



Faith In Action

by Perry Wilbur

The faith of millions is being strongly tested today in this era of massive job cuts, layoffs, financial crunch and almost world-wide recession. The shield of faith is a must for this time period.

It calls to mind the faith of Moses, Joseph, Abraham and other greats of the Bible. Think of Abraham embarking on his long journey to a new land; Moses, as he accepted his awesome assignment from God; and Joseph, sticking to his belief that he would one day be out of prison.

People everywhere in this era are having to make a new start, launch a new vocation, find a different job. It reminds me often of how Michel de Montaigne, then a 38-year-old French nobleman who left public life in 1571, found the value of a new start.

Montaigne situated himself in his country house and spent the rest of his life writing. The subject he chose to write about was himself, "Because I found I had nothing else to write about."

He called his works "essays," as they meant experiments in a new kind of literature. A fresh

start and a whole new career thus enriched the world. Imagine the faith this action required.

The faith of Thomas Becket is another vivid example. He chose the honor of God as the road he ultimately wanted most to follow. To stand by and uphold that honor, he had to give his life.

Becket, then Archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered because he opposed King Henry II's policies toward the church. Once he became Archbishop, Becket could do no less than defend the honor of God with all his might. The honor of God called forth in Becket a new loyalty that was greater than his friendship with the earthly king.

One of the greatest tests of faith is sustaining the loss of a loved one. There's a true story about a father who lost his only son. The father's grief was so enormous that he moved into a house with an upstairs that overlooked the cemetery where his son was buried.

The father spent hours at a time each day, weeping beside the grave of his son. He simply would not accept the fact that the son he had loved so much was gone. It took more than two years before the father would accept the truth. Every day of that time the father was miserable.

Painful as it may be, each one of us must accept our loss and find the faith—the strength—to go on living. This is the time when a

person's faith kicks in... the faith and belief that life is eternal and that God is in control of the universe.

Marcus Bach, in *The Will To Believe*, tells of the great need for the will to live what we profess: "To do good in a world where much does not seem good; to be honest at a time when dishonesty may seem to be expedient; to build and not destroy.

"To be true to one's highest ideals at a time when ideals may not seem to matter much anymore; to have the faith that in all, and around all, and above all, is God Who is just and true. That is exercising the will to believe in our time." †

Perry Wilbur lives in Florida.

The Royal Visitor

Beckon nigh that dwell herein;
A Royal visit shall all attend.

Heaven's carpet adorns the feet,
Transports the One about to
speak.

Heed His words that conquer all,
Listen closely, avoid the fall.

Imparting wisdom that does
transcend;
Earthly desire, the strands that
end.

The heart of Him is pure and
tender,
Unto it must all surrender.

—Girard Guidotti