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**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Rev. Bill Harkins
Priest Associate**

After the Boston Marathon bombings, a friend asked me whether, as a veteran of the marathon, I would make a public statement about the events there. And, she asked if the bombings would deter me from running the Peachtree Road Race. My response to both questions was the same. My "statement" was to get out with friends the next day, and run, and run on July 4th.

In the passage from Galatians for this week, we are reminded: *For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* (Galatians 5:1, 13-25)

We live in a complex world that is always changing and the response of any system—whether a family, a business, an economy, a church, or an ecosystem—to the shocks and disturbances of change depends on a number of factors. One of the adages of my band of trail runners is "conditions may vary." In other words, we seek to be prepared for the inevitable changes of the trail conditions, weather, and our own minds and bodies as we venture forth, and we do not give in to fear. We seek resilience. I have learned over the years that these changes are best encountered in community. And, this is as true for life in general as it is for our recreational activities.

Resilience is best understood in the context of hope amidst anxiety and fear. Hope is deeply connected to our ability to cope with life's difficulties and to live within—and into—communities of faith in ways that are life-giving and resilient. This is especially important in the midst of the life-depleting and debilitating culture of anxiety.

In their book, *Hope in the Age of Anxiety*, Anthony Scioli and Henry Biller describe "hopeful resiliency." They believe hope to be at the core of what it means to be resilient. Of particular interest to Scioli and Biller, and to those of us in the church, is the "collaborative coping" of many religious individuals: *They do not view themselves as passive souls needing explicit formulas to address life problems. They view their own strength and skill as important factors in coping with these problems. In Saint Paul's letter to the Philippians, he asserted, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."*

Getting knocked down is as basic as being human—life just does this to us—and so is the desire to get back up. Indeed, the difference between those who repeatedly get back up and those who don't is exactly the difference between those who are able to lead and those who aren't. The name for this difference is resilience, the ability to get back up again and again and again and again. Kill hope, and resilience will die with it. And where resilience is displayed, there you see hope.

Resilience is best learned in community. Communities of hope—the calling of all Christian communities—are actually places that have resilience written into their being. They are founded on hope and their very existence testifies to the fact that getting back up is not simply a matter of the individual will. We can be helped back up, and can learn how to help

others up. Because of God's work in Christ, we can, quite literally, hope for someone else, and they can hope for us. Resilience is a communal practice. Fear can be contagious. And, hope is, too!

When we give in to fear, we become slaves not to love, but to those fears that would hold us in bondage. At times, we need community to remind us of this. This year I and others will again run on behalf of the Care and Counseling Center of Georgia and our own Cathedral Counseling Center:

www.crowdrise.com/cccgrowththepeachtree/fundraiser/careandcounselingcen. If you see a member of the Counseling Center Advisory Board (Ginny Plummer, Ann Burns, Harry Gilham, Sam Hollis, Carter Hoyt, Amy Lance, Jenny McClure, David Overend, Randy Rizer, Sydney Shipps, Walker Sullivan, and the Rev. Carolynne Williams) please say "thank you." And, please consider a donation in the service of supporting our Counseling Center and its ministries of training, counseling, chaplaincy, and education. In so doing, you will be embracing freedom from the bondage of fear and anxiety, and you will be co-creating hope and resilience, in community.

Yes, "Conditions may vary," but freedom, borne of hope and love, abides.