



# NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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## Dear Friends,



*...and provide for those who grieve in Zion –  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor.  
Isaiah 61:3*



I sat on the hillside silently pondering the events that were shaping my teenage world. Why was I the only one sitting here? Everyone had left school and headed home at least an hour ago. I was the single silent mourner contemplating the inescapable events that had changed my world, for how long? Forever? Yes. Forever. The evening breeze was no longer warming. In the fading pre-twilight, it felt like a growing chill. What memories or people did I need to try to resurrect and clutch on to? That was as fancifully useless a thought as the scores of thoughts I had toyed with all afternoon. Any funny or even merely pleasant ones? Any laughter? I could only conjure frozen tears as I recalled the somber silent tasks of the final hours of this final day that had now left me alone to wonder, and to wander through the corridors of memory.

In the upper register of our overly loud and artificially boisterous social conversations, we could eke out a sort of gallows humor. The halls would echo now and then some passing acknowledgement *that we were moving on; that life was heading to greater heights; that greener pastures were ahead.* But all that upper noise only covered the lower silence. The words they conveyed and the thoughts they evoked evaporated as quickly as they had come. And we returned to our silent corporate isolation - a large group of disconnected loners, finally exiting through the doors, in groups but... alone.

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And I was there alone too, or seemingly so. I needed some way of touching the untouchable and saying some kind of goodbye to this place - this holy shrine of adolescent deities now suddenly cursed with isolation, heading towards desolation. As an ignorant tenth grader, filled with rage, hormonal energies, and little else, what was I going to say or do to bring meaningful closure? And as I searched the corridors of my mind to try to locate whatever it was I was trying to grasp, sitting alone overlooking the football field I had all my life assumed would always be there, a Voice gently spoke to me. ***“It is not this place you love. It is not the passing of this location you mourn. It is the people, even the ones you don’t like. Their stories are not over. I am not done here.”*** I sat stunned for a moment, aware that I had been spoken to by Someone. In the web of thoughts and memories, sorrow and anger, it all became an undecipherable confused mixture - one of idolatrous reverence for the pseudo-sacredness of this now deserted space... and a small essence of searching holy hunger. I turned from the athletic field for the very last time, and went home.

Years came and went. I made my yearly pilgrimage back to boyhood for a day or so. And always I would return to the shrine. My memory would pay its respects to the many haunting specters of my unprocessed past. In healthier frames of mind I would objectify it all and try to move past the isolated ruins. Emerging from that realm once again, I would head as fast as I could back to ‘my real world.’ But as years came and went, and I grew in wisdom and sorrow, I would sometimes return out of season, and turn my silent grieving into prayer. And in those prayerful moments, flashes of Light would come. Years became decades. I still tended to wander through deserted grounds, now prayerfully rather than in immature sentimentality. I always checked the locked doors knowing they would not open. Then, two years ago, as if on the eve of some sort of a Jubilee, the door of the auditorium collapsed! I walked in freely to the otherwise dilapidated ruin I had wrongly cherished for so long. Years before I had transcended that boyish misapplied lower realm of nostalgia for the Higher one, which called to something greater I did not know exactly how to describe, but knew it was present. ***It was in the context of a maturing holiness and true love that my Father, when He saw it was time, opened the portal and set in motion a miracle of resurrection.***

The grand piano I had not touched for over fifty years sat still and silent before me. ***“Son, can these bones live?”*** I wasn’t trying to quote Ezekiel, but not knowing how to answer replied, “Lord, only you know.” I left shaken and a bit bewildered. But since that day, the renovation of the entire area has begun to take place. My beloved old ruins are now gone. My boyhood longing for the world that then was, has slowly been replaced with a far greater, higher vision for purposes I still cannot fully see. A new set of buildings are being set in place and heading towards completion. Not as a school, but as a workplace providing employment for hundreds of men and women. In the natural, it is nothing more than a bulldozed set of ruins making way for new buildings that has no purpose except the practical business aims of a current enterprise. But in the spiritual...? I am praying for

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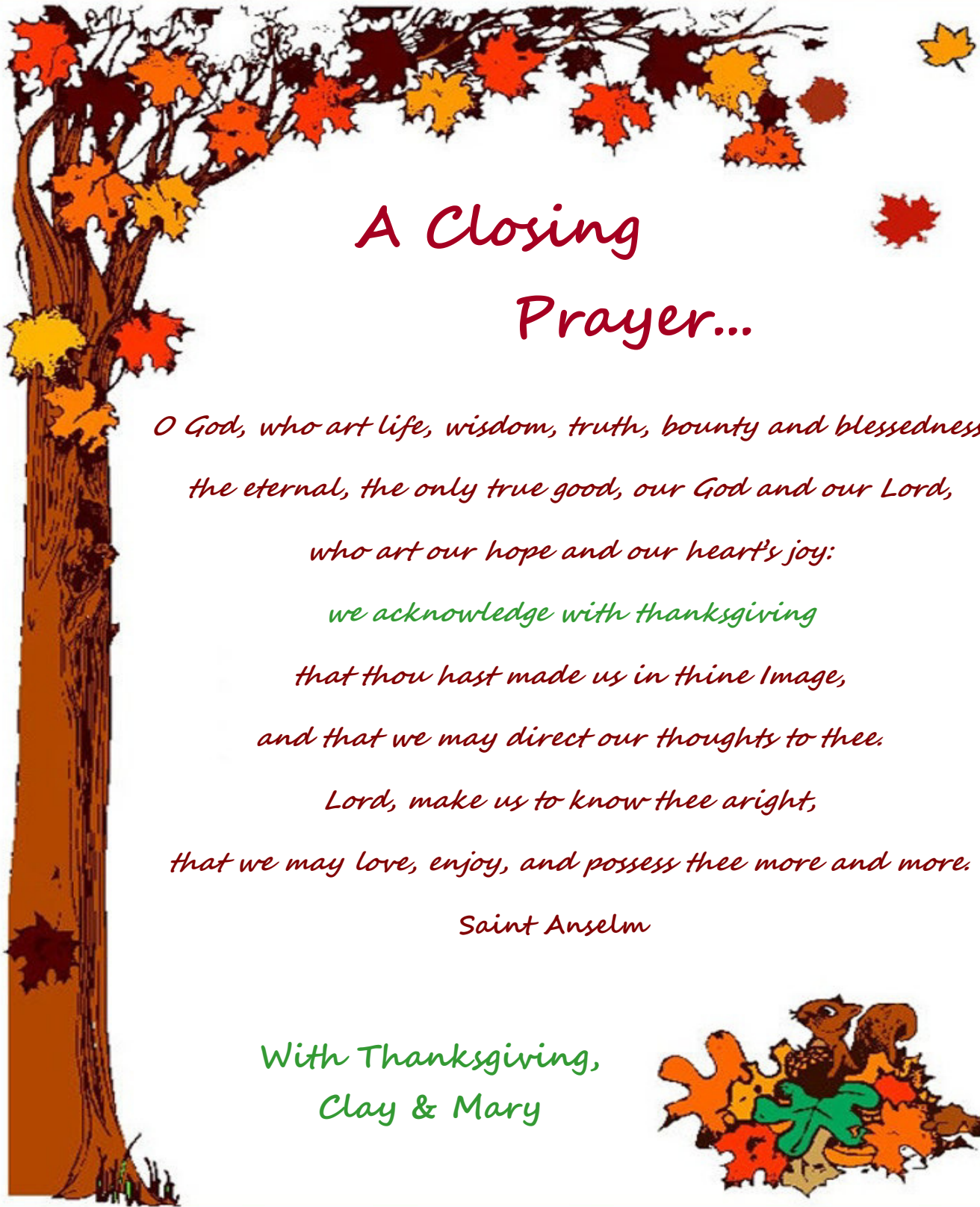
the words of the One that spoke to me fifty years ago to be fulfilled. First in the invisible, emerging into the visible. God delights in taking the small, and even the ruins of a bygone era, and invisibly energizing its secret potentials into cities made without hands. I don't know what God has in mind. I just know it was God, and still is God. And I am now praying for His Kingdom to come in that once seemingly dark and destitute place. That lives will be resurrected. That the means of earning a living will be restored. That these folks will follow Him.

And think about it. This prayer encompasses only a very small town in the state of Mississippi. What about our dark and destitute world? Can these bones live? How much more can our faith, love, and hope be renewed by our Redeemer! The One who is the Resurrection and Life! Beauty instead of ashes; gladness instead of mourning; praise instead of despair... for the display of His splendor. In Mississippi. In Israel. In the nations.

**May Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**







## A Closing Prayer...

*O God, who art life, wisdom, truth, bounty and blessedness,  
the eternal, the only true good, our God and our Lord,  
who art our hope and our heart's joy:  
we acknowledge with thanksgiving  
that thou hast made us in thine Image,  
and that we may direct our thoughts to thee.  
Lord, make us to know thee aright,  
that we may love, enjoy, and possess thee more and more.*

*Saint Anselm*

*With Thanksgiving,  
Clay & Mary*



### **McLean Ministries**

P.O. Box 2088 • Hickory, North Carolina 28603 • 828.322.5402  
website: [www.mcleanministries.org](http://www.mcleanministries.org) • email: [claymcleanministries@pobox.com](mailto:claymcleanministries@pobox.com)