

Greetings to All,

This month we searched for an article that might be appropriate as the calendar year nears conclusion. Scanning the archives, we found a piece that was presented in 2015. David Brooks' "The Moral Bucket List" was written in April of that year. In the article, Brooks talks about aspiring to be a person of good character and he starts by reflecting about people who radiate inner light. His encounters with such people are infrequent, but these experiences brighten his day. Sadly he concludes that although he has had success, he has not achieved a generosity of spirit or a depth of character that these folks have.

During his deliberation Brooks concludes that these wonderful individuals are made, not born, and have slowly built inner virtue from moral and spiritual accomplishments. Brooks added, "Many of us are clearer on how to build an external career than on how to build inner character" (2015). He suggests some experiences that might contribute to a "moral bucket list," and provides us with a rich inner life. Click [here](#) to read more from the *New York Times*.

As we progress in the Advent period of preparation, perhaps we may self-assess, and use Brooks' article as a guide. Toward the end of his story, he advises that we should ask ourselves if we are always trying to be better than we used to be.

Enjoy the reading. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Wally Kennedy

P.S. As mentioned previously, I promised comments about John Shea's book, "To Dare the Our Father." This is an in-depth look at the way the author came to appreciate and engage the Our Father as a transformative spiritual practice. The prayer became transformative (as opposed to rote) because it changed the way he thought about himself and how he acted in situations. For me this is a read that is beneficial, but should be done slowly and with considerable reflection.