

GOD'S GIFTS GIVEN
YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE THE
GIFTS WILL LEAD YOU

Anybody worth the salt of God's Divine Wisdom will tell you that they haven't a clue where God will lead them through the gifts He gives to them. It's like pieces to a puzzle. You discover a Divine Gift God gives, and you use that Gift to His Glory and Honor, and the piece fits exactly into God's overall plan. But, in the meantime, there remains missing pieces, future gifts given, to the final completion of the puzzle which await our discovery. In truth, God's mysterious ways remain just that — God's Mystery! If you want to know how the mystery is supposed to turn out, then you've got to sign up to a part of the mystery!

Where do we sign up for the mystery? Where do we enter into the Mystery of God? That's the easy part. It comes to us the moment we realize and acknowledge that the only path open to us is love, and through love to charity. God draws near to man by the only path He chooses — Love. The only path open to us to draw near to God is love. Where charity is not found, God cannot dwell, for God has chosen not to dwell there without Love. To embrace charity means we embrace God through His Divine Love, regardless of the human cost to us.

Giving God permission to dwell in us and we in Him through His Divine Love is the scary part for every human being. Our human understanding of love is so finite, so meager, so shallow, and so conditional, that each of us are overpowered and overwhelmed by God's unconditional Love for us. So overpowering is God's Love, that He burns away the layers of our souls which lead us to sinful desires through the power of His Holy Spirit. In truth, we shall remain in the dark in discovering our Divine gifts until God has burned away the soul's layers of rebellion and disobedience. **“Faith points the**

way to the Land of Divine Promise as the Pillar of Fire; hope feeds us with God's manna of sweetness, but it is love that actually introduces us into the Promised Land,” (St. Francis de Sales). Everything we do, if not done through God's Divine Love, is without purpose or use to God.

Little did Buba, my wife, know when she moved to Illinois in 1998, that God would take her on His “Divine Mystery Tour,” God's Divine Ride through His Divine Love. But she gave God permission to do His Will in her, and the strangest and most overwhelming things began to happen to her. As you may know, her love for God is God's Love for her. You may know also that God implanted the gift of sewing in her, but it was a hobby to her, not a profession. God changed all that in her tour of duty here as a priest's wife. God began to place people in her path, people leading her to other people, and each of them embracing certain specific talents, but they were pieces to God's Divine Puzzle. What else can you say when a parishioner at St. Peter's gives her name to another person, and that person calls Buba asking her if she would accept the position of being the costume mistress for the Peoria Ballet. Buba meets the new Artistic Director of the Ballet, Erich Yetter, who himself is a fellow Episcopalian. Mr. Yetter provides the Artistic Designs for the costumes and Buba makes them come to physical life through her sewing. Yes, indeed, God provides the means to His Divines ends, even though we do not see the entire picture at first. When you think of yourself as but a mere vessel awaiting the Lord's outpouring of His Divine Gifts and Blessings into that vessel, with the overflow pouring out upon others, then you shall begin to understand what the Lord intends in each of us. It is God Almighty who molds and shapes the vessel — His Way! Our say in the matter is giving God

the permission to allow Him to mold and shape His vessel.

Working for the Peoria Ballet is an experience Buba would never trade for anything. It has been an exciting three seasons filled with memories that will last her a lifetime. It never crossed her mind that she would end up at the Ballet. For both of us, we've gained more benefit from God's Plan than we could ever give as a benefit to God. What we've gained most of all is the glorious appreciation of Ballet as the human admiration of dance. When you attend the Ballet, nothing is required of you in knowing anything about ballet, or even about the production or performance. All you need to know is the wonders of the human body in motion set to the choreography of music and dance. A night at the ballet is a magical time of visual and physical beauty as the performers make the actions of their bodies tell the story to you on the stage.

The Peoria Ballet completed the first production of the 2002-2003 season, entitled “Night Moves” in October. It was a wonderful night of ballet and jazz dance, a night to treat the human senses to a multifaceted experience. The Ballet is now gearing up for a Seasonal favorite—the Nutcracker with two performances on Saturday, December 14 and Sunday, December 15. For the first time ever, the Peoria Ballet and the Symphony will team up for a joint production of the Nutcracker, and finally, those who attend the Ballet will be able to experience the full depth of the senses the way the performance was intended.

On a parish level, St. Peter's, Canton and St. Francis, Chillicothe are teaming up for the group rate of twenty people for the Nutcracker's Matinee Performance at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Afterward, we're planning to dine at a local restaurant to make the day complete. The timeless tale of the Nutcracker, a child's

wondrous fantasy dream on Christmas Eve, set to music and dance, is without question an honored tradition to attend in many households. But, there are many who have yet to see the Nutcracker, and many who think that having seen it before means they have seen it always. Yes, it is true, the story told in dance is the same, but those who perform it are different, and thus, the performance is ever wondrous by the way the pieces of the puzzle are fit together to make the overall performance. You may be interested to know that the Peoria Ballet was in the past strictly a community arts effort, but is being lifted to a professional status among the American Ballets, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Erich Yetter and the Ballet board. The Peoria Ballet has grown from 80 students to over 300 students in just one year! The ballet is not for the rarefied air of the social class only, but for everyone who thinks they can be a part of the magical night at the ballet. The tickets for the Peoria Ballet are reasonably priced for all stations of life. So, come one, come all to the ballet in support of the arts in Peoria! It's fun night. It's exciting. It's a blast to see how good the Peoria Ballet has become in such a short time!

The spring performance of the Ballet will be the legendary production of Firebird. It should prove a spectacular event, especially the third and final act of the "Hell" Scene! Buba has over 100 yards of red fabric to make into costumes for this scene. It should be a night to remember for anyone who attends.

I can think of more unpleasant ways to spend an evening. I used to think ballet and the evening spent at the ballet as a boring night, until I began to understand the tremendous and sacrificial effort the dancers must endure to perform this dance. The sacrifice of every female ballet dancer on pointe is ugly toes and toe nails. The muscle control required to

perform the steps of ballet are without question the hardest and most difficult of all dance. I have come to appreciate the dance of ballet, not from the performance side, but from the dancer's side behind the scenes. The viewer of ballet will never know of their hardship in the dance, for all the viewer will know is the beauty and elegance of dance performed upon the stage. But now that I have the opportunity to stand in the wings, I know what they must give of themselves to perform, and it is nothing short of giving yourself to God for God's Mystery to be revealed in the future of your life. Episcopalians are known for our support of the arts, because deep down, we know God directs the artists to move us in ways we could not imagine or anticipate. It is only when we close our minds and spirits to the arts is when we remain unmoved by the work of the artist. So it is with God too.

For Buba and me, our lives have been utterly changed and altered by this experience with the ballet. We both believe it is what God intended by the gifts he gave to Buba. All that was required from her was permission for God to act in her life. When we give it, all that is left is acknowledging the wonders to behold in God's workings! +

By The Rev. Ronald E. White



© 2004 DoveTracts, Inc.

**GOD'S GIFTS
GIVEN
YOU NEVER
KNOW WHERE
THE GIFTS
WILL LEAD YOU**

