

Scripture Reading: John 15:9-17

There is nothing better than a friend — unless it is a friend with chocolate!
—Anon.



This year, the quaint town of Carmel-by-the-Sea (about 300 miles north of Los Angeles and not far from Monterey, California) will host its 81st Annual Carmel Bach Festival.

It is an extraordinary event! Beginning the first of July, musicians and singers arrive from all over the world and begin an intensive two weeks of rehearsals, followed by two weeks of the most beautiful music you have ever heard!

Some friends of ours, Henry and Frances, had an opportunity several years ago to help sponsor Molly Quinn, a young soprano. They connected by email and made plans to meet for brunch following a lecture they attended in which Molly was participating.

“Do you think we could reschedule?” Molly asked. “The soprano for tomorrow’s performance of *The Magic Flute* is ill; I’ve been asked to step in; I need to rehearse.”

Of course they agreed! She went off to rehearse, and Henry and Frances went to buy tickets for the concert.

Her performance was superb and her ovation, thunderous. Henry and Frances waited for her in the jammed foyer and when they finally got together, she threw her arms around them and said this: “I was so nervous! I didn’t think I could do it. My knees were shaking. And then I peeked out from back stage and I saw you! And I said, ‘Molly, you can do this. Your people are out there.’”

Isn’t this just what a church should be like? Whatever it is that God has called you to do with your day or your week, you can do it! Your people are out there! And God is with us, too.

—Melanie Silva

Prayer: We thank you loving God for your presence and for the people who are always present to us. Amen.