people that I loved them,  
If I had my life to live over again;  
But, you see, I don't.

*From the Journal of Humanistic Psychology.  
By an 85-year-old man dying and accepting death.*



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