

A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

Epistles and Email

This time of year, we are flooded with mail. If it's not catalogs, it's cards. If people aren't sending wishes, they're soliciting money. We destroy trees and expend ink in monumental proportions..

Personally, I'm a card-writer and note-sender. At a time when more people are relying on cell phones and emails to convey whatever is on their minds, I prefer a piece of paper, a pen and a stamp. There is just something about writing a note, with your hand, on some scrap of fiber from a tree. It takes time. It takes effort. It takes thought.

It takes something more, too. To jot a note is also to give part of yourself in a unique way. What you write and how you write it—your penmanship, that piece of stationery—will never be duplicated, exactly the same, again. To pen a note is to offer an irreplaceable gift. Are we losing that gift to beepers and computerized bits of light and air that pass for electronic mail?

I think of our most prolific and enduring writer of letters, that tent-maker from Tarsus, Paul. His letters are impassioned, full-throated cries of faith and hope, rage and reason. Those epistles crackle with ideas. He might slide in a little aside about this slave or that deacon—a few more words about *deacons* would have been welcome, of course—but he didn't waste precious parchment commenting on the weather or what sort of foolishness those wacky Gentiles were up to. He had something to say.

Imagine if he were writing today, to the people of Corinth, and relying on the shorthand of email.

FWIW ... Love = patient, kind. IMHO. Jealous? Petty? ROFL! Love endures! :-)

P, aka S.

More likely, were he penning epistles today, Paul would have his own online "blog," a weblog of dialogue and debate where he would post his own opinions, and collect countless "hits" from readers as far-flung as Ephesus—or, maybe, Elmhurst.

Beloved Paul-dotters...while some of our "Roamin'" associates are chasing down people to feed to the lions—bat tip to "ManeEvent" for that warning—I'd advise you, instead, to pray, not prey, and do it without ceasing. Having doubts? Check out this link, from my blog bud, Titus. (Hat tip to "TitusChristi" for the link.) Don't forget to log on Sunday after the Eucharist for our world-wide pray-a-thon and epistle-chatfest! Keep the faith—and click the link to PayPal to keep this site up and running!

We all know the pen is mightier than the sword, but I'm not so sure about computerized communication. Thoughts that are *written* are thoughts that are planned, pondered over, designed to last more than a day, or an hour. You invest in something. It doesn't get viruses, and it doesn't crash when the link goes down.

The word on paper is committed to something tangible, something to be held in the hand and put in a pocket. It is there to be read and re-read. Paul's epistles endure because of that.

Letters like his can withstand what flickering dots on a computer screen can't.

Maybe that is the essence of the truth they contain, and the faith they profess.

Just IMHO. FWIW.

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