

by Marjorie George

Defaulting

Some of my family members have property on the Llano River, just over the FM 2900 bridge from Kingsland. Except that the 2900 bridge isn't there any more. On the morning of October 16th, while torrential rains pummeled Central Texas, we watched a news feed out of Austin as it captured video of the bridge going down. Tons of concrete and steel were demolished by the raging river in under 30 seconds.

The river rose 38 feet that day, screaming out of its appointed banks, grabbing boat docks and rider-less jet skis, backyard sheds and centuries-old trees as it hurled on its course. Earlier in the week upstream in Junction it had taken four lives with it.

The communities along the river face months of repair and rebuilding. And not just of buildings and boat docks; but of the courage to go forward even knowing that life can be altered forever by forces beyond our control.

Where do we go when catastrophe slams into our lives? We go to our default. We deal with it by taking the well-worn path of what we know best. Like a car driving down a deeply-rutted dirt road, we take the line of least resistance.

So if prayer is how we start and end every day, we will turn to prayer when danger looms. If it is our habit to help our neighbors out of love for them because that is the example set by Jesus, we will pitch in with love instead of resentment during a crisis. If we are aware of our own shortcomings through frequent acts of self-examination and repentance, we will be inclined to cut others some slack when they disappoint us.

The practices of the Way of Love that is the focus of this issue of *Reflections* are habit-setting. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry calls them "Practices for Jesus-Centered Life."

Some of the houses along the Llano river will be stripped to their studs in the rebuilding of that community. All the amenities in those houses – from the choice of doorknobs to the placing of the furniture – will rely on the foundation of that structure.

Whatever we choose as foundational for our own lives becomes ground-zero for all our daily decisions and interactions. "Start as you intend to go," says a friend of mine.

Lord have mercy on all who suffer due to the vicissitudes of this life, and grant us to walk in paths formed from the bedrock recognition of you as Lord of all. *R*



Reach Marjorie at marjorie.george@dwtx.org.