



October 23, 2024

# MESSENGER

## QUOTE FOR TODAY

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age."  
Matthew 28:19,20

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## "Homecoming"

That's the title of the classic painting by Norman Rockwell that depicts the drama in a low-income tenement neighborhood when a young Army vet arrives back in his hometown after serving in World War II. It first appeared on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*<sup>1</sup> on May 28, 1945, just twenty days after the Peace Treaty was signed in Europe.

When you first look at the picture, you're struck by the emotional reactions of all those welcoming him home: Mama's open arms dominate the central theme of welcoming; Papa is more reserved, but clearly pleased and proud; sisters are full of joy, but brother's exuberance sends him into a sprint. However, the welcomer who will get to him first is Bennie the Beagle, who picked up his scent a block away. You get the impression that the shy young lady in the green pinafore standing against the wall is not planning to remain shy much longer. Watch out, Junior!

Since **ABC's Homecoming Sunday** is coming up in less than two weeks, my focus is what **that young man is thinking** as he confronts all of this, or what **Homecoming attenders will experience** when they return to their old ABC neighborhood. They may notice the same raggedy clothes hanging out to dry, the trash collecting under the stairs, a familiar potluck smell from Mama's kitchen, the fact that all the family members have the same unruly red hair<sup>2</sup> (except for the balding papas). You may experience something like that when you think about attending ABC's Homecoming.

***Continued on other side...***

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## Continued from other side

Certainly our young serviceman was also thinking about himself: who he was, who he is, who he's going to be. This homecoming is likely to be a turning point in his life, whether he ends up spending his future here or whether (much more likely) he will move on to new, even more challenging life adventures.

Let me suggest how you may use **"Home Again,"** ABC's 2024 Homecoming Sunday, as a growth experience in your spiritual journey. I'll challenge you with these six Rs:

Remember Moments – What important things happened to you at ABC?

Restore Relationships – What friendships can be renewed and strengthened?

Realign Values – What things were you more passionate about then?

Reorient Direction – Has your life has gone a little off the rails since then?

Renew Commitments – What causes would you like to be more committed to?

Refresh Energy – Are there some spiritual pep pills you need to take?

You'll need a solid spiritual home and family to help launch the next chapter in your life journey, just as that young returning veteran would need all the people and places from his youth to help him step out into his future as a responsible part of the new post-war American society. Who knows what the Lord has in mind for you? Get prepared by reminding yourself of the solid spiritual footing you found at ABC.

Pastor George Van Alstine

<sup>1</sup> If you don't know what *The Saturday Evening Post* was, you're not in touch with the *Twentieth Century*, the pre-historic (pre-social media) world of your grandparents.

<sup>2</sup> Rockwell is probably telling us even more: the red hair of all the family members identifies them not only as close relatives to each other, but also as first generation Irish immigrants whose son has represented their new Nation on the battlefield.