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Only Just Begun—by Mother Rachael Christian, O. S. B.

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fall so that I would come back to Him, but into such a dark and dreary existence as I saw those I loved living, no.

Some days I would sit alone in the sun, and I would think about how I would live when I became an adult. O the lofty and

high expectations I had back then! O the dreams I carried in my breast where no one could touch and destroy them! Did I seek God during those times? Rarely if ever, to my shame and much regret! I have said in another place how I longed for God. And I did. But in the world, there were many lions, tigers and bears seeking my ruin.

These same animals were only representatives of the thoughts and attitudes I carried around like a mask to hide my pain. My constant outcry was "leave me alone!" "I don't care" and a few other ones to lame to record here; yet it was, that on a cold February morning as I watched the family I had loved speak of my mother, who lying before me in a casket, unseen by these eyes for many years, that life took a seed from its packet of worm eaten dreams and planted that one, close to my heart, and for her, I began to live, or so I thought. It took many years and much fighting and scrapping with myself to find my way to

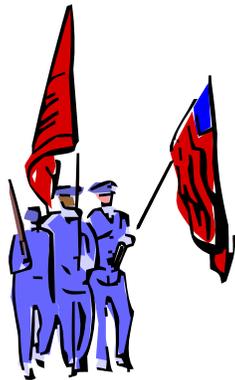
God. All the while God was looking out for me and I never knew it.

A song became popular when I was in my late twenties..Bette Midler's "the Rose." Like the Carpenter's of my early years, this one explained my life for a time. "So afraid to love" was a line I became so intimately familiar with that it took all my energy to change my thoughts, to turn my head and see, to lean on, rely on, trust, someone other than myself for love. And what was love to me, was nothing more than illusion. When I became an adult both in mind and in body, I struggled against all that I had learned life was; disappointment, grief, momentary friendships, no respect, none given, hate, judgment on others and myself..the litany runs like a stream over a bed of stones. Yet, God was with me even here. It was a late winter morning, or perhaps it was summer, I really don't recall the season as such. What happened changed my life forever.

A very good friend, asked me when was the last time I had gone to church. I think I laughed for like 20 minutes. Me, in church? The roof will cave in. We laughed and she said, there is a church I think you should check out. 2 weeks later I did that. And Continued on Page 3

When I was young there was a Carpenters' song that began with "We've Only Just begun. To live" why it came to mind today I am not sure. I only know that my life has finally truly found purpose in and with God. While I have walked around with God for 14 years, the truest love of His intimacy, I have not known or been aware of , until this last Easter. 14 years of wandering in the desert of my thoughts, and actions. 14 years of wanting more but not asking only hoping, not truly understanding what it was I was seeking; and it turns out... I was not the one seeking, but it was God who sought after me.

Like a deer that pants for running water, so my soul now seeks the Living God. My youth was spent on wasting my life. I could have been a drug addict or an alcoholic, both run in my family on both sides, but God sheltered me under His wings, protecting me from myself in many ways. Don't get me wrong, there were times He let me



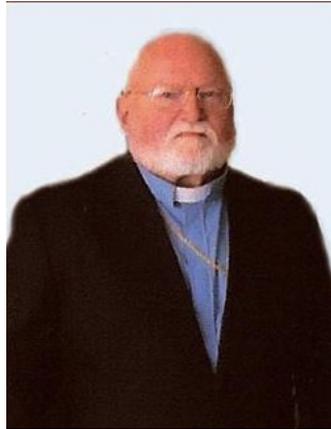
Editorial on Anglican Church History, Part III—The Tudors and the Church of England—by Bishop Richard Mence

Following the Battle of Bosworth Field (1485 CE) and the defeat of King Richard III the crown of England came to Henry Tudor (Henry VII) by conquest without regard to what was considered a legitimate claim. Considering that Richard III had been a usurper and that the crown had been volleying back and forth between different branches of the Plantagenet family King Henry VII did not lose a great deal of sleep over the taking of the crown. He proceeded to garner wealth for the crown from taxes and forfeiture of properties by those considered traitors. He also proceeded to give good laws to the nation and cooperate with Parliament. He also provided an era of peace for the people of England throughout his reign which lasted from 1485 until his death in 1509 CE. He would leave a considerable treasury to his heir.

For his son, Henry VIII, however, his reign was not as settled as that of his father who had had two sons. His elder brother, Arthur died young. In the tradition of rulers Henry VII had an heir and a spare. With the passing of Arthur, Henry became the heir to the crown and he also inherited Arthur's fiancée, Catharine of Aragon, daughter to their Most Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella. One of Henry VIII's driving motivations was to have a male heir. He and Catharine would have six children but only one would survive into adulthood. That was Mary who became a devoted Roman Catholic and would become the darling of the English people as Henry VIII's reign proceeded and her mother was displaced as queen.

Henry became enamored of Anne Boleyn, younger sister of a previous mistress who had given Henry and illegitimate son giving Henry confidence that the death of his progeny was not because of any medical problem on his part. Therefore he justified putting Catharine aside because Henry had married his brother's widow having gotten a dispensation from the pope. The laborious process for acquiring a divorce was followed by Henry VIII and his Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey. Not being loath to ignore politics the pope declined to approve a divorce for Henry citing the dispensation already given for his marriage to Catharine and that Rome was being besieged by the King of France. The failure of Wolsey in getting the king a divorce would cost the cardinal his chancellorship and would have cost him his head if he had not died of age and the strain.

Through his own machinations Henry received the support of religious and lay men of learning to claim that his divorce was justified. Henry was so desperate for a male heir that he was willing to go to any lengths to achieve it. It became treason to deny Henry VIII his place as the Head of the Church in England. Many were to die for denying this claim including St.



Thomas More and others. While Henry considered that he and England were still devout Catholics he would brook no opposition from the church. Clergy lost their livings and some lost their lives. Anne Boleyn and Henry married and she bore Henry a daughter, Elizabeth, who would become Queen Elizabeth I. After Anne bore a boy who died on the day of his birth the machinery began working to dispose of her by having her tried for treason and witchcraft.

During the comings and goings of Henry's various queens a male child was born to Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, named Edward (1534 CE) who would become Edward VI. Two years later Queen Jane would die in childbirth of a premature male child. During all this time the Church of England became separated from the Roman Church and began developing independently. Clerical and lay leaders would rise and fall in an attempt to maintain the Catholic nature of the Anglican Church or to steer it more clearly in the direction of other Protestant faiths that were rising in the west. The influences of Calvin and Luther were felt in the early Anglican Church and the English Church would continue to be unstable upon the death of Henry VIII when King Edward VI, who was still a boy, would be heavily influenced by the Lord Protector and powerful clerics who would have the English Church lean more to Protestant beliefs. Edward lived only a few years and in 1555 CE his elder sister, Mary, would become queen and make efforts to bring all of England back to the Ro-

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man Catholic Communion. She lived only a few years, however, and was followed in 1558 CE by the young, but determined, Elizabeth I. She wanted a stable nation and would be more tolerant of religious diversity, within reason. She continued to lead the English Church into the Protestant system of beliefs. The Book of Common Prayer, which had been started during the reign of her brother, Edward VI, would be refined and formalized during her reign. While the nation had a large Catholic minority

the bulk of the English people followed the faith of their queen.

The English Church took the “via media”, the middle way, between Roman Catholicism and the Protestant denominations of Europe. England would be under threat for many years during the reign of the Virgin Queen culminating in a war with Spain characterized by the battle of England’s navy with that of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The major Roman Catholic threat to the Church of England was greatly reduced and Queen

Elizabeth I would provide support for the Protestant cause in Europe, especially the Low Countries. This would continue throughout her reign into the beginning of the seventeenth century and the ascension of James I (James VI of Scotland), the son of Mary, Queen of Scots.

This would bring us into the reign of the Stuarts, the coming of revolution, and the publication of the King James Version of the Bible. This will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

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trust me , in those two weeks I knew what vehicle the Pastor drove and I knew every way out if I felt it was necessary to flee. One day during those 2 weeks I heard an old Beatles song on the radio in my car as I sat in the parking lot of the church. (I had made sure it was a day no one would be around). “Let it Be” was playing. I lost myself in the intimate tone of Mary’s heart and love reaching far from and around God to my heart. I wept for 30 minutes, put the car in drive and went and bought the first Bible I had ever owned.

God spoke rivers of life in those words I read long ago. He gave me hope where I had none. And the first new leaves of my life’s work were beginning to bud on a trunk of a tree. And I began to live. But not all the way just yet, I had to prove to myself many things, never mind what I thought I needed to do or be around people at church. If they

didn’t like me, I was okay with that, or so I thought. God knew better, as He always does. The first service ended and I thought I would be safe if I got to my car without being seen.

Suddenly behind me I hear: “see, the roof didn’t cave in, did it?” There behind me stood the 2 men God had sent, long before at the age of 4, into my memory, and they were quoting the words I said to only one other person!

I knew I was home, and I have never left.

And the song that rings true of my life now? There are at least 3: Ancient Words, Word of God Speak, and, Hallelujah, (a song we did at Easter this year) this last one reminds me not only did Christ die



for me and for the world, but on the day I die, I will be with Him in Paradise and so many others along with me. The life work I have is not the sum total of who I am, it is God who designed that, and gave me my name. I am not ever going back to who I was, but always now I am alive, looking for a moment in time, when all that I hear are the words of love my Savior said to me, not once but many times, “I am here, I have not left you, don’t be afraid.” No song can be measured worthy next to those words of love.