

MM Mailing for Leap Year February 28 2016

Morgan's Moment

Leap Year...again...a day
that changed my life...
but almost didn't.
It was at church youth group...
attendance required
to play basketball.
Guys on a side of the room..
girls on the other...
when it happened.
A girl came across the room
stopped in front of me...
asked me to be her date
to the Last Chance Dance.
All I remember saying is...
"No...I can't dance."
I still see that shy 15 year-old
returning to her friends
to report my rejection.
I didn't go but you may guess
it wasn't my last chance...
her friends made me learn
how to dance.
This year we celebrate
our 17th Leap Year
since I said "no" to her
for the last time.
Yogi Berra would have said..
"If you get a second chance,
take it!"
Let's all stand and sing
"Amazing Grace!"

Art Morgan

(Note: My grades soon changed
from a D average to honor roll!)

BOOK CORNER

Oliver Sacks wrote his last book of
four essays and 45 pages during the
final few months before his death this
past June, 2015. It is called "Gratitude."
He describes thoughts and feelings as
last days approach.

*"Above all I have been a sentient being,
a thinking animal, on this beautiful
planet, and that in itself has been an
enormous privilege and pleasure."*

POPE FRANCIS AND THE WOLVES

I shouldn't have been surprised to hear criticism of Pope Francis following his recent visits to Cuba and Mexico. All leaders attract wolves.

Vatican insiders were among his critics from the beginning. One book describes him as "*Pope Francis Among the Wolves*."* He aspires to the shepherd's role of protecting the flock against the wolves.

He attracts crowds wherever he goes. Masses for the masses I call them. It's impressive. But some would prefer that he were different.

He offended some when he put aside the regal robes of other Popes and appeared in humble white. He chose not to move into the palatial Papal apartment but to room with fellow priests. He went out of his way to make contact with the homeless and beggars and gave less attention to the wealthy and powerful. Many such acts.

He goes to places where Catholics are unpopular. He visits a Jewish temple, and Muslim mosque. He embraces the Pope of the Eastern Orthodox Church, brushing aside historic animosity.

His recent visit to Cuba angered Catholic exiles living in the United States. Francis is aware of the history of oppression in the countries he visits. He spoke a strong moral voice based on his vision of Jesus as an advocate for the oppressed.

That moral voice is often unpopular among oppressors.

He really set the wolves howling during his Mass at the Mexican-US border when he urged compassion for political and economic refugees coming from Central America as well as Mexico. Whenever he mentioned poverty and greed and militarism he was called a "Globalist" with Socialist ideals.

On the plane back to Rome he was quoted as telling reporters that Donald Trump was not speaking like a "Christian." Whatever was said reminded us that there is a lot of political rhetoric about who is a "Christian" and which candidate is the right kind of "Christian" to be worthy of presidency. Some people didn't like the Pope entering the discussion.

I thought Pope Francis was more restrained than he could have been. Imagine the prophetic Jewish Jesus before he was tamed by the four Gospels and the Creeds of the church. Pope Francis is a lamb in comparison.

I realize that a reforming Pope can only go so far and that the wolves are outside his office door. I guess Lent is meant to remind serious Christians that Jesus always had wolves at his door too.

Art Morgan, February 24, 2016

*"*Pope Francis Among the Wolves* —

The Inside Story of a Revolution" by Marco Polito