

# Prayer Issue

# THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER

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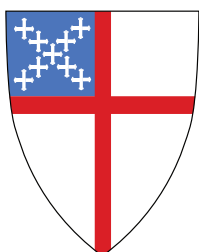
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## Prayer for Others—A Glimpse into the Communion of Saints

By the Rt. Rev. Andrew M.L. Dietsche



The Rt. Rev. Andrew M.L. Dietsche

When I lived in Poughkeepsie, I regularly made the morning trip to Manhattan by train. A beautiful ride along the Hudson, it was a peaceful way to begin the day, and perfectly suited to morning devotions. In a way, the long train ride served for me as a kind of meandering rosary, with catalysts for intercession along the way serving as the beads.

At Garrison, for example, I would invariably look over toward West Point, and pray again for my father, buried there. At Sing Sing, I would make intercession for those incarcerated, and for Canon Sabune their chaplain, and for our ministries in prisons across the diocese. Through the upstate counties, and then snaking through the Bronx and into Manhattan, I prayed for the parishes we passed and those farther afield and drew them into my reading of the morning office.

Once I arrived at Grand Central just finishing my prayers, and as I made my way through the throng of commuters I was still in a kind of “prayer buzz.” I guess what I mean is that it’s hard to lurch suddenly out of prayer, but happens more gradually, and I find I continue for a while to look at the world through the eyes of that prayer mindfulness.

So as I arrived at my subway platform and found my place, I turned back to face the throng of people hurrying onto the platform, breaking around me as they passed by like twin currents of a powerful river. And I began to see them, and to pray for the people in that crowd, praying for each of them, praying for their faces as they went by, asking God’s blessing for each of these strangers as they rushed past me. A string of human prayer beads.

I was astonished by how much is revealed in the unguarded face! How much of our inner struggles and joys and longings are expressed in our eyes without our knowing! After a few moments I had to look away—it was emotionally overwhelming to take all of these hundreds of faces into myself in prayer. But I learned something.

I am certain that intercession, prayer for others, brings spiritual benefits to them. How that works is a mystery, but I trust God to work it out. But prayer always changes those who pray. Through the eyes of prayer we are able to see connections between people, the ties that bind, the richness of our shared common humanity, in ways that we cannot otherwise, and hold that before God. Prayer for others gives us a glimpse into the communion of saints. The fullness of it and the possibilities. It is exhilarating. Heartbreaking. Beautiful. Inspiring. Sublime.

## Orar por los Demás—Una Visión de la Comunión de los Santos

Por el Revdmo. Obispo Andrew M. L. Dietsche

Cuando yo vivía en Poughkeepsie, habitualmente, yo hacía mi viaje a Manhattan por las mañanas en tren. Un hermoso viaje a lo largo del río Hudson, era una manera apacible de comenzar el día y perfectamente adecuada para las devociones matutinas. De alguna forma, el largo viaje en tren me servía como una especie de rosario zigzagante con catalizadores para la intercesión sirviendo como una sarta de cuentas a lo largo del camino.

En Garrison, por ejemplo, invariablemente miraba hacia West Point, y oraba una vez más por mi padre, quién está sepultado allí. En Sing Sing, hacía intercesiones por los allí encarcelados, y por su capellán, el Canónigo Sabune, y por nuestros ministerios de las prisiones de toda la diócesis. A través de los altos estados, y después de zigzagar por el Bronx y entrando a Manhattan, rezaba por la parroquias que íbamos pasando y por aquellas más a lo lejos y las traía a mi lectura del oficio de la mañana.

Llegaba a Grand Central justo terminando mis oraciones, y a medida que me abría camino en medio de la multitud de pasajeros todavía seguía en una especie de estado de “exaltación en oración”. Creo que lo que quiero decir es que es difícil salirse abruptamente del estado de oración, más bien ocurre gradualmente, y encuentro que sigo viendo al mundo con ojos cuya atención está centrada en la oración.

Así, cuando llegaba a mi plataforma del tren subterráneo y me acomodaba, me daba vuelta a mirar las caras de la multitud humana apresurándose en la plataforma, abriéndose paso alrededor mio mientras pasaban como corrientes gemelas de un poderoso río. Y empecé a mirarles, y a orar por la gente en esa multitud, orando por cada uno de ellos, orando por sus rostros a media que pasaban, pidiéndole a Dios que bendijera a cada uno de esos extraños mientras pasaban apurados por mi lado. Una cuerda de cuentas humanas de oración.

¡Yo estaba asombrado al ver cuánto se revela en el rostro desprevenido! Cuántas de nuestras luchas internas y de nuestros gozos y de nuestras aspiraciones se reflejan en nuestros ojos sin darnos cuenta. Después de unos momentos, tuve que mirar para otro lado—fue emocionalmente sobrecogedor el tomar esos cientos de rostros en mi mismo en oración. Pero aprendí algo.

Estoy seguro que la intercesión, la oración por los otros, le trae beneficios espirituales a los demás. Cómo funciona eso es todo un misterio, pero se lo dejo a Dios para que Él lo trabaje. Pero, la oración siempre transforma a quienes oran. Por medio de los ojos de la oración podemos ver, conexiones entre las personas, lazos que unen, la riqueza de nuestra humanidad común y compartida, en formas que no podríamos ver de otra manera, y sostenerlo ante Dios. Orar por los demás nos permite vislumbrar la comunión de los santos, ver su plenitud y sus posibilidades. Es excitante, doloroso, hermoso, inspirador y, sublime.

*Traducido por Sara Saavedra*



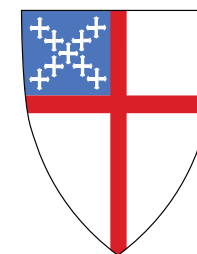
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# The Image of God

By the Rev. Dr. Clair W. McPherson



Fig. 1

**Y**ou have probably had the experience of hearing someone before seeing her. Your first contact with someone by telephone; some announcer or politician whose voice you first hear on the radio; a singer whose voice you hear on record or iPod before you happen to see him on some screen or other. Despite Skype, YouTube, and ubiquitous, inescapable television, it still happens.

Something quite analogous occurs when we pray. In prayer we speak, silently or aloud, to someone whom we do not see—and will not see anytime soon (whether we shall ever “see” God is an open theological question: St. Paul and Origen mention “spiritual senses,” which might enable a vision of God; Gregory of Nyssa and the *Cloud of Unknowing* say that our only experience of God in this life will be in darkness).

But when we talk to someone on the telephone whom we have not yet met, we usually picture that person in our minds—that is, we *imagine* him or her. For most

people the visual is the strongest sense, so for most people it is quite natural: we *picture* God as we pray. What does this God look like?

It is not a trivial concern. The God we image is, consciously or not, an expression of the God in whom we believe, so we should take this seriously and examine it closely.

Begin with the most common prayer in the Book of Common Prayer. When you say (again silently or aloud) the phrase, “Our Father,” what do you see? Many picture someone who rather resembles the Renaissance image of the Father.

Michelangelo perfected this image (see Fig. 1), and it is decidedly a good one. Its power actually comes from the fact that it is a visual paradox: its three major features—a mesomorphic, athletic body, a very old head, and a sheer pink tunic—are intuitively incompatible.

That Western icon of God has managed to displace almost any other, and that suggests its power; it also involves some serious problems. First of all, it makes God the Father, old, white, stern, and enormously muscled: all of which is far too narrow and limited a vision. Worse, that image has degenerated: just try Googling this phrase: “God cartoon,” and you will see for yourself what that means (see Fig. 2).

The Renaissance visual paradigm has clearly degenerated: the man with the white



Fig. 2

“Hey, don’t look at me —  
I gave them *free will!*”

*The idea of petitionary prayer has always made me uncomfortable. Who am I to ask God for favors? And how could I trust or love a God who grants the desires of one person and not another? Is God a slot machine, so that everyone puts in their coins and the lucky ones win the jackpot? I prefer Kierkegaard's idea of prayer—“The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.” The best result of prayer is awareness of the presence of God, which allows us to face life with fortitude and dignity.*

—Sheba Ross Delaney



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

beard is now a joke, useful for poking fun at conventional religion but scarcely anything anyone would find helpful in prayer.

In fact, depicting—and by implication, imagining—God the Father at all is a historical anomaly. Before the Renaissance, the First Person of the Trinity was normally represented by a symbolic hand stretching from Heaven (and the Spirit by a symbolic Dove). Only God the Son was pictured, because, as John of Damascus cogently explained, it was in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth that God chose to become visible; otherwise, as a Spirit, God could never be seen.

And since many of us pray “through Christ our Lord” or “in the name of Jesus,” imagining Christ as we pray makes some spiritual sense. But here again, conventional depictions of Jesus Christ involve problems. First, the most popular Western icon of Christ is the Crucifixion, as in this excellent triptych section by Matthias Grunewald shown in Fig. 3.

But this picture is patently an icon meant for contemplating what it depicts, a Good Friday meditation, not a catalyst for ordinary prayer. The second popular western image of Christ would be the infant at Christmas (which has replaced the Child with the Madonna that dominated the Renaissance imagination), an image again obviously less than helpful for prayer.

We can always imagine an attentive Jesus, befriending us and concerned with the minutiae of our lives, but the image this conjures for most people has, like the Michelangelo God the Father, been trivialized to the point of the ridiculous as in Fig. 4.

For this reason, many find it helpful to explore alternative Icons of God, such as this book cover from early medieval England, the Genoels-Elderen ivory shown in Fig 5.

Probably created for the court of one of Charlemagne’s descendants in the ninth



Fig. 5

century, it depicts a victorious Christ, cross slung like a weapon over his shoulder, treading upon the beasts from Psalm 91, which Christians interpreted as representing demons and death. Its plain linear style contrasts with its intricate carved design, and makes a particularly striking way of imagining Christ for prayer and meditation.

Similarly, this image, from 10th-century Denmark, offers a positive, colorful, embracing Christ whose power has morphed the Cross into a living, organic form. The first Christian king of the Danes, Harald Bluetooth, had this 8-foot high Runestone carved in commemoration of his victories and the conversion of his people, and it, like the Genoels Elderen ivory, offers a splendid alternative icon of the Second Person (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6

The two previous images are notably pre-renaissance. Postmodern art also offers alternative visions of God: consider the exquisite image by the 20th-century Russian artist Marc Chagall shown in Fig. 7.

Chagall was himself Jewish, but he produced some of the very best Christian art. This image, entitled *Mystical Crucifixion*, speaks for itself iconographically: it should be contemplated slowly, letting its various elements (most of which have at least two referents) slowly, letting them emerge into the consciousness. Thereafter, it becomes a picture to hold in the mind during prayer.

The other alternative is to take the apophatic route. *Apophatic* is a variation of the Greek word *apophasis*, “denial,” and it implies, among other things, that the reason for the Second Commandment is that no image can possibly express the Infinite (just as apophatic theology as-



Fig. 7

*I had led a spiritually empty life. My free will reigned supreme, depriving me, as it led me on paths of self-destruction. I always seemed to end up in places of emptiness and personal failure.*

*Then my husband suffered a near-fatal stroke. I screamed a deafening sound and fell on my knees in fervent prayer, knowing I had broken God’s heart; hoping I was worthy of his mercy. Day and night I called, “Father.” Wait! Did I just say Father? I had finally arrived after years of my husband’s gentle persuasion. I could call on my God and know my prayers did not fall on deaf ears.*

*My husband is recovering. I often wonder if God and my husband orchestrated the whole thing to get my attention. It doesn’t matter how. It matters that it worked. I live in love with God and my husband.*

—Donna (a member of the congregation at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility)



Labyrinths don't have to be fixed in place—walking a canvas one.

Photo: The Rev. Mary Cat Young

## Labyrinth Lessons

By the Rev. Mary Catherine Young

**W**hether walking the streets of New York, the circuit of your neighborhood, the daily path to a commuter train station, or the route from the couch to the fridge, movement from one place to another provides an opportunity for prayer. I have learned lessons in the practice of prayer through movement from a variety of labyrinths.

I first encountered the labyrinth as a college student. A piece of canvas 40 feet in diameter, with a circular path of twists and turns, was laid out in the floor of a gymnasium. Candles were lit, meditative music played and phrases from scripture were printed on sheets of paper, providing mantras that could be thought or spoken aloud while following the path. I entered the lane, assured that I could not get lost, as there was only one pathway from the outside to the center. I stepped slowly, methodically, one foot before the other, one breath per step. When I turned left or right to follow the path before me, I would momentarily look up, and take notice of the fact that as I was changing direction, the view of my surroundings changed as well, but the path beneath my feet continued to propel me forward. The labyrinth provided an invita-

tion to slow down, to trust in the path before me, to be attentive to God's invitation that we walk together.

The following summer, while I was serving as a counselor for a senior high session of church camp, the campers collected bricks—remnants of a razed chapel—and placed them alongside a wide path that spiraled toward a large open space in the middle. This path was built on an outdoor clearing, surrounded by trees, where eagles sometimes flew overhead and the soothing sound could be heard of lake water lapping the nearby shore. It was holy ground, made more sacred by the love and prayers laid upon it with these bricks and the invitation to walk and pray there. This labyrinth was built as a place to carry one's hopes, questions, grief, confessions, discernment and dreams, circling inward, to a resting place at the center, a symbolic pathway to the heart of God.

The first time I introduced a labyrinth to children was when I was in seminary. I preached that morning about two followers of Jesus walking the long distance of seven miles from the city of Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. I reflected on the sorrow they carried with them: the news of Jesus' death. Their bodies were engaged throughout the story: feet walking, ears and mouths active in conversation, hands breaking and passing bread, hearts pounding when it was suddenly understood that Christ had been present with them. I invited the children to enter the labyrinth thinking how sad the disciples were at the beginning of that story, mourning Jesus' death. As they moved forward, following the path, I invited them to imagine that they were seeing footprints appear before them, footprints they recognized and felt compelled to follow, the footprints of Christ. Without prompting the children began to walk faster, to skip, to run, to dance, they wanted nothing more than to put themselves at the center of the story, the center of the path, to feel their hearts burn, as had the disciples' who realized they had known all along they were in the company of Christ. The joyfulness of walking with Jesus was revealed to me that day—the invitation to become like a child, and to dance at the chance to love and be loved as a companion of Christ.

The labyrinth has revealed its power and metaphor to me again and again—in many different ways. When I make my way to a new destination, I trust in the invitation to follow and to discover God. In companionship with others, we build diverse and sacred path when we seek God together. Even in moments of solitude, I can rejoice that I am not, and never will be truly alone, for Christ is my constant companion on the journey.

An Episcopal Church Labyrinth information site.

<http://www.holycrossep.org/forms/labyrinth.pdf>

Labyrinths around the world are listed at <http://labyrinthlocator.com>

**Parishes and others in the diocese with labyrinths (apologies for any omissions – and note that there are many other labyrinths in the area – see <http://labyrinthlocator.com> for more.)**

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Chappaqua

St. James' Church, Hyde Park

The Church of St. Barnabas, Irvington

St. Thomas' Church, Mamaroneck

St. Paul's Chapel, Manhattan

St. James' Church, Manhattan

The Church of the Regeneration, Pine Plains

Holy Cross Monastery, West Park

St. Gregory's Church, Woodstock is in the process of building a wheelchair-accessible labyrinth.

*Young is the chaplain, Canterbury Downtown and the diocese's Young Adults Coordinator.*

## Pilgrims in Spain: On the Camino de Santiago

By the Rev. Alison Quin



A Walker on the Camino de Santiago.

Photo: Flickr, José Antonio Gil Martínez



The Main Route of the Camino de Santiago

**D**uring my recent three-month sabbatical, my husband and I walked on the Camino de Santiago, the famous pilgrimage route across northern Spain to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, where the relics of Spain's patron saint, Santiago (St. James—one of the sons of Zebedee) are housed.

In preparing for the walk, we were advised to carry no more than 10% of our body weight. We packed and repacked our backpacks, trying to shed all but the bare essentials; we were astonished to realize how little we really needed. It helped that we weren't going to be camping out: all along the route, there are albergues, or hostels, where pilgrims can stay very inexpensively (there are also small pensions and hotels if you need a break from sharing a room with 100 of your friends.)

Over our two weeks we traveled about 150 miles. The first few days were a challenge as our bodies got used to all that unaccustomed exercise; but our spirits quieted down as we focused on walking, taking in the experience and letting go of other concerns. We passed from town to town, with beautiful countryside in between of woods, streams, farms and fields. Most of the towns offer food and shelter, since people have been walking the pilgrimage for over a thousand years. And they are also beautiful, with medieval churches, bridges, walls and other buildings.

At the pilgrim's mass in Roncesvalles, where we started, we learned that people from 89 countries were walking the Camino while we were—and for us one of the great joys of the pilgrimage was meeting some of them and hearing their stories. There was a great spirit among those walking and among the people who live along the Camino. Many times along the way, people went out of their way to help us, point us in the right direction, share food and other necessities. It was a profound experience of unity among people who spoke different languages, came from different corners of the world and had their own unique histories.

Sometimes we walked in silence and saw very few people. At other times, we would meet someone and start chatting and strike up a friendship. There

were kilometer markers along the way with stones piled on them reflecting people's prayers. Sometimes we saw pictures of loved ones who had died, or notes with written prayers. Often, we would stop in at a church for prayer, and in the evening we would sometimes catch a Mass.

We felt close to God during the whole experience—the simplicity of just walking all day, trusting that we would find somewhere to eat and sleep, meeting wonderful people, the beauty of our surroundings, prayer along the way, and being on a pilgrimage route that has been walked for a millennium combined to make this a deeply moving experience of God's love and care for all of us.

*Quin is rector of the Church of Christ the King, Stone Ridge.*

*I think prayer is like riding a bicycle: hard to learn, but then you're away. Prayer is the essence of faith—it means getting the language of God's authority into your head. And our heads tend to be rather resistant! It feels like irrational childish nonsense, psychological weakness. For some of us, it's a process of "finding your voice"—finding a way of speaking Christian language that's authentic, honest. I found poetry a crucial resource—especially George Herbert. I also wrote poetry at the time I was first grappling with this (early twenties), and writing poem-prayers was a crucial way in.*

—Theo Hobson

## Gather All the Voices

By Margaret Diehl

### PRAYER

By Emily Dickinson

Prayer is the little implement  
Through which Men reach  
Where Presence—is denied them.  
They fling their Speech

By means of it—in God's Ear—  
If then He hear—  
This sums the Apparatus  
Comprised in Prayer—

*Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) was inducted into the Cathedral's American Poets Corner in 1984.*

With her signature brevity, Emily Dickinson describes prayer using mechanical terms—*implement, apparatus*. The ostensible point of the poem is that prayer, which people can talk about endlessly and use as a framework for beautiful and haunting language is, at heart, simple: we speak, God hears. But using words that emphasize the impersonal, how-to side of prayer tells us something else: prayer is a human construct that works for a reason.

Prayer, as a technique, has drawn the attention of clergy, poets, philosophers and mystics, and much has been written, including extraordinarily subtle analyses. The kernel is that prayer is a special communication that focuses the mind. At its best, it distills what we need and want, at any given moment, to its purest form, whether that be “Thy will be done,” or a specific request. What happens after the prayer leaves our lips or heart, we can’t say, but what it does as we formulate and express it can be measured, both by internal examination and scientific apparatus.

Researchers have recently discovered that the brains of people who spend hours a day in prayer or meditation are different than the brains of the rest of us, as shown in fMRI images: prayer reshapes the neural architecture. That is to say—by implication from those whose lives are devoted to contemplation, where the alterations are large and obvious—whether or not your prayers are answered as you hope they will be, they are changing you. The act of devotion and humility, of quieting the mind, asking for help, and opening a space for God is effective in itself.

Cathedrals are built to inspire prayer. The grandeur, the beauty and the room for a large crowd change the feeling of worship. It builds on or accompanies experiences of smaller churches, of family and solitary prayer. The Cathedral priest, like a choirmaster, gathers all the voices, many who are strangers to each other, many visiting from around the world; and by whatever mysterious

means, the group connects individuals to one another on a soul level. Devotion shared reveals common ground, energizes faith and brightens hope.

Intercessional prayers are offered for people in pain or difficulty; and general prayers are offered as a means of praising God. At Easter and Christmas, the Cathedral fills up and thousands pray together. On an average Sunday, the congregation is smaller, and yet the soaring space and the light pouring through the stained glass windows (when the weather cooperates), reminds worshippers of the “size” of the church as a network of people who pray, who trust enough to open themselves to the divine wisdom. Place, like prayer itself, tunes the mind, and all the Cathedral’s activities are different ways of using the power of the space to allow, inspire and encourage prayer—whatever faith you may uphold.

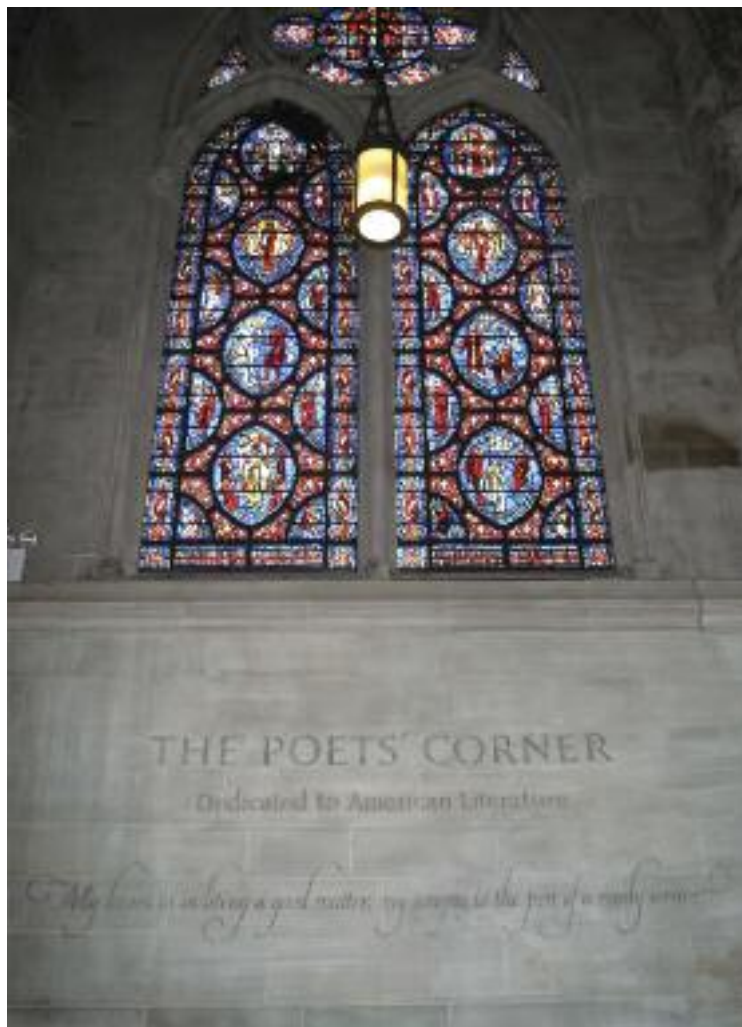
The Cathedral has distinct programs emphasizing prayer, both for groups and individuals. Nighwatch sleepovers offer children a chance to experience the Cathedral at night, away from school and family, primed by group prayer to recognize the parts of themselves we call “spirit” or “soul.” This is more difficult in our society than it once was, and Nighwatch is an opportunity to give children something other (additional or not) than Sunday school or Sunday service—to teach them the vocabulary for what adults recognize as an awareness of spirit, whether it occurs in church, during a solitary walk in the moonlight, or in any ordinary moment lit by heightened consciousness.

The Congregation of St. Saviour offers healing prayers twice a week (Sunday and Wednesday). The laying on of hands, an ancient gesture invoking the Holy Spirit, is enacted by the priest resting a hand on head of an individual, as a prayer is offered for health, healing and wholeness of body, mind and spirit.

In the Baptistry, prayers for the child or new member of the faith harness the joy and hope of beginnings. As the water cleanses the soul, the words of the prayers cleanse the mind of distraction and selfishness.

In the Columbarium, where the ashes of the dead are interred, is a small wooden stand where mourners and visitors place lighted candles and offer prayers. The mystery of death is profoundly addressed by poetry, prayer and silence. Love and memory are sent out into the vastness. Similarly, people offer prayers at the AIDS memorial in the Medicine Bay, remembering and honoring those stricken by the illness.

Like the poems of Emily Dickinson, prayer can seem small and repetitive. She writes about love, death, God and nature, and approaches the same questions from many angles. But just as her poems are sinewy and lasting—superior implements—so too is prayer infinitely elastic, adapted to every tongue and every occasion. Prayer weaves through our conversations, our exclamations of happiness and wonder, our endearments. It often arises without words. If we make music or art, tend the young, the elderly, the sick, or perform charitable acts, we may be praying with our bodies. Prayer, like poetry, slips between the bars of definitions.



Poet's corner in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Photo: Cathedral Archives.

*Diehl is editor of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine's Newsletter.*



# A New Life of Prayer and Service: The Companions of Mary the Apostle

By the Rev. Dr. Shane Phelan

**A** new venture has begun on the grounds at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park. In January, the Companions of Mary the Apostle moved into the gatehouse at the top of the driveway. The founding members are the Rev. Elizabeth Broyles, longtime of the diocese, and the Rev. Dr. Shane Phelan, a priest from the diocese of Newark. We are currently working as retreat leaders, spiritual directors, and supply clergy. We hope to broaden our ministries as other women with different gifts come to share our life.

We began conversations when we learned that we both sought a life of prayer and service in community. As we talked, we learned that we shared a broader sense of where God was calling us. We value the monastic tradition, but we also feel an urgency about making a place where people can find God beyond the bounds of what is already given. We are standing at the hinge of past and future, looking for signs of resurrection in the world and the Church.

With the guidance of Holy Spirit, we strive to:

Live governed by the values of simplicity, celibacy, and mutual accountability

Encourage the engaged spiritual journey of women and men

Foster women's leadership, within and beyond the church

Advance inclusive language and feminine images in worship

The backbone of our life is daily prayer and worship. We share daily Eucharist and Vespers with the brothers (except Fridays, when we have a Eucharist in our house chapel). Matins, Diurnum, and Compline are said at our house. We use inclusive lan-

guage breviaries, chants, readings from the tradition, and shared Bible study to draw closer to God. We are enjoying the freedom of experimenting with different prayer books and resources.

We host women's gatherings on alternate Friday afternoons, in which we share images and approaches to God in prayer, conversation, poetry, and art. We look forward to forming deeper connections among women and men in our area and beyond. We will also be offering retreats in the fall for women and men on a variety of topics. Check the Holy Cross website, [www.hcmnet.org](http://www.hcmnet.org), or our website, [companionsofmarytheapostle.org](http://companionsofmarytheapostle.org) (currently under construction). We are also available for parish retreats and talks.

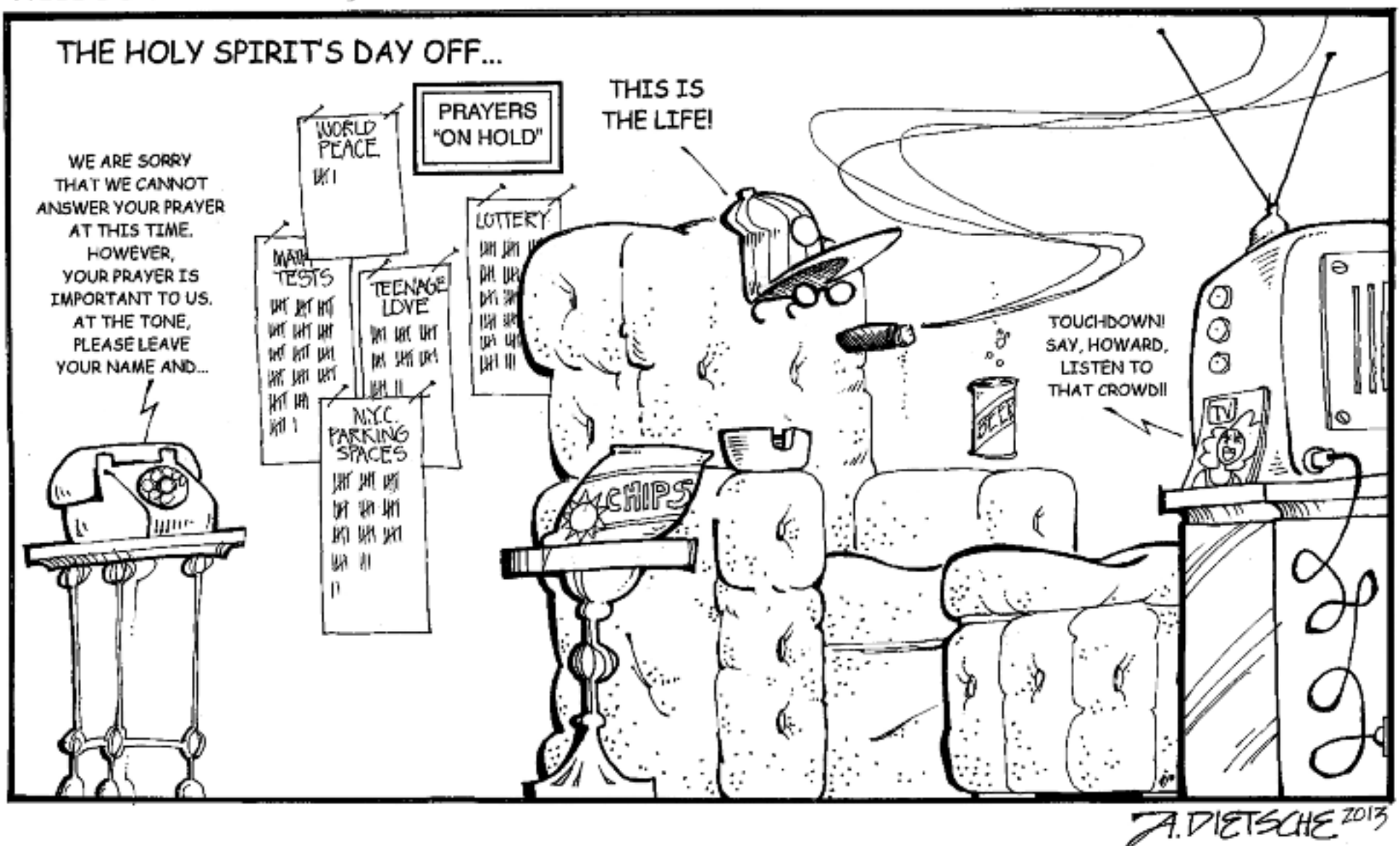
We have begun to enter into conversations with women who would like to become Companions, and men and women who seek affiliation ("companions to the Companions"). Our first "Companions of the Companions" meeting was held June 16, and we look forward to broadening our network of prayer, service, and support.

We would love to hear from you. We have an electronic newsletter. If you would like to receive that newsletter, please send your email address to [companionsma@gmail.com](mailto:companionsma@gmail.com). We have a blog, "Standing at the Empty Tomb," at [companionsma.blogspot.com](http://companionsma.blogspot.com).

Thanks be to God for this new beginning. Please pray for us!

*Phelan is a priest in the Diocese of Newark and a founder member of the Companions of Mary the Apostle.*

## WHY SOME PRAYERS JUST NEVER DO SEEM TO GET ANSWERED



# Good Enough for Jesus

By Brother James Michael Dowd, OHC

I used to have a priest when I was a teenager who was fond of saying: “If it’s good enough for Jesus, it’s good enough for me!” While, perhaps, a bit simplistic, that phrase has stuck with me all these years and I think would apply to the subject of retreats.

Throughout the Gospels, we read about Jesus periodically stepping away from his ministry so that he could pray. For example: “Many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.” (Luke 5:15-16). Now let’s just think about that for a moment. As important as Jesus’ ministry of healing, teaching, proclaiming the Kingdom by his very presence was, he seemed to know that, on a very regular basis, he had to take some retreat time. To step away from the work, the ministry, the crowds, even those who loved him, so that he might reconnect on a deeper level with his Father.

I’ve often wondered what Jesus was doing in those deserted places, on those mountains, and by that lake shore. My guess is that he was pouring out his heart and soul to God; asking God questions; looking for guidance, and most of all—listening for, and resting in, God.

And ultimately, I think that is what a retreat is: an opportunity to listen for and rest in God. Yet so often, I hear people say that they are too busy for a retreat. That their parish, office, or fam- (continued on page 33)



Holy Cross Monastery.

Photo: Daniel Case, Wikimedia Commons.

## “Come to Me... and I Will Give You Rest”: Retreat Houses Remind “My Burden is Light.”

By the Rev. Robert Fitzpatrick

When I worked at a corporate job in Manhattan, I would find a little patch of sunlight near every office I worked in.

Downtown, Hanover Square was my favorite and the closest. If I wanted to go for a walk, the East River waterfront between the Pier 11 ferry terminal and South St. Seaport was another favorite. In Midtown, it was harder to come by, but somehow it was always possible to find that patch of sunlight, warmth

and rest.

I would go there at lunch to eat a sandwich and read. Some mornings I would take a sunshine break instead of a coffee break. I would stand and bask in the sun silently and happily for a few minutes.

It made me happy. It helped keep me whole. It made the office feel less like a hamster wheel because I was more human. (continued on page 33)



Garden and Chapel entrance at General Seminary.

Photo: The General Theological Seminary.



Eucharist at Holy Cross Monastery.

Photo: The Order of Holy Cross.

*An elderly parishioner never came to the rail for prayers during healing services. She told me she had petitioned God once, and that was enough. Søren Kierkegaard used to say, “The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.” I keep asking. Not because I think God should change or didn’t hear. I just need to break my silence—the isolation I too often feel. I lament. I cry out, expecting an answer, that may not be what I thought I wanted. But often, it becomes more than I can ask for, or imagine.*

—The Very Reverend Dr. James A. Kowalski

*Some people and places that host retreats, “quiet days,” and offer spiritual direction in and around our diocese.*

#### **HOLY CROSS MONASTERY**

Hospitality is the primary ministry of the monks at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY. The brothers center their lives on learning to live and share what St. Benedict called “balance” among work, prayer, study and rest. Situated at the edge of a grassy hill overlooking the Hudson River, the monastery grounds offer Adirondack chairs, walking paths and a labyrinth. Inside, the chapel, holy singing and a well-stocked library await. The food was featured in The New York Times food section a few years back. Arriving at the monastery brings you briefly into the steady, gentle rhythm of the brothers’ lives. It can be a welcome way to step out of our own routine for a weekend or a few days. The brothers offer retreats for groups and individuals. From time to time the monks or their companions host “quiet days.” Quiet Days are one day programs, typically teaching on an announced theme, mixed with quiet time for reflection and exploring. Spiritual direction with a brother, or a companion of the community (male or female), is available by advance request. Located on US Route 9W, Holy Cross is also accessible by Metro-North or Amtrak trains with a 10 minute taxi ride from nearby Poughkeepsie station.

#### **Holy Cross Monastery**

1615 Route 9W  
West Park, NY 12493  
(845) 384-6660  
www.holycrossmonastery.com  
guesthouse@hcmnet.org

#### **COMMUNITY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST**

The Sisters of the Community of St. John Baptist in Mendham, NJ, host retreats and group meetings at St. Marguerite’s Retreat House. Individual retreats of worship, simple meals and spiritual direction with the Sisters are available at the Convent across the lawn. Walk the extensive grounds atop one of the scenic rolling hills of Morris County. Walk the labyrinth. Reflect on the lives remembered in the open-air cathedral that is the Community burial ground. Visit Pony, who lives in the yard behind the convent garden. In addition to their on-site ministries, the Community runs three pilgrimages each year through the Celtic Journeys ministry led by Sr. Margo Elizabeth. Pilgrimages include Ireland, Scotland and Celtic Britain. The Community of St. John Baptist is located 20 minutes off Interstate 287 in Morris County, NJ, or can be reached by NJ Transit train service and a 20 minute taxi ride from Morristown station.

#### **The Community of St. John Baptist**

St. Marguerite’s Retreat House and Convent  
P.O. Box 240  
82 West Main Street  
Mendham, New Jersey 07945  
(973) 543-4641  
www.csjb.org  
csjb@csjb.org

#### **HOUSE OF THE REDEEMER**

House of the Redeemer on Manhattan’s Upper East Side is “dedicated to providing peace and serenity for those who seek ‘a place apart.’” Housed in a grand, converted townhouse in the Italian Renaissance style, House of the Redeemer offers lectures, chamber music concerts, quiet days and retreats for individuals and groups. Worship has been open to the public daily since the 1950s, and is currently led by monthly “priests-in-residence.” Rentals for non-profits and weddings are also available. Overnight accommodations are dedicated to retreat uses. House of the Redeemer can be reached by subway. Take the 6 Train (Lexington Ave. line) to 96th St, then walk west on 95th St. for two and a half blocks.

#### **House of the Redeemer**

7 E. 95th St.  
NY, NY 10128  
(212) 289-0399  
www.houseoftheredeemer.org  
info@houseoftheredeemer.org

#### **GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY: THE CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY, GARDENS AND CHAPEL**

The General Theological Seminary is the oldest Episcopal seminary in the United States. Located in the heart of the Chelsea neighborhood in Manhattan, the seminary’s Close, or campus, offers a place of quiet, beauty and refreshment of soul. The word close relates to the idea of monastic enclosure, yet the exquisite gardens and chapel are open to the public Monday through Friday, from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Additionally, the seminary’s Center for Christian Spirituality holds quiet days, contemplative Eucharists, and other special events open to the public and designed to nurture the spiritual life. The Seminary is walkable from Midtown (15 minutes south of Penn Station), or by subway on the C and E Trains to 23rd St., or the 1 Train to 18th St.

#### **The General Theological Seminary**

Center For Christian Spirituality  
440 W. 21st Street (between 9th and 10th Aves.)  
New York, NY 10011  
(212) 243-5150  
http://gts.edu  
http://gts.edu/center-for-christian-spirituality

#### **COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: BLUESTONE FARM AND LIVING ARTS CENTER**

At Bluestone Farm in Brewster, NY, the Community of the Holy Spirit host guests who want to “experience our monastic rhythms, meet and talk with the Sisters, and to share in our life of worship.” The Sisters also accept applications for Summer Companions to work alongside them on the farm and worship with them. Bluestone Farm is one of two local homes where the Community of the Holy

Spirit offers hospitality. The other is the recently renovated St. Hilda’s House in Upper Manhattan. Bluestone Farm is a 10 minute drive from the crossing of Interstates 84 and 684 in Brewster.

#### **Community of the Holy Spirit**

Bluestone Farm  
118 Federal Hill Road  
Brewster, NY 10509  
(845)363-1971 x31  
http://www.chssisters.org  
MelroseConvent@CHSSisters.org

#### **SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST**

The Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE) is a monastic community of Anglican men in Cambridge, near Boston. The Society offers retreats and spiritual direction to travelers. Worship is open to the public in the monastery’s Harvard Square neighborhood. SSJE also offers retreats in a rural setting at Emery House, 45 minutes north of Boston, near the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border. In addition, SSJE has brought the ancient charism of sharing monastic wisdom into the digital age with their daily email “Brother, Give Us a Word,” and “Foundations for Freedom,” an online guide for those seeking to establish a “rule of life” for prayer and self-care. Both the Cambridge monastery and Emery House are reachable from the New York area by Amtrak and reliable local transit service.

#### **The Society of St. John the Evangelist**

Monastery  
980 Memorial Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 876-3037  
www.ssje.org  
guesthouse@ssje.org

#### **INCARNATION CENTER**

Incarnation Center is a conference and retreat center on the idyllic lakeside site of Incarnation Camp—the oldest co-ed summer camp in the United States. Located on over 700 acres in Ivoryton, CT, 45 minutes east of New Haven, it is an ideal location for group retreats such as confirmation classes, vestries, youth ministries or parish spiritual retreats.

#### **Incarnation Center**

P.O. Box 577  
Ivoryton, CT 06442  
(860) 767-0848  
(860) 860-581-4560  
(Summer Office, June 25 – August 21)  
http://www.incarnationcamp.org  
info@incarnationcamp.org

## Something Happens When We Pray

By the Rev. Stephen R. Harding

*“People say that prayer is coincidence. But I notice that when I pray, coincidences happen.”*  
—Sir William Temple

To write of prayer is to write of the felt experience of communion with God. To pray out loud in the presence of others is to be emotionally intimate and vulnerable and to reveal oneself completely. As a preacher, my prayer as I walk to the pulpit is “please help me.” When I walk back, it is “Thank you.” When I was a chaplain at Ground Zero, before saying prayers for the recovered remains of Firefighters, and surrounded by Firefighters, Police Officers, and construction workers, my internal prayer was “don’t let me f\*\*\* this up.”

I went to seminary because of the experiences I had as a student at the Swedish Institute of Massage Therapy and because of one of our instructors, Jill Thompson, who had an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary. In the course of my studies to become a licensed Massage Therapist, at times I felt an energy moving through me that wasn’t my own. It flowed through me as a Massage Therapist into the person I was working with, and they got off the table looking much more like themselves. The effect of the massage was more than I could do at the muscular level, and I knew that I was experiencing something for which I had no words or vocabulary but that was real.

At Union, I discovered Christianity’s tradition of healing. For the members of the early Church, their healers used anointing, the laying on of hands, and prayer. (This was what I had stumbled onto, as a Massage Therapist in the late 20th century). Any Christian could heal, and the desired outcome was not necessarily cure, but wholeness. As a note, the Anglican Church rediscovered its stance on the ministry of healing during the Lambeth conferences of 1908, 1920, and 1930, with a special committee making its report in 1924. The Episcopal Church took up the issue of healing ministries at its General Convention of 1965.

As I developed my massage therapy practice, I noticed that if I centered myself in prayer before I began working with someone, my hands would know where to go to release muscular tension; but beyond muscle adhesions, images began to unfold in my mind. If the images felt friendly, I would work with them; if they felt unfriendly or scared, I would literally hold the place I was working on to see/discern what had happened and address it. If I took the time to pray for each person before their appointment, and just focus on them, I found that I was getting images about what was going on in their bodies and areas to work with.

Touch intensified these images and the transfer of their emotional states to me: I found that unless I was careful, I would begin to experience their emotional state. This became a way of checking out how they were doing because I became a sort of barometer of emotions: by checking in with myself to see how I was feeling, I could use that emotion to see what they were experiencing.

These experiences of distant intercessory prayer, contemplative prayer, together with touch and a good intent toward the other led me to become a vehicle for what I can only call grace and the working of the Holy Spirit through me. When I didn’t know what to do, I asked, and the answer always came.

Being in this altered state felt like the states described by the mystics, with Hildegard



Duccio Healing the man born blind (fragment). Tempera. 1311. Photo: Museo del Duomo, Florence.

of Bingen’s drawings come to life. Ron Hunt, a healer and former priest, summed it up for me in describing his own experience as a healer: “I center myself, open my heart to God, open my heart to the other, and let grace flow toward the seeker.”

These early experiences of prayer have led me to look more deeply at intercessory prayer studies involving hospital patients, and into the work of shamans, who, through what I would call prayer, enter into an altered reality in order to heal their patients or their community.

It is this intimate and vulnerable connection with the Divine that I seek in the Eucharistic Prayer and in contemplative and intercessory prayer: that sense of complete and felt experience of communion with God, for myself as a vehicle of grace, and for that grace to be received by the seeker. It’s not a coincidence. Something happens when we pray.

*Harding is the diocesan Disaster Response Coordinator, Protestant Chaplain to the FDNY, and a priest in the diocese.*

# How Saul Became Paul: The Power of the Prayer of Forgiveness

By the Rev. Rhonda J. Rubinson

**T**he conversion of St. Paul is one of the most famous stories in the Bible. The dramatic episode on the road to Damascus—the blinding flash of light, the booming voice that sounded like thunder, Saul’s blindness, followed by the return of his sight after he submits to the reality, love, and lordship of Jesus—are all well known to us from accounts in the Book of Acts (9:1-19) and Paul’s own Letter to the Galatians (Gal. 1:11-16).

What is less well known is what precedes this episode. When we had last seen Saul in the Book of Acts, he is consenting to the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-70). After Stephen is martyred, Saul continues on, “ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, (and committing) them to prison” (Acts 8:3).

This was not new behavior for Saul, who had a well-deserved reputation as a virulent and violent enemy of Jesus’ disciples (Acts 9:13-14). The question is: what provoked this transformation from Saul, Jesus’ worst enemy, into Paul, arguably Jesus’ most effective evangelist? Why was he converted at this particular moment?

I submit to you that it was Stephen’s prayer of forgiveness for his persecutors as he was dying that released the healing power of God to heal Saul and transform him into Paul. On his knees, Stephen prays for forgiveness for his killers, echoing the words of the crucified Jesus (“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” Lk. 23:34). Stephen says, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). Since Saul was a member—perhaps the leader—of the persecutors’ band, he was a direct object of Stephen’s powerful prayer.

Forgiveness of sins is a common theme to many prayers for the healing of body, mind, and spirit throughout the gospels. We tend to think of healing prayer as a category unto itself—how often do we pray for the healing of a sickness, or a situation, any kind of problem, by asking for Jesus to solve that problem only and not tinker with the rest of our lives? But Jesus is a holistic healer, concerned with the well being of soul as well as mind



Stephen prayed for his persecutors’ forgiveness. *The Stoning of St. Stephen*, ivory, Mosan workshop, c. 1100.

and body; his healings are often accompanied by forgiveness of the sufferer’s sins. The connection between healing and forgiveness is so crucial—and so provocative to Jews who believed that forgiving sins was the exclusive province of God alone—that Jesus feels the need to state it plainly when healing a paralytic: “Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Stand up, take your bed and go to your home” (Matt. 9:5-6).

Now let’s be clear here. Jesus is teaching us that a forgiven and forgiving spirit is necessary to health in every corner of our lives, not that we are to denigrate those who are suffering as sinners. In fact, he says the very opposite when he is questioned about the man born blind: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answers, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him” (Jn. 9:2-3). All challenges to our health are opportunities for God’s glory to be revealed. Forgiveness puts us on our own road to Damascus, our own road to healing.

Jesus grants us the power to forgive, even *requires* us to forgive others as a condition for continued membership in his community. He gives us instructions on how and how often to forgive (Matt. 18:15-22, Lk. 6:37, Jn. 20:23), and teaches us to pray for the forgiveness of our own sins in the Lord’s Prayer. Yet many of us persist in seeking healing without either forgiving others or receiving forgiveness ourselves. Let’s face it, we have an instinctive revulsion to forgiveness. Forgiving others offends our sense of justice. We know when we’ve been done wrong, and it just doesn’t seem right to us to be told that we can’t hold injustice or injury—whether perceived or real—against the offending party. And receiving forgiveness ourselves can be just as difficult, since we tend to make our own sins part of our identity, even cherishing them to the point of allowing them to define us.

But if we are to pray with power for healing, Jesus tells us we must both give and receive forgiveness. If forgiveness can transform Saul into Paul, who knows what mighty works of glory God can reveal through us when we forgive and are forgiven?

*At the Seamen’s Church Institute, we serve both international seafarers and inland river mariners. As a result, I minister on the water where I experience God’s presence and absence (deus revelatus and absconditus in ascetical language) in powerful ways. To board a huge ship or river tow at sunset brings a quiet prayer of praise when I behold divine and human hands working together. On tougher days, however, I encounter crew-overboard fatalities where a human misstep becomes instantly catastrophic by the overwhelming force of nature. Simultaneously, I feel fully alive yet like a speck of sand with the vastness of my surroundings. I taste the mariner’s life and recall the Psalmist who prays, “Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out from their distress; he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they had quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.” (Ps 107:28-30)*

—The Rev. David M. Rider

Rubinson is priest-in-charge, Church of the Intercession, Manhattan.

## Sit Down, Be Quiet and Pay Attention

By the Rev. Elizabeth Garnsey

As Episcopalians, thanks to our inherited Book of Common Prayer, we benefit daily from the spiritual thinkers, theologians and contemplatives who have, over many generations, paid a lot of attention to prayer. They wrote, for our use in nearly any circumstance, some of the most beautiful collects, prayers and thanksgivings available. But our challenge as liturgical Christians is to rely not just on the attention to prayer of those who went before us, or on the prayers that others say on our behalf, but always to turn our own attention to prayer, whether we are hearing or saying one of those Prayer Book treasures or offering our attention to God in our own bodies, hearts and minds.

Our ability to pay attention is one of our greatest—though possibly our most under-developed and under-utilized—human powers. Energy flows towards whatever we give our attention to, and where energy flows, things grow. Whether the energy is toward our gardens and relationships or our fears and anxieties, things go well when they receive our attention.

Likewise, as Simone Weil said, “prayer consists of attention. It is the orientation of all the attention of which the soul is capable toward God.” So the quality of our attention determines the quality and flourishing of our prayer practices. How can we strengthen and hone our ability to pay quality attention in our daily lives? Let me suggest we begin with one of the most overlooked words in our Prayer Book, which comes to us in the form of a rubric: *silence*.

Whether saying a Daily Office or a service of Holy Eucharist, after each lesson, before Confession, at the Breaking of the Bread, all are invited into silence. How rare it is that we actually accept that invitation, because most of us officiants, liturgists and presiders skip mindlessly over it, but how important that little rubric is to the quality of our attention, and to the nourishing and growth of our inner lives!

I wholeheartedly believe that individuals, the church and the whole world would benefit if more and more people adopted a regular practice of silent prayer.

Fortunately, unlike having “the right words at the right time” or the perfectly succinct petition just when we need it, silence is always available to us, any place at any time. And it is perhaps the most important form of prayer there ever was or is. Sometimes called “contemplative prayer,” silent meditation is at the foundation of all other forms of prayer, because it trains us to pay attention to God like no other practice can. Mother Teresa said, “Silence of the heart is necessary so you can hear God everywhere—in the person who needs you, in the closing of a door, in the birds that sing, in the flowers, in the animals.” To turn our attention towards true silence is to enter into a form of pure mercy. There is no evaluation there, no judgment—only openness to and union with the mystery of Divine presence.

For the past two years, I have facilitated a Monday Meditation group at my parish, where we practice a form of Centering Prayer: twenty minutes of intentional silence,



“Prayer consists of attention” – Simone Weil

oriented around the practice of “letting go” or “self-emptying,” so wisely and generously taught to modern Christians by the likes of John Main, Thomas Keating, Cynthia Bourgeault, and many others.

The practice is very simple. But as Cynthia Bourgeault says, “it is also very hard.” It requires us to pay continuous attention while letting go of every thought, noise and distraction as they come. It’s not a practice that takes “work,” but rather “intention” and “consent.” Try it for five minutes, and you’ll see what Cynthia means by hard.

But its simplicity is beautiful and fruitful over time, and it is possible for anyone to practice it no matter what their state of health or mood, as long as they offer to God their intention to enter into the silence and remain there for the allotted time—in the case of our Monday night group, a twenty minute session. As a cartoon on my wall of two dogs sitting down to meditate says, “the key to meditation is learning to stay.”

In his essential book *Open Mind Open Heart*, Fr. Thomas Keating says the principle method of Centering Prayer is to sit down. If your intention is to maintain a practice, the only thing you can do wrong is to get up and walk out. There are some helpful ways to facilitate this sitting down and meditating.

First, Keating suggests choosing a mantra—a word that is relatively devoid of meaning so it doesn’t distract you from the silence of the mind. No matter what you choose, that word is sacred because it is the symbol of your intention, your consent to God’s presence and action in your life. That consent is what you are returning to when you say your word.

Second, settle into an alert but comfortable posture with your eyes closed. Breathe easily, then begin to introduce the word in your mind gently and silently.

Third, when you notice yourself engaging with your thoughts, or responding to a noise or distraction in the room, return to your word (the “re-centering” of Centering Prayer). This pattern recurs throughout the session. The exercise is to acknowledge the thoughts, memories, distractions and noises that come, and not resist them, but to let them go by refraining from any emotional reaction. Simply observe them when they come, and let them go, like a butterfly off a tree branch.

A practice of silent prayer literally exercises our “muscle” of attention. Over time, the fruits of this form of contemplative prayer are spiritual but also physical, emotional and mental. It prepares us for a life of action, because suddenly we are able to pay a higher quality of attention to the things that matter most. We become increasingly guided by the inner presence of God in our lives, to whom we grow more attuned because, lo and behold, we have been paying attention. And where our attention goes, energy goes, and life springs forth.

Garnsey is Associate Rector at the Church of the Heavenly Rest, Manhattan.

## Prayer and the “E” Word

By the Rev. Claire Woodley

When I served in Chappaqua in the 1990s, God told me to kick my intercessory prayer practice up a notch—to get out of the church and find people who wanted prayer. I gulped, I stalled, and then I started, in the Grand Union during parental rush hour, at the end of work and the beginning of dinner. I found the dried bean aisle was perfect for a private public place in which to pray with surprised but pleased parishioners. I quickly worked my way up to the train station platform for the morning rush. A grueling commute and high pressure financial district jobs made the train station anxiety central. It was not long after I began lurking on the platform, coffee cup in hand, looking for my people, when they began to bring to me their own people. Soon enough the platform was a going prayer concern.

Outreach? Yes! Evangelism? Definitely!

The experience of God drawing near through God’s people, in your loneliest place, when you least expect it, can be very good news. It was not unusual to see a buttoned-down business person’s eyes fill up when they explained the precarious job, the scary diagnosis, the lost child—and the relief transmitted as we stood next to one another praying. Good news indeed. It often wasn’t long before I saw them in church. When God reaches out, people reach back.



The Rev. Sandra Seaborn at St. Mary’s, Scarborough, offers a healing prayer service every month. Photo: Sandra Seaborn

Prayer as evangelism happens all over our diocese; there are many ways that prayer can be offered to bring the good news and, as a side benefit, encourage church exploration. The Rev. Sandra Seaborn of St. Mary’s, Scarborough offers a healing prayer service one Sunday a month attended by 20 – 40 people. It makes for a peaceful, meditative Sunday afternoon, as people experience prayer as a spiritual spa. A Sabbath experience in a weary world is one of the reasons the service is so successful. In this mini-Sabbath

away from phones, families, and the daily rush, people can enter prayer, focus on God and leave feeling refreshed. The service is connected to an ecumenical Christian Healing Ministries class. At the end of every Sunday session folks are invited to talk about their experience. These conversations lead to others, and then conversations lead to visits.

An ecumenical prayer group in Putnam Valley ran a prayer booth at the town fair

last year. “People asked us to pray about anything and everything,” says Melissa Cosentino of Divine Love, Montrose. “They were carrying so much around inside on such a sunny day outside.” Many people who came by the booth said they hadn’t attended church in years and didn’t know whom they could ask to pray for them. Roxanne Robson and Laura Lamia of St. Mary’s, Mohegan Lake also participated, and agreed that it was exhilarating experience. The town asked them back again for this year.

The Rev. Stephen Harding, Disaster Response Coordinator for the Diocese of New York, has been a chaplain at many public disaster sites, including the World Trade Center. “Being prayerfully present helped the crews to see what they were doing as sacred, holy work and that God was very much present,” he says. He tells how on another occasion, when he was a hospice chaplain, he asked a blind patient if he should pray so that he could hear it, to which the blind man responded, “No—pray so I can feel it.” Before he began, Harding thought deeply about the prayer. Later, he asked the man if he had felt it, and the man replied that yes, he had. He also mentions a Navy chaplain on patrol in Afghanistan who said, “It is a privilege to pray with them, and you have to make every word count.” Prayer brings us close to the God who seeks to draw near; for the isolated and the frightened, well-chosen words of prayer—words that bring the nearness of God into focus—can be the gift that helps one face danger and death, be it in hospice, or on military patrol.

When we reach out, God sanctifies the nearness, makes it holy and life giving. Every year I join my Roman Catholic neighbor, Msgr. Thom Sandy of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, to “beat the bounds” and do a business blessing on the main street of Mohegan Lake and Shrub Oak. We enter each shop and ask if they would like an interfaith, ecumenical blessing and if there is anything they would like prayer on. We visit over 200 shops, many of which keep the card at their register and pray it daily. Drawing near, reaching out and being present the blessing takes on a life of its own and brings good news with it as folks pray it forward. It is good news, alive and active. Give it away!

*A Prayer for Mohegan Lake and Shrub Oak Businesses: Almighty God, Be with us in this coming year, share our toil and be present with us where we work. Help us to be good stewards of your bounty and give us a just return for our labors, that we may care for all you have entrusted to us. Give us pride in what we do, glad in service to our customers, and a help to all our neighbors. All this we pray in your Holy Name. Amen*

*From your friends at St. Mary’s Episcopal and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parishes.*

Woodley is rector of St. Mary’s Church, Mohegan Lake.

*For most of my adult life I have recited the Daily Office as my primary prayer. This makes me conscious that I join with countless others in the church’s common prayer, what Saint Benedict called “the work of God.” It reminds me that as “the earth rolls onward into light” I stand in relationship with the cosmos itself, giving voice to the voiceless praise of the sun, moon and stars. The Scripture readings, the prayers of confession and intercession, and the Psalms especially, touch on every aspect of human life, the world’s life, and my life.*

—The Rev. Tobias Stanislas Haller BSG

## Comfortable Words

By Stewart Pinkerton

Prayer takes many forms. Whether it's through a hymn, canticle, creed or a private, spontaneous communication with God asking for help, forgiveness or giving thanks, prayer is always a highly individualized spiritual experience.

For me, the basics of prayer began long ago and far away in a time they called the Fifties, in a Midwestern town awash in dour, Nordic Lutherans, stolid, wonderful people who were good friends but who often seemed to frown much more than they smiled. So it was uplifting to listen to and absorb the lyrical beauty of Thomas Cranmer's words in the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer*. I can still remember the sonorous, clear baritone of Bradford Hastings, the long ago rector of my church in Minnesota, asking God, "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," to "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit." And all of us joining him in joyful communal thanks "for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men."

My favorite service from that era was *The Order for Daily Morning Prayer*, then printed in a reassuring old-style font that made me think I was reading the original 1549 text. Alas, in 1979, that important part of my past was updated, appearing in a new, flashier modern font and oddly bifurcated into Morning Prayer, Rite I and Morning Prayer, Rite II (Or, if you prefer, an even more contemporary approach: Prayer,

Morning, 1.0 and 2.0).

Sadly, Morning Prayer itself, in whatever form, has become something of an endangered species of late in many parishes; thus depriving me the regular chance to stumble once again over the word "unfeignedly" when we got to the part of the General Thanksgiving beseeching God to give us "that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful..."

I also miss singing the *Venite, exultemus Domino*: "O COME, let us sing unto the LORD; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation." The *Benedictus es, Domine*: "BLESSED art thou, O Lord God of our fathers: praised and exalted above all for ever." And the marvelous psalm, *Jubilate Deo*: "O BE joyful in the LORD all ye lands: serve the LORD with gladness, and come before his presence with a song."

As long as I'm in a cranky mood about trends in the frequency of services and changes wrought to the 1928 prayer book, here's one I'm still steamed about after more than 30 years: In my head I can still hear Rev. Hastings literally soothing the congregation mid-way through *The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion*, by saying "Hear what comfortable words our Savior Christ saith unto all who truly turn to him."

There followed quotes of the comforting sort from St. Paul, St. John and St. Matthew, including the wonderful: "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Rev. Hastings put particular emphasis on the word *refresh*, accenting the second syllable in a way I could almost feel a cool washcloth on my forehead.

But in Holy Eucharist Rite I, the introductory words now read: "Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to him." The much speedier Rite II, no doubt useful whenever a longer-than-normal coffee hour is planned, omits this section entirely, leaving those parishioners in need of a cooling refresher bereft of any comfort.

This decades-old minor tweak to the liturgy can be and perhaps should be seen as just a grain of inconsequential sand on the beach. But having spent my entire career focused on the precise use of words, it was an infuriating change for apparently no reason. Perhaps some well-meaning committee felt it was politically incorrect for Episcopalians to be seen as wanting to be comfortable, i.e., elitist. Oh, never mind.

My point is that the words one says or hears in a service of prayer are critically important to the spiritual experience itself. I treasure the emotional impact of the 1928 language I grew up with. Which is why in my own prayers, I increasingly seek comfort in those older words.

Everyone needs an editor. But nobody should edit what you say to God.

*Pinkerton is a former managing editor of Forbes Magazine and former deputy managing editor of The Wall Street Journal. A nonfiction author who practices law in upstate New York, he has also served as a member and chairman of the Editorial Advisory Board of the ENY.*

*A General Thanksgiving.*

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men; [*\* particularly to those who desire now to offer up their praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed unto them.*] We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

\* This may be said when any desire to return thanks for mercies vouchsafed to them.

No more stumbling over "unfeignedly" – The General Thanksgiving from the 1928 Order for Daily Morning Prayer.

*Prayer rescued me. I am not given to imagined auditory stimuli but it happened.*

*I was exhausted, discontent with life. Yet reluctant to petition God. Would He listen? Respond? This chapel time on a retreat was a chance for amends.*

*Unusually, I was able to be quiet and become calm. I played the videotape in my mind of my woes!*

*"Give it to me," a voice whispered.*

*What was that?*

*"Give it to me," this time more emphatically.*

*What is going on here?*

*"GIVE IT TO ME!"*

*You want this mess?*

*"YES!"*

*Christina Rossetti : "What I have I give, give my heart."*

—The Rev. Deacon Ann Douglas



# The Sweet Amen of Peace

The First Annual Diocesan Interfaith Celebration of the Vision of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By the Rev. Stephen C. Holton



## Prayer is the Key.

We began with Native Americans, blessing the four corners of St. Philips, Harlem; and the neighborhood and world around it. A cantor—who had first noticed the Star of David over the altar—led us in the Sh'mah: “the Lord thy God, the Lord is One.” Truly God is One. We clapped in Hebrew. A Buddhist led us into stillness. A Christian sang the Spiritual “Prayer is the Key.” A Muslim called us to pray—to the One God. Truly God is One.

“I’ve been to the mountaintop and I’ve seen the Promised Land” bid us begin our entry into King’s Holy, Promised Land of Beloved Community. Behold, we were there as we lifted every voice and sang, together. Look into your brother’s eyes; look into your sister’s eyes of another faith. See that when we are together we are One, under the One Lord, and we are in that Promised Land.

But not yet.

Not all of us.

In King’s words, as he said in his prophetic vision, it would take a while for all of us to get there.

So many have died along the way; from gun violence and all violence. And as the Imam said in his sermon, quoting King, if one is hurt directly, all are hurt indirectly. Children don’t make guns, but children are killing and being killed with guns. Violence is an infection, and a cursed affection, the curse of Cain that bedevils our culture. It is killing all of us, one way or another. To begin to take action, led by the Archdeacon, we took up an offering for the gun buy-back program at St. Philips and for the continued work of Sandy Relief in our neighborhoods.

Time to turn our heads toward peace. Time to be “warriors of the dream” as Ozzie Davis said some years ago.

The World Peace prayer reads:

*Lead us from death to life,  
from falsehood to truth;  
lead us from despair to hope,  
from fear to trust;  
lead us from hate to love,  
from war to peace.  
Let peace fill our hearts,  
our world, our universe. Amen.*

## Prayer is the key.

We’ll be together again, next April 5, 2014, at 4 p.m. at St. Philip’s, Harlem, with the Star of David over the altar and people of many faiths praying and singing in the pews, hearing the words of Scripture and the words of King. We’ll have an interfaith feast afterwards. It will be the Saturday

nearest Brother Martin’s martyrdom from gun violence, in the 4th week of Lent; a good time to repent, of the violence we do and the violence done on our behalf. Violence is the curse. Prayer is the cure.

See you on the 5th in church. Until then, see you on the streets in our neighborhoods.

*Holton is chair of the diocese’s Episcopal Muslim Relations Committee*

The Sweet Amen of Peace; a Renunciation of Violence was organized by the Rev. Stephen C. Holton, Episcopal Muslim Relations Committee and Ms. Jeannine Otis, Music Director, St. Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery. Cosponsors were: The Ecumenical & Interfaith Commission of the Diocese of New York; The Interfaith Center of New York; The Union of Black Episcopalians.

## COFFEE HOUR By Brad Whitehurst

Plates passed, collection counted, I pump Purl to rid my hands of tainted cash, adjust my tie, my name tag, enter the hall to greet the newcomer I’ve directed from the pews.

Behind the open door he sways, his eyes amazed and roaming. His shock of silver buzz cut blocks a down-spot and blazes halo-hot, his blinding T-shirt tucked, immaculate.

As regulars mingle, ladies dispense brewed Folgers from industrial urns, their Christian calm a balm in Gilead, and proffer trays of half-picked Bundt, one pulverized, thick clump

of which he’s sandwiched in a fistful of napkins. Unmedicated demons who kicked and muttered throughout the service, sassed the Virgin, yawned at the uninspired sermon, have grown subdued.

His cup refilled, but not to overflowing, he hunches on a bench against the wall. So I sit with him to look for Jesus in the unexpected guest, the stranger brother.

“Robert,” he blurts as introduction, shaking my hand with chiropractic force. Undammed, a stream of data overwhelms its banks: he was a cop, worked in the Reagan White House,

his mother a purse-and-gloves Episcopalian, his “hard-ass dad” a Bible-beating Baptist. No word of going through a rough patch, losing it, or nights holed up in city parks.

Odd segues and slurred syllables abound to such a degree that I almost miss his offer to sketch my portrait. Well, yes, of course. Ransacking his backpack, he produces paper,

ballpoint pens, a clipboard easel. Snarls of pleasure resolve to pursed-lip concentration as he looks up, looks down, his manic pen strokes flicking, a self-induced art therapy.

Our mutual regard less guarded, hand and mind more steady than they’ve been, he captures me in pen. For this un-commissioned gift, I offer to pay. “A hundred bucks,” he chuckles.

Shrugging, he adds, “Well, you could buy me a burger.” From my wallet ATM-fresh bills still stick together: two crisp twenties (more than I intended) slip. “Hey, that’s too much.

“He scowls, offended by the tackiness in our charade transaction. I can’t take it. He can’t give it back or afford to scruple, pockets it. (I pray it goes toward food.)

A thought balloon blooms above my blockhead – not a half-bad likeness – where he signs, “Robert Blue (Little Frank), NYPD and White House Artist,” with scrollwork flourishes.

He hands it over with a grimaced smile. “Will you be here next Sunday?” Yes, I reply, unsure of my commitment to the gospel and just how far the big tent might be stretched.

I needn’t fear. That Sunday’s come and gone. Back in my proper pew I find no sign of Robert speaking in tongues, maligning creeds we mouth to hold ourselves together, paying

our tithes to continuity. When I stood to say goodbye and he heaved me to his chest, I couldn’t return the hug that threw me, drew me, dangling his portrait in suspended need.

*Whitehurst is a member of St. James’ Church, Manhattan, where he serves on the vestry.*

## A Conversation with God

By Helen F. Goodkin

**H**ow many times in your life do you think you have prayed the Lord's Prayer ... once a day, twice a day, 365 days a year plus leap days, times how many years? It is a lot. The words roll off our lips, often thoughtlessly. Yet those words, when you do reflect on them, are revolutionary.

Martin Luther was so concerned that the average person "recite[s] the Lord's Prayer without reflecting on it" that he wrote the *Treatise on Prayer for Master Peter the Barber*, cautioning Peter that just as he must concentrate diligently on cutting hair, so he must concentrate on this prayer, giving "careful consideration to all the words and thoughts from beginning to end."

For Luther, the Lord's Prayer is a deep and genuine conversation with God; he expands each petition into a separate collect that explores its meaning in depth. The words will speak to you one way today and another tomorrow, he writes to Master Peter. Sometimes, he admits, he gets so focused on one petition that "I let the other six go. Thus, it is of the greatest importance that the heart free itself."

Let's follow Luther's example and look at the Lord's Prayer phrase by phrase, noting that versions in Matthew and Luke are slightly different, and remembering always that it will speak to us differently on different days.

### Our

Most surprising for me is Jesus' very first word. Not my—Jesus'—father, but *our* father. Everyone is a child of God; *we are all together* as creatures of the almighty; all are created in her image. The invitation is to pray *together, in community*. The church has often forgotten that Christianity is about community—*yet here community is, emblazoned in the first word of our most sacred prayer.*

### Father

While the fatherhood of God was a continuing belief among the Jews, there are few, if any, instances where God is addressed directly as *Father*. In the Psalter, God is never so addressed. Jewish prayer at that time instead began with ornate descriptions of the transcendent being.

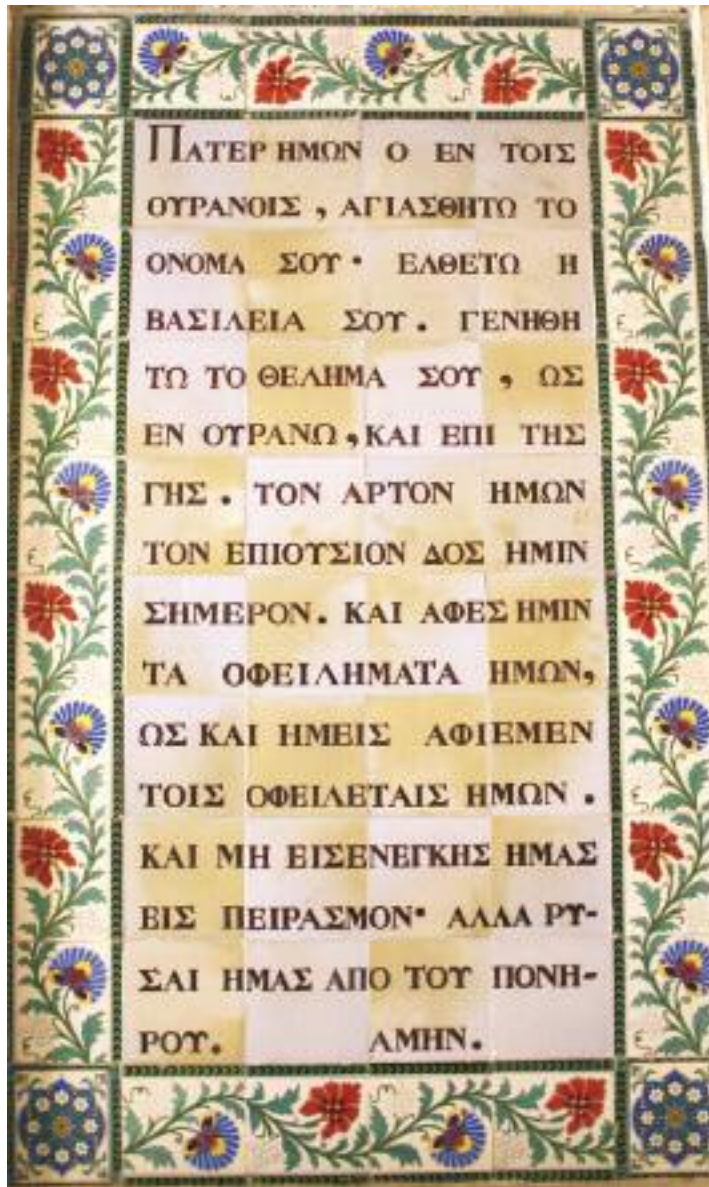
Some scholars propose that Jesus actually used the Aramaic word *Abba*, which comes to us as *pater* in Greek. Elsewhere, Mark has Jesus say *Abba* when he prays in the garden before his crucifixion: "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible..." (14:36). Paul also twice uses *Abba* without translating: "...God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Galatians 4:6, see also Romans 8:15)

Whatever the word, the prayer calls us not to be servants, or slaves, or rebels, but children, God's children, as Jesus is his child. It calls us to the intimacy of a family.

"There is nothing real in us," writes Simone Weil, "which does not come from God our father." To describe God as Father (or mother, and the Bible does that too) is an act of trust on our part that he will behave as a good parent, a faithful protector who *listens to us. We are his from creation and through Baptism, and we call upon him to continue to sustain us.*

### Who art in heaven

Matthew adds *in the heavens*, a typically Jewish form. It designates the otherness—the



The Lord's Prayer in Greek

non-earthliness—of God. While we call him Father to reflect his immanence, *in the heavens* reminds us that she is still our transcendent creator.

Yet in our scientific age, where is heaven? The Prayer Book from the Church in New Zealand says it quite well: "Loving God, *in whom is heaven.*" For me, *in heaven or in the heavens is a state of being that we are called to foster and to help create right here, right now.*

### Hallowed be your name

In keeping with Jewish prayer forms, the Lord's Prayer recognizes the holiness, the sacredness, of God, even as we call him *Abba*, father. Our intimacy with the father is tempered with awe and respect for God.

The word translated as "hallowed" means "to make holy" or "to set apart." To call something holy is to recognize it as something apart from the ordinary. This is not something that we can effect: We pray, with an imperative, simply that God's name *should be hallowed*. The prayer commits us to see that God is hallowed by everything we do, every word we utter, every thought we have. Thus, while the prayer begins with adoration, it points to *action, to right living, to loving the world as God loves us.*

### Your kingdom come

After establishing our relationship with this immanent yet transcendent being, we ask, again with an imperative verb—more forceful in the Greek—for the coming of God's reign. We ask that the perfect realm of the one whom we worship overcome our sinfulness, our lust, our greed, our poverty, our

imperfections. As Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is at hand." (Mark 1:14 Matthew 4:17) We pray, "Let it happen now," but do we have any idea what the coming of God's reign really means? God will be in charge; she will make the rules; we will follow. As Margaret Guenther has said, it won't be a democracy. Are we really ready to surrender our wills and our desires to Almighty God? The end of the world as we know it...no war, no hunger, no illness, no deceit—but what else—power, prestige, possessions—will go away that we might miss? Are we really prepared to find perfect freedom, as the Prayer Book says, in doing God's will for us? The kingdom of God is an embodied relationship with God to set things right in the world. We aren't to just come into God's courts with praise; we are to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, feed the hungry, and help the homeless—*allow the kingdom of God to become operable in the world.*

### Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Now a second phrase is added so that we don't miss the point. We pray, in faith, *to surrender to the rule of God and the mystery of His loving redemption of creation, to the complete and utter Good that God desires to bring to the world.*

.....

*While these first clauses are seemingly about God and God's activity, they are, as you can see, very much about us and our lives. The next four clauses more directly address human needs and how we live those lives. The prayer makes clear that we should not fear to ask for things.*

*But, what do we really need? What is really necessary for the coming of God's reign? When we realize that the center of our being is God, we begin to understand what really matters.*

.....

## Give us this day our daily bread

We say boldly "Give us." Another imperative verb; Jesus wasn't shy, but again it says "our" and "us." This isn't my bread or yours, but bread for the world. It is shared bread. Nor do we ask for a lifetime full of bread, but rather just enough bread that we are not hungry. Just as God sent to the Israelites in the wilderness enough manna for each day, so we pray that we need not worry about bread, but that we have just what we basically need. As Proverbs 30:8 tells us, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food sufficient for me." This is a petition about basic sustenance.

We also understand the spiritual dimension of this bread. Simone Weil, for example, spoke only of supernatural bread. "Christ is our bread," she wrote, and when we ask for it, she believed that we ask for "transcendent energy." Like Manna in the wilderness, the body and blood of Christ, the bread and wine, is on-going sustenance for body and soul, for individual and community. At the very heart of this prayer is *our dependence on God for nourishment, physical and spiritual.*

## And forgive us our debts, (sins) as we also have forgiven our debtors

Forgiveness was a common theme among the Ancient Israelites, who were acutely aware of their sinfulness before God and their underlying sense of individuals' debts to God for what God has done for his people and what humans have failed to do in response. Both of our evangelists include this petition, yet they use two different words to translate whatever the Aramaic word for debt might have been. Matthew's community of predominately Jewish Christians would have understood the word "debts" in the Old Testament sense of financial debts as well as a plea for economic justice. Luke, who probably had a Gentile audience, used a word more familiar to a Greek speaking audience, often translated as "sins." The Church Father Origen, true to both evangelists, calls sins our unpaid debts.

Canadian author Margaret Atwood has written that debt "goes well with the plain, grape-juice drinking United Church" of her youth, while trespasses is "an Anglican word, rustling and frilly that would go well with wine-sipping...and ornate theology." Either way, she continues, "*neither debts nor trespasses [or sins] were desirable things to have.*"

*Forgiveness* and forgiving, on the other hand, break the chain of sin and sinning, whatever we call it. For Cyprian, another early Christian writer, forgiveness is the very core of this prayer; in Christ, we have the assurance that this forgiveness is possible. I am reminded of the woman in Luke 7:47 who washes Jesus' feet and the dinner guests are scandalized. Jesus says the woman has shown great love *because she knows her sins have been forgiven.*

Forgiveness exacts a price on both the forgiver and the forgiven. The forgiver must

*In the Gospel of Luke the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. I find that many people are reluctant to talk about prayer; often it seems as though this hesitancy comes from a fear that they are doing it "wrong." There are many avenues to God's ear and God's heart; a preferred type of prayer may get stale after a while. We each need to figure out what works for us in a particular moment in our lives, whether it be silent prayer, Ignatian Meditation, Lectio Divina, using prayer beads or some other method, and use it as a way to engage with God on a regular basis. Most important is to find a way that seems to fit and to keep it up.*

—Sister Faith Margaret, C.H.S.

*Prayer, for me, is the practice of living from the inside out. With daily attention to my inner life, I am seeking to align the way I show up in the world with my experience of the Spirit in me. It involves centering myself in God, practicing surrender, opening to moments of grace, listening for where Love is calling me, noticing occasions that lead to a false sense of disconnection, and seeking the face of God in others.*

*Prayer is, thus, about grounding or re-grounding myself, each day, in the Source of my vow to incarnate love in the world.*

—Kathy Bozzuti-Jones

seek out reconciliation; the one forgiven must seek self-renewal and resolve to change. The prayer asks that we *go forward in our lives with an open, loving heart, because we have experienced within our souls the profoundly deep emotion of true forgiveness.*

## And lead us not into temptation

Or, "do not bring us into the time of trial." Trial is the same word Luke uses when Jesus is in the desert jousting with the Devil. It also appears when Jesus prays that the disciples will not come into the time of trial as events leading up to the crucifixion unfold. The disciples who heard this prayer would, of course, have been well aware of the testing of Abraham and the trials of Job. As contemporary Biblical Scholar Amy-Jill Levine says, "This is a good Jew saying 'enough already.'"

But, what does it mean for us? We are praying here for grace and providential care during times of trial—for a faith that sustains us. As we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews (2.18) "because he (Jesus) was tempted he is able to help those who are being tested." And we remember that even when we succumb to great temptation or are caught in great trouble, great despair, great grief, God reaches out to call us back. We have only to remember Peter's denying Christ three times to realize that *God's mercy will sustain and restore us.*

## Deliver us from evil

Evil exists, as the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff tells us, because there is always something to tempt us, to cause us to disobey the voice of God. Sin expands exponentially from a little sin here and a little sin there, until bigger and bigger evil becomes institutionalized within a culture. We as nations, societies, churches, do what we want, rather than what God wants. We sin against our neighbor, the poor, the powerless, our environment. But Boff and other Latin American theologians teach that we must build the kingdom of God in opposition to the kingdom of this world. We must make Satan fall "like lightning" from the sky, as Luke (10:18) writes.

This juxtaposition of good and evil begins in the early narrative of Jesus' life on earth. King Herod lusts for power so intensely that he murders all the Jewish male children to protect himself and his rule from new born baby. The kingdom of Man versus the Kingdom of God begins the very narrative of Jesus' life on earth.

Our role, it seems to me, in helping to build the kingdom is modeled on the babe that the wise men worshipped. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we recognize God's awesome power and ask that we allow it to work within us to bring God's justice to the human community, to ensure that all creation has bread for the journey, that we forgive those around us because we know that we ourselves have been forgiven, and that we, and all the world, may be delivered into the divine fellowship of kinship with God. "Our prayer is not that we may come into the Kingdom," Evelyn Underhill writes, "for this we cannot do in our own strength. *It is that the Kingdom, the Wholly Other, may come to us, and become operative within our order.*"

*Goodkin is on the vestry of the Church of the Epiphany, Manhattan and regularly leads Bible Stories in the New York area.*

*This article is a summary of a program initially created for the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, meeting at Berkeley Divinity School, November 2012.*

## Programs for Spiritual Growth

By the Rev. Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF

“... to equip the saints for the work of ministry.” *Ephesians 4:12*

**P**rayer, worship, music and the arts, along with scripture and outreach have been at the core of Christian community and mission from the beginning of the



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Church. These areas have been, and continue to be, at the core of my life and ministry. Trained as an educator and musician, I strive to use those God-given gifts to advance God's work by encouraging and providing resources for the spiritual life of the Church.

Christian formation has been the focus of my work. I use the term “Christian formation” rather than “Christian education” because I believe it is a broader term, which encompasses both the process of gaining knowledge *about Christian faith*, as well as a process *to form and transform one to a life of faith in Christ*. Both processes are needed to be a faithful and effective Christian. Having served the Church for more than thirty years as a parish priest, where I certainly devoted time and effort toward Christian formation, the primary focus of my ministry now is to provide resources for Christian formation to the Church at large through *Roots & Branches: Programs for Spiritual Growth*.

Roots & Branches exists to support dioceses, parishes, and other religious institutions in their efforts to provide programs and experiences to foster spiritual growth and mission. Roots & Branches offers customized programs to address the specific needs of a parish, diocese, or other religious community, as well as an array of programs including lay ministry development events, youth and young adult events, music and worship workshops and consultations to enhance worship, as well as programs to encourage outreach into the community.

The following are examples of programs offered by Roots & Branches.

*My Neighbor: A Gift of God*, a program created in response to the horrific events of 9/11, and to the reality of my experience having been born into an interfaith home – Christian and Muslim, wrestles with the challenge to be in positive life-giving relationship with those who are different from us. Increasingly, we are being challenged to relate to “the other,” of another culture, race, ethnicity, or religion. *My Neighbor* explores principles of Christian spirituality that call us to work towards constructive, positive relationship with “the other,” and to discover in what ways “the other” may exhibit something of the nature of God, even though being different from ourselves. Furthermore, *My Neighbor* offers ways to be faithful to God, and yet appreciative of those who practice a different religion. *My Neighbor*, encouraging Christians to reach out to “the other” in the spirit of Christ-like



The author with a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point following a presentation on interfaith cooperation.  
Photo: the Rev. Masud Ibn Syedullah

welcome and hospitality, has been offered and enthusiastically received in parishes, dioceses, and retreat centers in this country and abroad, broadening a sense of mission to those and with those who differ from ourselves culturally, ethnically, theologically, and in other ways.

**Youth and Young Adult Programs** include a spiritual pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Community of Taizé, France where, each year, thousands of youth and young adults gather from around the world for a weeklong retreat led by the Brothers of the Taizé Community. There they share the riches of Christian scripture, prayer, and community life in an ecumenical and international setting with other youth and young adults who are seeking to support their life of faith in the midst of the challenges and pulls of contemporary life. The Brothers of Taizé have also begun to offer similar gatherings for youth and young adults here in the USA and Canada, making these experiences more accessible. I have led many such pilgrimages with youth and young adults, both to France and here in the USA, including some from the Diocese of New York. All have been inspired and encouraged to grow spiritually as a result of their experience there.

**Liturgy and Meditation Workshops** are also offered by Roots & Branches to acquaint participants with fresh and inspiring ways to engage worship, personal prayer, and meditation. These workshops are particularly beneficial to congregations looking for ways to reach out and to encourage the participation of young adults, and those not used to traditional liturgical worship. Although we as Anglicans have a rich liturgical tradition, we sometimes become solidified in ways that no longer communicate the life and spirit of worship that we desire people to experience. Sometimes we are so concerned about the detail of liturgy that we forget that it is really about creating an environment where people may more easily have a spiritual encounter with God. These workshops, designed for clergy, choir masters, organists, choir members, and all others interested in congregational worship, have been acclaimed as some of the most inspiring liturgy workshops participants have ever experienced.

The programs described here are but a sample of those offered by Roots & Branches. Others include traditional Quiet Days, Congregational Leadership Workshops, interfaith study tours, and spiritual direction, to name a few. For more information please go to [www.rootsandbranchesprograms.org](http://www.rootsandbranchesprograms.org).

*Syedullah is the Director of Roots & Branches and a priest in the diocese.*

# Our Environmental Ministry: Bringing it Home

By the Rev. Canon Jeff Golliber, Phd.

People of faith have been concerned about the environment for a long time. Yet the word “environment” has always seemed a little awkward—and for good reasons. We habitually give all kinds of misleading meanings to words that shape how we think, feel, and act. This is why in the 1970s the World Council of Churches objected to using the words “the environment” in policy-making at the UN. It wasn’t that the WCC was against the environment. Rather, it wanted to identify the underlying issues and address them openly. Its members knew that the word suggests something that is both separate from us (a sense of scenery or landscape), from God (it is God’s creation, after all), and seemingly distant from actual communities, matters of economic and racial justice, and the life of our souls.

Today—one hopes—we all know better.

Also, back then, the church was singled out by some quarters of society as especially complicit in environmental degradation—we had, they said, neglected to uphold and teach the basic values of respect for the environment. There was some truth in that, I suppose. But perhaps those accusations were also made by people trying to claim the moral high ground for themselves by saying, “the problem is not us—it’s them.” What I learned first-hand, nearly a quarter century ago, was that many people, lay and ordained, in our diocese and in others, had been deeply engaged with this ministry for years, as had their predecessors—in addition to St. Francis of Assisi. And when I spoke with people doing mission work in southern Appalachia, where I was raised, and Central America, where I worked as an anthropologist, they were disheartened to discover that many environmentalists back then seemed to be unaware of what “water rights” and “land reform” really involved.

Today—one hopes—we all know better.

I don’t want to quibble about words. It’s clear that the “environment” represents a perennial set of problems that, in our day, have spiraled out of control. The critical point is that it’s time now to renew our vocations in the church so we can bring this ministry home—so we can do what needs to be done now, as the church.

At its heart, the Episcopal tradition is rooted in the sacraments, and our sacramental experience on Sunday mornings is deeply personal. We need to ask ourselves some basic questions about that: how do environmental issues like water, food, and energy/climate change relate to our sacramental life? Think of the unrealized or unspoken connections between water and Holy Baptism, food and Holy Eucharist, and the energy we use in our sacred places of worship. Surely water, food, and energy in our sacramental life are more than “externalities”—secondary considerations that have no direct bearing on the bottom line, which is how environmental “costs” are routinely regarded by mainstream economists?

Questions like these are not ones we would look up in a book (or online) or seek expert advice to answer—although we should in the case of energy use. Ultimately, they call out a prayerful response from the soul. This requires personal reflection, group discussion, discernment, and action. That’s what the Diocesan Committee on the Environment wants us to do. We’ve already organized two congregational events relating to energy use and sacred space. We’ll continue that work, while taking up water and food in the months ahead. Do we believe the Holy Spirit is trying—“groaning,” according to St. Paul – to tell us something through the sacraments about our life together in heaven and on earth? Of course we do. We’re Episcopalians. We’re people of faith.

*Golliber is chairperson of the Diocesan Committee on the Environment and vicar of St. John’s Memorial Church, Ellenville.*



One of the 23 baptisms at Trinity Wall Street this Pentecost.

Photo: Leo Sorel

## St. Andrew's Helps Feed Fallsburg

By Peggy Friedman



Fallsburg Food Pantry.

Photo: St. Andrew's Church

**A** couple of times a month I work in my church's food pantry. I try to explain to my friends why there is a growing need for such services. Is it because "the poor are always with us"? Is it an unanswerable question or is it a measure of the growing income inequality in the United States?

St. Andrew's Mission is in South Fallsburg, a small, rural, poor Catskill village, where many of its citizens live a hard-scrabble life. The church was built in 1915 by members of the congregation and some of the same families serve the community today through our outreach activities. Our priest, Mother Ninon Hutchinson, fully supports our work, which includes feeding approximately 1,395 households yearly.

I take my place in the basement kitchen of the church and begin taking the meats out of the freezer. I have one of the easier jobs in the food pantry, bagging and distributing hot dogs, ground turkey and occasionally, if we get an extra grant, the luxury of ground beef. Most welcome are the generous donations of turkeys and hams around the holidays.

We look at the clock. Four other volunteers stand in the big room ready to sign

in our clients, hand them bags pre-packed according to the number of members of each household. Each bag is filled with cereal, canned fruits, vegetables, tuna fish, pasta, tomato sauce or gravy, peanut butter & jelly and packaged mac and cheese, a beloved favorite of our clients. There is a client-choice table usually presided over by Cynthia Johnston, head honcho of the operation and treasurer of St. Andrew's. On this table are all kinds of necessities from soap and toilet paper to bread, fresh fruit, veggies and cookies. In the wintertime, we offer gently used coats and jackets.

Our clients are a diverse lot: remnants of old farming families, workers whose take-home pay puts them below the poverty level, people with chronic illnesses who find it hard to stand and wait in line, young married couples who are struggling to provide for their babies, and the occasional person who staggers in, obviously under the influence of wine, but still needing food. Our only criteria are residence (Town of Fallsburg) and family income.

Many we greet by name, and the two hours go quickly. Occasionally we have a volunteer/client, and one client gives us \$10 when she has it. She wants to give back, to participate. Major funding comes from our yearly NY State Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) grant administered through the Regional Food Bank of NY and United Way of Sullivan County. It is never quite enough.

We are known as "the little church with the big heart". But, some ask, how do we manage to do so much—operate a food pantry 12 months of the year, regular hours, second and fourth Fridays, and keep it running with a high level of customer satisfaction? I joke with the clients when I am embarrassed at their excessive gratitude, "If you didn't come, we would have to go out of business. Thank you for coming!"

The secret is, in part, we are not just 12 members—although "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them"—but part of the larger community of the Town of Fallsburg. We are also the Lion's Club, Wizard Electric, Steingart Printing, M&B Food Processing, and New Hope Community plus many, many volunteers and donors who are not church members, who are Protestants of other sects, Catholics, Jews, and Deists. The question we ask, is "Do you have a couple of hours on Friday to spare to help distribute food to the poor?" I am always surprised how many people say "Yes!"

*Friedman is a member of St. Andrew's, South Fallsburg.*

# Productive Partnership in Yonkers: Iglesia San Andres and Sarah Lawrence College

By Rachel Kraun

Over the past seven years in Yonkers, Iglesia San Andres and nearby Sarah Lawrence College have developed a strong partnership—and their collaboration and deepening relationships have benefitted Sarah Lawrence students, faculty and staff and San Andres families and staff alike. Each individual in the partnership has been touched by meeting new people, seeing new possibilities, engaging in struggles together, and learning more both about him/herself and about others. Our work together—whether through tutoring, enrichment programs, field trips, workshops, summer programs, or celebrations—has created important and sustaining connections for everyone involved.

An integral part of this partnership has been the Rev. Yamily Bass Choate's ministry and teaching. She has attended and spoken at many Sarah Lawrence events—including delivering the keynote address at this year's Community Celebration, a night dedicated to commending the wonderful partnerships between Sarah Lawrence and the Yonkers community. Ask any student on campus and you'll hear that Bass Choate's words are always inspirational. Through her openness to partnering with Sarah Lawrence students and professors she has helped teach many important lessons about learning and working together.

The Iglesia Scholars Enrichment Program, now in its third year, is central to the partnership. Every Saturday of each semester, Sarah Lawrence student-facilitators ("Iglesia Scholars") create and implement a series of educational and arts-based activities for a group of elementary-aged San Andres children. These activities are grounded in common weekly themes, such as "theater" or "ancient history," and serve to guide the children in exercising their creative talents and critical thinking skills. Each semester, Iglesia Scholars takes the children on a field trip to places such as the Bronx Botanical Garden or the Sony Wonder Technology Laboratory in Manhattan to further enrich and diversify their learning experiences. Through Iglesia Scholars, strong and continuous connections are fostered between Sarah Lawrence students and San Andres children.

In another program, students from Sarah Lawrence Service Learning courses are partnered with children in the San Andres after school program. Every week, Sarah Lawrence students provide homework help for the children and encourage them in small group work. Children accomplish their homework challenges, and the relationships that develop between Sarah Lawrence students and the children mean that everyone learns from one another, as the students gain important practical experiences to complement their coursework, explore the connections between theory and practice, and reflect on their own development and assumptions. In the 2012-2013 school year, these Service Learning courses expanded to include a partnership between San Andres and students from Bronxville High School. This partnership strengthened and broadened the ties between the Yonkers and Bronxville communities as well. Like the students from Sarah Lawrence, the high school students help support the after-school program by tutoring the elementary age children and by building relationships with children and staff.

In addition to these other opportunities, many events occurring on the Sarah



San Andres children at the Sarah Lawrence Campus.

Photo: Quyen Nguyen, Sarah Lawrence College



San Andres children and Sarah Lawrence Students join hands.

Photo: Quyen Nguyen, Sarah Lawrence College

Lawrence campus are open to members of the San Andres community. For example, during the summer, San Andres's camp visits the campus once a week to engage in fun-filled activities for the children and counselors (soccer, tie-dye, water balloons, art activities, etc). Children in the San Andres community are also invited to attend Sarah Lawrence's annual Mayfair Carnival, which offers children and families a full day of games, crafts, and prizes. Staff members attend workshops for tutors, workshops on child development, and attend day and week-long institutes on education. Through all of these avenues, the ties between San Andres and Sarah Lawrence continue to deepen, and a stronger partnership continues to develop. Everyone benefits with more opportunities for mutual learning and growth. This connection is one for which everyone is truly grateful.

*Kraun is a student at Sarah Lawrence College.*

# The Work of the Reparations Committee

By Gary Ryan

**N**ew York is our small part of God's green earth. The Episcopal Church in our diocese is the faith community that binds us, though we be the most disparate of lots.

This much is true for all of us.

But how did we get here? And is this Church now, and has this Church been, equally kind and gracious to all her children?

Is it true, as some have claimed, that if indeed we are now prosperous, it is partly or largely due to our Church's use of slave labor when that was allowed—and then to its later support of slave labor elsewhere when it became illegal here, through financial institutions and instruments, and through other kinds of direct and tacit aid and support? And what of slavery's aftermath? How are we as a people affected even now by our past? Have our thought-patterns really changed?

If part of the body of Christ has substantiated claims that it has been mistreated or forgotten, it would not be a first. In the earliest Christian Church in and around Jerusalem, Greek-speaking Jewish converts complained that they were being treated as “second class citizens” by earlier Hebrew-speaking ones. The Apostles met to discuss the matter, determined that the claims had substance, and appointed the first seven deacons, charging them with making sure this kind of mistreatment did not reoccur.

The 2006 General Convention resolved that the Episcopal Church's history with slavery warranted closer examination, and admonished the dioceses to explore the precise nature of their individual histories with slavery. That same year, Bishop Sisk appointed a cross-section of lay and clergy, black, white, Asian, and Latinas to be members of the Reparations Committee, with Dr. Nell Braxton Gibson as chair.

Since then, the Reparations Committee has engaged in a dialogue amongst our-

selves, in various churches, with our present and previous bishop, with Annual Convention, and with General Convention. At no time has this been an easy discussion, and the matter at hand has never been easy to resolve. But we have come a long way: we have learned over time to listen to each other better and speak more freely about difficult matters; and we have encouraged others in the diocese to do the same via workshops, “town meetings,” and reports to various groupings of the body.

Our work continues. We still struggle with where all this is headed. Is a “truth and reconciliation” commission in order (as in post-apartheid South Africa)? Is some sort of apology by our diocese or by General Convention in order? How does one repair wrongs that were committed before one's lifetime? What wrongs persist today, in plain sight, that we have done nothing to correct? How are we, as a Church, being asked to be prophetic NOW upon the matter of racial justice?

What we do know is that our future work must involve more partnering with individual churches and with consortiums of churches; that it must involve more young people; and that it is—yes—about historical slavery and its aftermath, but also about the innate sentiment that causes us to disregard or even maltreat others who are different.

What is your church's history? What role did it play in ALL the social upheavals of our shared past? Was it prophetic then? Is it prophetic now?

We do need your help. We need to hear your church's story. Would you share it with us?

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*Ryan is a member of the diocese's Reparations Committee and of St. Peter's Church, Manhattan.*

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### MY BRIGHT ABYSS: MEDITATION OF A MODERN BELIEVER

BY CHRISTIAN WIMAN

FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX. 182 PAGES.

Reviewed by Robert Pennoyer

Does the decay of belief among educated people in the West precede the decay of language used to define and explore belief, or do we find the fire of belief fading in us only because the words are sodden with overuse and imprecision, and will not burn?" Christian Wiman poses this question in *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*, a book written for those "frustrated with the language and forms of contemporary American religion" but who "nevertheless feel that burn of being, . . . that insistent, persistent gravity of the ghost called God."

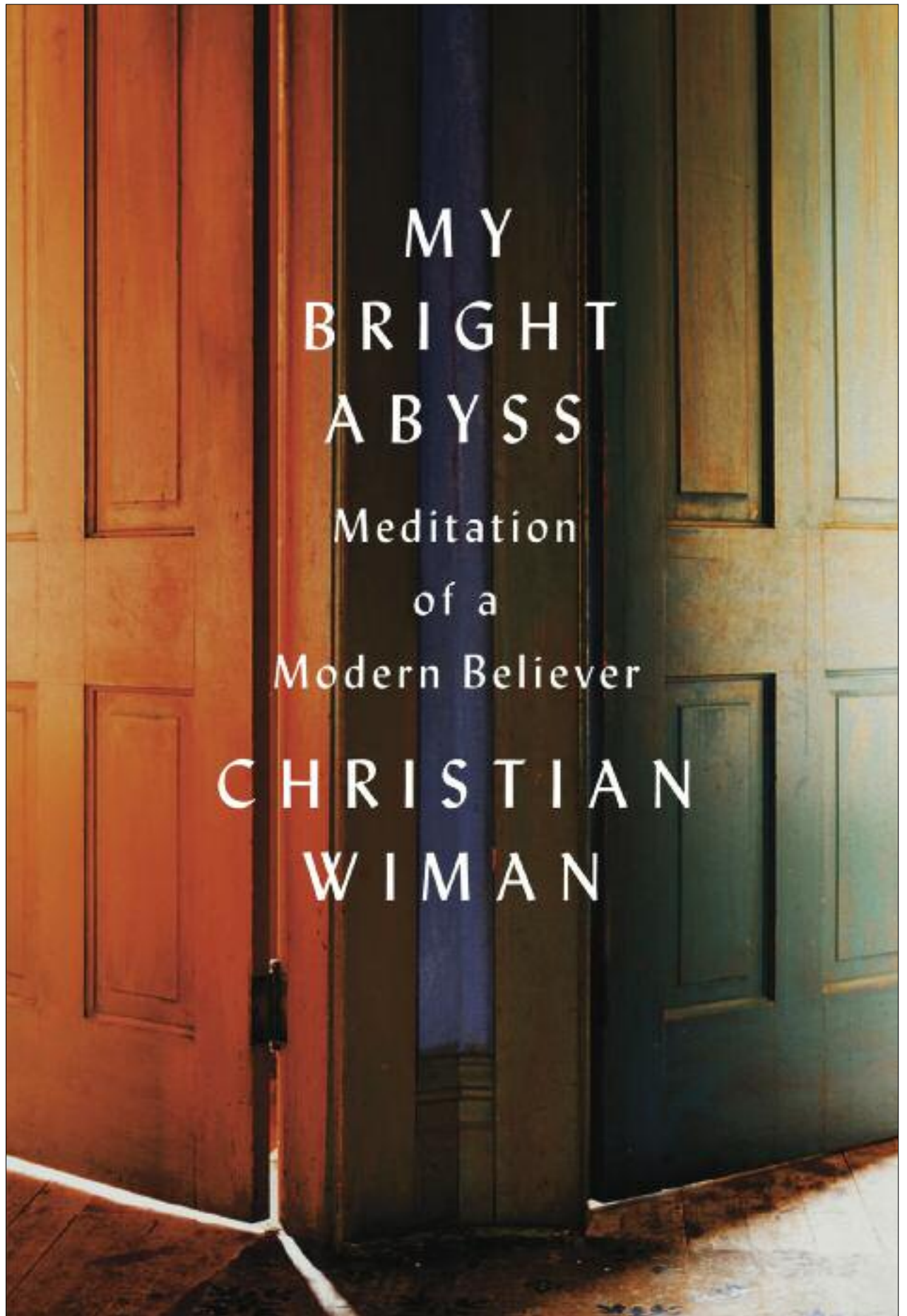
Many, and perhaps most of us, find it easier to admit belief than to describe it. We can recite the creeds of our church, but individual faith depends upon our own vibrant, ever-changing experiences of the numinous. No fourth century committee could possibly invent or agree upon language that is (or was) both personal and flexible enough to anticipate our varied visions of God. We need what Wiman calls "a poetics of belief, a language capacious enough to include a mystery that, ultimately, defeats it, and sufficiently intimate and inclusive to serve not only as an individual expression but as a communal need." Finding such language might be impossible, but in this new book the search for it is honest, lucid, and inspiring.

A poet and the outgoing editor of *Poetry* magazine, Wiman was diagnosed with a rare and painful form of cancer seven years ago. He wrote *My Bright Abyss* within that stretch of years, finishing it after a successful bone marrow transplant restored his health, at least temporarily. Drawing on a mix of personal narrative and poetry (his own and others'), Wiman meditates on his beliefs and on how to express awareness of grace—both in life and in the face of death.

"The soul in extremity craves language," he writes, "and even more than that, craves within language some fixed point of perception, some articulation of soul and circumstance that neither wavers nor decays, some—how the modern mind pretzels itself trying not to speak this one word—truth." Such truth often resists capture or classification. Notice how the syntax of the sentence above mirrors its content, as the object of the soul's craving is swapped out and modified in halting phrases until the sentence finally arrives at "truth." (One of the many joys of reading *My Bright Abyss* is watching a poet apply his skill to prose.)

The truth for which Wiman searches, both in his life and in his language, won't be confused for dogma. He writes, "The minute any human or human institution arrogates to itself a singular knowledge of God, there comes into that knowledge a kind of strychnine pride, and it is as if the most animated and vital creature were instantaneously transformed into a corpse." He goes on: "Truth inheres not in doctrine itself, but in the spirit with which it is engaged, for the spirit of God is always seeking and creating new forms."

Wiman is not just arguing against certitude, he is mak-



ing a case for innocence and wonder. He writes, "To be innocent is to retain that space in your heart that once heard a still, small voice saying not your name so much as your nature, and the wherewithal to say again and forever your wordless but lucid, your untriumphant but absolute, yes. You must protect this space so that it can protect you."

Reading *My Bright Abyss*, I found myself scribbling in the margin, noting again and again instances where Wiman found phrases for beliefs and feelings I've struggled to express with any precision. Such is often the reward of reading poetry, but in this case recognizing language that resonates with the truth of experience offers

Wiman's readers an implicit challenge: will you delve into the vocabulary of your own faith? Those who try will surely come to share Wiman's hope that "the inadequacies of the words you use will be transcended by the faith with which you use them."

Wiman's faith shines through his words in *My Bright Abyss*, along with ample doses of courage and skill. He has written a remarkable book of poignant beauty, humility, and wisdom—one well worth reading.

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*Pennoyer is a member of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, Manhattan, a member of ENY's advisory board and a Postulant for the Priesthood.*

# Views and Reviews

## ARTS AND LITERATURE

### EXHIBITION REVIEW: ILLUMINATING FAITH: THE EUCHARIST IN MEDIEVAL LIFE AND FAITH

THE MORGAN LIBRARY  
29 E 36TH ST, NEW YORK  
THROUGH 2 SEPTEMBER 2013

Reviewed by Pamela A. Lewis

Imagine yourself at Mass on a Sunday morning in the year 1485. The service takes place in a beautiful chapel, its pink and blue Corinthian columns topped by gold acanthus leaves. You and other congregants stand behind a green curtain that separates you from the clergy and acolytes. At the climactic moment, the celebrant raises the sacred host high above his head. The eyes of the clergy and acolytes look up, their gaze fixed on the small white disc. All of you behind the green partition crane your necks or stand on tiptoe to catch a glimpse of the elevated host. Unless it is Easter Day, that is the closest you and the others behind the curtain will get to the consecrated wafer; but to have witnessed the Elevation of the Eucharist is in itself a blessed substitute.

This scene is splendidly depicted in the “*Elevation of the Eucharist*” from the Della Rovere Missal (Rome, 1485), which is one of over sixty masterpieces from across Western Europe that comprise *Illuminating Faith*. The delicate execution and jewel tones do not diminish the awe-imbued moment of the Elevation—a ritual introduced after the Fourth Lateran Council had codified Transubstantiation in 1215, and had decreed that everyone should receive Communion at least once a year.

*Illuminating Faith* explores how the mysterious power wielded by (in the words of medieval scholar Miri Rubin) a “small, fragile wheaten disc” became the center of a religious system defined and expressed by very distinctive rituals. Organized around six thematic sections and displayed within four rooms, the exhibition features a variety of Eucharistic objects such as chalices, ciboria, a pax, and an altar card; included as well are two monstrances for displaying the communion wafers. In the center of the space is a replica of a rood screen, the pierced wooden enclosure that separated the clergy from the congregation in some medieval churches.

While the Della Rovere Missal offers one of the most compelling representations of the institution of the Eucharist, other objects also address this theme. In one scene from *Miniatures of the Life of Christ* (France, late 12th century), the Last Supper is a Mass, where the apostles look closely at Christ as he elevates the host in one hand and a chalice in the other. A scene of the Israelites gathering manna in the desert, depicted in a page from the *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, is presented as prefiguring the Eucharist and as an example of typology—the theological study of “types” (people, events, or things from the Old Testament interpreted by medieval theologians as foreshadowing or prefiguring those elements in the New Testament). The page is framed by several biblical quotations explaining the typological relationship, including “*This is my body, which I have given for you.*”

The exhibition also highlights the Feast of Corpus Christi, which was first established in 1246 in the Belgian town of Liège. The Feast had its own Mass, special indulgences, mystery plays, and elaborate processions. For the laity, who during the rest of the year were afforded only a fleeting glance of the elevated host, the week-long celebration provided many opportunities to spend hours in devotion and worship of the exposed sacred object. This extraordinary pageant is immortalized in a sheet from Giulio Clovio’s *Farnese Hours* (Rome, 1546), a perfect marriage of art and object of personal devotion that underscores the undeniable fervor inspired by the Eucharist. The festal procession of cardinals, attendants, and flower-bearing *putti* (on a scale that would have inspired Cecil B. DeMille) is shown winding its way into Old St. Peter’s Basilica. At the center is Pope Paul III, carried on a litter, and holding a monstrance bearing the sacred host.

Images of bleeding hosts and of Christ being squeezed in winepresses to shed his sacred blood reveal the strange and dark sides of medieval beliefs surrounding the Eucharist. Christians struggled with the contradiction between the host’s unassuming appearance and the audacious claims made for it. As bleeding hosts were often presented as the most convincing proof of the True Presence in the Eucharist, wafers that miraculously bled proliferated during the Middle Ages. On view is what may be the last known image of the most famous of these: the Sacred Bleeding Host of Dijon. Visually arresting for its embossed image of Christ flanked by the instruments of his Passion, this host—which bled at the appropriate places on his body—was the center of a 350-year cult that flourished well into the 18th century. Traditional belief held that the wafer bled due to Jewish desecration. Not so: it was a fungus.

Through beautiful and unique works elegantly displayed, and distinguished by thorough scholarship, *Illuminating Faith* tells a fascinating story of how and why one small object—the host—rose in stature. It is a feast for the eyes. The admission price includes a complimentary audio guide (recommended for a show of this scope) and an online lecture, both narrated by the exhibition curator Roger Wieck.

Lewis is a member of St. Thomas Church, Manhattan.



Elevation of the Eucharist, from the “Della Rovere Missal,” Rome, ca. 1485–90  
Illuminated by the Master of the della Rovere Missals (Jacopo Ravaldi?) for Cardinal Domenico della Rovere The Morgan Library & Museum, New York. Photo: Graham S. Haber.

### TEN PRAYERS YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT: HOW TO TALK TO GOD ABOUT ANYTHING.

BY RICK HAMLIN.  
GUIDEPOSTS, 246 PAGES.

Reviewed by Laura Saunders

The Christian writer Rick Hamlin takes these Biblical charges to heart, and his new book will delight and instruct readers in the mystery of prayer. Hamlin, the executive editor of Guideposts magazine for more than two decades, has long focused on this subject both in his life and writing: his 1997 memoir, *Finding God on the “A” Train*, was subtitled: *A Journey into Prayer*.

This work offers the fruit of Hamlin’s explorations in a way that’s engaging and readable but never simplistic. Here, for example, are its opening sentences:

“To try to pray is to pray. You can’t fail at it. Nobody can. Open your heart, open your mouth, say something, say nothing. . . It’s the only human endeavor I can think of where trying is doing.”

These are welcoming words, but they are also evidence of the orthodox Christian idea undergirding this book: It’s that God’s grace does not in any way depend on human merits and cannot be earned. Prayer is not a way to win favor with God, but instead a way for our relationship with

**WHEN GOD TALKS BACK:  
UNDERSTANDING THE AMERICAN  
EVANGELICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

**BY TANYA M. LUHRMAN  
ALFRED A. KNOPF, 464 PAGES.**

*Reviewed by Anne Nelson*

Every once in a while, a book comes along that utterly reorients your thinking on seemingly familiar questions. *When God Talks Back* is such a book. The author, psychological anthropologist Tanya M. Luhrman, immerses herself in an evangelical community for years, questioning, observing, and tracking its spiritual practices.

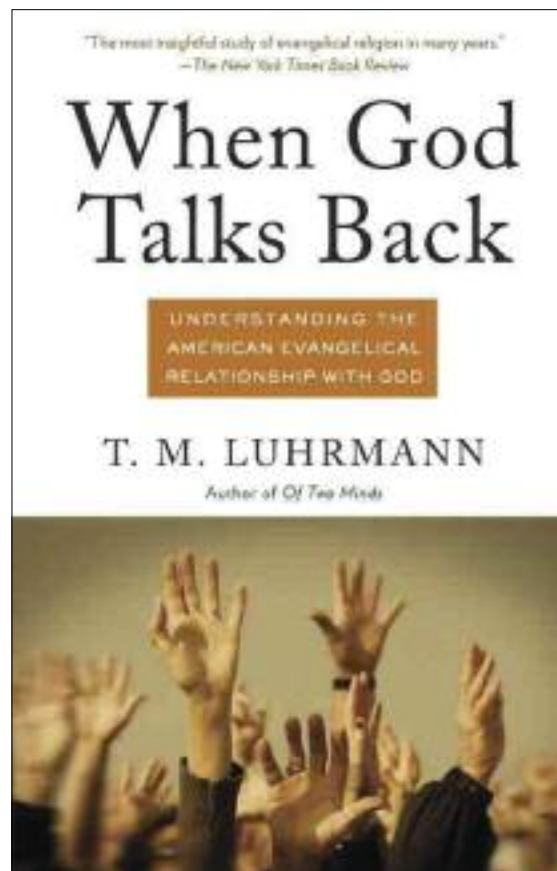
But her book far transcends her research. It is a learned and searching exploration of the questions of how religion affects human beings—mostly for better, sometimes for worse. Luhrman invites us into her study as a warm, often humorous, and always deeply sympathetic guide. It is to her credit that this terrain, which starts out seeming exotic and remote, becomes familiar and universal by journey's end.

Luhrman examines American evangelical Christianity through a case study of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, a denomination founded in California in the 1970s. From the start, she offers a corrective of our oft-blinkered notion of the American evangelical movement. The Vineyard Fellowship, for example, combined older American evangelism with the evolution of the “Jesus Freaks” of the 1960s, which Luhrman considers an under-studied cultural current of our time. She distinguishes between fundamentalism, and its emphasis on traditional practice and readings of sacred texts, and the evangelical movement, which stresses a personal relationship with God. Her Chicago congregation is racially, economically, and politically mixed, contradict-

ing the stereotype of Southern Tea Party homogeneity.

Luhrman notes that “membership in charismatic congregations has exploded since the 1960s,” over the same period that the memberships of mainline Protestant denominations have been in sharp decline—including the Episcopal Church, down 58 per cent.

What explains the appeal of the evangelicals? Luhrman points to a Newsweek study that found that 40 per cent of Americans said their main interest in religion was “to forge a personal relationship with God.” The same forces that have undermined traditional religious institutions—scientific rationalism, materialism, social isolation—have benefited the evangelical movement. Luhrman shows us the power of its social ties, through highly personalized interactions among members and clergy, and tight-knit prayer groups. She also portrays a society in which it is “normal” (and beyond that, admired) to have a one-on-one relationship with God (less “I/Thou,” she reports, than “you/me”). These relationships frequently involve conversations, sometimes “in one’s head” and sometimes as a perceived physical presence. Luhrman points out that many of the fellowship members derive the same kind of benefits from the church that secular Americans seek from psychother-



apy.

Although Luhrman writes with the quiet authority of a social scientist, she reveals the soul of a seeker. Even when she describes practices she finds odd, she avoids being judgmental, and she always—compassionately—considers the underlying human needs. It is this quality that propels the book to another level. Luhrman asks how evangelical practices counter loneliness and alienation, and how the cognitive process of talking to God may relate to schizophrenia or creativity—not because she’s scoring political points, but because she really wants to know. Embedded in this book is her own spiritual quest, one that leads to un-

expected places.

My only criticism of the book is the misleading nature of the title and the framing of the subject. American evangelical Christianity is merely the starting point. In this beautifully written work, Luhrman is seeking and finding clues to the nature of all spirituality, which, she compellingly argues, lies at the very heart of the human experience.

*Nelson is a member of the Church of St. Ignatius of Antioch and serves on the Episcopal New Yorker editorial advisory board.*

God to develop, the open door to His love at work in human lives.

Drawing on current culture, Hamlin has organized his book as a list, with ten categories of prayers and an extended consideration of each. Drawing on his experience at Guideposts, the chapters abound with anecdotes bearing witness to prayer’s meaning in the lives of a wide range of people. Some of the names are familiar—Carol Burnett, C. S. Lewis, Marcia Gay Harden, Robin Roberts, Thomas Merton—while others are not. A few appear as bare initials.

Hamlin’s anecdotes often have the tang of reality, which is a testament both to his open-eyed faith and his masterly writing. Clearly he knows life—and the Bible—too well to present prayer as a magic carpet ride out of human misery. This author is just as likely to include stories about Lou Gehrig’s disease, entrenched alcoholism, and the senseless murder of children as he is about miraculous healing.

Gracefully woven into the book are Hamlin’s own experiences of prayer. The most memorable is of his father, whom

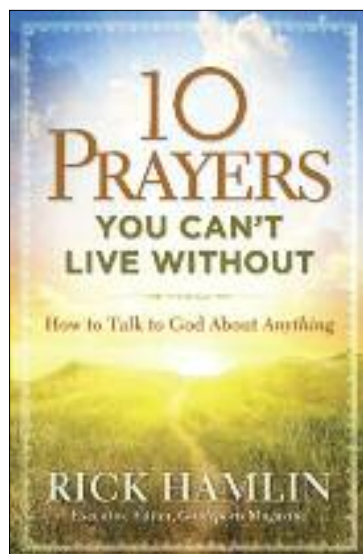
he calls “a modern-day Psalmist in a button-down shirt and bowtie.”

As his son recalls, the elder Hamlin’s dinner blessings were stream-of-consciousness petitions that “prayed us through the 1960s and 1970s,” from the turmoil of the Vietnam War, the stock market’s rise and fall, Watergate, and Cambodia to matters close to home, including his daughter’s drill team performance, his son’s piano recital, or interruptions from phone calls and barking dogs:

“Thank you for our daughter’s popularity. We know that whoever is calling her will call back. God, be with our dog Andy. Help him to protect us.”

Although the father could be a self-absorbed man who drank too much—again, Hamlin doesn’t whitewash—his son remembers the dinnertime prayers as genuine blessings that demonstrated one of many ways of talking to God.

Christians, who always need to learn more about prayer, can be thankful for this book. Episcopal New Yorkers can also be proud that Rick Hamlin is one of “ours,” an active member of St. Michael’s on the Upper West Side for



**THE TOP TEN**

- 1. PRAY AT MEALTIME:**  
“Bless this food to our use, and us to thy service . . .”
- 2. PRAYER AS CONVERSATION**  
“Hi, God . . .”
- 3. PRAY FOR OTHERS:**  
“Be with those I love and the ones they love. . .”
- 4. PRAY THE LORD’S PRAYER:**  
“Our Father, who art in heaven. . .”
- 5. PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS:**  
“I blew it, God . . .”
- 6. PRAY THROUGH A CRISIS:**  
“Nooooooooo! . . .”
- 7. SING YOUR PRAYER:**  
“Alleluia . . .”
- 8. A CLASSIC PRAYER TO FOCUS YOUR THOUGHTS:**  
“Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner . . .”
- 9. PRAY IN THANKSGIVING AT ALL TIMES:**  
“Thank you, God.”
- 10. PRAY YES:**  
“Yes, and . . .”

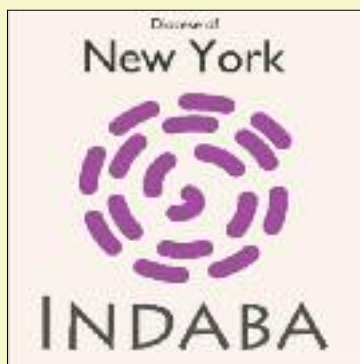
more than three decades.

He is available to discuss the book with congregational groups.

*Saunders is a member of the Church of the Heavenly Rest and chair of the ENY’s editorial advisory board.*

## The New York Indaba Process – Initial Gathering September 28 at Cathedral

The mission of the Diocese of New York is carried out in a huge variety of urban, suburban and rural contexts, among a wide range of people with unique talents and interests. With a view to bringing us closer together and increasing our mutual understanding of what that means, Bishop Dietsche announced at the diocese's annual convention last November that a diocesan Indaba conversation would be a major part of our work together in the coming year. Recently a letter from the bishop went out to congregations explaining the process and calling for their participation. That letter may be read on the diocesan website ([www.diocesenyc.com](http://www.diocesenyc.com)). The Indaba process will begin with a gathering of all participants at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on Saturday, September 28.



### What is an Indaba, and why are we doing it?

Indaba is a Zulu word meaning “gathering for purposeful discussion.” It is both a process and a method of engaging one another to listen and learn about the opportunities and challenges that we face in our different communities. After its successful use at the 2008 Lambeth Conference, several groups of dioceses took part in global “Continuing Indaba” conversations in 2011 and 2012. In these, New York was linked with the Dioceses of Derby (England) and Mumbai (India), and teams from each diocese visited one another to experience what it means to be an Anglican Christian in very different contexts. One of our team's biggest insights when it hosted its English and Indian friends was how varied our contexts *within* the Diocese of New York are, and how much there is that we need to learn about one another. The New York Indaba is intended to help us do that.

### What does it involve?

Each participating congregation is linked with two others from around the diocese to form a group of three, and appoints a team of four people representative of a broad cross-section of its members, including the rector or priest-in-charge (if there is one), and, if possible, someone between the ages of 16 and 30. This team

- Attends the gathering on September 28 at the Cathedral
- Hosts the teams from the other congregations in its group at one of three weekend gatherings from fall 2013 through spring 2014
- Participates in concluding sessions in early May in which three groupings gather (i.e. 9 parishes in all). Facilitators will be appointed to guide this ending conversation as well as to observe the gatherings on the three weekends.

### What does a hosting weekend involve?

#### Saturday

- Hosts introduce visitors to their congregation and community
- Visitors are housed in homes for the night, preferably the homes of host team members

#### Sunday

- Visitors join host congregation for worship and fellowship
- Early afternoon, teams wrap up visit with reflections about the experience of the weekend.

## Armenian Archbishop Barsamian Welcomes Bishop Dietsche

By the Rev. Joseph Campo



*“How good and how pleasant it is to live together as brothers in unity.” (Ps. 133:1)*

While it would be presumptuous to believe that “unity” among Christians was achieved on a late spring afternoon at New York's St. Vartan Armenian Orthodox Cathedral, one cannot downplay the example of collegiality and mission that did occur.

Bishop Dietsche was welcomed as both partner and friend in Christ at an impressive ecumenical gathering of bishops ministering in New York City. Most of these represented various Orthodox traditions; the present and retired Roman Catholic cardinal archbishops of New York and the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States also participated.

The host and main speaker was Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. He was joined not only by Archbishops Vicken Aykazian and Yeghishe of the Armenian Diocese, but also by bishops from the Orthodox Church in America, the Eritrean Orthodox Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church. Representatives from the Malankara Syrian Church, the National Council of Churches as well as from two Orthodox Seminaries and the Episcopal Church's General Theological Seminary rounded out this impressive congregation.

More than merely an opportunity to congratulate Bishop Dietsche upon his election and ordination to the episcopate, this was an occasion that was initiated in prayer, reinforced with a shared meal and filled with words of mutual and respectful praise. Archbishop Barsamian welcomed Bishop Dietsche as “a man of firm conviction but also gentleness...a pastor who deals with the urgent solemn issues of the Church.”

The formal welcome of Bishop Dietsche provided an opportunity for remembering “the loving holy friendship” between the Episcopal Church and the Armenian Church. Visioning the many Orthodox and Western traditions of Christianity together in prayer and for “breaking bread,” one was struck by the varied voices, languages, theological perspectives and beliefs from which God in Christ is praised. Speakers highlighted that this is a New York reality. We are a city of many voices, languages and religious cultures. The world needs to see and know this when, as the Archbishop noted, “we bring our fraternity (sic.) to the wider world, we say something the community needs to hear.”

The exchange of gifts between Bishop Dietsche and Archbishop Barsamian only symbolized the need for Anglican and Orthodox communities to continue on their journey together in mutual support and prayer.

*Campo is chair of the diocese's Anglican-Eastern Churches Committee.*

# John Talty Appointed President of Episcopal Charities

**O**n May 7, Bishop Dietsche announced the appointment of John Talty to serve as President of Episcopal Charities. Mr. Talty succeeds C. Douglas Mercer II, who served as president for 10 years, and founding president Cecil Wray. The appointment was made official as part of Episcopal Charities Board meeting held on June 10.

During Mr. Talty's six years as a Board member, he has chaired Episcopal Charities' Grants Policy committee and served on the Advisory committee, which reviews and evaluates programs supported by the organization. He has also served as a member of the Finance committee, as Treasurer, and as Vice President.

In addition to his service to Episcopal Charities, Mr. Talty was a member of the vestry of St. Matthew's, Bedford for six years (the final years as Treasurer). He currently serves as a Trustee of the Bedford Free Library. He retired in 2008 from the position of President and CIO of the asset management firm Seix Advisors, having held earlier positions as Chief Fixed Income Strategist at JP Morgan Securities, Fixed Income Strategist at Morgan Stanley and Strategist at Merrill Lynch Capital Markets.

In announcing Mr. Talty's appointment, Bishop Dietsche noted that "John's combination of in-depth program familiarity, fiscal expertise and commitment to mission make him uniquely qualified to carry forth Episcopal Charities' tradition of inspired, dedicated leadership."

In accepting the appointment, Mr. Talty said, "I am honored and humbled by Bishop Dietsche's confidence in me. It will be my great privilege to work as President with Episcopal Charities' Board, staff and volunteers in our efforts to help New Yorkers in need."



John Talty. Photo: Nicholas Richardson

# Diocesan Participation in Pride March



Once again this year, thanks to the organizing efforts of the diocesan LGBT Concerns Committee, hundreds of Episcopalians, including Bishop Dietsche and his wife Margaret, participated in the New York Pride March in Manhattan Sunday June 30—and by doing so witnessed to God's all-embracing love.

Photo: Millard Cook.

# Over \$18,000 for Sandy Victims Raised in Effort Spearheaded by Deacons

**B**y now, everyone is aware of the extensive short and long-term damage that super storm Sandy wreaked on Staten Island, particularly in the beach areas on the East and South Shores and the flood-prone neighborhoods facing Bayonne and Jersey City. While our parish churches sustained little or minor damage, several parishioners and their extended families did not fare so well: at least 20 families were affected by flooding and mold damage to their homes, while others suffered serious structural damage with long term implications.

In the first week following the storm, our diocesan officials—who had designated Christ Church, New Brighton as a collection and distribution center—received many inquiries about how the people of the diocese could best help with the re-building both of the homes and, more importantly, of the family life of those affected. In response to this it was suggested that a diocesan wide collection of some sort should be undertaken.

When the Rev. Stephen Harding, Diocesan Disaster Coordinator, suggested that the deacons of the diocese might be able to spearhead this collection, the idea was proposed to the Deacons' Council, and they agreed. Deacons Denise Lavetty, Vonnie Hubbard, Lynn Werdal, and Gail Ganter-Tobak took the lead in coordinating the collection, while Deacon Geri Swanson collected and recorded the donations for the diocese.

To say that it was a rousing success would be an understatement. Over \$18,000 in gift cards and cash were collected by the middle of January. Donations came from parishes large and small across the diocese. Others were from parishes from as far away as North Carolina and California who learn of the collection from friends, former parishioners and colleagues or the internet.

Deacon Hubbard, who lives in New Windsor stated, "The support from the parishes was amazing. And all I really did was send a few emails and drive a few miles."

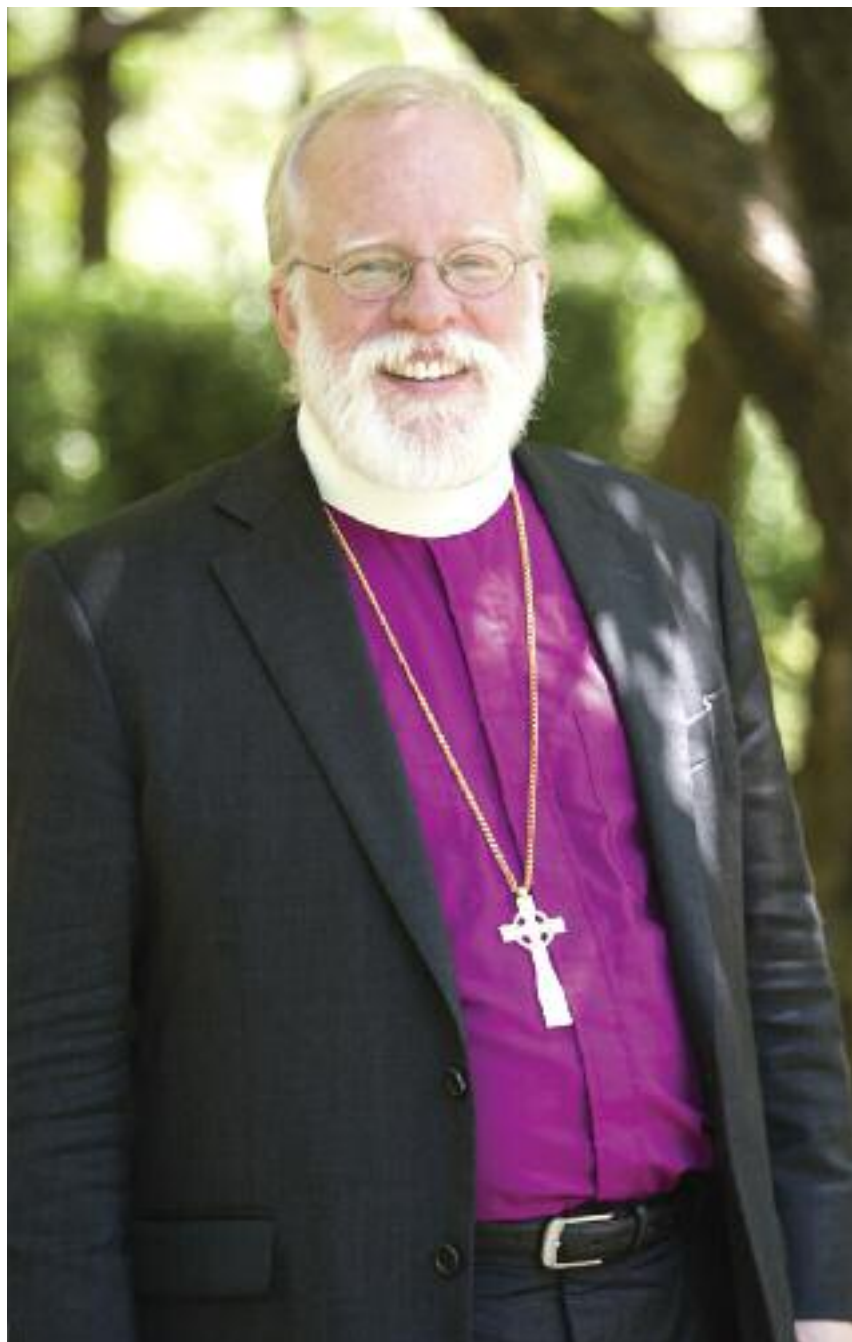
"The enormous generosity of strangers has been an amazing and overwhelming experience," said Father Charles Howell, rector of Christ Church, New Brighton. "I am so grateful to have been a part of the relief effort at Christ Church."



Deacons Vonnie Hubbard and Gail Ganter-Toback, together with Staten Island relief coordinator Darrel Hayes, visiting "Big Mike" at his bungalow in Midland Beach to present him with some of the gift cards collected by the New York deacons. Mike's place was filled with five feet of salt water after the storm—fortunately he had heeded the forecasts and gone to stay with a relative, together with as many of his most precious possessions as he could carry. A volunteer crew from an Episcopal Church in Vermont helped Hayes to install insulation and sheetrock in the house.

Photo: Beverly Neuhaus.

## Bishop Issues Pastoral Letters/Statements on Boston Bombing, Anti-Gay Hate Crime, and Supreme Court Decisions on the Voting Rights Act and Same-sex Marriage



Bishop Andrew Dietsche.

Photo: Kara Flannery

Since the last issue of the Episcopal New Yorker, Bishop Dietsche sent letters by email to the people of the diocese on four occasions.

### THE BOSTON BOMBINGS

In an April 18 letter in which he was joined by Bishops Smith and Knudsen, the Bishop wrote, in part, that “prayers for the fallen and pastoral care to the bereaved, while central to our call as Christians, cannot be all we have to offer a broken world...it is not too early to say that it is an affront to the lives of freedom, justice and peace that Jesus calls us and invites us to live that we are made to carry out those lives against the background din of guns, bombs and the sorrows of the bereaved. It is an offense against the Prince of Peace that we are required to accept some level of violence as the price of our common life. Rather, the church must explore every avenue to witness to an aching, watching world those principles of life, peace and freedom which we received from and learned from a loving God.” For the full text of this letter, please go to [http://episcopaldioceseny.org/news\\_items/246-bishops-respond-to-boston-bombings](http://episcopaldioceseny.org/news_items/246-bishops-respond-to-boston-bombings).

### ANTI-GAY HATE CRIME IN MANHATTAN

On May 31, Bishop Dietsche, joined by Bishops Smith and Knudsen, responded to the May 18 murder of Mark Carson and a rash of other anti-gay hate crimes in Manhattan in the previous weeks with a letter in which he affirmed that “we emphatically do not believe that homosexuality is incompatible with the Christian life.” The Bishop wrote that the Diocese of New York has “labored to remove every barrier to the full inclusion of and participation by the LGBT community in our church in the whole of our life” and most recently “broadened our understanding of and teaching regarding marriage to include same sex couples.” While, he observed, there are many who insist that homosexuality is incompatible with the Christian life, “we emphatically do not believe that,” and encouraged the people of the diocese “to let the world see and know that there are countless faithful Episcopalians in the LGBT community, and that they are loved, embraced and respected by the larger body of the Church of which they are and have always been a part.” For the full text of this letter, please go to [http://episcopaldioceseny.org/news\\_items/249-bp-dietsche-on-anti-gay-hate-crime](http://episcopaldioceseny.org/news_items/249-bp-dietsche-on-anti-gay-hate-crime).

### SUPREME COURT DECISIONS ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

In consecutive statements on June 26 and 27, the Bishop welcomed the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act and California Proposition 8, while lamenting its ruling on the previous day that had the effect of gutting the Voting Rights Act. The texts of these statements are printed in full on the facing page in English and Spanish.

## ON DOMA AND PROPOSITION 8

As all the world now knows, today the Supreme Court made two historic decisions related to the legal rights and standing of those in the LGBT community, by striking down the federal Defense of Marriage Act, and by dismissing the appeal against the lower court decision in California which makes provision for same sex marriage in that state. In the annals of the struggle for civil and human rights, and for the recognition of the equality of all people, today will be remembered as a milestone of justice and righteousness. On behalf of the Diocese of New York, I join with those who have worked so hard for so long to guarantee rights for gay and lesbian couples in celebration of these important decisions and what they will mean. I am confident that the day is coming when marriage equality will become the law everywhere in America, and I am sure that the events of this day, our day, will further the pursuit of those just ends.

Certainly, for same sex couples in our own state and diocese, the abolition of DOMA opens the way for the breaking down of the final barriers to full equality and freedom for same-sex couples. I am proud that in various ways this diocese has made its witness that such equality is truly of God, and speak for our whole community in offering our thanks today to the United States Supreme Court, and to those who have tirelessly pressed the case before that court, and we offer our congratulations and best wishes to all those whose lives will be enlarged and blessed by the events of this day.



## ON THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT DECISION

Yesterday I produced a statement celebrating the Supreme Court's decisions on DOMA and same-sex marriages in California. Yesterday was, in my judgment, a landmark day for those who celebrate the dignity of every person and strive for justice and equality for all people.

Yet on the preceding day the same court stripped key provisions from the Voting Rights Act of 1965—a decision seen by many as gutting the force of an Act that has had a transformative effect to the good on the landscape of American life.

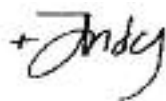
People born in the last half century may find it hard to fully understand how formidable were the barriers that had in the past been erected and rigorously, even violently, defended to prevent African Americans from exercising their voices in the public square. That such barriers were enshrined in the laws of states covered our nation in shame.

But in 1965 that changed: since then and until two days ago, the Voting Rights Act has guaranteed to all people the right to participate fully in our public life.

The protections and guarantees which were established in that Act and in the other landmark civil rights legislation of its era -- very largely driven forward by people of faith and by religious institutions in what was among the church's finest hours in our age -- were hard won and extraordinarily costly. They witness, I believe, directly to our love of God. They are precious to us, and are not to be taken for granted -- a fact that has been only too amply illustrated during recent elections, when alarmingly regressive statutes have surfaced in many states, designed, it is clear, to limit the ability of people of color, young people and poor people to exercise their right to vote.

Now the Supreme Court has nullified the most vital part of the Voting Rights Act. And in the short time since it announced its decision two days ago, the reasons for preserving that Act intact have already been amply demonstrated: already several attorneys general have announced that legislation in their states regarding voter ID laws will now be immediately implemented.

This week, then, has brought both setbacks and steps forward in the ongoing struggle for the rights of people. Let no one doubt that that struggle is of God. The struggle for freedom, and the rights of people, and the fullness of human life is ongoing; it never ends, it is marked by victories and defeats, and it requires constant vigilance. God being our helper, let us recommit to the protection and preservation of the rights of every person to participate in full in our common life. Let us never lose faith, but bind ourselves to the pursuit of justice.



Como es de conocimiento mundial ahora, la Corte Suprema Federal hoy hizo dos fallos históricos en relación a los derechos legales y a la situación de los miembros de la comunidad LGBT al declarar inconstitucional la Ley de Defensa del Matrimonio (DOMA por sus siglas en inglés), y rechazar la decisión de California de prohibir el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo en ese estado. En los anales de la lucha por los derechos humanos y civiles, y por el reconocimiento de la igualdad para todas las personas, el día de hoy será recordado como un hito histórico en la justicia y la probidad.

A nombre de la Diócesis Episcopal de Nueva York, me uno a quienes han trabajado tan arduamente por tanto tiempo para garantizar los derechos de las parejas homosexuales y lesbianas en celebración por estas importantes decisiones y lo que significarán. Confío en que llegará el día cuando la igualdad en el matrimonio será una ley en toda América, y estoy seguro que los acontecimientos de este día, nuestro día, fomentarán la búsqueda en pos de esos propósitos justos.

Ciertamente, para las parejas del mismo sexo en nuestro estado y en nuestra diócesis, la abolición del DOMA abre la brecha para romper las últimas barreras que se oponen a la igualdad completa y a la libertad para las parejas del mismo sexo.

Estoy orgulloso, porque esta diócesis, en diversas formas, ha dado testimonio de que tal igualdad es verdaderamente de Dios, y hablo por toda nuestra comunidad al expresar hoy nuestro agradecimiento a la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos, y a quienes han incesantemente presionado el caso ante la corte. Felicitamos y enviamos nuestros mejores deseos a todas las personas cuyas vidas serán engrandecidas y bendecidas por estos acontecimientos de este día.

Ayer, hice una declaración celebrando las decisiones de la Corte Suprema sobre DOMA y el matrimonio del mismo sexo en California. A mi juicio, el día de ayer marcó un hito para quienes celebran la dignidad de toda persona y luchan por la justicia y la igualdad para todos.

Sin embargo, el día anterior, esta misma corte eliminó provisiones claves de la Ley de 1965 respecto al Derecho a Voto – decisión que muchos han visto como un acto que le resta fuerza a una ley que ha tenido un efecto transformativo para el bien en el panorama de la vida americana.

Las personas que nacieron en la última mitad de siglo probablemente encuentran difícil de comprender cabalmente cuan terribles eran las barreras que fueron levantadas y defendidas arduamente e incluso violentamente en el pasado, barreras que impedían que los afro americanos ejercieran sus derecho a voz en la plaza pública. Tales barreras que fueron protegidas por las leyes estatales cubrieron de vergüenza a nuestra nación.

Pero, eso cambió en 1965: desde entonces y hasta hace dos días atrás, la ley de Derecho a Voto ha garantizado a todas las personas el derecho a participar plenamente en nuestra vida pública.

Las protecciones y garantías establecidas en esa Ley y demás legislaturas que marcaron otro hito en la era de los derechos civiles – fueron, en gran parte, sacadas adelante por las personas de fe y por las instituciones religiosas, y constituyeron los mejores tiempos de la iglesia en nuestra era – se ganaron con ardua lucha y a un costo extraordinario. Dan testimonio, yo creo, directamente de nuestro amor a Dios. Son logros preciosos para nosotros y no deben tomarse por dado gratuitamente – un hecho que ha sido ampliamente ilustrado durante las recientes elecciones, cuando alarmantemente surgieron estatutos retrógrados en muchos estados, quedando claro que fueron diseñados para limitar la habilidad de las personas de color, las personas jóvenes y las personas pobres para ejercer su derecho a voto.

Ahora la Corte Suprema ha anulado la parte más vital de la Ley del Derecho a Voto. Y en el breve plazo desde su anuncio hace dos días atrás, las razones para preservar la Ley intacta han sido ampliamente demostradas: ya varios fiscales generales han anunciado que la legislación en sus estados referente a las leyes de identificación del votante serán implementadas inmediatamente.

Esta semana, entonces, ha traído tanto retrasos como avances en la lucha permanente por los derechos del pueblo. Que nadie dude que, ésa lucha es de Dios. La lucha por la libertad y los derechos del pueblo, y la integridad de la vida humana es permanente; es incesante, está marcada por las victorias y los fracasos, y requiere vigilancia constante. Siendo Dios nuestro auxiliador, reanudemos nuestro compromiso con la protección y la preservación de los derechos de cada persona a participar plenamente en nuestra vida.

## Trinity's Pentecost Baptism Boom

When Bishop Dietsche visited Trinity Wall Street this Pentecost (May 19), there was an encouraging turn out. 23 baptisms, eight confirmations, a reception, and three re-affirmations. As Nathan Brockman wrote for the Trinity newsletter, "Priests displayed different aquatic tactics. The Rev. Mark Bozzuti-Jones, Priest for Pastoral Care, plopped most children right in the font, splashing their heads with water reputedly drawn from the Hudson River before sanctification. The Rev. Dr. James H. Cooper, Rector, and the Rev. Canon Anne Mallonee, Vicar, employed more traditional hold-and-sprinkle techniques."



Photo: Trinity Church

## Guinean Interfaith Leader Visits Diocese



Archdeacon Parnell, Grand Imam Mamadou Saliou Camara, the Rev. Stephen Holton, Imam Ibrahima Saliou Camara

Photo: Nicholas Richardson.

On June 17, the Grand Imam Mamadou Saliou Camara of Conakry, in the West African country of Guinea, and his colleague Imam Ibrahima Saliou Camara visited Diocesan House for discussions with Archdeacon Parnell and the chair of the Anglo-Muslim Dialogue of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission, the Rev. Stephen C. Holton. The Grand Imam is a leader in interfaith dialogue both in Guinea (where 95% of the population is Muslim) and throughout West Africa. The Grand Mosque in Conakry seats 12,500 people, with room for as many again on its esplanade.

## Ordination of Deacons



From left to right: The Rev. Deacon William Alan Cusano, The Rt. Rev. Andrew D. Smith, The Rev. Deacon Carol Ann Pepe, The Rev. Deacon Robert A. Jacobs, The Rt. Rev. Andrew ML Dietsche, The Rev. Deacon Eliza Davies, The Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen, The Rev. Deacon Ella Louise Roundtree-Davis, The Rev. Canon Constance C. Coles, The Rev. Richard C. Witt, Jr., and The Rev. Canon Deborah G. Tammearu.

Photo: Alito Orsini.

At a service in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on May 4 three new deacons were ordained and deacons from throughout the diocese renewed their vows. The new deacons were:

**Bill Cusano**, who has served in many roles within the church, including vestry member, Eucharistic minister, treasurer, outreach coordinator and fellowship leader. He spent over 30 years in various management positions before starting his own marketing consulting and video production business. He and his wife, Kathy, live in Port Chester.

**Carol Pepe**, who has been a member of the Church of St. Andrew, Staten Island, for 13 years and also of Trinity, Solebury, PA, where she was officially received into the Episcopal church and began her ordination discernment process. Carol has been a Eucharistic minister for twelve years, a member of various committees, and serves as a lector. She is Director of Case Management Services at Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth and an adjunct professor in Rutgers University's School of Social Work. She and her spouse, Carmelina Arias, live in Metuchen, N.J..

**Ella Roundtree**, who was received into the Episcopal Church in June 1989 and has been active in the church in many roles including Eucharistic Minister, has served on various committees, and has participated on retreats including Tres Dias and Kairos Outside. For over 32 years she worked as an educator in school districts in and around New York City before retiring in 2010. She lives on City Island in the Bronx with her husband and son.



# Bishop Knudsen at Holy Apostles

Assistant Bishop Chilton Knudsen visited the soup kitchen at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Manhattan June 25, where she was assigned to beverage distribution. The Holy Apostles soup kitchen serves over 1,200 meals every weekday. For more information, go to [www.holyapostlessoupkitchen.org](http://www.holyapostlessoupkitchen.org).



Box Slinger Knudsen.

Photo: Jordan Rubenstein.

## IMAGE OF GOD (continued from page 5)

serts that no assertion we make about God can possibly be valid, since everything we mean by the words we use is based upon limited, temporal experience).

The mysterious sixth century writer Dionysius the Areopagite (known to academia as “The Pseudo-Dionysius”) summed up the apophatic route, and the *Cloud of Unknowing* followed his (or her, or their—no one knows for certain who the writer really was, or what) teaching in prescribing a way of prayer that eschews all images, and practically leaves thought behind. The *Cloud* recommends a prayer reduced to a single-syllable word, such as “love” or “peace” (or perhaps, “help”) that expresses the needs of the person praying and makes no pretense to “knowing” anything at all about God.

Gregory of Nazianzus in the fourth century said that all talk about God is strictly analogous, approximate, and metaphorical: in other words we can say nothing directly about God. And his contemporary Evagrius warned that the worst thing that can happen in prayer is for us to begin to accept whatever pictures we have conjured for God to be literally true—for they cannot be.

It is at once a startling warning, and a freeing invitation—an invitation into praying either free of images, or with whatever Icons of God we find helpful—as long as we realize their limits.

In prayer, says Origen, we are lifted into friendship with God. And then, in the experience of that relationship, we discover what we need to know. It probably will seem very minimal. But it will be enough.

*McPherson is Professor of Ascetical Theology at the General Theological Seminary and Associate for Adult Education at the Church of the Transfiguration, Manhattan. He formerly served on the ENY's Editorial Advisory Board.*

## GOOD ENOUGH FOR JESUS (continued from page 10)

ily needs them and they just can't get away. I've even heard monks say it. Including me. Really? If it's good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me!

A retreat gives us the opportunity to rest, connect or re-connect with God, and take time for the contemplative aspect of our faith. There are many retreat houses all over the country, including several throughout New York State, New Jersey and Connecticut. At them, you'll find everything from silent retreats, to programed retreats, individually directed retreats, communal retreats and private retreats.

Here at Holy Cross Monastery we offer all of those approaches to retreats at various times of the year. But the aspect of our Guest Ministry that is somewhat unique, is that we offer the opportunity for our guests to enter into the life of the monastic community. At Holy Cross there is an active and alive community that wants our guests to join in prayer with us, share a meal with us, and take a few days of your spiritual journey with us. In his Rule, St. Benedict taught us that a monastery would never be without guests and that the guests we were to especially welcome were the pilgrim and the poor—those most searching for God.

We do that, not because we think everyone is supposed to be a monk, but because we believe that everyone is called to follow Jesus and, if it was good enough for Jesus, it must be good enough for us. To spend some time away from our usual schedule, surroundings and responsibilities in order to enter more fully into God's presence is, in a nutshell, what a retreat consists of. It is an invitation into a more intimate relationship with God.

And so, the brothers invite you to make a retreat—whether it's your first, or your hundredth, God is waiting for you to take the same opportunity that Jesus took regularly in his faith journey. We'd love to welcome you to our Guest House to experience what it means to retreat into God.

*Brother James Michael is the Guest Master at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY. You can reach the guesthouse at [guesthouse@hcmnet.org](mailto:guesthouse@hcmnet.org) or by calling 845-384-6660 x1 or visit them on the web at [www.holycrossmonastery.com](http://www.holycrossmonastery.com).*

## RETREAT HOUSES (continued from page 10)

Retreat houses are a bit like patches of sunlight in busy lives.

Places like Holy Cross Monastery, the Community of St. John Baptist, House of the Redeemer, the Center for Christian Spirituality and Gardens at General Seminary, and Bluestone Farm, among others, are places for quiet, restorative pauses. The Society of St. John the Evangelist offers urban and rural retreat options, plus online prayer ministries. Incarnation Camp is set aside as a fun and active place for kids and teens.

Retreats, whether they center on teaching, silence, or some combination, provide a place of stillness, a place to listen.

Stillness seems to be an increasingly rare gift. It is stillness that gives busyness meaning. Time set aside with God and ourselves keeps our time with other people a healthy reflection of who we really are.

Stillness is available, like those patches of sun in a crowded city.

*Fitzpatrick is vicar of St. Anne's Washingtonville, dean of the Hudson Valley Clericus and a member of The ENY Editorial Advisory Board.*

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## Diocesan Staff Changes

The arrival of the **Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen**, formerly Bishop of Maine to take up the position of Assistant Bishop, was noted in an earlier edition of the *Episcopal New Yorker*. Here are some other arrivals and departures that are either recent or may have slipped through the editorial net:

The **Rev. Canon Deborah G. Tammearu**, formerly rector of St. Thomas Church, Mamaroneck, joined the staff at the beginning of 2013 as Canon for Transition Ministry, replacing the **Rev. Canon Thomas Orso**, who retired at the end of 2012.

The **Rt. Rev. Andrew D. Smith**, formerly Bishop of Connecticut, who had served the diocese as ¼-time Assistant Bishop since October 2010, retired effective June 30.

The **Rev. Canon Constance Coles**, who had served the diocese as Canon for Ministry since 2001, retired effective July 11. The **Rev. Canon Charles W. Simmons**, formerly priest-in-charge, St. Andrew's Church in the Bronx, has been appointed to succeed her.

### WANT TO PLACE AN AD IN THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER?

As the official publication of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, *The Episcopal New Yorker* reaches more than 31,000 households representing every congregation in the diocese. Reaching laypersons and clergy, this newspaper informs, inspires, teaches and promotes understanding among the diverse constituencies in the diocese.

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#### Non-profit display rates (figure are per insertion)

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#### For-profit display rates (figure are per insertion)

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1/8 Page (5" x 2.5")	\$300	\$270/insert

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Sheet and envelope insertions available for an additional fee.

#### 2013 ad deadlines:

February 15 for Spring issue; May 31 for Summer issue; August 31 for Autumn issue; November 30 for Winter issue.

To submit an ad or to receive more information, contact the editor of *The Episcopal New Yorker* at: 1047 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10025 Tel: 212-316-7520 e-mail: ads@episcopalnewyorker.com.

### CLERGY CHANGES

**The Rev. Floyd M. "Buddy" Stallings**, Priest-in-Charge, St. Bartholomew's, Manhattan, to Rector, St. Bartholomew's, Manhattan, March 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Dr. Philip H. Towner**, Transitional Deacon, March 2, 2013, to Curate, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Manhattan, March 3, 2013.

**The Rev. Fred C. Cartier**, Supply, to Interim Pastor, Regeneration, Pine Plains, April 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Shelley D. McDade**, Associate Rector, Ascension, Manhattan, to Interim Pastor, Ascension, Manhattan, April 15, 2013.

**The Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen**, Retired Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Maine, to Assistant Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of New York, April 15, 2013.

**The Rev. Joshua Condon**, Rector, St. Stephen's, Armonk, to Diocese of Texas, April 16, 2013.

**The Rev. George Anthony Hoeltzel**, Priest-in-Charge, Holy Cross, Yonkers, to retirement, April 21, 2013.

**The Rev. Katharine Herron-Piazza**, Supply, to Interim Pastor, Holy Trinity, Pawling, May 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Gwyneth M. Murphy**, Supply, to Interim Pastor, St. Gregory's, Woodstock, May 19, 2013

**The Rev. Lewis C. Johnson**, Vicar, Good Shepherd, Roosevelt Island, to retirement, May 26, 2013.

**The Rev. José R. Gándara-Perea**, Left Priest-in-Charge, Intercession, Manhattan, May 31, 2013.

**The Rev. Hugh McPhail Grant**, Associate, St. Luke in the Fields, Manhattan, May 31, 2013.

**The Rev. Megan Sanders**, Port Chaplain & Tri State Coordinator, S.C.I., to Interim Pastor, St. Andrew's, Staten Island, June 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Edward Johnston**, Vicar, St. Peter's (Lithgow), Millbrook, to retirement, June 9, 2013.

**The Rev. Krista K. Dias**, Transitional Deacon, March 2, 2013, to Curate, Christ Church, Short Hills, NJ, June 17, 2013.

**The Rev. Patrick J. Williams**, Transitional Deacon, March 2, 2013, to Curate, St. Philip's, Manhattan, June 17, 2013.

**The Rev. Elizabeth (Beth) A. Phillips**, student, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT, to Assisting Priest, Christ Church, Warwick, June 22, 2013.

**The Rev. Gabriel Lamazares**, Assistant Rector, St. Michael & All Angels, Portland, OR, to Associate, St. Luke in the Fields, Manhattan, June 24, 2013.

**The Rev. Rhonda J. Rubinson**, Supply, to Priest-in-Charge, Intercession, Manhattan, June 30, 2013.

**The Rev. Luis Gomez**, Chaplain, Calvary Hospital, NYC and Associate Priest, Holy Apostles, Manhattan, to half-time Assistant, Intercession, Manhattan, June 30, 2013.

**The Rev. Matthew F. Heyd**, Director of Faith in Action, Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan, to Rector, Heavenly Rest, Manhattan, June 30, 2013.

**The Rev. Susan E. Hill**, Assistant Priest, St. Michael's, Manhattan, to Associate Priest, Holy Apostles, Manhattan, June 30, 2013.

**The Rev. Adrian F. Dannhauser**, Transitional Deacon, March 2, 2013, to Lilly Fellow, St. James' Church, Manhattan, July 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Anne F.C. Richards**, Senior Assistant, St. Mark's, New Canaan, to retirement, July 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Frederick Wm. Schraplau**, Rector, St. Alban's, Staten Island, to retirement, July 1, 2013.

**The Rt. Rev. Andrew D. Smith**, Assistant Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of New York, to retirement, July 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Samuel J. Smith**, Director of Programs, Episcopal Charities, and Interim Pastor, Holy Trinity (Inwood), Manhattan to Assistant Priest, St. Michael's, Manhattan, July 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Canon Constance C. Coles**, Canon for Ministry, Episcopal Diocese of New York, to retirement, July 2013.

**The Rev. Charles Winston Simmons**, Priest-in-Charge, St. Andrew's, The Bronx, to Canon for Ministry, Episcopal Diocese of New York, July 2013.

**The Rev. Caroline Peacock**, Transitional Deacon, March 2, 2013, to Priest Associate, Holy Comforter Church, Atlanta, GA, July 3, 2013 and Chaplain Intern, Emory University Hospital, Atlanta, July 15, 2013.

**The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr.**, Rector, Christ the Redeemer, Pelham, to Rector, Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, Alexandria, VA, July 21, 2013.

**The Rev. Sarah T. Condon**, Transitional Deacon, March 2, 2013, to Chaplain, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, Houston, TX, August 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Dr. Rayner W. Hesse, Jr.**, Pastor, St. John's (Wilmot), New Rochelle, to retirement, August 31, 2013.

**The Rev. Loyda Morales**, Bishop's Vicar, St. Stephen's, Staten Island, leaving, September 1, 2013.

## BISHOPS' VISITATION SCHEDULE

### JULY AND AUGUST

#### No Visitations

#### SEPTEMBER 8 (16 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Stephen's, Pearl River (a.m.)  
All Saint's, Valley Cottage (p.m.)

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. Mary's, Manhattanville

#### SEPTEMBER 15 (17 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Simon's, New Rochelle (a.m.)  
Trinity St. Paul, New Rochelle (p.m.)

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. Augustine's, Manhattan (a.m.)  
St. Matthew's, Bedford (p.m.)

#### Bishop Sauls:

St. Gregory's, Woodstock

### SEPTEMBER 29 (19 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Peter's, Westchester Square

#### Bishop Wolf:

Trinity of Morrisania

#### OCTOBER 5 (SATURDAY)

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. Mary's, Mohegan Lake (p.m.)

#### OCTOBER 6 (20 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

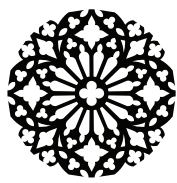
Cathedral

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. Paul's, Pleasant Valley

# Cathedral Calendar

## SUMMER/EARLY FALL 2013



### The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine

1047 Amsterdam Avenue at 112th Street  
New York, NY 10025 (212) 316-7540

For details of ongoing programs, tours and workshops at  
the Cathedral please visit [www.stjohndivine.org](http://www.stjohndivine.org).

#### SUNDAY SERVICES

8 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Eucharist  
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
11 a.m. Choral Eucharist  
4 p.m. Choral Evensong

#### DAILY SERVICES

Monday–Saturday  
8 a.m. Morning Prayer  
8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Tuesday & Thursday only)  
12:15 p.m. Holy Eucharist  
5 p.m. Evening Prayer

Hear stories of New York's immigrants, inventors, and artists who have helped shape the City and the world. Visit the Firefighter's Memorial and see New York City's skyline in sculpture. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide John Simko.

#### CHANOYU TEA CEREMONY IN THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JAMES

Monday, August 5

The Omote Sen family has preserved and promoted the traditions of Sen no Rikyu's style of the tea ceremony for over 400 years. Tea Master Akira Ozasa Soshō will give a talk and overview of the ancient Japanese ceremony, followed by formal tea settings, to share its cultural, aesthetic and spiritual values with members of the public. Please visit [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org) for ceremony times and more information.

#### SIGNS AND SYMBOLS:

##### SPOTLIGHT ON SYMBOLISM

Sunday, August 4, 1 pm – 2 pm

Please see description for July 28.

#### SIGNS AND SYMBOLS:

##### SPOTLIGHT ON SYMBOLISM

Sunday, August 11, 1 pm – 2 pm

Please see description for July 28.

#### SECRETS OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE:

##### SPOTLIGHT ON HIDDEN IMAGES

Sunday, August 18, 1 pm – 2 pm

What are a stripper and the signs of the zodiac doing in our stained glass windows? Find out on this tour that puts the spotlight on surprising images in glass and stone. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek.

## SEPTEMBER

#### THE METTAWEE RIVER THEATRE COMPANY:

##### TALIESIN

Friday, September 6 – Sunday, September 8, 7:30 pm

The Mettawee River Theatre Company returns to the Cathedral with a new take on the medieval Welsh tale of Taliesin. Watch as sorceresses, shape-shifters, and valiant youths come to life, brilliantly portrayed by Mettawee's signature puppets, giant figures and masks.

#### KNIGHTWATCH MEDIEVAL

Friday, September 13, 6:30 pm

Children ages 6 – 12 can experience a fun, safe overnight stay in the Cathedral surrounded by knights, jesters, and princesses, making crafts and learning dances and other exciting features of medieval courtly life. Bring your imaginations and sleeping bags! \$135 per person. Visit [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org) for registration and more information.

#### CLOSE READING: MARY BLOOM

Wednesday, September 18, 6 pm

Photographer Mary Bloom's evocative images have captured years of Cathedral traditions, from the Blessing of the Animals to everyday moments around the Close. Join the artist and the Cathedral community for the opening of a retrospective of her work, on view in the Crossing.

#### KNIGHTWATCH MEDIEVAL

Friday, September 20, 6:30 pm

Please see description for September 13.

#### GREAT MUSIC IN A GREAT SPACE

##### PRAYERS OF THE ANIMALS: ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Wednesday, September 25, 7:30 pm

The first concert of the 2013-14 season of Great Music in a Great Space presents a prelude to the Cathedral's annual St. Francis Day and Blessing of the Animals in October. Music from 15th

#### TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS

Unless otherwise noted events do not require tickets or reservations. Tickets for all performances other than free or "suggested contribution" events may be purchased directly from the Cathedral's website, [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org), or by calling (866) 811-4111.

Please visit the Cathedral's website, [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org) or call the Visitor Center (212) 316-7540 for updates and additional event and tour information.

#### ONGOING PROGRAMS, TOURS,

##### WORKSHOPS

#### The Great Organ: Midday Monday

Cathedral organists provide a 30-minute break for mind, body and spirit at 1:00 p.m. with an entertaining and informative demonstration of the Cathedral's unparalleled Great Organ.

#### The Great Organ: It's Sunday

*The Great Organ: It's Sunday* invites established and emerging organists from across the U.S. and around the world to take their turn at the Great Organ and present a free 5:15 p.m. concert.

#### PUBLIC EDUCATION AND VISITOR SERVICES TOURS AND CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

Public Education & Visitor Services offers Cathedral Highlights, Vertical, and Spotlight Tours. All tours meet for registration at the Visitor Center inside the Cathedral entrance, at 112th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. Highlights Tours: \$6 per person, \$5 per student/senior. Vertical Tours: \$15 per person, \$12 per student/senior. Spotlight Tours: \$10 per person, \$8 per student/senior.

#### Highlights Tours

**Mondays, 11 am – Noon & 2 – 3 pm,**  
**Tuesdays – Saturdays, 11 am – Noon & 1 pm – 2 pm, Select Sundays 1 pm – 2 pm**  
Explore the many highlights of the Cathedral's history, architecture, and artwork, from the Great Bronze Doors to the seven Chapels of the Tongues. Learn about the Cathedral's services, events, and programs that welcome and inspire visitors from around the world. No prior reservation necessary. Meet at Visitor Center.

#### Vertical Tours

**Wednesdays, Noon – 1 pm; Saturdays, Noon – 1 pm & 2 pm – 3 pm**  
On this adventurous, "behind-the-scenes" tour, climb more than 124 feet through spiral staircases to the top of the world's largest cathedral. Learn stories through stained glass windows and sculpture and study the grand architecture of the Cathedral while standing on a buttress. The tour culminates on the roof with a wonderful view of Manhattan. Space is limited to 20 people 12 years of age and older, and reservations are recom-

mended. For reservations, visit the Cathedral website or call 866 811-4111. Bring a flashlight. Meet at Visitor Center.

#### Medieval Birthday Parties

##### Saturdays & Sundays, by availability

Celebrate your child's birthday with a two-hour party in the Medieval Arts Workshop, where children sculpt gargoyles, weave, make brass rubbings, carve a block of limestone, and much more! For children ages 5 & up. Call the Public Education & Visitor Services Department at 212 932-7347 for more information and reservations.

#### Nightwatch

The Nightwatch program has been updated and expanded with three exciting and innovative offerings: Nightwatch Crossroads, Knightwatch Medieval and Nightwatch Dusk & Dawn. For more information visit [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org) or contact: (212) 316-5819/ [nightwatch@stjohndivine.org](mailto:nightwatch@stjohndivine.org).

#### ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN TRUST (A.C.T.)

To learn about the many nurturing year-round programs for young people offered by A.C.T., please call (212) 316-7530 or visit [www.act-progra.m.s.org](http://www.act-progra.m.s.org).

#### CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY CARES (CCC)

Please visit [www.stjohndivine.org](http://www.stjohndivine.org) for more information on CCC programs, which include health screenings at the Nutrition, Health and Clothing Center, the Clothing Closet, Sunday Soup Kitchen, SNAP/Food Stamps Program, and Walking Club

#### SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

## JULY

#### JANE ALEXANDER:

##### SURVEYS (FROM THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE) On view through July 28

*Surveys (from the Cape of Good Hope)* is the first major North American survey of tableaux, sculptures, and photomontages by important South African artist Jane Alexander. Her artwork speaks of lasting disfigurements in her native South Africa, yet raises issues about human nature that resonate with viewers internationally. This site-specific exhibition at the Cathedral allows audiences to experience the familiarity and mutability of Alexander's universe.

#### HIDDEN LIVES:

##### THE UNTOLD STORY OF URBAN REFUGEES

On view through August 30

Over half the world's refugees now live in large

towns and cities where they are confronted by a unique set of challenges. The traditional image of life in tented, sprawling camps no longer tells the full refugee story. Refugees and displaced people move to the city in the hope of finding a sense of community, safety and economic independence. However, in reality, what many actually find are harsh living conditions, lack of security and poverty. Working with the International Rescue Committee and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), Panos Pictures' photographer Andrew McConnell documented this new reality across four continents culminating in this exhibition.

#### TEXTILE TREASURES TOUR

Wednesday, July 17, 2 – 4 pm

Explore the Cathedral's magnificent art collection with a special focus on textiles! This unique opportunity includes a behind-the-scenes visit to the Cathedral's world-renowned Textile Conservation Lab, which conserves tapestries, needlepoint, upholstery, costumes, and other textiles. Particular attention will be paid to the Barberini collection of the *Life of Christ* tapestries, given before there was even a cathedral to display them in, and the Acts of the Apostles tapestries, based on cartoons by Raphael. \$20 per person, \$15 per student/senior. Space is limited to 20 people 12 years of age and older.

#### SURVEYS (FROM THE CAPE OF GOOD

##### HOPE):

##### SPOTLIGHT ON THE EXHIBITION

Saturday, July 27, 3pm – 4pm

Participate in a one-hour, staff-led discussion of the Cathedral's contemporary art exhibition *Jane Alexander: Surveys (from the Cape of Good Hope)*. During these guided tours, visitors will engage in lively conversations about Jane Alexander's installations, sculptures, and photomontages, and the architecture of the Cathedral that compose this site-specific exhibition.

#### SIGNS AND SYMBOLS:

##### SPOTLIGHT ON SYMBOLISM

Sunday, July 28, 1 pm – 2 pm

Explore the signs and symbols in the Cathedral and discover the unique attributes that characterize saints, martyrs, and angels. See these ancient symbols in paintings, glass and stone, and learn how the legends have inspired artists through the centuries. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Becca Earley.

## AUGUST

#### I LOVE NEW YORK: SPOTLIGHT ON THE CITY

Saturday, August 3, 10 am – 11 am

Celebrate New York City and its indomitable spirit with a special tour of the Cathedral. Learn how the Cathedral and City serve as places of diversity, tolerance, and human achievement.

# Suffragan Election Goes Digital

By the Rev. Wm. Blake Rider

## Seeking a Wide Field of Candidates

The Committee to Elect a Bishop circulated its request for proposed candidates throughout the Episcopal Church. At the diocesan level, it did this in the form of an e-mail to over 3,000 individuals and institutions, and as a posting on the diocesan Facebook page (<http://facebook.com/EpiscopalNY>) that was viewed by over 1,800 people. More broadly, the notice was circulated by the Episcopal News Service, by The Living Church on-line, and to Transition Ministry staff members across the church. Ministries focused on niche interest groups within the church, including the Episcopal Church's offices of Black Ministries, Asian-American Ministries, and Hispanic Ministries, all circulated the notice, as well as the Union of Black Episcopalians, Integrity, the Episcopal Women's Caucus, 118 Diocesan & Provincial ECW Presidents, the Gathering of Leaders, the House of Bishops/Deputies listserv, and the House of Bishops listserv.

A special website was also created ([www.suffraganny.org](http://www.suffraganny.org)) on which the Diocesan Profile and all necessary forms were made available in both English and Spanish.

## Electronic Document Submission

The Committee received proposals for clergy within the diocese and from 18 other dioceses from coast to coast. They offered a rich array of backgrounds, experiences, skills and gifts. They were enthusiastic about the possibility of serving as our suffragan; were energized by the challenges we face, as outlined in Bishop Dietsche's description of the position; and were eager to work with our new diocesan.

Each person seeking consideration provided several pieces of background information: a copy of their Office of Transition Ministry portfolio; a résumé; answers to four questions; and three letters of reference. These were delivered to us electronically and then shared with members of the Committee via Dropbox, a secure online document sharing application. (Additional measures have also been taken in order to further ensure the privacy of the process and to protect the confidentiality both of those being considered and of the work of the Committee.)

*By early June the Committee had made progress in the "first screening," whereby the total pool of those under consideration was refined to a somewhat shorter list.*

## Onward To Skype Interviews

The Committee to Elect a Bishop is continuing the move into the digital age with interviews conducted via the video conferencing feature of the internet service Skype. The use of video conferencing has become common across the Episcopal Church in recent episcopal elections and represents a great improvement over traditional voice-only conference calling. Using Skype allows the interviews to be recorded: the Committee can thus divide the interviews among several teams, while enabling each member of the Committee to view each interview later.

*Following the Skype interviews, the Committee will further refine the candidate pool of candidates.*

## Next—a Discernment Retreat

The next step will be to bring all of the remaining candidates to New York for a several-day Discernment Retreat, during which the Committee will be able to meet and in-

teract with each of them. Typically these retreats, which are widely used in bishop searches throughout the Episcopal Church, include small-group interviews, discussions by the candidates as a group, presentations by individual candidates, worship, Bible study, and opportunities for the candidates to ask questions. We know this is a process of mutual discernment: as we are getting to know the candidates, they are getting to know us. After the retreat, the Committee will proceed to the final step in their discernment—to select

"no more than five names," as required by the canons of the diocese, to forward to the electing Convention.

*On Monday, October 7th, the Committee will announce the names of the individuals who will be placed into nomination at the Convention. The period for joining the ballot by Petition will also open on that day. More information on the Petition process will be provided in the coming months.*

## November Walkabouts

One part of the process that is NOT going digital is the traditional series of walkabouts. During the week of November 18th, the Committee will host a series of opportunities throughout the diocese, at which clergy and lay Episcopalians will have an

opportunity to meet and engage each candidate—both those nominated by the Committee, and any who will be on the ballot via the Petition process.

## Report of the Committee Will Be Digital

The Committee will make its Report—the booklet that is traditionally prepared as an aid to the election process—available to the diocese electronically. It will be presented at [www.suffraganny.org](http://www.suffraganny.org) and on the diocesan website, and also made available via email in PDF format. ***There are no plans to print the heretofore typical several thousand copies and then mail a copy to each member of the clergy, each parish, and each lay delegate to the electing convention.*** We are trusting that someone in each parish will have access to the internet and a printer, and that they can print a hard copy for anyone who desires one.

The Committee to Elect a Bishop bids your continued prayers for those who make themselves available to this long process of discernment, for the ongoing work of the Committee, for Bishop Dietsche, and for the clergy and delegates of the Diocese who will participating in the Electing Convention.

The Committee is composed of: Co-Chairs the Rev. Wm. Blake Rider (Christ Church, Poughkeepsie) and the Rev. Nora Smith (St. Barnabas, Irvington); and members Tina Pinckney (St. Margaret's, Bronx), Susan Heath (St. Peter's, Lithgow), David Shover (Congregation of St. Saviour at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine), George Wade (Chancellor of the Diocese), the Rev. Martha Overall (St. Anne's, South Bronx), the Rev. Buddy Stallings (St. Bartholomew's, NYC), the Rev. Yejide Peters (All Saints, Briarcliff). The Committee would like to express its thanks to The Rev. Loyda Morales who initially served as Co-Chair, but has since resigned. Brother Scott Wesley Borden from the Monastery of the Holy Cross in West Park is participating in the work of the Committee as its Chaplain. Many, many thanks for the blessing that he is to the work of the Committee.

*Rider is co-chair of the diocese's Committee to Elect a Bishop and rector of Christ Church, Poughkeepsie.*

