



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Writing Your Life Story with God as Your Guide*. The book was born in the week-to-week meetings of the Spiritual Journal Writing group of Holy Family Episcopal Church. And yet it had its beginnings much earlier. Each person who has shared examples of her life with God in this book has a yearning to communicate with God in writing. Where did all of this begin? For some, through the Scriptures, with others, through questions offered up to God, and for others, through readings of men and women on the same journey, asking the big questions of life. Who am I? Who is God? What does God want of me? What do I really believe? And, finally, what difference does my life with God make—for myself, for others, and for the world in which I live?

For myself, I am a person who asks questions. As I have asked these questions, I have found answers that have shaped my life. Many in our world search and do not find answers that work and many still seek. Many live in a world

without foundations. The people who write in this book have found their answers in the story of Jesus of Nazareth and His revelation of God in a world very different from our own. We believe this story is critical to understanding our own story up to the present time and eternally. We believe this understanding will change our world if we let it do so. Whether you have found your answers as we have and wish to go deeper with God as a Christian, or are still on your journey, we invite you to use this book. It is a tool for self-discovery, venting, deeper understanding of the mysteries of life, and, hopefully, deeper faith.

Your life is a story with many chapters. You probably only know a few of them. Let me invite you to discover more, or reflect on past chapters. As I have done so in my life, I have been enriched and grown as a person and as a Christian. In the Spiritual Journal Writing group at Holy Family, we explored many themes. We have called our group “Spiritual Journal Writing.” If you are not familiar with journal writing, do not let that term put you off. Journal writing is merely a term for opening your heart in writing. Whatever is on your heart is fit material for this very personal writing. My prayer for you is that, whatever you call it, you will open your heart to God. My prayer for this book is that it may be a tool for you to open this very precious gift of God, your heart, and thus lead you to your life, and that your life will bless those other gifts of God we call people.

The Rev. Aileen Pallister Walther, Deacon

Dear God,

I'm scared. Tom is really sick. I've suspected it for some time, but I didn't want to admit it was true. All day he has had tests. I look at the blank look on his face, and I can see the fear in his eyes. The doctor said surgery is a real possibility to remove an obstruction but one more test is necessary to be sure. He is not a strong man and has never had an operation. Neither of us is young anymore, and the recuperation will take a long time, so we are told.

I remember my father dying on the operating table. I don't want that to happen to Tom. I don't want to lose him. I need you to help me, please Lord. Don't take my Tom away. Tell me what to do. We both love you. Please increase our faith in you.

Love,

Mary

Dear Mary,

I love you and Tom. Trust me. Give me Tom's illness and your fear. Place everything in my hands.

Love,

God

As you write these kinds of letters from you to God and perhaps imagine God's response, or hear what God has to say to you in prayer, your journal becomes the raw material of you in the making. It is the story of your life with God.

Now return to the subjects you mentioned earlier following the close of a real day in your life. You are now ready to write about your life with God. But before you do, let one or more of the following questions guide you.

- 1) If God were to ask you, "What do you want me to do for you, what would your answer be?
- 2) If God were to say to you, "Come, follow me," what specific things do you think God would want you to do?
- 3) What if you are afraid to follow God right now or don't know if you are able to do what God expects of you? Maybe you are unsure of what God wants? Allow yourself to write about how you feel.
- 4) Can you remember a time when God was very close? Write about it as if you were telling a special friend.
- 5) When did God feel very far away? What was that like? Imagine you are telling your special friend what was going on in your life and how you felt.

Points to Ponder:

- 1) God can be your special friend.
- 2) You can be your special friend.
- 3) You can tell yourself the story of your life with God.
- 4) You can discover the inner "you" by writing the story of your life.
- 5) Writing about God and you may reveal God's vision for your life.