

***This is a call ...***

**A talk by Joe Jackloski**

**Grace Church, Kingston**

**November 11, 2007**

**The Sunday before New Consecration Sunday**

I often marvel at this place, this collection of stone and mortar we call Grace Church. I look around and see memorials to saints long past, small tags containing names without faces, whose commitment long ago built this edifice.

I do not know many of these people, nor their progeny, yet their faith and commitment during some harsh economic times speaks volumes and has provided us a place of common worship where we may freely speak to God in the bosom of friends and neighbors.

We, the beneficiaries of their commitment, their love, are called to stewardship as well, so that those who follow us may share their lives and faith through worship of God's goodness, to preserve and prosper this edifice for generations to come.

Our forebears speak to us in stained glass, wood and metal, the legacy of sacrifices they made so that Grace was established and preserved. We are charged to ensure that this place survives, no, thrives, so that our children and their children will join this great company of the faithful who call this place home. For that is the meaning of stewardship, the careful cultivation of that which we value, so in that way, it becomes more valuable still.

This is a call to transcendent faith, a call that says what we do here and now will transcend time and touch the future.

Some of us possess a practical faith, that is, one that acknowledges the many gifts we have received from God and thus we give thanks in worship.

Some of us possess a transcendent faith, the willingness to trust wholly in divine providence and see God's hand in their daily life.

Some of us have a practical generosity, that is our willingness to share a portion of which was afforded us.

Some of us possess a transcendent generosity, the absolute trust the God will provide, as God has prospered us.

Most of us here today fall somewhere in the middle. We have faith in God, but do not always see the hand of Providence. We are willing to share, but after our personal needs have been met.

What we are embarking on next week is a sojourn to transcendence.

Over the last few weeks, you have heard your fellow parishioners bear witness to a higher calling, a new consecration to faith. Next week, on Consecration Sunday, you will be asked to renew and enhance your commitment to this place based on intention, not obligation.

On New Consecration Sunday we commence a journey based on our need to give, rather than an obligation to do so.

You will be asked to estimate your level of support to Grace Church for the coming year, not as a pledge, but rather as a goal. We want you to know that this estimate of giving is an act of faith and conscience. No one will police your goal. No one will force you to commit to anything. You are free to choose. We hope you have carefully considered where this journey will take you, and the legacy Grace Church will thus enjoy.

Next Sunday, we will be passing out "Estimate of Giving" cards during worship. You will be asked to fill them out during the service, and present them as an act of Faith the same day.

We realize that some of you may not wish to do this. If you choose not fill out a card, you may simply return a blank card during the presentation. We value your commitment to this place, and we certainly do not want you to feel any pressure or obligation to conform.

Whether or not you choose to submit an estimate of giving card, you are cordially invited to our New Consecration Sunday luncheon immediately after the 10:00 o'clock service. This is a great fellowship opportunity, and a way of giving thanks for God's blessings in a convivial atmosphere.

This will begin at about 11:45 in the Undercroft. It will be a catered affair, so you need to bring nothing but your smiling face. Best of all is the camaraderie, and it is absolutely free.

We will, however, need to know if you are coming. So please fill out your reservation card and return it so that we have an idea how many will attend.

I thank you for your kind attention, and I hope to see you next week.