Devotional Reflection, Monday, July 2026
Proper 12, the week of the Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Names Etched on the Head of a Pin

Key phrases for reflection from today's reading:
16:1I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae. . . .11Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. 12Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. 13Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also. 14Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. 15Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. 16Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

You will find the full text of today's epistle reading at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP*, 977)
AM Psalm 56, 57, [58]; PM Psalm 64, 65
Joshua 24:16-33; Rom. 16:1-16; Matt. 27:24-31

Today we celebrate the Feast of Willian Reed Huntington. (See below.)

David's Reflections

Billy Collins, former poet laureate of the Library of Congress read the poem "The Names" to Congress in the fall of 2002. These lines close that poem.

Names etched on the head of a pin.
One name spanning a bridge, another undergoing a
tunnel.
A blue name needled into the skin.

Names of citizens, workers, mothers and fathers,

The bright-eyed daughter, the quick son.
Alphabet of names in a green field.
Names in the small tracks of birds.
Names lifted from a hat
Or balanced on the tip of the tongue.
Names wheeled into the dim warehouse of memory.
So many names, there is barely room on the walls of
the heart.*

In today's epistle we find a litany of names, the names of people beloved to Paul but unknown to us. Yet, reading the list creates a poignant sense of the felt connectedness of Paul and his larger community. He was separated from these people by distance, but that distance could not weaken the sense of connection nor dim the shared memories.

In 2003, one of the most beloved people in my life died; Nell Erwin was my high school choral teacher for four years. She lived a love of music and it proved contagious in my case. For years she served as organist in the local Methodist church. We had remained in touch for the four decades since my graduation; I last visited with her the month before moving to Virginia in 2002 and had planned to see her again in the fall of 2003 when returning for my high school reunion. But, she fell victim to pneumonia. Her death left a gaping sense of absence where her presence had lived. She appeared in a dream two years ago, and I awoke feeling freshly the grief of her death and departure.

"Names wheeled into the dim warehouse of memory.
So many names, there is barely room on the walls of the heart."

A Sunday does not go by but that during worship some of those names roll across the screen of memory like credits in a movie. Faces appear in rapid succession, some of the living and some of the dead. Prayers whisper their way upward in response. The heart rolls over with feelings of love, absence, and hope for the well being of the people those names represent.

"Names wheeled into the dim warehouse of memory.
So many names, there is barely room on the walls of the heart."

Perhaps there are names arising in your awareness now. Some may need a phone call, an email, a visit, a prayer, or more than one of the above. Perhaps they are thinking of and praying for you. You can pray for the ongoing bliss of those who have died. The pandemic thrust us into a more painful level of absence, making presence even more dear.. We've had a fresh reminder of the unique value of face-to-face interaction with family and friends.

"Names wheeled into the dim warehouse of memory.
So many names, there is barely room on the walls of the heart."

This collect expresses my hopes for those I love, both living and dead. "Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (BCP, p. 834, no. 52).

*Billy Collins, "The Names." https://internetpoem.com/billy-collins/the-names-poem/

Collect of the Day, Proper 12, the ninth Sunday after Pentecost
O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, 231)

Today we celebrate the Feast of William Reed Huntington, priest (died 26 July 1909 CE).
http://satucket.com/lectionary/WRHuntington.htm
https://www.anglicanhistory.org/usa/wrh/

Collect of the Feast of Willam Reed Huntington
O Lord our God, we thank you for instilling in the heart of your servant William Reed Huntington a fervent love for your church and its mission in the world; and we pray that, with unflagging faith in your promises, we may make known to all people

your blessed gift of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Palm Sunday (Written by William Reed Huntington)

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he sufferred pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for the Renewal of Life

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, 99)

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A Prayer for Seeing Others as Community

Gracious God, thank you for the diversity of human beings that surround me on every side. In the ideas, in the hopes, in the dreams, and in the struggles of those who share this earthly life, let me find that through a community of human beings I am made fuller and more alive. Let the fullness given by community give me the courage to offer my own unique self with humility to the lives of others. As we all share in the life that you have so graciously given us, may we be the lights of your love to one another. Amen.

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A Collect for Mission

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, 100, 257)

Daily Office Epistle, Romans 16:1-16

16:1I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, 2so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in

whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. 3Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, 4and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. 6Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you. 7Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. 8Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. 9Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. 10Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. 11Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. 12Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. 13Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also. 14Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. 15Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. 16Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*