

THANKSGIVING AND CONTRITION AT THE END OF THE WAR

Tonight two moods, I think, mark our awareness:

THANKSGIVING;

Just sheer relief that a terrible, terrifying ordeal is over
(some don't believe it)

Not having to go to bed tonight, driving the agony from our minds
with a pill

That the ~~napalm~~ napalm and fire jelly will not longer torture little
children

That the bestial bombs will no longer be dropped

That hand grenades will no longer explode, disfiguring and dementing

That guns will be silenced, and the angry roar of fighting planes will
die away

That the controversy which has savagely torn at the vital seams of our
society will be lessened

That this great, writhing, gasping agony that has lain across the heart
of our beloved nation will eventually sob its tears away and
our national soul may begin the long process of healing

And yet there is another mood. It is...

CONTRITION:

This is a religious and theological term:

It speaks of sincere penitence and remorse

It means: "sorrow for and detestation of sin with the true purpose of
amendment."

How much we have to amend; how much we have to account for!

-50,000 lives, plus other numbers of S.E.Asians, incalculable

-the names we read from Brown Co. were real persons

-the unknown number of young men who have been hidden away in
prisoner of war camps, their precious years of manhood slipping
away, their families grieving in their absence. the loss of
hope, the steadying, decaying, day by day experience of
waiting and wondering.

-the thousands of men who will come home to awake screaming in
the nights because they have been addicted to the cruel
tyranny of drugs.

-the unspeakable, unbelievable horror of My-Lai

-the unknown number of men hidden away in hospitals for the walking
dead, their bodies dismembered, their faces disfigured, their
lives forever broken.

How I wonder about what Norman Cousins said: "An ice age can come about
inside man through a lowering of the temperatures of human
response." (IN PLACE OF FOLLY, 160)

We have tried to glorify war, but Bruce Catton in THIS HALLOWED GROUND
~~REPORTS~~ reports what an Illinois soldier said: "There is no God in
war. It is merciless, cruel, vindictive, un-Christian, savage,
relentless. It is all that devils could wish for." p.358

QUOTE FROM SIMONE WEIL, WHO IS QUOTED IN THE NEW YORKER, May 15, 1971,
p.27,28 - *sermon: "The War against abortion." May 30, 1971*

I wonder how much of this "inward ice age" has crept into the very
center of my being, freezing my awareness of the reality of
human beings, flesh and blood, body and spirits, minds and
dreams.

My own son - thanks to a fluke, or luck, did not have to go to Vietnam.

My standard of living during these terrible years has not slipped an inch
I have enjoyed plenty of new cars, clothing, food, vacations

But I wonder if all of these untold numbers of persons who have died
have died for me:

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

-Isaiah 53:4-6

RECALL THE IMPRESSION OF "INDIVIDUALS IN A TRAFFIC JAM" IN Arizona,
Aug. 9, 1967:

It was Rt.66 in Arizona and we were held up in a long traffic
jam caused by a serious accident that had occurred - out of our
vision - far up the road. People entertained themselves by
getting out of cars, lounging about:

some pickniced
some boys played basketball
one man behind us walked his dog
one impatient young man in a sports car tried to pass
down the side of the stalled procession on
the berm. Apparently he was thinking only of himself
Everyone was inconvenienced but some made it thoughtfully.
Later as we moved forward we passed the scene of the acc-
ident. Two lifeless bodies were lying under blankets.
Two cars were hopelessly twisted out of shape.

Later I learned that one driver had tried to pass in
a similar line, in a blinding rainstorm, and crashed
head-on into another car

"Moonlanding make the stupidities of earth intolerable." - Arthur Clarke,
Author of "2001: Space Odyssey", said this to Walter Cronkite
on night the first landing on moon, July 20, 1969, CBS-TV.

The proper place for us tonight is not to be dancing in the streets,
or shooting firecrackers, or drinking ourselves into insensitivity thru
senseless revelling.

Our place is on our knees before Almighty God, beseeching him for his
grace, mercy and peace.

In 1865 Abraham Lincoln stood in Washington for his Second Inaugural,
facing a bleeding, broken, and beaten nation. He said there: looking out over
the carnage of that fratricidal war: "With malice toward none; with
charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the
right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the
nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for
his widow, and his orphan - to do all which may achieve and cherish a just
and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations."

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

First United Methodist Church	The Rev. Lee C. Moorehead, Pastor
Grace Lutheran Church	The Rev. Dean Kilgust, Pastor
St. Francis Xavier Cathedral	Monsignor Orville Griesse, Pastor
St. John the Evangelist Church	The Rev. James T. Jacobs, Pastor
St. Mary of the Angels Church	The Rev. Valentine Myslicki, O.F.M., Pastor
St. Willebrord Church	The Rev. David Rondeau, O. Praem., Pastor
Christ Episcopal Church	The Rev. James W. Samter, Pastor
Grace Presbyterian Church	The Rev. William D. Osick, Pastor
First United Church of Christ	The Rev. John G. Decker, Pastor
Union Congregational Church	The Rev. Charles L. Bagby, Pastor
Zion United Methodist Church	The Rev. Allen McCaul, Pastor
Cnesses Israel Congregation	Rabbi Isaac Vander Walde