
ON CONSIDERING *Planned Giving*

*For we have this treasure in earthen vessels,
so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.* 2 Corinthians 4:7

My sister Tara lives in southern California. She and her husband David travel deep into Chihuahua, Mexico, to the town of Mata Ortiz, so to import clay pots into the US. These prized earthen vessels are only created in Mata Ortiz, and they echo everyday vessels used ages ago. Angela and I have one; it is beautiful and fragile.

I think of our Mata Ortiz pot when I hear Father Joe preach on the fragility of our bodies, our earthen vessels, and the wondrous technology of the medical art and science to analyze, diagnose, and mend our strained, cracked, or diseased bodies. Father Joe also speaks of the passing of those who are dear to us and to our church, losses we all feel and carry, for which the promise of medical art, science, and technology can no longer mend.

I am reminded of the *Five Remembrances* of the Buddha. They speak of our fragility and that our bodies are frail even while we are in health.

- We are of the nature to grow old. We cannot escape growing old.
- We are of the nature to have ill health. We cannot escape having ill health.
- We are of the nature to die. We cannot escape death.
- All that is dear to us and everyone whom we love are of the nature to change. We cannot escape being separated from them.
- Our actions are our only true belongings. We cannot escape the consequences of our actions. Our actions are the ground on which we stand.

We know material things do not last, that everything is impermanent, yet our culture permits us to shape the change to come. One tool to shape change is planned giving. There are basic four planned giving documents.

1. Your Will
2. Your Living Will
3. Your Medical Power of Attorney
4. Your Financial Power of Attorney

Your will is the primary planned giving document. Making your will is a loving act for one's self, one's family, and one's religious beliefs and church.

If you've never thought about a will, or made a will, and need safe direction, please contact the church office for a free booklet, *Planning for the End of Life*. The Episcopal Church Foundation writes it. It's all about making a will, and it's primary information about the first necessary steps for making a will. It is free and on hand just for the asking.

And while you are at it, consider St. James' Memorial Garden as the place where you may bury, scatter, or inter in a columbarium, your cremains. An introductory brochure about the Memorial Garden is in the information rack in the hallway near the kitchen and details and documents about the Memorial Garden may be obtained in the church office.

— Bill Collins
— the Planned Giving Committee of the Stewardship Team

St. James, Knoxville, TN