

# Grace Notes in Miniature

## For Friday, May 8, 2020

Dear friends:

Today we observe VE Day – Victory in Europe Day – and mark the end of the fighting in Europe

as the Second World War started to come to a close. It would be another three months until the end of the war with Japan. Let's listen to those who survived those years, and learn from them before they are no longer with us!

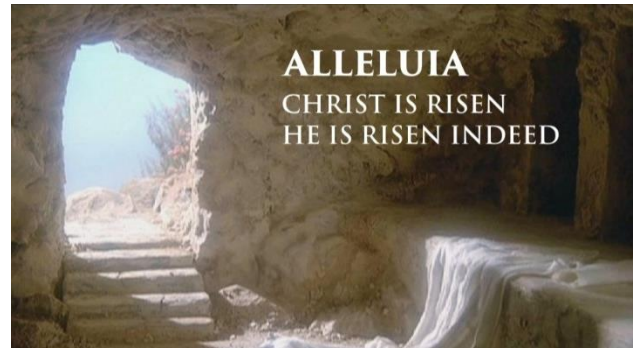
Right now it feels as if we are living under wartime conditions: the 'rationing' of some items in our supermarkets, the isolation in our homes which can feel like black-out conditions, missing people we love and want to be with rather than being restricted to written and electronic communications. I can remember the days of the telegram: it was a rather like sending a text as you paid by the word – including the spaces and the "stop" or period which punctuated the words. Arriving in Scotland to visit my grandparents in 1965, I watched my grandmother

struggle to compose the message to my parents: ARRIVED SAFE STOP WILL CALL SOON STOP LOVE MOTHER. Only under such circumstances would one be excused the indiscretion of using an adjective instead of an adverb (safe vice safely) or the improper first-person form (will vice shall) as these reduced the letter count! The message would often arrive as a piece of printed tape pasted to a card or, if you had a household telephone, by an impersonal voice reading the message over the phone.

Sadly, people of my parents' generation were used to receiving such items headed **Ministry of Defence** and beginning **WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU...** The MOD wasn't quite as constrained with the letter counts.

I am glad to say that the only telegrams I ever received personally were the messages of congratulations sent for our wedding and read by the best man at the reception. I also have played the game "broken telegraph" but always wanted the message to be sent correctly!

I hope that God listens to or reads telegram-style messages as often my prayers are pretty short. But then, I look to the Psalms or Proverbs – possibly my favourite places to go in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) – and see many big messages delivered in short statements.



During the Easter Season, we telescope a great deal of joy, praise, thanksgiving, excitement into the word, **Alleluia!** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2JEjEo2NGI> I always feel that saying Alleluia somehow deprives it of the life it is intended to convey. I do appreciate the direction of the liturgists that we should not say the Gospel Acclamation: if it is not to be sung, it should be omitted. In this season in particular, we should be singing it as much as possible, as joyfully, emphatically and powerfully as we can. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55zTJkeWCXQ>

I note here also that it is acceptable to use “Alleluia, alleluia” as the sung psalm response during the seven weeks of Easter. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNGIP5Gf5Co>

As a Leonard Cohen fan, I couldn't leave out: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9R6FBEe\\_10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9R6FBEe_10)

Finally, I invite you to sing along with [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s87W\\_ByZlfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s87W_ByZlfw) **Alleluia!**

Today we draw Catholic Education Week to a close, but it is in a very open-ended way as we celebrate “A Future Full of Hope”. Our Saint for today, Blessed Catherine of Saint Augustine, is a wonderful model of hope for this time. She came from France in 1648 to join the sisters in the Hôtel-Dieu hospital in Quebec City, contracting plague on the voyage but recovering to serve the community for another twenty years. Saint François de Laval, Quebec's first Bishop, said of her, “I don't need to see any extraordinary signs from her to be convinced of her holiness, because her virtues made me perfectly aware of it.”



Bienheureuse Marie-Catherine de Saint-Augustin  
1648 - Sur le bateau qui l'emmena en Nouvelle-France

This weekend we celebrate Mothers: mothers, mothers-in-law, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, godmothers, house-mothers, foster mothers, den mothers, and lots of other people without the word “mother” in their titles who nurture and care for us. Even as we recognise our mothers, perhaps we can also send a message of thanks to someone who has shared nurturing qualities with us.

Wishing you all a joyful Fifth Sunday of Easter and a weekend with lots of virtual hugs! Alleluia!

Gillian