



Episcopal Greeting

Greetings All,

***“Man’s reach must exceed his grasp. Or what is a heaven for?”
(From “Andrea del Sarto,” by Robert Browning)***



The fresco by Michelangelo titled, The Creation of Adam, that serves as the cover for the program booklet of the 2020 Series of Annual Conferences of the Fifth Episcopal District, depicts Adam, newly created, reposed upon the Earth, weak, barely able to raise his hand to receive the touch by the of hand of God, the source of life and vitality. Without that touch Adam remains one with the dust from which he was molded, but with that touch Adam becomes a living soul!

Humanity, represented in Adam, desires a touch by the finger of God, and thereby rises from the mundane to the high calling of our destiny.

According to Robert Browning, it is that illusive touch just beyond our reach that keeps us striving.

The Fifth Episcopal District theme for the 2020-2024 Quadrennial is THINK BIG!

The scriptures that serve as the foundation of our work are found in Isaiah 54: 1 – 10 (MSG), and St Luke 12:22-32 (MSG).

Immediately after assuring the Elect of God of their peace, their redemption and their salvation through the suffering and death of the Messiah (Isaiah 53: 5), the Prophet recites a litany of gracious promises that the Lord has in store for them. “Sing, barren woman, who has never had a baby. Fill the air with song, you who’ve never experienced childbirth! You’re ending up with far more children than all those childbearing women.” God says so! “Clear lots of ground for your tents! Make your tents large. Spread out! THINK BIG! Use plenty of rope, drive the tent pegs deep! You are going to need lots of elbow room for your growing family. You are going to take over whole nations, you are going to resettle abandoned cities.” (Isaiah 54: 1-3 MSG)

And to those for whom these promises seem fanciful in light of their mediocre existence, the words of Jesus in the Gospel of St Luke admonishes, “What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God’s giving. People who don’t know God and the way God works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how God works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don’t be afraid of missing out. You’re My dearest friends. The Father wants to give you the very Kingdom itself.” (St Luke 12: 29-32 MSG)

So, this Quadrennial, with heaven in view, and the hand of God beckoning us onward and upward, lifting when we are too weary or too weak, THINK BIG!

If you have set your sights on a goal that you feel is attainable, given your gifts and grace and resources – you don’t need any help – then the course on which you have set is NOT of God!

“A man’s (a woman’s) reach must exceed his (her) grasp. Or what is a heaven for?”

Join me on this journey this Quadrennial as we reach for the stars! Not just for the stars, but for the heavens above and beyond, in so doing, perchance, we might touch the hand of God!

Clement W. Fugh
Presiding Bishop