



St. Stephen's Traditional Episcopal Church

11856 Mays Chapel Rd., Timonium, MD 21093

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, September 13th, 2010

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son
and of The Holy Ghost. Amen. ✠**

Since the very beginning of recorded history, people have striven to take control of their destinies. A remarkable aspect of all the effort we expend on to trying to get control over our destinies, is that, except in the most minor of ways, it doesn't work. Our helplessness and vulnerability was to be seen in the appalling crimes that were committed in New York and Washington 10 years ago this week -- more than three thousand innocent people cut down as they went about their daily lives at the murderous whim of a band of terrorists.

Cynics profess to find the continuing public out-pouring of grief that still follows the tragedies of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to be overblown or in some way excessive. Thousands, they say, die in the Third World every day and we don't mourn them with the same intensity. That might be true. But we do not live in the Third World.

We live in the United States. And with our all-seeing intelligence services and all our technology, this simply shouldn't have happened.

But happen it did and it is, perhaps, the sheer randomness of the horror that struck a chord with so many millions people. The suddenness of the happening is a stark reminder of our inability to control our destinies. It echoes two verses from the Book of Job read during the Burial Office: "Man, that is born of woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower: he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." It leaves us asking: Are we all simply at the mercy of capricious fate?-

This is the question that Jesus addresses in today's Gospel, and his answer is a resounding: "No." It doesn't matter what

cruel twists fate imposes upon us, if we embrace God, he will embrace us, and no matter what happens, we will triumph in the end.

The message is: "Don't worry. God loves you. And, because he loves you, he will take care of you." Saying this is one thing, of course, but accepting it and believing it is quite another. It is not difficult to believe in God. Evidence of his handiwork surrounds us. Even so, it is hard to believe the Creator of the Universe could care about the fate of folks as tiny and inconsequential as ourselves.-

The answer, says Jesus, is to be found in God's creation. Few individual creatures could be more inconsequential than the common sparrow, yet not a sparrow falls to the ground that God doesn't know and care about. We imagine God as being far too exalted to be interested in our needs, yet God cares so deeply for his creation that even lilies -- a flower that lasts no more than a day -- are clad more gloriously than the most magnificent king.

If God supplies the needs of the birds of the air and the grass of the field -- creatures that make no effort to care for themselves -- why would we imagine he doesn't take a similar

interest in the well-being of the creatures he has made in his own image.-

The root cause of all our cares, concerns and anxieties lies not the vagaries of a capricious fate, but rather our own inability to trust the God who created us. We suffer agonies not because God has placed us at the mercy of capricious fate, but rather because we refuse to accept the fact that he will shore us up, strengthen us, comfort us and, ultimately, deliver us from those things that betray us and hurt us.-

To be sure, we cannot control our own destinies, but, then, we don't need to. That is God's department -- and the fact of the matter is that he's an awful lot better at doing the job than we are. *AMEN*

***To the Only Wise God, Our Saviour, be
Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power,
Both Now and Forever. AMEN.***