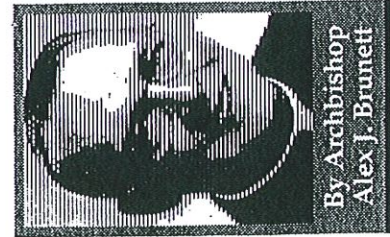


The enduring promises of a loving God



By Archbishop
Alex J. Brunett

It's not often that greeting cards express sentiments that make a lasting impression. But a Thanksgiving card I received recently from Bellarmine Preparatory School in Tacoma offered such an eloquent and appropriate reflection for this season that I want to share it with you. The text is taken from "Motivation for the Great Work" by John P. Cock.

That text reminds us that especially in times of fear and uncertainty, we must remember that we do have much to be thankful for — because our loving and faithful God has made enduring promises to us.

This truth, expressed throughout the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, is easy to overlook when we see violence, suffering and discouragement all around us. At times like these — even as we anticipate the season of Advent, the season of promises fulfilled — we may forget about the assurances God has given us. When

wars rage and economies falter, we may become quite impatient with promises.

Likewise, we may also confuse God's enduring promises with our own personal "expectations" of God — expectations of a way of life we may even believe we're entitled to. God has not promised us all good things, as the world defines good things.

In fact, as the Thanksgiving card points out, God does not promise what so many people take for granted: "long life, good health, financial security, a marriage that works, loving children, a nice house, a solid job, sweet dreams, no pain, a good education, kind in-laws, responsible government, safe cities, no taxes, good neighbors, cessation of wars, and the end of poverty."

God does not promise these things, and if we sit back and expect them, we will likely wait in vain.

But God has made many enduring promises to us. The card names these:

- To love us absolutely
- To be with us no matter what
- To bind up our deepest wounds
- Everlasting arms to catch us when we're falling
- Faithfulness amid our unfaithfulness
- Grace sufficient for every need
- Peace that passes understanding
- A calling whether we want it or not
- Courage in spite of fear
- Purpose when we have lost our way
- Mercy without our ever asking
- Future when all seems impossible

- Balm for the deepest grief
- Forgiveness when we deserve none
- More freedom than we will ever want

'We must remember that we do have much to be thankful for — because our loving and faithful God has made enduring promises to us.'

- Welcome home with open arms regardless
- Resurrection in this life
- Comfort when we are in greatest pain
- Refuge when the storms of life are raging

- Rest for the weariest
 - Hope against hope
 - Light in the darkest night
 - Joy unspeakable
- What a list! But it's not a list that simply offers reassurance. It's a list that invites us to act.

As Pope John Paul II reminded us in a recent Thanksgiving appeal, we must begin to find ways to enfold God's enduring promises — to make them real and tangible in the lives of people throughout the world who are deprived of so much. Conditions of grave poverty and need persist worldwide, and extraordinary initiatives are not enough. We must make a commitment to justice, a commitment that will demand an authentic change in lifestyle, especially in prosperous societies like ours.

Thanks to Bellarmine Preparatory School for inviting us to reflect, with gratitude and hope, on the enduring promises of our loving God! □

A Thanksgiving Reflection



God did not promise ...

- long life
- good health
- financial security
- a marriage that works
- loving children
- a nice house
- a solid job
- sweet dreams
- no pain
- a good education
- kind in-laws
- responsible government
- safe cities
- no taxes
- good neighbors
- cessation of wars
- and the end of poverty.

Bellarmine Preparatory School
2300 South Washington
Tacoma, Washington 98405
253/752-6302

God did promise ...

to love us absolutely
to be with us no matter what
to bind up our deepest wounds
everlasting arms to catch us when we're falling
faithfulness amid our unfaithfulness
grace sufficient for every need
peace that passes understanding
a calling whether we want it or not
courage in spite of fear
purpose when we have lost our way
mercy without our ever asking
future when all seems impossible
balm for the deepest grief
forgiveness when we deserve none
more freedom than we will ever want
welcome home with open arms regardless
resurrection in this life
comfort when we are in greatest pain
refuge when the storms of life are raging
rest for the weariest
hope against hope
light in the darkest night
joy unspeakable
... all this abundant life,
but not as the world promises or giveth.



From "Motivation for the Great Work" by John P. Cook



*As we approach the season of Thanksgiving
may we be truly grateful for the
enduring promises of a loving God.*