

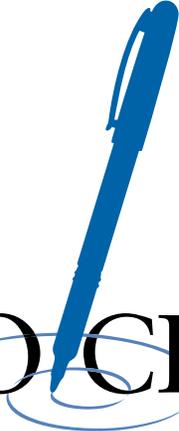
About the Author

Ordained in 1967, the Rev. Robert Gribbon, D.Min., served as college chaplain, parish rector, Alban consultant, Interim Pastor and diocesan Transition Minister. He is now fully retired in Salisbury, Maryland.

About Vintage Voice

Vintage Voice is a monthly publication written by beneficiaries of The Church Pension Fund. We hope you enjoy these articles and find them helpful. Articles are published with the authors' permission. If you have a reflection about your life in retirement, consider writing for the Vintage Voice! Send your submissions to vintagevoice@cpfg.org.

VINTAGE VOICE



Daily Bread

By The Rev. Robert Gribbon

On my granddaughter's third birthday, upon her tasting the cake, she leaned over and said, "Good job, Granny!" Now that the grandchildren are older, I'm the one teaching them to bake. When I retired and started to work part-time, we reassigned some household tasks. I took over most of the cooking.

One thing I like about cooking is that unlike most of my professional efforts, you know when it works. You can taste the results immediately. On the other hand, most of what I've done in fifty years of ordained life is ephemeral. Sermons and suppers are carefully planned, laboriously prepared, anxiously anticipated, and quickly forgotten.

One sermon I do remember was one I heard around age eleven. Perhaps it was at an acolyte festival. The preacher spoke on a phrase from the story of the wedding at Cana, "the servants who drew the water knew." John 2:9.

I don't really remember what the preacher said specifically, although I'm sure he drew parallels between the servants and our work as acolytes. However, I do remember the point because it has been borne out many times over all these years: Great mysteries are revealed to those who serve and who attend closely to the realities of water and wine, text and temperature.

I haven't kept a record of the 2,000 sermons or 4,800 meals I've prepared over the years, so it's hard to say what I've done, much less judge what impact any of it has had. All filled a need at the time. Perhaps a few services or meals were memorable, but I wouldn't be called a great preacher or a great cook. My style in both has been workmanlike, rather than gourmet. The purpose is not to be fancy, but to feed people.

In both occupations, I've found that "If you keep it as simple as possible, it will be complicated enough." Both spiritual and common feeding seem straightforward, but there are always complications. Events and accidents intervene. Tastes vary. Thus, it is wise to skip the flourishes and stick to the basics.

An old homiletics professor taught us to cut the clever pieces from our sermons. I enjoy cooking most when I can walk to the farmer's market, buy local, and prepare it for supper that evening. I'm impatient now with falderal in restaurants and clever preachers who feel the need to fill half an hour.

Nonetheless, I try to “give thanks in all things,” which is rather the most important point. Meals and services are both occasions for Eucharist, good words, the giving of thanks and praise. Good job, God. We prepare the most basic things offered, give thanks, and share it with others. The servants who draw the water know.



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