



With All That You Are: Lenten Devotional 2022, FOR **ASH WEDNESDAY** by Barbara Affrunti

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” ~Philippians 4: 6 – 8

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” ~Joshua 1:9

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As a child in Catholic school, I learned that faith in God “can move mountains.” As an adult, I came to learn that faith in God made life easier to navigate, because God was by my side, and I was God’s follower. Today I am 79 years old and I not only believe the above, I do KNOW that faith in God does indeed “move mountains” because God moved ME—from my “pity chair” to “I am who God wants me to be TODAY” – the receiving end of all God’s blessings.

Since moving to SC in February of 2015, our beloved son-in-law John M and our wonderful daughter-in-law Debi have both passed on to heaven. In 2019, I began to lose the ability to walk due to my advanced Rheumatoid arthritis. Not being able to walk changed my life.

Through my life, I have been the provider of love to my four sisters from my mom’s 2nd marriage. I taught CCD for 15 years, brought home a paycheck, and Joe and I successfully raised three wonderful children and received five wonderful grandchildren.

To be honest, I always thought I was 2nd in command! I held it all together. Joe and me, yes, but I believed I was the glue. Since 2020, that “glue” has dried up! I was not able to walk or able to “fix” anything. I retired to my “pity chair” and needed people to take care of me. I needed others to make things work. Saying “thank you” thirty times a day is very difficult when you know that you need that help.

New Year’s Day of 2022, I prayed my usual prayer of serenity—but instead of asking to ACCEPT, I prayed for COURAGE to change! I prayed and begged God “Please give me courage! Please give me courage to change!” And what I’d learned long ago was right. God DOES move mountains! God kicked ME right off my “pity chair!”

I proudly say thank you now to all who greet me or smile at me or do something for me that needs to be done. I realize, too, that maybe God is using me to help others in ways I do not understand. God asks us to serve, yes, but maybe God wants us to accept who we are today with a smile and a “thank you.”

Prayer:

Gracious God, my Way in the wilderness, guide me, by your word, through these forty days, and minister to me with your Holy Spirit, so that I may be reformed, restored, and renewed; through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

