

*"Lord take my hand and lead me Upon life's way
Direct, protect and feed me From day to day.
Without your grace and favor I go astray
So take my hand, O Savior, And lead the way" Julie von Hausermann 1825-1901*

One of the famous pictures from our history was a picture of the late President Harry S. Truman at his desk with a sign on it that says "The buck stops here". It was an important reminder to him that as president he needed to make the final decision when matters came his way. He really couldn't delegate it to another person. If you anything about Truman's presidency he did take that kind of ownership for his own decisions whether people liked them or not.

While we may not be in the same category as a president of the United States, we too have to make decisions, and that means tackling tasks, projects or situations that may not be easy. In fact they might even take us way out of our own comfort level. In fact as I write this I am sure there is at least one person who at this minute may be confronted with a difficult decision only he or she must make.

When we come to that place in our lives we need to know who we belong to and who we can rely on always, "twenty-four seven". We always need to remember that when we were baptized, we were not just part of a "welcoming ceremony" we are declared "children of God" and "inheritors of eternal life." Perhaps that is why it is so important the question is asked of the parents and sponsors of their commitment to raise the newly baptized in faith. Instruction reinforces we are part of God's family; we need to be reminded that God will never leave us or forsake us.

I know it is only natural and understandable in such moments of our life to say things like "why me?" or we may be faced with a decision which has no completely good outcome. Perhaps too we are the ONLY one who can make a particularly hard decision. It is here the wonderful words of Julie von Hausermann from hymn 333 in our Lutheran Book of Worship as quoted at the beginning of this article puts it all in perspective for us.

In reviewing my life I guess I have seen the truth of those words more in retrospect rather than at the beginning in times of decision or challenge. Maybe you have too. Let us remember our place as God's children at the beginning. If there is the natural temptation to doubt, then us turn to the other great sacrament of the church, Holy Communion, and hear the words , "This is my body broken for YOU, This is my blood shed for YOU".

Remember "Despair is not an option" you belong to God and God will NEVER leave you or forsake you. We are not alone.

Pr. John Van Haneghan