

“Ma te Atua koe e whakau, kit e pono me te hari.”

“God fill you with truth and joy.”

From the New Zealand Prayer Book

Dear Friends,

As you read this, I am traveling somewhere in the far away land of New Zealand. I flew from Newark to Los Angeles on February 20th where I met up with two of my sisters, Laurie (from Bartlesville, Oklahoma) and Colette (from Whitefish, Montana). We spent that night at a hotel nearby LAX, had dinner with my son Colin, and then made the long flight (thirteen and one half hours) from Los Angeles to Auckland that night.

Why are the three of us travelling to New Zealand? To visit yet another of my sisters (I have five in all). Leslie has been living and working there for just over a year. She is the only veterinarian dermatologist in the entire country, which enabled her to get permanent status there. She loves it; she has just informed us that her plan is to stay after retirement. That means plenty of other opportunities for us to visit her.

I imagine that even now, I am enjoying it as much as she does! Leslie gave me an itinerary of what we might do when we arrive. It includes visiting an island that is a bird sanctuary, a hike on Mount Rangitoto (a dormant volcano and a ferry ride away), the gannet beach on the west coast, perhaps a day trip to Waiheke Island (their area wine country) and lots of swimming (her favorite sport). She doesn't know it yet, but I also plan to work in some visits to the local Anglican Churches.

You see, the Anglican Church has quite a presence in New Zealand. Did you know that the first woman bishop in the *entire* Anglican Communion was for New Zealand? She was. The Right Reverend Penelope Jamieson was consecrated in 1990, leading the way for women across the globe. The Church in New Zealand is known for other things as well. They have been pioneers in reaching out to their native population, the Maoris. All of the services in The New Zealand Prayer Book (the equivalent to our Book of Common Prayer) have the prayers in both English and in Maori. The quote at the top of the page is one example of that.

Speaking of the New Zealand Prayer Book, did you know that we use it every week at Christ Church, Shrewsbury? We do! Each Sunday, in the final moments before the 10:00am service begins, the Altar Party joins with the St. Gregory's Choir for a moment of prayer to ready us for worship. Can you guess? The prayer always comes from the New Zealand Prayer Book. Their language and sensibilities offer a different dimension to our prayers, and we are often surprised and delighted by the language it uses. We also use a prayer adapted from the NZPB at the conclusions of our monthly Vestry Meetings. It goes like this:

“Lord, it is ended. An end is a time for stillness. May we be still in your presence, O God. An end is a time for letting go. What has been done has been done. What has not been done has not been done. May we let it be. An end is time for taking stock and binding up. If we have been injured or offended, may we find comfort in you. If we have injured or offended others, may we receive your forgiveness. You have been with us here, O God. As we leave for our next encounter, be our companion on the way. As we seek our homes, may we find you awaiting our arrival. Amen.” This was also the prayer I recently used when I asked to be part of the reorganizational meeting of the Borough of Shrewsbury; it fit the bill perfectly.

I have no idea what all I will encounter on my trip to NZ. I hope it will give me inspiration for months and years to come. What I do know, is that I may well be reciting that wonderful prayer as my plane lands back in Newark..... ***Lord, it is ended. An end is a time for stillness. May I be still in your presence, O God. An end is a time for letting go. What has been done has been done. What has not been done has not been done. May I let it be.”***

te rangimarie (peace),

Mother Lisa+