

VIEW FROM THE HEIGHTS

September 2022

Greetings,

How many of you use a “Birthday Book”?

A journal to record important dates such as birthdays & anniversaries was once a stationery staple. Versions ranged from hand-tooled leather to Scripture-versed to Hallmark-sentimental. Now, they’ve largely been replaced by reminders on our mobile phones!

I’m a “Luddite”ⁱ when it comes to books vs. apps. and happily still use paper and ink to keep track of special occasions. My current Birthday Book is filled with art and quotations by notable women so just looking up a date is a pleasure. Such logs are a wonderful record of relationships – and of life itself.

Special Occasion journals are black (choose your favourite ink colour...) and white reminders of people dear to us. Ones we still hold close, ones who have become distanced, ones who have died. Entries make us smile – or shed a tear. They can warm our hearts or soften a calcified spot. They prompt us to pray!

Birthday Books are diaries, prayer journals, and memory keepers rolled into one. The latter may be their most important function. For memories are far more than exercises in nostalgia. They are a crucial component of our identity. Both individual and collective memories help form who we are and how we relate to one another and to God. In his book, “*Where the Hell Is God?*”ⁱⁱ Richard Leonard suggests that memories are an integral part of what we term the “soul.”

He writes:

“Memory, as a constitutive element within my soul, means that when I meet God face to face, I will remember who I am and how I lived, and God will remember me.”

Memories will be part of our first face-to-face with God. They will be the foundation of our heavenly sojourn. The remembrance of friends and failed relationships, loved ones and lost connections, will contribute to our eternal selfhood. Reunions will happen. Healings will take place, and, when required, corrective re-remembering.ⁱⁱⁱ

No judgements will be made but memories will be jogged on an as-needs basis. Just what a good Birthday Book accomplishes this side of those blingy gates!

*“Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God.
Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart.”
Philippians 1: 3-4, The Message*

Send a card to someone who’s crossed your mind!

Deepest Blessings,
Brenda

ⁱ “Luddites” were early 19th Century textile workers who fought against the mechanization of their crafts.

ⁱⁱ Richard Leonard, SJ, "Where the Hell Is God?" Paulist Press, 2010

ⁱⁱⁱ To remember is to RE-FORM (RE-member) an event in one's mind.