

Miramar 01-08-09

From the Gospel according to St. Luke: And the angel of the Lord said unto them:
“Fear not.”

We have just come to the end of the Christmas season, that season that,
As the carol states, brings tidings of comfort and joy.

But it would be foolish to try to persuade anyone here that we have not come here with a
Sense of sorrow.

Grief is a natural and normal emotion when we are faced with the loss of a member of the
Family, or a friend, or a mentor or, in the case of my father, an icon.

But that emotion can be not for him, but for ourselves.

For him, the strife is over, the battle done.

It is for us at this time to look into ourselves

And to determine what it is in our lives, our character, our organization
Has been changed, informed, influenced by his having lived, and
Been part of our lives.

I hope you will indulge me in a few personal vignettes.

As a child, I always faced the coming of Christmas with all the wonder and anticipation
Of any child.

But I also faced it with a sense of dread,
For the coming of Christmas foretold not only the coming of the Messiah,
But also the writing of thank-you notes.

My youngest brother, who has a well-deserved reputation

For coming to the point and not wasting words,
Solved the problem by writing a thank-you note which I now quote in its
Entirety:

“Dear Colonel and Mrs. Hogaboom: The dollar.”

This solved a great problem for the Krulak and Hogaboom clans.

Any occasion could be covered with a note saying merely:

“The wedding,” or:

“The graduation,” or:

“The ordination.”

But in a larger sense it has bred in me the compulsion when, invited to dinner,

To sit down the next day and for the hostess write a hand-written thank-you note,

On off-white paper written with a fountain pen.

Many of you know that my father collected watches.

A harmless pastime, you might think.

Until you found out about his fetish for punctuality.

Having experienced being grounded for a month as a teenager

For returning the family car 3 minutes after the appointed time,

I live in mortal dread of being late.

My father, who for some reason did not like to call people on

Their cell phones, found an exception.

If I were due to pick him up to go to a meeting at the zoo,

I could rest assured that sometime between 6:50 and 6:55,

My phone would ring and he would ask me if I was

Coming.

The curse is that I live my life arriving 10 minutes early and waiting for

People who are always late.

As a young boy, my father and I used to go horseback riding on Sunday mornings.
Not, however, before attending the early morning Eucharist in the Post Chapel.
There as a 9 or 10 year-old I was able to become fascinated with the
Elegant Elizabethan English of the Book of Common Prayer,
To wonder that a word such as “vouchsafe” could exist.
It just seemed right to address God in such language,
Not in the Pedestrian forms of Modern English rites.

For each of us, whether in the intimacy of being a son, or the casual acquaintance of
The required reading of First to Fight.
Neither life nor death will be able to separate us.

But the message of the Christmas season just past is the one that we can focus on as we
Come to grips with the fact that this man has moved from the Church Militant
Here on Earth to the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

For when the angel Gabriel came to announce to the Virgin Mary that she was to be
The mother of the Messiah,
The message was quite simple: "Fear Not!"

When the angel announced to the shepherds in the fields that the Messiah was born,
He said the same thing: "Fear Not."

When our Lord was 12 and, like any adolescent, began to strike out on his own,
And remained behind in Jerusalem after the Passover,
And his parents looked for him for three days,
He reassured them.

When his disciples fretted about food, drink, and a place to stay on the road,
His response was: "Do not be anxious."

And when the women came to the tomb on the first Easter Day, and were greeted by
The amazing fact of the empty tomb,
They were greeted by an angel who said:
"Do not be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth.
He is not here. He is risen."

From conception to death, the message that we received at Christmas remains the same:
We have nothing to fear.
For Christ has been there first, has experienced all we have to experience
And has assured us that we need not fear.

So as we come in our sorrow over OUR loss, we can rejoice that, for Victor Krulak,
The strife is over.
The battle done.
The victory of life is won.

And the Marines who guard heavens streets, had best be squared away.