

A QUALITY OF LIFE

Sermon Preached in The Mackey Worship Center
The Rev. Dr. Carroll C. Meyer, Preaching
Westminster Presbyterian Church
353 East Pine Street, Wooster, Ohio, 44691
The Second Sunday of Lent
March 4, 2007
Communion
Celebrating Divine Gbagbo's Ghanaian Ministry
Mark 14: 3 – 9
Two Selected Ghanaian Hymns
One Lenten Hymn for the Season

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse--and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness--
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

"How sweet is mortal Sovranty!"--think some:
Others--"How blest the Paradise to come!"
Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;
Oh, the brave music of a distant Drum!
Translated by Edward FitzGerald. From FitzGerald's first edition,
published in 1859.

Perhaps we are not speaking to the Persians of Iran but they are still speaking to us through their many gifts to humanity, notably, the four verse, AABA rhyme poetry, Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. In this wonderful and oft memorized poem, Omar Khayyam, through the atmospheric words of Edward FitzGerald, identifies the ultimate bliss of the secular life. To wander in the woods, to sit beneath a spreading Chestnut tree, to share a loaf of bread, a jug of wine, a leaf of poetry with your lover and hear in the distance, the haunting music of the drum. What could possibly exceed that rarefied moment of life! And yet, there is this very fine membrane of ethereal existence that still separates us from something just a hesitation more than this vision of the ultimate romantic scene, an existence of sacred blessedness that occurred when the woman poured the anointing oil on the

head of Jesus. But the text does not say it that way. In English it reads: *'the poor woman poured on Jesus head an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard'*. Jesus was anointed and blest.

Today we want to experience the possible moment and movement when that ultimate bliss of the secular quality of life shifts every so subtly into the sacred life.

Amen