

6th and 7th Queries for 4th Month, 2018, RQM

Sixth Query

Do we live in the life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars? Do we, on Christian principles, refuse to participate in or to cooperate with the military effort? Do we work actively for peace and the removal of the causes of war? Do we endeavor to cultivate good will, mutual understanding, and equal opportunities for all people?

Keystone Fellowship: We doubt that we operate in the full measure of the life and power God desires, but we do strive to live into that life and power, and to have that life and power live through us. By ourselves, none of us can do enough to promote peace, but we can allow the Prince of Peace to live through us. We need to focus on what he would have us to do, rather than being drawn into political partisanship and other competing worldly voices and causes. We are also aware that our struggle is not against other people, but against spiritual powers of darkness. May our Lord help us toward greater clarity to live into the life and power he offers us. This may mean as something simple as prayerfully putting on spiritual armor, or talking with our neighbors before the calling the police in order to settle disputes.

Marlborough: We seriously endeavor to live in that power and spirit which takes away the occasion of all wars. Other than the passive cooperation of paying our federal taxes, refusal to participate in war activities is not difficult for us, but actively working for peace challenges us. We are sometimes surprised at the prejudiced beliefs of some of those around us, but we are hopeful that our efforts to share our concerns are fruitful and we believe that most people want to live in peace. However, we see a need to do more. By actively listening beyond what we hear from the media, and more closely to the Holy Spirit, we could be better led to work for peace.

Rockingham: We are troubled by the growing divisiveness across our country and within many of our own families, but Christ is our power that weathers all storms. Alert to His love, we find ourselves most of the time enabled in some measure to facilitate good will, understanding across cultural differences, and kindness for all people, including those with whom we very much disagree. We remind ourselves when necessary that each person is beloved of God. Many of us intentionally seek to let the Holy Spirit guide us through the day so that our lives – at home, at work, and with everyone we encounter - may reflect Christ's love and peace, and thus, through our words and examples, calm the heart conditions that lead to war. None of us actively participates in military action, although most of us pay taxes supporting that action. Some of us feel a special concern for veterans, for active-duty members of the military and for their families, all of whom who face the sorrows of injury, emotional distress, and death. In addition, we variously work for peace by supporting reconciliation work, emphasizing patience and forgiveness, tempering both our own inclinations toward anger and confrontation and also our own desires for material goods and power, and by witnessing aloud to the transforming power of Christ.

Proposed Summary: We doubt that we operate in the full measure of the life and power God desires, but we do strive to live into that life and power, and to have it live through us. Many of us intentionally seek to let the Holy Spirit guide us through the day so that our lives – at home, at work, and with everyone we encounter - may reflect Christ's love and peace. Other than the passive cooperation of paying our federal taxes, none of us actively participates in military activities. Actively working for peace, however, challenges some of us, but we find ways to do so through talking about our concerns with those around us, supporting reconciliation work, emphasizing patience and forgiveness, tempering our anger and desires for material goods and power, and by witnessing aloud to the transforming power of Christ. Our struggle is not against other people, but against spiritual powers of darkness.

Seventh Query

Do we observe simplicity in our manner of living, sincerity in speech, and modesty in apparel? Do we guard against involving ourselves in temporal affairs to the hindrance of spiritual growth? Are we just in our dealings and careful to fulfill our promises? Do we seek to make our Christian faith a part of our daily work?

Keystone Fellowship: We aim for the things mentioned in the query, and sometimes we hit the mark, and other times we do not. Sometimes we find ourselves overtaken by temporal affairs, and so guarding ourselves against busyness is something to which we must be alert at all times. We put our hope in God's protection. Others have come to realize that older age is actually a great assistance to simplicity. The daily challenges of aging often put things into perspective: we find ourselves needing to let go of things that are no longer helpful. Simplicity cannot be achieved by human will. It is a gift from our Lord in his strength and love. In his will, we can be made quietly able to accept Christ's simple way.

Marlborough: We sometimes fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others in the world, leading us to believe we are doing well in matters of simplicity, sincerity, modesty and just dealings with others. However, we see a need to focus more on making our Christian faith part of our daily existence, sharing it in words as well as in action, and we believe that this will cause the rest to fall into place.

Rockingham: We do live simply and with restraint in our consumption, especially relative to the rest of our culture. We dress simply, mostly ignoring fashion trends and expensive garments; we do not want our dress to provoke anyone to envy or desire. Many of us find that temporal affairs do intrude upon our spiritual life, but in time and with intention, each of us is able to return to Jesus Christ as our center. We are usually careful in how we word promises, limiting them to circumstances about which we are fairly certain. Likewise, we make efforts to be fair in all our dealings, at work and in our other communities. We make an active effort to have our Christian faith be a part of our daily life, but sometimes we need a jolt of adversity to keep ourselves focused on and trusting in God's help.

Proposed Summary: Relative to others in our culture, we dress and live simply and with restraint in our consumption, but we are mindful that such a comparison may lead us to believe that we hit the mark more often than we do. Many of us find that temporal affairs intrude upon our spiritual life, but in time and with intention, we are able to guard ourselves against busyness and return to Jesus Christ as our center. We are usually careful with our promises and make efforts to be fair in all our dealings. We make an active effort to have our Christian faith be a part of our daily life, but some of us see a need to focus more on this, sharing it in both word and action.

2017 Approved Query Answers

Sixth Query

While some of us believe we are fairly consistent, through God's grace, in living in Christ's Life and Power, others are not always sure if we succeed. Most of us do not promote any military effort beyond supporting it through paying our taxes, and we are against the taking of life, but some of us support military efforts toward peace, disaster aid, and humanitarian actions. We have been active in endeavoring to cultivate good will, mutual understanding and equal opportunity for all people through our jobs, through welcoming and building relationships with our neighbors, through rejecting prejudice and anger, and through providing support and material goods for those in need. We welcome all to our meetings, including those who have served in the military, and with God's help we stand ready to support Friends in their outward faithfulness.

Seventh Query

We strive for simplicity, sincerity of speech and modesty of apparel, and we are mindful to be just and keep our promises, but sometimes our faithfulness falls short. Many of us find a frequent challenge in keeping our outward affairs subordinate to our spiritual life, though we recognize that temporal affairs can sometimes be a part of our spiritual growth when approached prayerfully. We believe that the way we live reflects and encourages our faith. While we fall well short of perfection, we acknowledge the growth in our lives. We pray for discernment and strength to follow His will and are grateful for Christ's faithfulness to us.