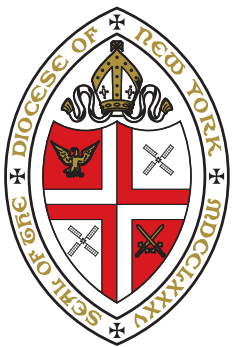


# Sin Issue

# THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER

THE OFFICIAL NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NEW YORK

FALL 2017



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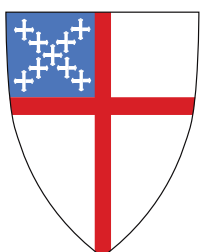
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#### THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER

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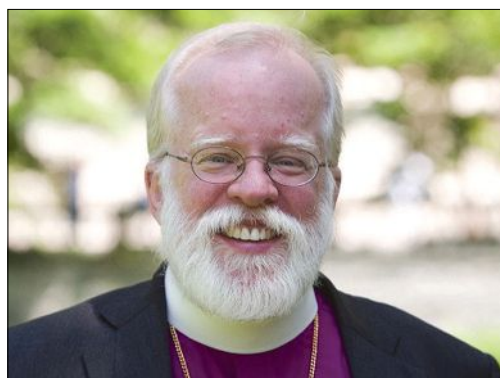
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## We Need a Redeemer

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

Recently I was in conversation with friends, and we began talking on the subject of shame. I mentioned that I don't really hang on to the memories of hurtful things that have been done to me in the past, or if I do, I find that the power of the hurt has a short half-life, and diminishes over time, so that even when thoughts of old wrongs done to me come to mind, they do so with little emotional power or weight. I stop caring. But I said that hurts that I had done to other people—thoughtless or intentionally unkind, even when those offenses were done in childhood—when I remember them, burn as ferociously in my conscience as they did when my offense was new. Time does not mitigate the power of those memories to drop me to my knees, burning with shame and remorse, sorry all over again, remorseful, praying that the person I had offended had not been too deeply wounded, had gotten over it quickly, and perhaps might even have found the grace to forgive me. I hope that desperately.

One of the people in the conversation then told us that someone who had said a deeply hurtful thing to her over a half century ago, when both were kids, had not long ago found her on Facebook and contacted her to make his apology. For fifty years the unkind thing once said continued to hang over him, tormenting his conscience, until with the advent of social media he was able to seek out and find one he had not seen in decades to throw himself before her and make his apology, to ask forgiveness, to lay down a heavy burden under which he had labored virtually his entire life. I found myself astonished by his courage.

These long-carried, forever fresh, acutely painful memories of the bad things we do to others are not the same as plain old guilt. Guilt is actually a profoundly useful thing, a simple recognition that we have done wrong and that we have recompense to make. We have to say we are sorry. We have to make up for the things we have done.

When I was a parish priest, it was my custom, as in many churches, to dispense with the General Confession on Sundays during the season of Easter. But I always made sure that we made our confession on Easter Day. When I told this to another priest he was surprised, and said that if there was ever a time to drop the confession it should be on the day of the resurrection, it should be on the day of our redemption. And I acknowledged the liturgical logic of that, and didn't dispute his argument, but replied that I had a whole lot of people who only show up in church on Christmas and Easter, and that if my church is the only church they attend, and that infrequently, then by God at least once a year they are going to say they're sorry for the things they've done!

But shame is different, and far more powerful. Guilt says "I have done wrong," and then shame adds, "and I know I am no damn good." Guilt breeds the hope that when we apologize we might be forgiven. Shame is the much deeper suspicion of our worthlessness; our fear that we don't deserve forgiveness: it is what keeps us from accepting forgiveness even when it is offered. Guilt lives in the head; shame in the gut. But as painful as shame is, it also is useful. It is the voice, crying out deep within us, that we cannot help ourselves; it is the confession of our soul that we need a Redeemer.

Over twenty years ago the writer Douglas Coupland wrote an essay in which he confessed his spiritual brokenness. He is the writer who coined the term "Generation X" to describe his own folks, those born after the baby boom, and he wrote about the soullessness of the culture they had made, or inherited. The uneasy trade-offs in exchange for late 20th-century affluence and opportunity. He wrote that "I seriously question the road my life has taken and I endlessly rehash the compromises I have made in my life." And he said "Sometimes I want to go to sleep and merge with the foggy world of dreams and not return to this, our real world. Sometimes I look back on my life and am surprised at the lack of kind things I have done. Sometimes I just feel that there must be another road that I can walk down—away from this person I became, either against my will or by default. Now—here is my secret: I tell it to you with the openness of heart that I doubt I shall ever achieve again, so I pray that you are in a quiet room as you hear these words. My secret is that I need God—that I am sick and can no longer make it alone. I need God to help me give, because I no longer seem to be capable of giving, to help me be kind, as I no longer seem capable of kindness; to help me love, as I seem beyond being able to love."

I am certain that however they might be expressed, these feelings are universal. I am equally certain that this is not how Jesus wants us to live. In this issue of the *Episcopal New Yorker* people from across our diocese will share their experiences, perspectives, thoughts and beliefs on the subject of Sin: that spiritual state which is our separation from God. Listen behind the words written for the deeper human need, the profounder human desire. To know and be known. To trust and be trusted. To love and be loved. Listen too for the sinner's silent, pleading hope: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." This is where we begin. Amen.

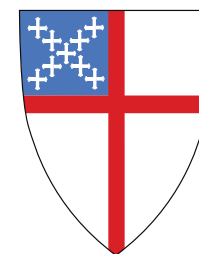


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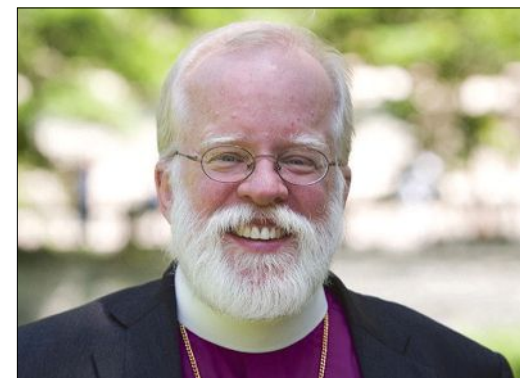
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## Necesitamos un Redentor

Por el Revdmo. Obispo Andrew M.L. Dietsche



Hace poco tuve una conversación con unos amigos y empezamos a hablar sobre el tema de vergüenza. Mencioné que, realmente, no me aferro a los recuerdos de las cosas dolorosas que me han hecho en el pasado, y si lo hago, encuentro que el poder que el dolor tiene sobre mí dura poco y disminuye con el tiempo, de forma que, aunque me vengan a la mente pensamientos de viejos agravios, lo hacen con muy poco poder o carga emocional. Dejan de importarme. Pero les dije que el daño que yo le había hecho a otras personas—inconscientemente o intencionalmente insensible, aunque esos agravios hubieran sucedido durante la infancia—cuando los recuerdo, arden en mi consciencia tan intensamente como lo hicieron el día en el que se produjo el agravio. El tiempo no mitiga el poder que tienen esos recuerdos de hacer que me arrodille, ardiendo de vergüenza y arrepentimiento, lamentándome una y otra vez, rezando porque la persona a la que he ofendido no hubiera sido herida tan profundamente, que lo haya superado rápido, y quizá incluso que tenga la gracia de perdonarme. Eso anhelo desesperadamente.

Entonces, una de las personas en esa conversación nos dijo que no hacía mucho que alguien que le había dicho algo profundamente hiriente hace más de medio siglo, cuando ambos eran niños, la había encontrado en Facebook y se había contactado con ella para disculparse. Durante cincuenta años, aquella cruel cosa una vez dicha se había aferrado a él sin descanso, atormentando su consciencia hasta que con la llegada de las redes sociales pudo buscar y encontrar a esa persona a la que no había visto en décadas para postrarse ante ella y disculparse, pedir perdón, liberarse de la pesada carga con la que había luchado prácticamente toda su vida. Me sentí perpleja ante su valentía.

Estos recuerdos que cargamos durante tanto tiempo, siempre recientes y sumamente dolorosos de las cosas malas que le hacemos a los demás no son lo mismo que una simple sensación de culpabilidad. En realidad, la culpabilidad es algo profundamente útil, un simple reconocimiento de que hemos hecho algo malo y que tenemos que compensarlo. Tenemos que disculparnos. Tenemos que solucionar las cosas que hemos hecho.

Cuando era párroco tenía la costumbre, al igual que muchas otras iglesias, de prescindir de la confesión general los domingos de la Semana Santa. Sin embargo, siempre me aseguraba de que tuviéramos nuestra confesión el día de Pascua. Cuando se lo conté a otro párroco él se sorprendió, y dijo que, si hubiera un momento para prescindir de la confesión este debería ser el día de la resurrección, debería ser el día de nuestra redención. Y reconocí la lógica litúrgica de eso, y no le llevé la contraria, pero le contesté que tenía a un montón de personas que iban a la iglesia únicamente en Navidad y en Pascua, y que si mi iglesia es la única a la que asisten, y con tan poca frecuencia, entonces, por Dios, ¡al menos una vez al año dirán que se arrepienten de las cosas que han hecho!

Pero la vergüenza es diferente y mucho más poderosa. La culpabilidad dice, “He hecho algo malo”, y luego la vergüenza añade, “y sé que no soy bueno en

absoluto”. La culpabilidad siembra la esperanza de que cuando nos disculpemos, podríamos ser perdonados. La vergüenza es una sospecha de nuestra inutilidad mucho más profunda; nuestro miedo a que no merezcamos el perdón: es lo que nos impide que aceptemos el perdón, aunque se nos lo ofrezca. La culpabilidad vive en la cabeza; la vergüenza, en nuestro instinto. Pero, aunque la vergüenza sea así de dolorosa, también nos ayuda. Es la voz clamando profundamente dentro de nosotros, que nos dice que nosotros no podemos ayudarnos a nosotros mismos; es la confesión de nuestra alma de que necesitamos un Redentor.

Hace más de veinte años el escritor Douglas Coupland escribió un ensayo en el que confesó su transgresión espiritual. Es el escritor que acuñó el término “Generación X” para describir a sus propios compañeros, aquellos nacidos tras el baby boom, y habló sobre la cultura sin alma que habían creado o heredado. Las alarmantes concesiones a cambio de riqueza y oportunidades a finales del siglo XX

Escribió, “Cuestiono seriamente el camino que ha tomado mi vida y no dejo de darles vueltas a los compromisos que he asumido en mi vida”. Y dijo, “A veces quiero dormirme y fundirme con el nebuloso mundo de los sueños y no volver a éste, nuestro mundo real. A veces vuelvo la mirada atrás en mi vida y me sorprende de la falta de actos amables que he cometido. A veces siento que tiene que haber otro camino por que el que pueda avanzar—alejado de esta persona en la que me he convertido, ya sea contra mi voluntad o por dejarme llevar. Ahora—este es mi secreto: te lo cuento con el corazón tan abierto como dudo que volverá a estarlo nunca jamás, así que rezo por que estés en una habitación tranquila mientras escuchas estas palabras. Mi secreto es que necesito a Dios—estoy enfermo y ya no puedo seguir solo adelante. Necesito que Dios me ayude a dar, porque parece que ya no soy capaz de dar; que me ayude a ser amable, porque parece que ya no soy capaz de tener bondad;

que me ayude a amar, porque parece que amar es algo que ya está fuera de mi alcance”.

Estoy seguro de que independientemente de cómo se expresen, estos sentimientos son universales. Estoy igual de seguro de que no es así como Jesús quiere que vivamos. En esta edición del *Episcopal New Yorker* las personas de nuestra diócesis compartirán sus experiencias, perspectivas, pensamientos y creencias sobre el tema del pecado: ese estado espiritual nos separa de Dios. Escucha tras las palabras escritas por esa profunda necesidad humana, ese deseo humano aún más profundo. Conocer y ser conocido. Confiar y ser de confianza. Amar y ser amado. Además, escucha la esperanza silenciosa y suplicante del pecador: “Yo sé que mi redentor vive.” Este es nuestro principio. Amén.

+ Andy



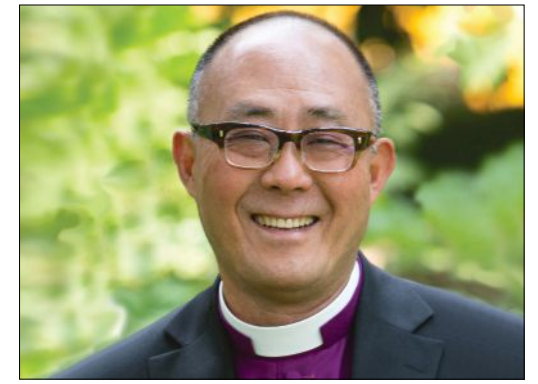
## Is Original Sin Useless?

By the Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin

For the early Christian theologians, the idea of original sin provided a compelling explanation of why human beings are as they are, and why they need the grace of Christ's redemption. For us moderns, however, the notion of original sin raises more questions than answers. Original sin seems to be an archaic notion that is really no longer relevant or useful to us today. How are we born with someone else's sin? Is human nature evil? Why have women been blamed for the origin of sin? If the Genesis story is symbolic, how is sin inherited from Adam and Eve?

Genesis 3 is the first story of sin in the Bible and is the foundational scriptural text for the Christian theology of original sin. In the Jewish tradition, this story is not given such a significant weight. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel has left a wonderful insight on it: when Adam and Eve hid themselves in shame, God came looking for them and said, "Where are you?" This, Heschel notes, is the first utterance of God to humankind, and thus begins God's search for humankind. The Bible, he writes, is not so much a story of humans' search for God as one of God searching for human beings who turn away from God again and again. The other key scriptural text for the development of the theology of original sin is Romans 5:19: "For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (NRSV). Here Paul contrasts Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience to make a point that Christ's obedience is the means by which we are redeemed from our solidarity with Adam in sin. The Christian understanding of redemption begins, therefore, with the premise that Jesus Christ takes away original sin. Why does everyone need the grace of Christ's forgiveness? What makes Christ's redemption universal? It was this line of inquiry that led to the emergence and development of a theology of original sin by the early Christian theologians.

It was Augustine of Hippo in the early fifth century who unified the diverse theories of the earlier theologians to develop the classical theology of original sin that would have a lasting influence on the Christian and the western worldview. He distinguished two versions of original sin: *peccatum originale originans* (originating original sin) for the event of Adam and Eve's sin, and *peccatum originale originatum* (originated original sin) for the condition of sin in humankind caused by the transmission of Adam and Eve's sin to all. This concept of inherited sin explained the human solidarity in sin with Adam and Eve, and thus the universal necessity for Christ's redemption. In the 11th century, Anselm gave a metaphysical definition of original sin as a privation of original justice—defining original justice as the supernatural capacity of the human will for moral integrity. Then in the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas integrated Anselm and Augustine and located four causes of original sin: the formal cause was the



privation of original justice; the material cause, concupiscence; the agential cause, the human heart; and the instrumental cause, the transmission of Adam's sin through sexual intercourse. The Council of Trent further defined Thomas' theory of original sin in sacramental and ecclesial terms and sacralized it as a dogma of the Catholic Church. Martin Luther and the Protestant theologians accepted Augustine's concept of original sin but rejected the necessity of the Church's mediation of redemption.

The idea of sin being inherited through sexual intercourse from generation to generation since Adam and Eve is rather absurd. Linking sin with sexual relations has also contributed to the devaluing of human sexuality. And the mysoginistic interpretation of Genesis 3 prolonged the systemic bias of sexism. Moreover, locating salvation exclusively in Christ and the Church has fostered the sense of Christian superiority and the denigration of other religions. Any rethinking of original sin should reconsider these negative influences. But, the notion contained in the doctrine of human solidarity in sin remains quite relevant even today. It points to systemic sin such as slavery, genocide, racism, white supremacism, sexism, classism, etc. Sin is not just a personal moral failure. Sin has its own system: the evil enterprise of division and hatred in which people collude and participate in solidarity with one other.

This systemic dimension of sin is what the Jesuit theologian Bernard Lonergan has in mind when he writes, "Sinfulness is different from moral evil; it is the privation of total loving; it is a radical dimension of lovelessness." The consequence of systemic solidarity in sin can be as grave as the end of a civilization, as Lonergan alarmingly observes: "A civilization in decline digs its own grave with relentless consistency." For Lonergan, humanness is potential, not given, and there can be authentic or unauthentic realization of human potentiality. *Peccatum originale originatum* (originated original sin) for Lonergan is humankind's sustained unauthenticity of humanity. By identifying religious conversion with being in love with the divine mystery of God, he puts the capacity of love as the highest authentic realization of humanness. And the humanity revealed in Jesus Christ is the highest authentic realization of human potentiality. Reinhold Niebuhr once remarked that "the doctrine of original sin is the only empirically verifiable doctrine of the Christian faith." What undermines our wellbeing is our alienation from God and the evil that we inflict on one another as a result. God has not stopped searching us out in redemptive love, and love remains our only hope of redemption.

+ Allen

## ¿Es Inútil el Pecado Original?

Por el Revdmo. Obispo Allen K. Shin

Para los primeros teólogos cristianos, la idea del pecado original proporcionaba una convincente explicación de por qué el ser humano es como es y por qué necesita la gracia de la redención de Cristo. Sin embargo, hoy en día, para nosotros la noción del pecado original nos plantea más preguntas que respuestas. El pecado original parece ser una noción arcaica que ya no nos resulta útil ni relevante hoy en día. ¿Cómo nacemos con el pecado de otro? ¿Es la naturaleza humana malvada? ¿Por qué las mujeres han sido culpadas por el origen del pecado? Si la historia del Génesis es simbólica, ¿cómo se hereda el pecado de Adán y Eva?

Génesis 3 es la primera historia de pecado en la Biblia y es el texto bíblico base de la teología cristiana del pecado original. En la tradición judía a esta historia no se le da una importancia tan considerable. El rabino Abraham Joshua Heschel ha dejado una visión maravillosa al respecto: cuando Adán y Eva se escondían por vergüenza, Dios fue a buscarles y dijo, "¿Dónde estáis?" Esto, apunta Heschel, es la primera manifestación de Dios ante la humanidad y así empieza la búsqueda de Dios por la

humanidad. La Biblia, escribe, no trata tanto de la historia de la búsqueda humana de Dios como de la historia de Dios buscando a los seres humanos que le han dado la espalda a Dios una y otra vez. El otro texto bíblico clave para el desarrollo de la teología del pecado original es Romanos 5:19: "Porque así como por la desobediencia de uno solo muchos fueron constituidos pecadores, también por la obediencia de uno solo muchos serán constituidos justos" (NVI). Aquí Pablo contrasta la desobediencia de Adán y la obediencia de Cristo para llegar a la conclusión de que la obediencia de Cristo es el medio por el que somos redimidos de nuestra solidaridad con Adán en el pecado. La interpretación cristiana de la redención empieza, por lo tanto, con la premisa de que Jesucristo quita el pecado original. ¿Por qué necesitan todos la gracia del perdón de Cristo? ¿Qué hace la redención de Cristo universal? Fue esta línea de pensamiento la que llevó a la aparición y al desarrollo de una teología del pecado original por los primeros teólogos cristianos.

Fue Agustín de Hipona, a principios del siglo (continuado en la página 42)



## Out of Slavery into Freedom

By the Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool

**S**econd only to the dictionary, the Book of Common Prayer is the reference book I most use. So I went to the Catechism section of the BCP—otherwise known as *An Outline of the Faith*—to see how the Episcopal Church defines sin.

Q. *What is sin?*

A. *Sin is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation.*

Q. *How does sin have power over us?*

A. *Sin has power over us because we lose our liberty when our relationship with God is distorted.* (BCP, pp. 848-849)

It is that last phrase that catches my attention: “we lose our liberty when our relationship with God is distorted.”

“We lose our liberty” is a way of saying we are not free, which immediately brings to mind Paul’s statement in Galatians: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” (5:1) One way in which we can see our own life’s journey is from *slavery to freedom*. Eucharistic Prayer B essentially states the same thing when we pray that in Christ, God has “brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life” (BCP, p. 368). Christ is *always* calling us out of slavery, out of sin, out of our bondage; into freedom, into new life, into freely living the life God has called us to live.

A relatively modern parable of the journey from slavery to freedom (or from sin into righteousness) is Charles Dickens’ well-known story *A Christmas Carol*. You are probably familiar with it—it’s one that seems to appeal to old and young alike. The old miser Ebenezer Scrooge is visited on Christmas Eve by the ghost of his dead partner,



Jacob Marley, which appears swathed in chains and locks, symbols of Marley’s enslavement to money. In the course of the tale, Scrooge gradually recognizes the truth of Marley’s statement that Scrooge’s chains and weights are more imprisoning and ponderous by far than those that the ghost itself drags along. And the way in which he finds that out is through the visits of three other ghosts: the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Future. These three ghosts accompany Scrooge on a journey. He goes *outside* himself in order to look *inside* himself: past, present, and future. He goes *outside* himself to see himself as others see him. And he is taken back into his own past, deeper into his own present, and tentatively into his own future, to observe and examine the person he really is.

Scrooge’s journey seems to me a wonderful paradigm of spiritual or psychological counseling. A spiritual director or a therapist or a counselor accompanies us on a journey that very often goes into our past; usually examines our present condition; and hopefully continues on into the possibilities for the future. The journey is one in which we must confront the painful fact of our own slavery to those forces which weigh us down or even bind us and prevent us from becoming fully human. This is *sin*: that which enslaves us distorts our relationship with God.

Dickens’ parable ends on a note of hope, as the former miser Scrooge begins to love and serve his brothers and sisters in the human family. As we continue our life’s journey of faith, let us put our full trust in Christ, who continually calls us out of slavery into freedom; out of sin into righteousness; out of death into new life as God’s free and loving children.

## De La Esclavitud a La Libertad

Por la Revdma. Obispa Mary D. Glasspool

**E**n segundo lugar, solo respecto del diccionario, el Libro de Oración Común es el libro de referencia que utilizo más a menudo. Busqué en la sección del catecismo del LOC—también conocida como Bosquejo de Fe—para ver como la Iglesia Episcopal define lo que es el pecado.

P. *¿Qué es el pecado?*

R. *El pecado es seguir nuestra voluntad en lugar de la voluntad de Dios, deformando así nuestra relación con él, con las otras personas y con toda la creación.*

P. *¿Cómo nos domina el pecado?*

R. *El pecado nos domina porque perdemos nuestra libertad al deformarse nuestra relación con Dios.* (LOC, p. 741)

Es esa última frase la que llama mi atención: “perdemos nuestra libertad al deformarse nuestra relación con Dios”.

“Perdemos nuestra libertad” es una forma de decir que no somos libres, lo que nos trae inmediatamente a la mente la afirmación de Pablo en Gálatas: “Cristo nos libertó para que vivamos en libertad”. (5:1) Una de las formas de ver el camino de nuestra propia vida es de la *esclavitud a la libertad*. La Plegaria Eucarística II dice básicamente lo mismo cuando rezamos que en Cristo, Dios “nos ha sacado del error a la verdad, del pecado a la justicia, de la muerte a la vida” (LOC, p. 263). Cristo siempre nos está sacando de la esclavitud, del pecado, de nuestro esclavismo; a la libertad, a una nueva vida, a vivir libremente la vida que Dios nos ha llamado a vivir.

Una parábola relativamente reciente sobre el camino de la esclavitud a la libertad (o del pecado a la justicia) es la conocida historia de Charles Dickens, *Un Cuento de Navidad*. Probablemente te resulte familiar—es una que parece interesar a viejos y jóvenes por igual. El viejo y tacaño Ebenezer Scrooge recibe en Nochebuena la visita del fantasma de su socio muerto, Jacob Marley, que aparece envuelto en cadenas y cer-

raduras, símbolos de la esclavitud de Marley ante el dinero. Durante el transcurso del cuento Scrooge reconoce gradualmente la verdad de la afirmación de Marley de que las cadenas y pesos de Scrooge le aprisionan y pesan mucho más que aquellas que el mismo fantasma arrastra. Y lo descubre a través de la visita de otros tres fantasmas: el Fantasma de las Navidades Pasadas, el Fantasma de las Navidades Presentes y el Fantasma de las Navidades Futuras. Estos tres fantasmas acompañan a Scrooge en un trayecto. Sale *fuera* de sí mismo para poder ver *dentro* de sí mismo: su pasado, presente y futuro. Sale *fuera* de sí mismo y se ve como otros lo ven. Y es llevado a su propio pasado, hacia lo más profundo de su propio presente y a su probablemente propio futuro para observar a la persona que es en realidad.

El camino de Scrooge me parece un maravilloso paradigma del asesoramiento espiritual o psicológico. Un director espiritual o un terapeuta o un consejero nos acompaña en un viaje que a menudo nos lleva a nuestro pasado; normalmente examina nuestra situación presente; y esperamos que nos acompañe en nuestro posible futuro. Es un viaje en el que debemos enfrentarnos al doloroso hecho de nuestra propia esclavitud ante esas fuerzas que nos agobian o incluso nos atan y nos impiden volvernos completamente humanos. Esto es el *pecado*: aquello que nos esclaviza deforma nuestra relación con Dios.

La parábola de Dickens termina con una nota de esperanza, ya que el anteriormente tacaño Scrooge empieza a amar y a servir a sus hermanos y hermanas en la familia humana. Mientras seguimos el camino de fe de nuestra vida, creamos plenamente en Cristo, quien continuamente nos saca de la esclavitud a la libertad; del pecado a la justicia; de la muerte a una nueva vida como los hijos libres y amorosos de Dios.





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# The Bad News? We Are Sinners. The Good News: The Church Is Here to Help.

by the Rev. Rhonda J. Rubinson

**S**in, defined by Saint Augustine, is “any word or deed or thought against the eternal law.” There is no doubt about it: we are all sinners—even us Episcopalians.

What’s more, we all *know* that we are sinners, sometimes on an intellectual or cultural level—we’ve all heard “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way” in Handel’s *Messiah* (based on Isaiah 53:6) and we don’t think to object to that premise. But we also know that we are sinners on a less conscious level—the vertigo and uneasiness that we commonly experience in the moments when we have the courage to let down our internal guards, when we become aware that there is sickness present in our souls that is deep and somehow different than illnesses that are treatable, albeit sometimes with great difficulty, by various medications and therapies. We intuit that there is a healing that feels beyond our reach, but we sense that something is missing, a palpable lack of power to cope with—let alone heal—the injuries (sins) caused by the divisions in our nature which we often experience as dichotomies: selfishness vs. generosity; carnal vs. spiritual; good vs. evil; and others.

Yes, we are all sinners. But how many of us know that our Church provides us a remedy, called “Reconciliation”? Take a look in your Book of Common Prayer—there are two rites for Reconciliation right there in black and white, on pages 447 and 449. That’s not all—Reconciliation is a *sacrament*, an “outward sign of an inward grace,” through which the Church gives us access to the power of God, to address directly the ravages caused by sin.

In order to address our sinful condition, we must squarely face it; but most Episcopalians are squeamish about sin. We don’t like talking or hearing about it, especially from the pulpit. We often treat sin as though it’s the black sheep in the family, someone not spoken of until we’re forced to acknowledge his existence when he turns up at our home on Thanksgiving; except in the church’s case this unwanted visitor turns up during Lent, and we’re glad to see him leave after Easter. The rest of the liturgical year, sin is the equivalent of *persona non grata*.

Why don’t (can’t?) we acknowledge the reality of sin? The answer has many layers. One of the most obvious is that we equate sin with shame. In our lives, we all feel opportunities for feeling shame hurled in our direction by bosses, parents, significant others, even Facebook “friends”—so we recoil at the prospect of being shamed, worst of all, by God, whom we judge (wrongly) to be more distant from us than even our Facebook “friends,” with whom we may be barely acquainted. We therefore give ourselves permission to shut down in “self-protection” at the very mention of sin.

Let’s go deeper. Judgment and sin are two sides of the same coin: if we believe we

(or someone else) have sinned, we immediately jump straight to judgment. The problem is that we are awful judges: we believe we haven’t sinned when we have, and we often writhe in guilt when we think we have sinned when we have not. We are assuredly not in the least qualified to judge the soul condition of ourselves, let alone that of others.

Have you ever watched the PBS show *Antiques Roadshow*? No one, except the expert appraisers, is qualified to judge the value of the stuff they brought in from their homes or attics, so everyone gets it wrong. If we can’t appraise the value of a vase left to us by our late Aunt Minnie, how can we ever hope to judge our own souls? Some soul appraisal mistakes are common; for example, we often mistake *trials* for sins. A trial is a challenge to our faith, which in itself is not sin. A frequent error is mistaking anxiety (the challenge to keep believing in God even when our mind is in a state of fear, a trial), for a sin. There are many others.

Clearly, we need an expert appraiser for our souls, and thanks be to God we have one: the Holy Spirit. Working hand in heart with the Spirit, we can be led to the restoration we crave, reconciliation with God. We can accurately be shown in prayer and meditation the state of our souls, then be guided by the Spirit to confess those thoughts, words, and deeds that truly need to be forgiven in

*Yes, we are all sinners. But how many of us know that our Church provides us a remedy, called “Reconciliation”?*

the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Notice where the Episcopal Church puts the emphasis: on reconciliation, not on sin; on forgiveness, not on shame. Jesus is clear and consistent throughout the gospels on offering forgiveness—absolutely indistinguishable from healing—to all forms of sin and brokenness. He is much less concerned with individual sins than he is with the vastness of the transformative power of forgiveness. There is only one requirement: receiving that forgiveness.

Can it really be that simple? Yes, it is.

There is a wonderful book by the Rev. Martin L. Smith entitled *Reconciliation: Preparing for Confession in the Episcopal Church*. It has been my guidebook from my very first experience of Reconciliation thirty years ago up until today. It is an excellent resource for anyone considering the sacrament; so is the counsel of clergy ahead of an initial confession.

Yes, we are all sinners. But the good news is that the Church is here to help. Avail yourself of the sacrament of reconciliation, and experience the power of divine forgiveness.

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*The author is priest-in-charge at the Church of the Intercession in Manhattan, and serves on the Episcopal New Yorker Editorial Advisory Board.*

# An Urgent Call for Climate Action Teams in the Episcopal Diocese of New York

Everyone knows that we have a substantial history of ecological awareness and environmental stewardship in the Diocese of New York. But now, we live in a time of climate emergency, and we must make a higher level of commitment. As people of faith, we know that environmental destruction is sinful. As people of faith and reason, we also know that the consequences for our generation and the future are almost unthinkable. Since the 2015 UN Agreement on Climate Change, leading policymakers and scientists have realized that the urgency is significantly more urgent than we thought. By some estimates, the global rate of carbon emissions has begun to level off, and the use of renewable, clean energy is on the rise. *However*, carbon emissions must not only level off, but also turn downward by around 2020—within 2 years. If that doesn't happen, the few inches of sea level rise that you might see where you live will inevitably become 2 or 3 meters by the end of this century, if not sooner.

The crux of the matter is that we could reach “tipping points” or “thresholds” very quickly—points past which we cannot go without risking irreversible global warming. Ten years ago, some scientists believed that Antarctica might remain relatively stable into the near future—that turns out not to be the case. Temperatures in the Arctic have been 20 degrees C above normal, sometimes more, which alarms even the scientists. And rapid Arctic ice-melt releases methane from permafrost in the soil—a greenhouse gas 85 times more harmful than carbon dioxide.

A related challenge is that the whole web of life is deteriorating. Some debate is taking place about whether we've already entered an era in Earth history called the “Sixth Great Extinction.” The last time extinction rates were this high may have been 66 million years ago. What we do know is that coral reefs are bleaching and dying from heat stress and rising levels of acidity in the oceans. 30 per cent of all mammals and 40 per cent of amphibians are facing extinction now. We frequently hear about large mammals: Arctic polar bears losing habitat in the Arctic and elephants illegally hunted in Africa. But even small parasites are facing extinction. 30 per cent of earthworms may be extinct by 2070—seemingly unimportant creatures that create healthy soil conditions on which food and agriculture depend. The reasons for these extinction rates include climate disruption, water shortages, habitat loss and rapid deforestation due, in part, to land and water grabbing, overpopulation, and pollution.

Working together for Creation care is a matter of morality and survival. The web of life is a life together, and so is human life. When we look at the big picture, we realize that what's actually endangered is, in fact, our whole life together. For us, in the church, the solution is to create a sustainable and just life together as the church and of the church.

In 2015, at our 239th Diocesan Convention, we passed the following Resolutions: **1.** *that ... every congregation ... renew its commitment to conduct an approved energy audit with all due speed; and on that foundation;* **2.** *that ... diocesan and parish organizations ... make resources available to congregations to help them pursue energy audits;* and **3.** *that ... every congregation, with the assistance of Property Support and the Committee on the Environment ... develop a “self-study” plan for the conversion to renewable energy sources within the next ten years.* We must follow through on these resolutions quickly.

For those and other reasons, the Diocesan Committee on the Environment issues an urgent call for the formation of Climate Action Teams in each of the three major regions of our Diocese: New York City (Manhattan, Bronx and Staten Island), **4.** Mid-Hudson (Orange, Dutchess, Ulster, and Sullivan Counties), and **5.** the Counties of Westchester, Rockland, and Putnam. We're looking for able volunteers who are willing to meet as Climate Action Teams within those regions for the purpose of education, mutual support, and organizing. **If you are interested, please complete the form at [dioceseny.org/cat](https://dioceseny.org/cat).**

The future really does depend on what we do now in our generation. To delay a day or two years is to gamble with what God has given us to care for, and we don't believe in gambling. Some climate scientists say, privately, that we may need a miracle. We pray about that, sometimes asking ourselves, whether we really believe in miracles. We do, and we believe in God. And we believe that we need to believe in each other too, so we can do what needs to be done before it's too late.

**The Committee on the Environment, The Diocese of New York**



## Don't Skip the General Confession

By the Rev. Nils Chittenden

I have it on excellent authority that there are plenty of parishes across the Episcopal Church which are skipping the General Confession in their celebrations of the Eucharist. There are, of course, no hard-and-fast statistics, but my (admittedly *ad-hoc*) research leads me to believe that omitting the General Confession is very widespread indeed throughout the Easter season and on other key feast-days.

There seem to be several reasons for this: none of them good, as far as I am concerned. The first is purely logistical—cut out the Confession to trim the length of the service, so that people don't get all antsy if the service lasts any longer than, say, an hour and five minutes. The second is more theological—thinking that the confession of sins, liturgical or otherwise—somehow indicates an unhealthy preoccupation with sin, and might put people off coming to church.

Both of these reasons are bad, in my book, because they absolutely reek of Moral Therapeutic Deism (MTD)—a sociological term coined around ten years ago to describe the religious outlook of the then-teenage millennials. Central tenets of MTD are: feeling good about oneself, and seeing God as a kind of help-desk deity—someone you know is benign, highly-knowledgeable, and able to get you out of a mess as and when needed, but not someone who would greatly impinge on your day-to-day life.

Far from MTD being a construct of millennials, I'm sure that it germinated a very long time ago and now finds itself with the congenial conditions to grow and flourish. Our society constantly tells us not only that we should feel good about ourselves, but that we have a right to. But, as author Tracy Kidder remarks, "You do the right thing even if it makes you feel bad. The purpose of life is not to be happy but to be worthy of happiness." Putting it in another, perhaps rather simplistic, way we should strive to balance our rights with our responsibilities.

In a nice, and hopefully non-hectoring, manner I often remark to my congregation that since we Christians are the Body of Christ, when we fail to show up at our principal act of worship we are missing limbs and organs and this inhibits the effectiveness of the body corporate. I believe that we come to church primarily for others, and only then for ourselves. Our principal responsibility in coming to church is to enable the Body of Christ to be at its most complete and effective, to help others to pray, to support them with our prayers and, yes, to hold them accountable as Christians, and be held accountable by them. Thus we strive to meet together as the Body of Christ even though it is the last thing we might feel like doing that morning, especially when there are things on offer that we think will make us feel good, like taking a trip to the beach, or sleeping in, or having brunch, or vicariously accruing satisfaction through our kids' sports schedules.

And what does this have to do with the price of fish, let alone with the General Confession? Focusing in on the ways in which we have failed God and our neighbor in the past weeks might not make us feel good, but we must balance our responsibility for our sinful actions with our right to know that we can be reconciled with God.

Christ has opened the road to reconciliation with God through his death and resurrection; the Eucharist, perhaps more than anything else in our corporate worship, reminds us of this. It is our sinfulness that detaches us from God, and it is the life, death and resurrection of Christ that stops sin having the last word. We can only truly know the healing power of Christ's actions—of which the Eucharist is the liturgical expression without parallel—if we acknowledge why we need that healing in the first place.

The powerful mystery of a sacrament is that it is the place where for a moment the God outside of space and time and our world of space and time touch and spark, and where the ordinary things of this world, like bread and wine, are imbued with a significance that moves them beyond their ordinariness and makes them speak to us of inward and spiritual truths. As St. Paul wrote to the new Christians in Corinth, taking part in this sacramental meal requires us to have taken time for self-examination: to have reflected at each Eucharist why it is that we are in need of healing.

As any therapist will tell you, the first step in healing is the acknowledgement that you have a problem. In the language of the twelve-step traditions, receiving the Eucharist requires that, each time, we take a "searching and fearless moral inventory" of ourselves, earnestly experience remorse for the ways in which we have hurt our neighbor and hurt God, hear the wonderful news each time that the slate has been wiped clean, and then experience in receiving the bread and wine the reality of that reconciliation with God.

Couldn't we just do that at home before the Eucharist? At one level, yes. But we are the Body of Christ. Everything we do, we do together. We don't just keep a supply of consecrated communion at home to dip into when we feel like it. We gather together, and we kneel at the altar together to receive the sacrament. We know this to be fundamentally important. Equally important, then, is acknowledging together, in person, why we need healing, and how it is that we have fallen short.

So even though the BCP does permit one "on occasion" to omit the General Confession, I hope that you may chose not to, because to do so leaves everything incomplete.

*The author is priest-in-charge of St. Stephen's Church, Armonk.*

*As any therapist will tell you,  
the first step in healing is the  
acknowledgement that you  
have a problem.*

# Conscience Is Our Guide

by the Rev. Frank Morales

“Always let your conscience be your guide.” - Jiminy Cricket

“The kingdom of God is within you.” - Jesus Christ

To paraphrase Catholic teachings: “Moral conscience” leads us at the appropriate moments to do good and to avoid evil, judging particular choices, and “bearing witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn,” while the prudent person “can hear God speaking.”

Martin Luther said that “to act against conscience is neither right nor safe.”

These days, is it not obvious to the conscience that transgressions against divine law and the dictates of our faith are a dime a dozen? In truth, it could be said that most of what counts as “reality” itself is nothing more than an *a priori* state of sin. In truth, it is difficult to discern where sin isn’t! In that sense, what is, shouldn’t be. Sin is the acceptance of what is, instead of the actualization of what should be.

For example:

- Our government (if you can call it that), which promotes and perpetuates organized crime: *a state of sin.*
- Our societal tolerance, celebration and utilization of violence and its tools: *a painful and vicious state of sin.*
- Our entire economic system that rewards greed, teaches neighbors to compete for artificially maintained scarcities and manufactures and perpetuates a lower class: *a state of sin.*

• Our normative tolerance for the obscene disparity of wealth and opportunity, with the world’s poor and outcasts suffering the deprivation of food, shelter, justice: *a state of sin.*

• Our disdain for the God’s Earthly Creation, ripped and torn asunder for profit, poisoned by wanton recklessness, fostering the on-going destruction of our natural environment, an environment that literally sustains us (though not for too much longer): *a state of sin.*

Is it therefore not evident to conscience that, as a species, we are on a suicide mission? Overcome by a “death instinct,” we commit each moment the mortal sin of self-murder.

Sin is thus to exist imprisoned in the woeful state of the what is, disingenuously projecting into some dreamy utopian future an other-worldly sweet by-and-by of the what should be: thereby mocking God, His moral commandments, His love and mercy, His promise.

Overcoming sin is to listen to the God within, the animated conscience of our very being, the compass of our faith, and acting and exercising the might of our moral dignity for right. Right makes might! Or as honest Abe once put it: “Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.” (Cooper Union, February 27, 1860)

*The author is priest-in-charge of All Souls’ Church, Manhattan.*



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# Whatever Became of It?

“Some are guilty but all are responsible!”

By the Rev. Canon Petero A.N. Sabune

**T**he title of this piece and the quote below it come from two of the greatest thought leaders of the 20th century. Karl Menninger was a medical doctor and mental health professional whose *Whatever Became of Sin?* opens with a man standing on a Chicago street corner pointing to total strangers with his finger and simply saying “Guilty.” Some hurried away, while others took a double look with a nervous smile.

The other quote is from Abraham Heschel, who became a close friend and companion to Martin Luther King, Jr. When he was asked why he went to march in Selma, Heschel’s answer was that “some are guilty but all are responsible.” Sin is alive and well and yes, we are all responsible. Every minute of every hour of every day of every week of every month, we sin by doing that which we should not have done and not doing the things which we should have done—and yes, there is no health in us.

Sin is mental, emotional, and physical; but ultimately it is a spiritual issue: it corrodes the core of our being. Every morning, walking our two dogs, I go around our neighborhood, picking up trash. Trash grows and creates visual violence. It takes me about an hour to walk the two blocks in each direction, twice a day. I have never not found trash. Some of it is simply negligence; coffee cups, used up lotto tickets, empty cigarette packs and condoms, used and still in packs.

The most fascinating and, perhaps, most troubling are liquid containers. I pick up dozens of bottles and because we live two blocks south of a high school and a block and half east of an elementary school, I am totally undone by broken ones. With shattered glass, I have to put on tough gloves and try to pick up the pieces. We live across the street from a playground: why would a person throw a bottle so that it breaks near a children’s playground? Sin, sin, sin.

Sin makes us forget who we are and whose we are! I love the plastic water bottles because someone picks them up and recycles them, and it also shows that people are drinking water. But the most interesting bottles, both glass and plastic, are the liquor containers. The little ones are so pretty that I often take them home and put them on display in my study. Soda cans and beer cans also have elaborate designs; I take them home too!

As pretty as they all are, they are all garbage. You can see discarded shoes, spoons and sneakers. Baby items cause me to think about why they were thrown away. Some of them are new! The toys I take home and save for my grandchildren. But I still wonder who played with them, and what the reason was that they were thrown away. Single shoes make me wonder what happened to the other shoe...and what



Some of the author’s collection of bottles and other containers. “As pretty as they are, they are all garbage.”

Photo credit: The author

happened to the occupant!

Sin is like that: it makes us forget that in the age of optional confession, we don’t need relief from “sins we have committed against you and our neighbors, for what we have done and what we have failed to do, for the sake of your son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us...” Yet as pretty as those bottles and cans look, you will be amazed at the ingredients listed in the small print among the “natural flavors”: sodium, potassium, saturated fat, cholesterol, dietary fiber, calcium, iron; yes there is water but there is also sugar, dextrose, citric acid, salt, sodium citrate, monopotassium, phosphate, gum Arabic, sucrose, acetate, isobutyrate, glycerol ester of rosin, and yellow 6.

We sin because we sin, and it is natural; but salvation is not! It is free but it is not natural. It takes daily, weekly, monthly, yearly discipline, to get in the habit of breathing out the toxic air of sin and breathing in the fresh air of salvation.

Warren Buffet, quoting Oscar Wilde, told the 2010 graduates at Sing Sing that “every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.” We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God but we are forgivable. Thanks be to God!

*The author is a priest in the diocese and director of the New York Theological Seminary’s Master’s Degree program at Sing Sing Correctional Facility.*



# Preaching It

By the Rev. Jake Dell

**W**e must preach sin in every sermon. That is because we must preach Christ in every sermon, and *Christ* is the remedy for sin. In preaching sin, we are preaching to that flaw in the heart that keeps us from doing what the gospel asks us to do. Sin is that variable that prevents us from being doers of the word.

I have preached many sermons (and heard many preached) where sin is not named. When sin is not named, then Christ goes missing. He sees that He is not needed and your congregation will not know Him.

Sin was once reduced to a list on stone tablets, but that is not sin. Sin is a condition of the heart. And the heart is one day in one place, and another day in another. Divorce was given to us for the hardness of our hearts. Adultery begins with a look before it ever ends in an act.

Sin cannot be reduced, so it must be preached. You must expound sin and illustrate it as you would any other point of your sermon.

Anchoring your sermon to a theme—a theme that Christ fulfills—can help. Then sin becomes your plot foil. You give Jesus something to do, something to overcome, an obstacle to His success as Savior. So many sermons are emotionally flat because you haven't given your Hero any work. Sin is your antagonist—every writer's friend.

With no antagonist your protagonist (Jesus) becomes lifeless. How unfitting to preach the risen Lord as lifeless! But if He prevails against the insurmountable, then we who are in Him must have hope.

If your theme is "justice is not finished until it achieves reconciliation" (see Proper 18, Year A) then ask, why does justice—even Christian justice—often fail to reconcile? The sins in Romans 13:8-14 (revelling, drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarrelling, and jealousy) don't offer a ready answer. They are byproducts of one particular sin.

You need to find that "one particular sin," name it, and then show how Christ overcame it. Here, the clue is Romans 13:8, "owe no one anything, except to love one another."

Ah, but we *do* owe something other than the debt of love, don't we? We are in debt to the flesh; that is our sin, and *that* is why we engage in revelling, drunkenness, debauchery, etc. But Jesus (who owes no one anything) paid this debt to the flesh for us on the cross. The only debt that Jesus owes is the debt to love, revealing to our astonishment that God is our neighbor. And if God is

our neighbor, then *who* isn't?

Preach sin and you will preach Christ, every time.

*The author is vicar and priest-in-charge of Holy Trinity Church, Inwood.*

## House of the Redeemer 7 East 95th Street, New York, NY 10128



### UPCOMING EVENTS-ALL ARE WELCOME!

**Finding the Words** with Suzanne Martinucci will take a look at writing in the fields of publishing, entertainment, advertising, and legislation circa 1916-1917. Ms. Martinucci, who has spoken at the House previously on cultural and operatic subjects, will explore the power of prose in the days long before acronyms, bloggers, and tweets. **Tickets: \$25. Thursday, November 2, at 6:30 pm.**

**Missionary Life in Tanzania 1876-1961**, The Rev'd. Cn. Sandra McCann, MD, November Priest-in-Residence, and her husband, Martin McCann, MD, spent twelve years in Africa as missionaries of the Episcopal Church. They will discuss the history of exploration in Africa, with an emphasis on missionary movements in central Tanganyika with the Church Missionary Societies of England and Australia. **Free of charge. Tuesday, November 7, 6:30 pm.**

**Remembrance Service**, we will be celebrating a Eucharist in memory of those who have supported the House over the years. Anyone wishing to memorialize a family member or friend is invited to contact the House office at [info@houseoftheredeemer.org](mailto:info@houseoftheredeemer.org) or (212) 289-0399. **Tuesday, November 14, 5:30 pm**

**House Advent Retreat** will be held in conjunction with Church of the Heavenly Rest. The Rev'd. Dr. Cathy George, Associate Dean of Berkeley Divinity School and author of *The Stillness we Seek: Daily Devotions for Advent*, will lead this retreat on finding stillness in a busy season. Lunch provided. **Reservations required. Fee: \$25. (Scholarship opportunities available for CHR parishioners. Contact Tuesday Rupp at [TRupp@heavenlyrest.org](mailto:TRupp@heavenlyrest.org) Saturday, December 9, 10:00 am-3:00 pm.**

**House Holiday Party**, Anthony Newfield, Broadway performer and artistic director of I Fabbristi, will continue the House tradition of a holiday reading followed by caroling and a festive reception. **Suggested donation: \$20. Monday, December 11, 6:30 pm.**

**Time to Remember; A Eucharist**, The House will conduct its annual Requiem Eucharist for Edith Shepard Fabbri, and will also mark the 60th anniversary of the passing of Sister Celestine, C.S.M., who served the House as Mother Superior General from 1949 to 1955. The Rt. Rev'd. Andrew M. L. Dietsche will officiate. Refreshments to follow. **Sunday, December 17, 4:00 pm.**

**A Celebration of Piano Music** with American pianist, Reed Tetzloff, for more information on Mr. Tetzloff visit: [www.reedtetzloff.com](http://www.reedtetzloff.com). Mr. Tetzloff's performance will feature pieces that correlate and celebrate the conclusion of our 100-year anniversary. Wine and cheese reception to follow. **Tickets \$30. Thursday, January, 18 7:00 pm.**

### ONGOING PROGRAMS

**Morning and Evening Prayer Monday-Friday 8:00 am and 5:30 pm.  
Eucharist Tuesday evening and Thursday morning (September-June)**

**Wednesday Bible Study, 3:30-5:00 pm**

**Thursday Meditation Group, noon**

For more information about these events or about the House, please visit us at [www.houseoftheredeemer.org](http://www.houseoftheredeemer.org) or call (212) 289-0399

2017



## 2018: A Year of Lamentations

By Diane B. Pollard

**T**he book of Lamentations is one of the shorter books of our Old Testament. It consists of five separate poems.

In the first poem (Chapter 1), the city sits as a desolate weeping widow overcome with miseries. In Chapter 2, these miseries are described in connection with national sins and acts of God. Chapter 3 speaks of hope for the people of God: the chastisement would only be for their good; a better day would dawn for them. Chapter 4 laments the ruin and desolation of the city and temple, but traces it to the people's sins. Chapter 5 is a prayer that Zion's reproach may be taken away in the repentance and recovery of the people. The five chapters can be seen as the five truths.

At the 241st Diocesan Convention delegates will be asked to approve a resolution presented by the diocese's Reparations Committee. This resolution, titled "A Call to the Diocese to Commit to a Year of Lamentations," represents the next opportunity for our diocese to continue the journey that we started in 2006, when Bishop Mark S. Sisk formed the Reparations Committee. Since 2006, many congregations and other organizations in our diocese have participated in the hard work of beginning to discern their histories. Some have engaged in the reading of *The New Jim Crow*, by Michelle Alexander. Other groups have joined in diocesan pilgrimages to areas that are examples of slavery and mass incarceration.

The resolution presented at this year's Convention will ask that we challenge our diocese to commit to active engagement in a *Year of Lamentations* beginning January 1, 2018, our active participation in which will prepare us as a diocese for the next step of *Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church's Long-Term Commitment to Racial Healing Reconciliation and Justice*. This participation will take the form of an ongoing study of our diocese and its history of involvement in slavery in both its old and new incarnations. We hope that we will all find ourselves lamenting previous actions.

Lamentation takes time, energy and deep soul searching. In each region of our diocese, the Reparations Committee will sponsor a series of activities intended to awaken our hearts and minds, in which it invites your participation both as individuals and in groups. The schedule for our 2018 opportunities is published on the facing page.

As we embark on our Year of Lamentations, representatives of the Reparations Committee will be available to your churches and organizations to discuss both the convention resolution and those opportunities.

*The author, a member of Trinity Church, Wall Street, serves on the diocese's Reparations Committee, and served as chair of the 2015 Social Justice and United States Policy Committee of the General Convention.*



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# 2018~A Year of Lamentations

## The Diocese Laments its Role in Slavery

Scan the QR Code for a more detailed calendar of events updated in real time! Or just go to this link: <http://bit.ly/yolcalendar>



### January

**Theatrical Presentation** *Christ Church, Staten Island*  
**A New York Lamentation** A play exploring the history of slavery within the Episcopal Church. 01/21 3-5pm

### February

**Blessed Absalom Jones Liturgy** *Cathedral of St John the Divine*  
A liturgical celebration of the first African American Priest ordained in the Episcopal Church. 02/10 10:30pm

**Film and Discussion** *Donegan Hall, Cathedral Close*  
**The Birth of a Nation (2016)** Join us as we view *The Birth of a Nation* and discuss the thematic elements together. 02/22 7pm

### March

**Theatrical Presentation** *Christ Church, Poughkeepsie*  
**A New York Lamentation** A play exploring the history of slavery within the Episcopal Church. 03/04 3-5pm

**Book Discussion** *Donegan Hall, Cathedral Close*  
**Deep Denial, by David Billings** Join the discussion on the narrative elements of Billings' book. 03/14 6-9pm

### April

**Film and Discussion** *Church of the Ascension, Manhattan*  
**Agents of Change (2016)** Watch *Agents of Change* with us and engage in a discussion afterwards. 04/22 2pm

### May

**A Liturgy of Lamentation** *Cathedral of St John the Divine*  
Celebrate with us through prayer, dance, song, and theater. 05/17 7pm

**Sacred Walking Tour Part 1** *Manhattan*  
Follow us to honor and explore sites that mark the Early African presence in New York. Sites that pay homage to the ancestors will include the Slave Gallery at St. Augustine's Church, the African Burial Ground and Seneca Village. Saturdays in May

### June

**Film and Discussion** *Christ Church, Staten Island*  
**Strong Island (2017)** Watch and discuss *Strong Island* with us, as we delve into the topics of race, culture and family. 06/10

### July

**A Pilgrimage of Lamentations** *Upstate New York*  
A three-day pilgrimage visiting historic sites to broaden our knowledge and understanding of African American history in New York state. End of July

### August

**Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage**  
A pilgrimage offering an opportunity for high school students to visit historic sights across Georgia and Alabama and understand civil rights activist Blessed Jonathan Daniels and the historic events surrounding his life and death. Details to come. Early August

### September

**MAAFA** *St Paul Community Baptist Church, Brooklyn*  
Come see the theatrical presentation honoring MAAFA, also known as the Holocaust of Enslavement. Please sign up ahead of time tickets are limited. End of September

**Book Discussion** *St James the Less, Scarsdale*  
**We Were Eight Years in Power, by Ta-Nehisi Coates** Join the discussion! Let's review and discuss this amazing book together. 09/16 2-4pm

**Theatrical Presentation** *St. Philip's Church, Harlem*  
**A New York Lamentation** See January for Details. 09/23 3-5pm

**Film and Discussion** *Grace Church, Nyack*  
Film Festival for Youth Come view a series of short films introducing youth to the Civil Rights Movement and its implications. 9/30 2pm

### October

**Book Discussion** *St George's, Newburgh*  
**We Were Eight Years in Power, by Ta-Nehisi Coates** See September 16. 10/21 2-4pm

**Theatrical Presentation** *St Bartholomew's, White Plains*  
**A New York Lamentation** See January for details. 10/14 2-4pm

**A Concert of Lamentations** *The Church of the Heavenly Rest*  
**Vibrations for a New Movement** A concert celebrating the empowerment of music! 10/27 4pm

**A Diocesan Conversation**  
A forum discussing and reflecting upon the Year of Lamentations. 10/28

## Theatrical Presentation

### A New York Lamentation

Check out this informative play looking into the history of some great community leaders and how the effects of slavery shaped their lives and the future of the Episcopal Church.

## Book Discussion

### Deep Denial, by David Billings

*Deep Denial*, part popular history and part memoir, documents why, despite the Civil Rights movement and an African-American president, we remain, in the words of the author, a nation hard-wired by race. (Please read book before coming.)

### We Were Eight Years in Power, by Ta-Nehisi Coates

This book features Coates' iconic essays first published in *The Atlantic*, including "Fear of a Black President," "The Case for Reparations," and "The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration," that revisit each year of the Obama administration through Coates' own experiences, observations, and intellectual development. (Please read the book before coming.)

## Film and Discussion

### Birth of a Nation (2016)

A depiction of the violent and historic rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia, led by Nat Turner, an enslaved baptist preacher on a quest for justice and freedom.

### Agents of Change (2016)

The untold story of the racial conditions on college campuses that led to the takeover of the student union at Cornell University in 1969 at the intersection of the civil rights, black power and anti-Vietnam war movement in America.

### Strong Island (2017)

A movie that tells the story of the Ford family: Barbara Dunmore, William Ford and their three children and how their lives were shaped by the enduring shadow of race in America.

A Vibration for a New Movement  
Check out this concert celebrating the empowerment of music!  
October 2018

Sacred Dignity to Human Suffering, Walking Tour, Part I  
Join us over the span of three weekends to honor and explore sites that mark the Early African Presence in New York. Sites that pay homage to the ancestors will include the Slave Gallery at St. Augustine's Church, The African Burial Ground and Seneca Village.  
Saturdays in May 2018

Sacred Dignity to Human Suffering, Excursion Tour, Part II  
Join us on a three-day pilgrimage as we visit historic sites to broaden our knowledge and understanding of African American history in New York state. Itinerary in formation and to include: The Stephen Myers Home, Albany, NY; Gerrit Smith Estate National Historic Landmark, Peterboro, NY and the Harriet Tubman Home National Historical Park, Auburn New York

## Journeys



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## Jesus with the Tattooed Face

By the Rev. Carla E. Roland Guzmán, PhD

**A**n author in El Salvador wrote a book for his mother thanking her for all her wisdom. One of the greatest pains in his short life, is that while selling bread he was arrested; he was arrested on Mother's Day. In reflecting upon the idea of original/inherited sin, Dr. Serene Jones argues in *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace* (2000) that "we are shaped by oppressive dynamics that predate us and that we do not choose to be determined by." In other words, we are born into a broken world, which to me then boils down to the responsibility we have in leaving the world better than we found it. And, if we choose to not be paralyzed by this brokenness, we have the responsibility to seriously put hope into various praxes. This hope is a belief in the promise of redemption for all within God's creation. Or said differently, in seeing ourselves and others as fully redeemable by God; no matter what we have done or left undone; no matter what has separated us from God and one another. This is part of living into our baptismal covenant.

Imagine for a moment all the conversations about judgment, forgiveness, salvation, etc. that you have been a part of, or sermons you have heard. Do you believe that all persons are worthy of God's redemption? Of course, we have hope in such redemption; our problem lies in practicing redemption and reconciliation. In my experience, although we believe in God's grace toward us, we often struggle with feeling worthy of God's forgiveness; we also judge others, making some into unredeemable ones; dehumanizing them. These are the persons in which we do not see the face of Christ. The key to putting hope into praxes is in returning personhood to the marginalized, the discarded, the other in all our lives.

In early October, the Rev. Susan Copley (Christ Church/San Marcos, Tarrytown) and I attended a human rights course in El Salvador offered by Cristosal (Cristosal.org). In addition to the intensive classroom time, and considering the

human rights approach as a faith issue, we met with incarcerated youth, ex-members of either the 18th Street or MS-13 gangs, as well as others who left the gangs and are trying to build a life on the outside. Sadly, the next time we visit El Salvador many of these amazing young men, including the author I mentioned before, will have lost their lives to violence. Because of gang involvement or gang tattoos, society has deemed them unredeemable and treats them as less than human. These young men shared their stories with us and helped us to understand their daily lives. Imagine a tattoo dictating what the rest of your short life will look like: vulnerable. Imagine that the only reason you cannot sell bread, and change your life, is because you have a tattoo and that makes you undesirable. Humanizing these young men does not minimize the pain they have caused or violence they have committed; they pay daily for their former gang involvement. Yet, respecting their dignity keeps them as part of God's humanity. If you had been in that detention center classroom with us, you would have left with so much hope for these young men, and so much despair knowing what awaited them outside.

These young men are living examples of persons shaped by "oppressive dynamics" choosing not to be determined by them. Yet, until we stand with them as the tattooed face of Christ we will let their bodies continue to be vulnerable and disposable. If we are to believe that we and all are worthy of redemption, we are called to humanize the despised, the marginalized, the discarded, not only in El Salvador, but in all the communities of which our churches are a part. These young men yearn for their families and their communities – the least we can do is advocate for their human right to survive and belong again to them, and be seen as part of God's creation.

*The author is rector of the Church of St Matthew and St Timothy in Manhattan.*

## Jesús con la Cara Tatuada

Por la Revda. Carla E. Roland Guzmán, PhD

**U**n autor en El Salvador le escribió un libro a su madre dándole las gracias por toda su sabiduría. Uno de las angustias más grandes en su corta vida fue que mientras vendía pan fuera detenido; arrestado el día de las madres. Reflexionando sobre la idea de pecado original/heredado la Dra. Serene Jones, en *Teoría Feminista y Teología Cristiana: Cartografías de Gracia* (2000), propone que "somos formados/as por dinámicas opresivas anteriores a nosotros/as, de las cuales no escogemos que nos determinen." En otras palabras, al nacer entramos a un mundo roto, que para mí, quiere decir que tenemos la responsabilidad de dejar el mundo en mejores circunstancias en que lo encontramos. Además, si escogemos no estar paralizados/as por esta quebrantes, tenemos la responsabilidad de seriamente practicar la esperanza. Esta esperanza es creer en la promesa de redención para toda la creación de Dios. Es decir, nos vemos y vemos a otras personas como plenamente redimibles por Dios; sin importar lo que se ha hecho o dejado de hacer; sin importar que nos ha separado de Dios y de otras personas. Esto es parte de vivir nuestro pacto bautismal.

Imagina por un momento todas las conversaciones sobre el juicio, el perdón, la salvación, etc. en las cuales has participado, o sermones que has escuchado. ¿Crees que todas las personas merecen la redención de Dios? Por supuesto, tenemos la esperanza en tal redención; nuestro problema está en practicar la redención y la reconciliación. En mi experiencia, aunque creemos en la gracia de Dios para con nuestra persona, a veces tenemos un pensar interno que nos hace sentir que no merecemos el perdón de Dios; también juzgamos y funcionamos como si otras personas no son redimibles; deshumanizando a esas personas. Estas son las personas en quienes no vemos la cara de Cristo. La clave de practicar la esperanza es retornando la humanidad a las personas marginadas, las descartadas, las que son esa gente en nuestras vidas.

Al principio de octubre, acompañé a la Revda. Susan Copley (Christ Church/San Marcos, Tarrytown) a El Salvador y participamos en un curso sobre los derechos

humanos. El curso fue ofrecido por Cristosal (Cristosal.org). Además del tiempo intenso en el salón de clases, y considerar el enfoque de los derechos humanos como un tema de fe, estuvimos con jóvenes encarcelados, miembros anteriores de las gangas de la Calle 18 y MS 13, al igual que otros ex-pandilleros que buscan reconstruir sus vidas. Lamentablemente, la próxima vez que visitemos El Salvador, muchos de estos increíbles jóvenes increíbles, incluyendo el autor que mencioné arriba, habrán perdido sus vidas por la violencia. Debido al involucramiento previo en una pandilla y tener tatuajes, la sociedad a dicho que estos jóvenes no son redimibles, y no son tratados como humanos. Imagina que un tatuaje dicte la realidad de tu corta vida: la vulnerabilidad. Imagina que la única razón por la cual no puedes vender pan, o cambiar tu vida, es un tatuaje que te marca como indeseable. Humanizar a estos jóvenes no minimiza el dolor que han causado o la violencia que han cometido; ellos pagan diariamente por su involucramiento en las gangas. Sin embargo, el respetar su dignidad los mantiene a ellos como parte de la humanidad de Dios. Si hubieses estado en el salón del centro de detención con nosotras, hubieses salido con mucha esperanza para estos jóvenes, y con mucho dolor por conocer lo que les espera cuando salgan,

Estos jóvenes son ejemplos vivos de personas formadas por "dinámicas opresivas" que están tratando de escoger no ser determinados por ellas. Pero, hasta que no los veamos como la cara tatuada de Cristo, continuaremos dejar que sus cuerpos sean vulnerables y despreciados. Si de verdad creemos que toda persona es digna de redención, tenemos el llamado a humanizar las personas despreciadas, marginadas, descartadas, no sólo en El Salvador, sino en los entornos de nuestras iglesias. Estos jóvenes anhelan por sus familias y comunidades – lo menos que podemos hacer es abogar por su derecho humano de sobrevivir y pertenecer a ellas nuevamente, y ser vistos como parte de la creación de Dios.

*La autora es rectora, Iglesia de San Mateo y San Timoteo, Manhattan.*

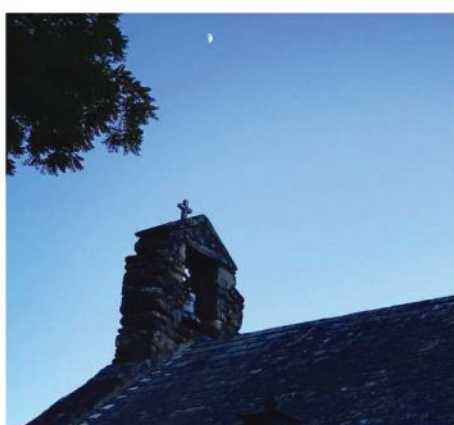




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# Forgiving It

By *Sheba Ross Delaney*

**S**in and forgiveness are core elements of Christian experience and Christianity's best hope for making the world a better place. The teachings of the church are clear: God's forgiveness is universal and unconditional. We sin when we are disconnected from God. If we know we can approach God without fear and be forgiven and healed, we can reconnect to God and stop doing things that hurt ourselves and others. Then there is less suffering in the world.

When we are connected to God we know that we are also called upon to forgive others. We understand that by forgiving those who cause suffering, we end cycles of violence and retaliation, and can build a better future for everyone. We're okay with this up to a point. Most of us can forgive sins that we can imagine ourselves committing; but when the sin and the consequent suffering gets bigger and more horrible our capacity for forgiveness is challenged. We don't want to forgive Hitler, Pol Pot, Ted Bundy or Steven Paddock, and we don't want God to forgive them either. What we really want to do is hurt them.

This is where the idea of hell comes in handy. We know we're not supposed to go after people with torches and pitchforks but if we indulge ourselves with the idea of hell we can sit back in our moral armchairs and let God do it for us.

The problem with hell—and it's not one of the better ideas that theologians have come up with—is that while it's satisfying to think of God torturing people who we think ought to suffer, it also sets up a contradiction as to the nature of God. Is God

loving and compassionate, or angry and punitive? According to Jesus, God is love. An angry God that throws people into hell does not seem very loving and is not very approachable. Fear will keep broken and vulnerable people away from God and opportunities for healing and redemption are lost.

What are we to do, then, with the anguish and the outrage we feel when sin torments the world and innocents suffer? Here are four things to think about.

First, for a religion to have any hope of improving human life it must encompass the best and the worst that humans are capable of. We all know what the best and the worst are. A God that only forgives stealing from the cookie jar and cheating on your taxes doesn't have much power to heal the world. If we elevate the crucifixion, it's in the hope of someday transcending man's inhumanity to man.

Second, forgiving sin does not in any way minimize the suffering that has been endured. God understands suffering. He's the guy on the cross, remember? We believe in an incarnate God that lives in, with, and through us. Every fallen sparrow, every tear, every cry of anguish in the loneliness of the night is written into the book of life. We, as Christians, have made an iconic image of a person being tortured to death by other human beings to remind ourselves that whatever we do to one another, we do to God, and that God suffers with us.

Third, when we forgive, we are not freeing anybody from sin or from responsibility. When I made private confession in preparation for baptism, my confessor wisely told me that forgiving doesn't mean nothing happened. Only God can set a captive heart free; only God has the power to see into the mystery of human consciousness and heal brokenness. But when we forgive, we neutralize the power that sin has to continue to hurt us; we free ourselves to be at peace in our own humanity and continue the business of life. It's a way of containing sin and keeping it from spreading.

Fourth, when we try to forgive and cannot, it's good to remember that we are loved and cared for by a compassionate God who understands every aspect of our consciousness and never asks us to do anything beyond our powers. It can be so very hard to forgive. It's hard because we are caring people, and our empathy for those who suffer is causing us more pain than we can deal with. We should be grateful for our humanity and our empathy. When our grief and our anger and desire for revenge make it too difficult to forgive, it's okay to step back and ask God to do it for us.

Jesus shows us how to do this. When he cries out in pain and sorrow from the cross, he doesn't wave a beneficent hand over his tormentors and proclaim "I forgive you." Instead he calls on God: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

It is here, in a grim scene handed down to us over so many generations, that we come face to face with ourselves. Here, we see our worst and our best in our ability to cause suffering and in our ability to transcend it. By the grace of God most of us will never find ourselves in the most extreme roles of victim and perpetrator. But there are many ways to sin and many ways to suffer. Brokenness and sin hurt us all, either by destroying life or by destroying our ability to find joy in it. By forgiving sin, and by sincerely hoping that all sinners find forgiveness in the heart of God, we become part of the stability of the world and the hope for a better tomorrow.

*The author is a member of the Church of the Heavenly Rest in Manhattan.*

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# Repenting It

By Neil Winward

**S**in is the hardest thing we deal with as Christians. It pervades every aspect of our Christian life. It distorts our behavior, corrupts our psyche, separates us from God and leads us to despair and loss of community.

Sin is like crime. Crimes require two things: a guilty act and a guilty mind. They also require being caught. They require proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, based on evidence presented in an adversarial process and judgment by a judge or jury. Conviction of sin is more straightforward. We know. God knows.

We can't avoid sin. It shares our daily walk, dueling angels and demons on either shoulder. Envy, Greed, Gluttony, Lust, Pride, Sloth, Wrath. The taxonomy of sins was formerly cardinal, capital, mortal and venial. The early church once held some to be beyond forgiveness. The modern church says all can be forgiven except one—the eighth: outright rejection of God. Even overcoming sin presents a risk: self-satisfaction, a subset of pride. Sin is complicated.

Sin is not just personal—between a person and God. It seeps into the soil of our community, poisoning relationships. It shreds the fabric of our society, tearing the delicate web that binds us together as a people of God. It leads to war, brutality, mass suffering, degradation—the wages of sin is death.

Polling company Gallup's annual Values and Beliefs survey shows that 77 per cent of Americans consider moral values to be in decline. The survey, however, only goes back to 2002 and perceptions vary across the political spectrum. The urge to sin, its sources and its results are ancient and defy political categories. The perception that things are getting worse may reflect more heightened awareness than an actual worsening trend.

The power of sin, the effort to resist it, and its constant re-emergence in our daily lives are daunting, until we realize we are not alone. Contemplating and discussing sin are uncomfortable. The word itself makes us feel unclean—until we realize we are not the first to struggle; this enemy is very familiar.

What does it mean that Christ died for our sins? The idea that someone can substitute his own life for us and, by doing so, save us forever is hard to grasp. The complexity is informed by parenthood. I would gladly suffer, even die, for my sons, wanting nothing in return, except perhaps that they would understand that the sacrifice was a gift, an expression of love and a wish that, one day, they would love their own children enough to do the same.

This helps, but it does not translate perfectly into Christ's sacrifice for us; and it does not explain God's sacrifice of his son for us. I understand the Trinity as: God

in charge; Jesus, second in command; the Holy Spirit as consigliere and all-purpose emissary. God made the universe, set everything in motion. Freewill proved troublesome and, together with a defection—Satan—problems arose and various solutions were tried. The flood didn't work; neither did the efforts of God's chosen people. So God sent Jesus to give us a way to get back to where God had originally intended us to be.

In recognizing that mankind would never be perfect again, God gave us a way out of sin. He recognized that the pattern of the Jewish people to accept their mission, to stray from that mission, to ask God for another chance, for God to grant them that chance, was simply and inevitably the way it was going to be: we would

never forget the evil we had discovered. By sending Jesus into the world; by allowing us to crucify him; by showing us, through the resurrection, that Jesus has power over death, God is telling us that if “the wages of sin is death” (Roman 6:23 NRSV), the wages of belief in him is a path to life.

We can lean on Jesus—like a child enfolded in the arms of its parent—and ask for help. We can

admit that we have sinned. We can ask for forgiveness in the knowledge that, if we repent, it will be granted. This is simple; and yet, it is the hardest thing we do. The tension in a quarrel is darkest before the new dawn of an apology. We see no way out; we are full of anger and self-righteousness (Wrath and Pride); and then, a voice calls us to forget ourselves for a moment; to accept the relationship is worth more than being right. Apologize, and the light floods in; healing begins. There is hope.

God's love is not conditional. His grace is free. There is a price, though, to accepting them. That price is repentance. Without repentance, there is no forgiveness. Repentance is the act of accepting God's love, receiving his grace, developing the habits of following Jesus and learning to forgive ourselves. Forgiveness is a bargain sealed in our soul, overseen by our conscience; recognizing the power of prayer to stay in touch with God; the power of worship to gain the strength of community.

We may stumble, but we have defined a new path. Sin may trip us up, but it will not be our master. Wrestling with sin, armed with the power of the cross, is a struggle we must accept as the price of our human condition, the price for having eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We will not escape without scars, but we will escape—and there will be beauty, love and gratitude along our path.

*We can ask for forgiveness in the knowledge that, if we repent, it will be granted.*

---

*The author is a member of the Church of St. James the Less, Scarsdale.*



# The Bread of Life

By Meghann Wu

**M**y guess is that you know sin when you see it. Especially in other people. Whenever my mother suspected me of lying, she would leer over my six-year-old self and sneer, “God is watching you.” I found myself feeling guilty about things I did do and things I did not do in equal measure. Now, as an adult, it is no surprise that I take responsibility for everything, even apologizing to the cab about to run me over when I have the walk signal.

But I am not casting stones. I am grateful for my mother’s spirituality and healthy choices, particularly after my father passed away when I was thirteen. Before Whole Foods even existed, we would travel hours to little bodegas in rural hippie towns to buy organic produce. Our rice was fifty shades of brown, wild, and ancient grains mixed together. She also baked her own bread, but did not bother with a bread slicer or a sense of aesthetics. Each irregular slice was 1-2 inches thick with tired, jagged edges. According to her, it was all going to same place anyway.

Having been the target of one too many pointed fingers in the school cafeteria, I began to hide her homemade sandwiches in the corner of the living room bookcase before leaving in the morning. To this day, I do not know why I did not just throw them away. I think, in my mind, that would have been worse. She was always quick to remind me that there were starving children in Africa, so I knew throwing food away was heretical as well as wasteful. Hiding it seemed more humane. Something Jesus would do. Besides, the dire need was to protect myself from the tormenting judgment of cool blonde girls and their perfect classic white Wonder Bread.

Pods of mold soon bloomed behind a forest of old National Geographics and graduate school chemistry textbooks. And like all sin ignored, the sandwiches began to smell. My mother had the sixth sense to clean one day and found them all.

She was so upset, she couldn’t even look at me. I sulked back to my room with requisite guilt, but also a strange sense of relief. She announced she would never make sandwiches again and sent me back to school with lunch money. I was finally free to be like the other kids.

The Catholic Archbishop Augustine Di Noia once said, “Original sin is not an inclination to evil, but a lack of facility of choosing good.” If this is true, it seems to me that sin is a function of our humanity: we only know what is good based on our experiences, perceptions, and facilities in the moment. As an adult, I see how bearing the burden of being teased while filling my body with wholesome food might have been the “good” choice. However, as a child, I did what I thought was good at the time. I was not throwing away food in the trash. I was simply saving myself from daily humiliation. And in the end, I got to buy my own lunch.

In this way, I believe sin is a shared agency in that we are all merely trying to do our best with the information we have and always falling short. Eve thought the fruit was “...good for food and pleasing to the eye...” (Genesis 3:6). Adam trusted her. But like my shame of healthy sandwiches, it was not good after all.

When they were afraid, they hid. God could smell it when he couldn’t find them. And perhaps this is the most hurtful moment as a parent. You try to do the best you can to provide for your children: nothing short of the world with only one rule. Then they go behind your back thinking they know better. Then they have the nerve to hide. Can you imagine?

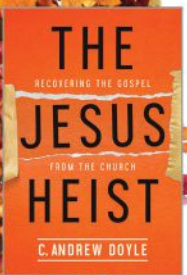
Of course they must be punished because you do not want to raise spoiled brats, but how long can you stay angry at them? How do you save them from themselves? And ultimately teach them what is good?

I’ve heard some theologians argue that sin was designed by God. I doubt it. I think we sin because we don’t know any better, and God gives us money to buy our own lunch. And in time, maybe, we will choose healthy sandwiches. In the meantime, I rest in knowing he has forgiven me, laid down his life for me, and, yes, is still watching me.

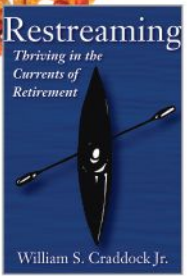
This love allows us to move past our sin and not let it define us no matter how it feels. Because if we define ourselves according to God’s love then nothing else matters, even our sin.

*The author is a member of All Angels’ Church in Manhattan.*

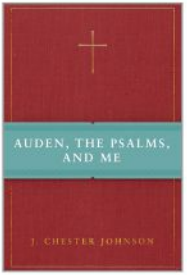
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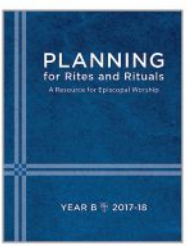
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# Why Does it Matter?

By the Rev. Deacon Novella Lawrence

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.*

**W**hy and how does understanding about sin matter to us today? It does so because we have chosen to be Christians, and as Christians we believe that “Christ died for our sins.” Indeed, as a part of our liturgy, during the Eucharistic prayers, we hear not only that he did so, but that he suffered greatly.

But while many of us today rightly quote the words of Jesus when speaking about issues of social justice, we rarely do so when Jesus speaks about sin and repentance. Why is that? What, after all, is the “Good News,” what is “the Gospel message,” if not that Christ took on the sins of the World so that we could be forgiven?

Are we not reticent to speak of sin and repentance because doing so makes most of us very uncomfortable? We don’t mind speaking about the corporate sins of greed, racism, oppression, crime, etc.—and rightly so; but regarding our own individual sins and those of our friends, family, associates.... never! We might, after all, appear judgmental and/or they might look at us more closely and see us as we are. It is easier to look the other way and “let God be the judge.”

Yet just before we receive Holy Communion the priest says “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...” and then invites us to say a corporate confession.

The truth is, many Christians do not seem to grasp or understand just what the “Good News” is. As a former hospice chaplain, I met with many lifelong churchgoers who were facing the end of life with fear, doubt, and uncertainty about what would happen when they died—many with unrepented sin on their consciences. Had they not heard and understood the Good News all those years in church? Did they not understand the need for true repentance? “How are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?” Romans 10:14 (NRSV)

We are all sinners, as St. Paul said, “of which I am chief.” I say this from my own personal experience: years ago, a Christian friend encouraged me to acknowledge that I was a sinner and spoke to me about repentance. I’d attended church for many

years, fully aware of my sins, and often thought of them while saying the General Confession. I had convinced myself each week that “God understood.” At least I wasn’t stealing, murdering etc. and after all I was kind to the poor, generous to the needy, supported and worked for my church. We all know the drill...and yet as we continue on in our sin, it does so weigh on our minds; and we continue to justify our sins because of our own selfish desires to hold on to what feels good to us.

In calling for contributions for this issue, the *Episcopal New Yorker* asked “How does repentance feature in a positive way in your life as a Christian?” For me, after years of thinking “I am a good person,” I reluctantly acknowledged my sins and said a sincere prayer of repentance. What followed was a knowledge and assurance of Christ’s forgiveness and of his unconditional love for me that became evident in many ways. Nothing was ever the same after that, and I then chose to learn as much

as I could about who this Jesus was, who could change everything. Am I still a sinner? Do I still commit sins in thought, word and deed? Absolutely yes, but not intentionally and no longer justifying it, but when realized, repenting and asking forgiveness and the grace to walk in his ways and delight in his will.

I believe that most people would agree that contemporary America is more sinful today than earlier

societies. Sin has been around since the beginning of time, of course, and in each century people thought that their era was the most sinful.

Not so long ago, they thought that the movies, the use of alcohol, popular music and dancing were bad. These are things that we now view as pretty innocent compared with today’s issues. Some of us have witnessed the changes in America, especially since the 1970s. It appears that today “anything goes” and “everything is okay.” With the drug epidemic, the wrong use of the Internet, some TV programs, talk shows, violent and sexually-explicit movies, we have seen a steady decline in our society. Many are concerned about their children and what effect this will have on them.

Yet when asked if some sinners were worse than others, Jesus replied: “No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.” (Luke 13:3 NRSV)

*The author is a deacon in the diocese and recently retired as deacon on staff at Christ Church, Staten Island.*

*I believe that most people would agree that contemporary America is more sinful today than earlier societies.*



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# Not Enough to be Nice

By Preston L. Pittman

*“...mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, che la diritta via era smarrita.” –Dante Alighieri*

**W**hen much younger, just out of college and after years of philosophy classes, I thought that I had solved the problem of sin. Coming of age is not easy in a time of questioning the justice of a war far away, racial and social injustice at home, and the complexities of sexual identity. (Bishop Paul Moore, whom I had the honor of knowing, well understood the difficulties of these issues.) I thought, a little naively, that I was on the right track. (As I write this, I recall Stephen Sondheim’s lyrics: “The way is clear. The light is good. I have no fear, nor no one should.”)

I believed that if people only knew the repercussions of their actions they would do the right thing, because they would understand that all the things we think and do eventually bear the fruit of the seed we have planted. As a song in the musical *The Fantasticks* has it, “Plant a radish. Get a radish. Never any doubt.” I had no doubt. A good life springs from good actions, which originate in good thoughts. *And*, equally important, one could live a good life and at the same time live *the* good life. “Ou monon tou zen, alla tou eu zen” – *Epicurus*

I understood that there are higher goals to which our everyday actions are connected. Perhaps the highest goal to which we can strive, beyond happiness in the Aristotelian sense, is to be at one with God; and thus “sin” becomes any action or thought that keeps us from the presence of God. I did come to question whether or not evil exists. It seemed that evil was the extreme absence of the presence of God and that it was a metaphor for that absence, and not a thing in itself.

Striving to follow an ethical path wasn’t so much a question of blindly obeying any one set of rules of scripture or behavior, as of understanding the far-reaching effects of our actions. The moral teachings of Jesus on being kind and forgiving to all, and of the epistles on living in love, gave general, practical advice; but there were modern questions which they did not easily answer for me. With the supplemental lessons learned from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, I felt well-armed to fight the good fight.

There comes a time in our lives when most of us enter Dante’s dark wood. I became the victim of a violent crime and soon after, the World Trade Center was brought down in sight of my office window. I became shaken by the notion of real evil existing in the world, and even more disturbed by the more complex issue of people causing suffering and evil in the world while thinking that they were doing the will of God. It might be easy enough to demonize the people who hurt me, and

who committed this larger act of terrorism, but the thought that they believed we were evil and they were acting in the name of God was more unsettling.

Not long ago, on the 16th anniversary of the World Trade Center attack, our rector at St. Philip’s Church in the Highlands, the Rev. Frank Geer, recalled that at the time he had said that an event like this leaves a hole in the heart and that we have to be most careful about what fills that void. There is often a tendency to let anger or fear fill it; our calling, as followers of a Judeo-Christian path, is to resist that temptation, and fill it instead with God’s love.

Bishop Berkeley believed that the world we see only exists in the mind of God, and we are co-conspirators with God in creating it. Perhaps evil and sin are “slip-pages” in that co-creation with God, in which we have become out of sync, and things happen to shake us out of lethargy or error.

The nature of sin and evil may be less evident to me now, but it does make sense that having faith, and acting in good faith, may be the only reactions to a confusing world. Prayer and meditation become more important tools in balancing us in an unbalancing world, so that we can act in an appropriate way, with kindness and forgiveness.

Again Dante comes to mind—“The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis.” It’s not just enough to be nice. Being nice is not the same thing as being good. The witch in Sondheim’s musical *Into the Woods* knows this: “You’re not good, you’re not bad. You’re just nice.”

Sometimes one has to take a stand and actively confront evil. In his novel, *The Magus*, John Fowles has the title’s character say of Nazi Germany that the tragedy was “not that one man had the courage to do evil, but that millions had not the courage to be good.”

In the end, perhaps the path through sin and evil to being and doing good, is much like a path through a dark wood. It’s a journey. It’s a process. Plant a radish and sometime get a magic bean stalk. The way is not always clear and the light is not always good.

In Ephesians, chapter 6:14, St. Paul exhorts us to “put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

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*The author is a member of the vestry at St. Philip’s Church in the Highlands, Garrison.*



# Whose Life Is It, Anyway?

By Judith A. Mason

**S**in is a falling short of, or turning away from, the fullness of the will of God by thought, word, or deed in a particular situation or relationship. It can be individual or corporate (or customarily a melding of the two) and it usually has something to do with fear.

The Roman Catholic priest and writer Father Jacques Philipe has said, “We must of course try as hard as we can to do God’s will as it comes to us in a general way that is valid for everyone: through Scripture, the Commandments, and so on. It is also indispensable, to go further: to aspire to know not only what God demands of everyone in general, but also what he wants more specifically of us individually.” [Edited]

And we must also seek to know and to do God’s will moment by moment, not only as individuals, but also in our corporate and communal lives—as a family, a church, at work, as a nation. The general will of God, as Father Philipe terms it—God’s universal principles and expectations—are well known. But how are they meant to be implemented specifically here and now in our shared life in a particular time and place?

We do know that corporately as well as individually, we are living out the story of

God’s continuing self-revelation—as long as we can give up our arrogance and our need for control of the story line. It is about Him not about us: “Yahweh” can be translated “I Am What I Am” or “I Will Be What I Will Be,” but never “I Am What I Was.”

This is where the fear comes in. Faith, not courage, is here the opposite of fear. We are not the authors of God’s continuing self-narrative: it existed long before our arrival on this blue planet that we have soaked red in one another’s blood; and it will go on long after. Our part in the story’s telling is to hear what the Spirit is saying and together, through the fellowship of deep, sustained prayer, to feel ourselves forward into where we are next being called; to know and to do God’s will, in all its concrete specificity, in our own particular time and place.

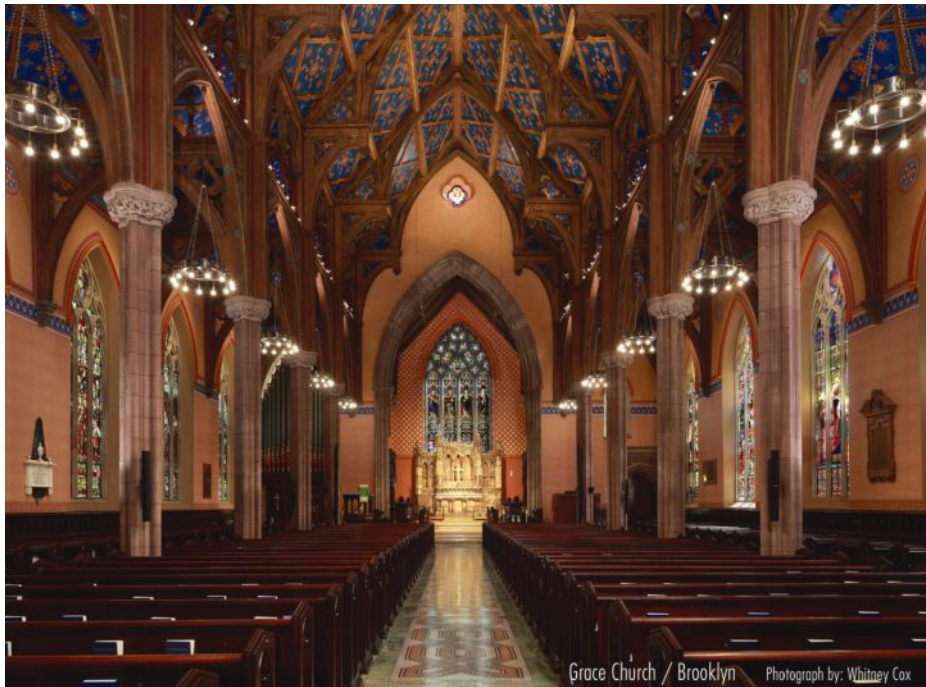
We can generally discern what actions God’s will requires our very next step together should be, although rarely any further. This is as it needs to be, so that our families, our parishes and our country can participate ever more wholly and freely in the ongoing, incarnate—always simultaneously immemorial and unprecedented—self-revelatory life of God.

*The author is a member of St. Bartholomew’s Church in Manhattan.*

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## Sin as Our Shared Discontents

By Gary Ryan, *ThM*

**Y**ou can never step into the same river twice ... the banks shift over time, whole swaths change course, new channels cut into the plain, others cut into the rock, and all the while the waters constantly flow toward the sea.

Human culture is like a river: it flows and shifts, never stays in place, never stops morphing from one iteration to the next. And over time, new awarenesses arise, and new understandings; new ways of looking at our previous notions, and new ways of interpreting what we already know.

A case in point is the matter of chattel slavery. In older times, it was thought to be justified and part of the divine order. Now we know that it is wrong, and almost universally throughout the world, it is forbidden. Where it is practiced, it is done so secretly, precisely because it is so broadly forbidden. We can scarcely now even believe our forebears put up with it.

The use of child labor, the use of child soldiers, capital punishment, and wholesale environmental degradation have all been outlawed in much/most of the world. My suspicion is that eventually we will even lose our stomach for war.

I read the Bible through when I was in high school. Occasionally a story would stand out head-and-shoulders above the others: Abraham offering his son, Boaz falling for Ruth—then Ruth taking her place in the royal line, Absalom warring against his father King David, Hosea “being asked/being told” to marry a prostitute as a prophetic gesture.

The laws about how sacrifices were to be made upon the altar I remember as high drama ... the animals were to be healthy and without blemish, they were to be cut into quarters, waved over one’s head, salted, then burned, etc. Depending upon the kind of sacrifice, part of the offering was to be taken home, cooked, and shared with the needy (widows, orphans, and refugees).

Once per year, on the day of Yom Kippur, the high priest oversaw the offering of two goats for all the people. Lots were cast ... the goat upon which the lesser lot

fell was killed and burned upon the altar. The other goat, the scapegoat, the high priest held by the head, spoke aloud the sins committed by the community in the past year, then handed the scapegoat to another man who led it away from the temple, and away from the city, and into the wilderness. A watchman atop the temple messaged the high priest when the scapegoat was out of sight, and the people yelled out their relief that their collective sins of the past year had been removed from their midst.

In our post-modern culture, it is not popular to talk about religion, and even less popular to talk about Christian religion. If Christians were better generally at representing the peace and love that Jesus modeled, perhaps it would be easier to have those conversations. Maybe. Or maybe not. Modernity doesn’t seem to be comfortable with any religion: not ours, not anyone’s.

That’s the backdrop we’re dealing with when the uniquely Christian idea of sin is brought up. How dare you, and who do you think you are?

For the record, one need not be religious to have enculturated ideas of sin. The Hadza, a hunter-gatherer tribe in the Rift Valley of Tanzania—who, in a way, are “proto-us,” have no religion and no hierarchy. What they do have is a set of rules called “epeme” that regulate who can hunt what animals, and how the kill is to be divided. Men cannot hunt animals that are small or slow, those must be saved for children and women. The man who kills an eland has sole right to divide it among others on the hunt, and later among others who tent near him. Violations of epeme are dealt with severely.

Most of the New Testament and an important early translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, were written in Roman times in common, not formal, Greek of the day, perhaps using lost source texts that were in Aramaic. In both Old and New Testaments, the word used most often for sin was “hamartia,” a word that literally meant, to set up a target, to shoot at it with an arrow, and miss.

That is interesting for several reasons.

In ancient Greece, sin was thought of as offending the gods even though their demands were fickle. That, and as making a mistake in a ritual or ceremony, even if the mistake was incidental or perhaps done innocently. In the Old Testament (2 Sam. 2:7), we have at least one similar example of this, in the story of Uzzah being struck dead for reaching to steady the Ark of the Covenant when it was being carted from point A to point B. Was the Ark supposed to be carted? Was Uzzah’s heart in the right place? To our modern ears, Uzzah was trying to be careful, but in light of the result, apparently not careful enough.

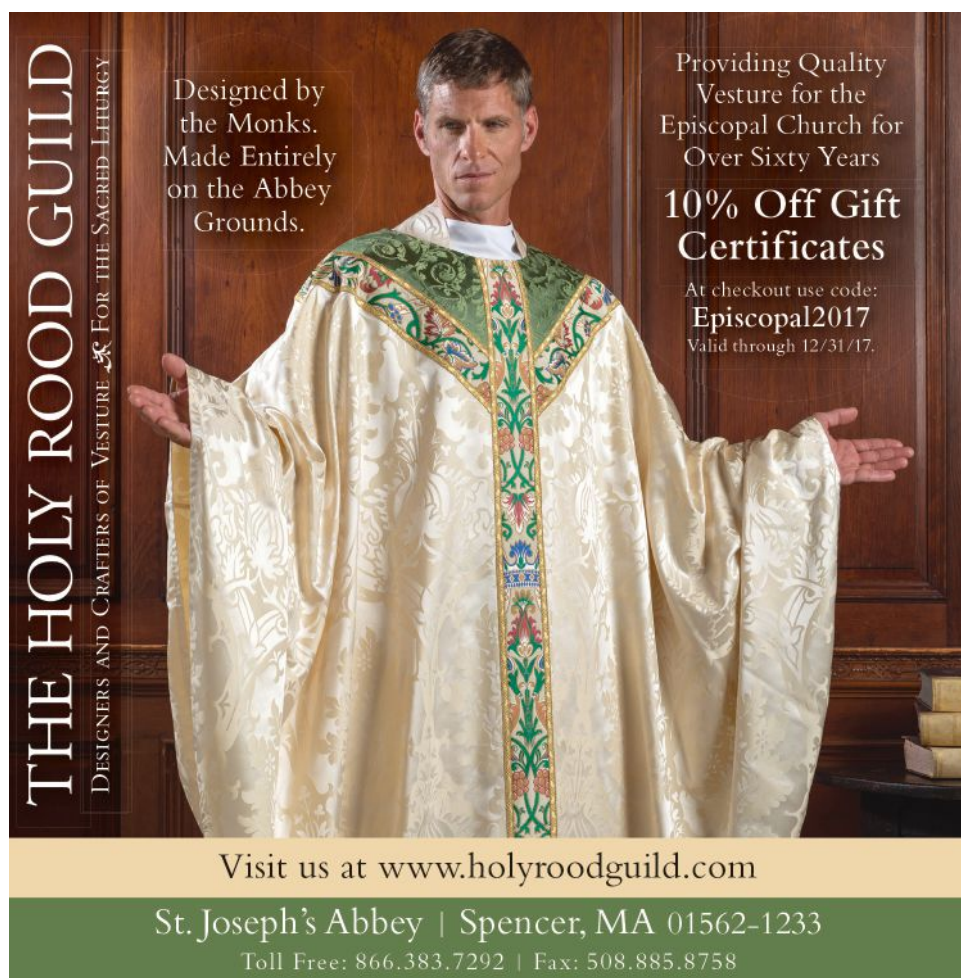
In the Old Testament there is little or no idea of what Christians call “original sin.” Sin was instead an individual person’s failure to keep one or more of the 613 laws in the Torah, or the community’s periodic failure to do so. There was little or no idea that the entire world, or all of humanity was spoiled in any way. The world was made good by God, and so was humanity.

In the New Testament, sin is at once human nature bent in a direction that predisposes persons to act in ways that divide from God, from community, and even from their own best interests. The word used for sin in Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke, was “chatta’ah”—which literally meant to be covered in mud, divided from God, and in need of forgiveness. Enter Jesus, his call for us to follow him, and our newly acquired disposition to model in the world the peace and love God gives when we are indeed forgiven.

In Psalm 17:8 the author wrote, “Keep me as the apple of your eye, hide me in the shadow of your wings.” What does that mean? This: “keep me so close to you, Lord, that when I look at you, I see the little reflection of myself in your eyes. Shadow me there.”

Thus endeth the reading.

*The author is a member of St. Peter’s Church, Chelsea.*



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# Guilt in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

By Sheila Brandes

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

Jesus, St. John 8:7 KJV

Any discussion of a Romantic poet must consider William Wordsworth's definition of poetry. In his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth writes, "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings [my italics]: it takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquility." This marks a radical departure from the eighteenth century view of human beings as primarily rational. The shift is from head to heart. This change is evident in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, where the protagonist is consumed with guilt, but ultimately achieves a modicum of redemption.

A definition of guilt is relevant here. "Guilt," according to an eminent psychoanalyst, "is when someone does not live up to his or her own moral standards." These standards traditionally come from parents and society. It is therefore interesting to note that Coleridge's father was an Anglican clergyman.

The Ancient Mariner has wantonly killed an albatross, "the bird of good omen," that had followed the ship for nine days, and now deeply regrets his heinous act. Upon returning from his voyage, he stops one of three wedding guests to tell his story of the albatross. He relates that when the bird initially approaches the ship, he compares it to a "Christian soul" while the crew "hailed it in God's name." Four stanzas later, however, the Mariner, for no apparent reason, shoots the albatross. He simply says, "With my crossbow/I shot the Albatross." The marginal gloss adds, "The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen." Since no reason is given for killing the bird, we can only assume that the Mariner did so on a whim. Soon after the Mariner shot the albatross, the bird begins to be avenged. First, the wind stops blowing, and soon after the crew is deprived of water: "Water, water every where, / Nor any a drop to drink." (ll. 121-122)

Next, the albatross becomes a symbol of Christ as the bird is hung around the Mariner's neck: "Instead of the cross, the Albatross/About my neck was hung" (ll 141-142). Later, Death and Life-in-Death play dice for the ship's crew. Life-in-Death wins the Ancient Mariner.

The Mariner's outlook on life is about the change. He begins to recognize and appreciate God in nature. His blessing of the water-snakes is evidence of this new "love" of nature.

A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware."

(ll. 284-285)

The self-same moment I could pray;  
And from my neck so free  
The Albatross fell off, and sank  
Like lead into the sea.

(ll. 288-291)

This marks the climax of the Mariner's story, and his atonement begins.

One of the first persons the Mariner meets on his return home is the Hermit who lives in the woods. He feels that the latter will "wash away/the Albatross's blood." The Hermit asks, "What manner of man art thou?" The Mariner then describes how his answer to that question has defined his life:

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
With a woful [sic] agony,  
Which forced me to begin my tale;  
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
That agony returns:  
And till my ghastly tale is told,  
This heart within me burns.

I pass like night, from land to land,  
I have strange power of speech;  
That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me:  
To him my tale I teach.  
(ll. 576-585)

Notice the word "teach." This is a *lesson*, and the listener must absorb and use it well.

The last eight stanzas focus almost exclusively on prayer. The Wedding-Guest is told how important this is. In these stanzas "the little vesper bell" is calling the Mariner to prayer. The Mariner takes the opportunity to tell the Wedding-Guest how lonely he was at sea, to point out the contrast.

O Wedding-Guest! This soul hath been  
Alone on a wide wide sea:  
So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
Scarce seem there to be.  
(ll. 595-600)

Next, the Mariner makes a pointed comparison between attending church and going to a wedding. The former is by far not only infinitely more important but also more enjoyable:

O sweeter that the marriage-feast,  
'Tis sweeter far to me,  
To walk together to the kirk  
With a good-ly company! –

To walk together to the kirk,  
And all together pray,  
While each to his great Father bends,  
Old men, and babes, and loving Friends  
And youth and maidens gay!  
(ll. 601-609)

Notice how close-knit and happy the church congregation is. The wedding-guests, meanwhile, are boisterous:

What loud uproar bursts from that door!  
The wedding-guests are there:  
But in the garden-bower the bride  
And bride-maids singing are.  
(ll. 591-594)

It is clear that the boisterous wedding-guests cannot hear each other. The bride and bride-maids, for their part, are perhaps singing to entertain the guests, who are already leaving. The wedding-guests are clearly not as unified a group as the congregation, and the stanza suggests that they have different interests. *(continued on page 41)*



# The Deeply Human Old Testament Novels of Mary F. Burns

By Stephanie Cowell

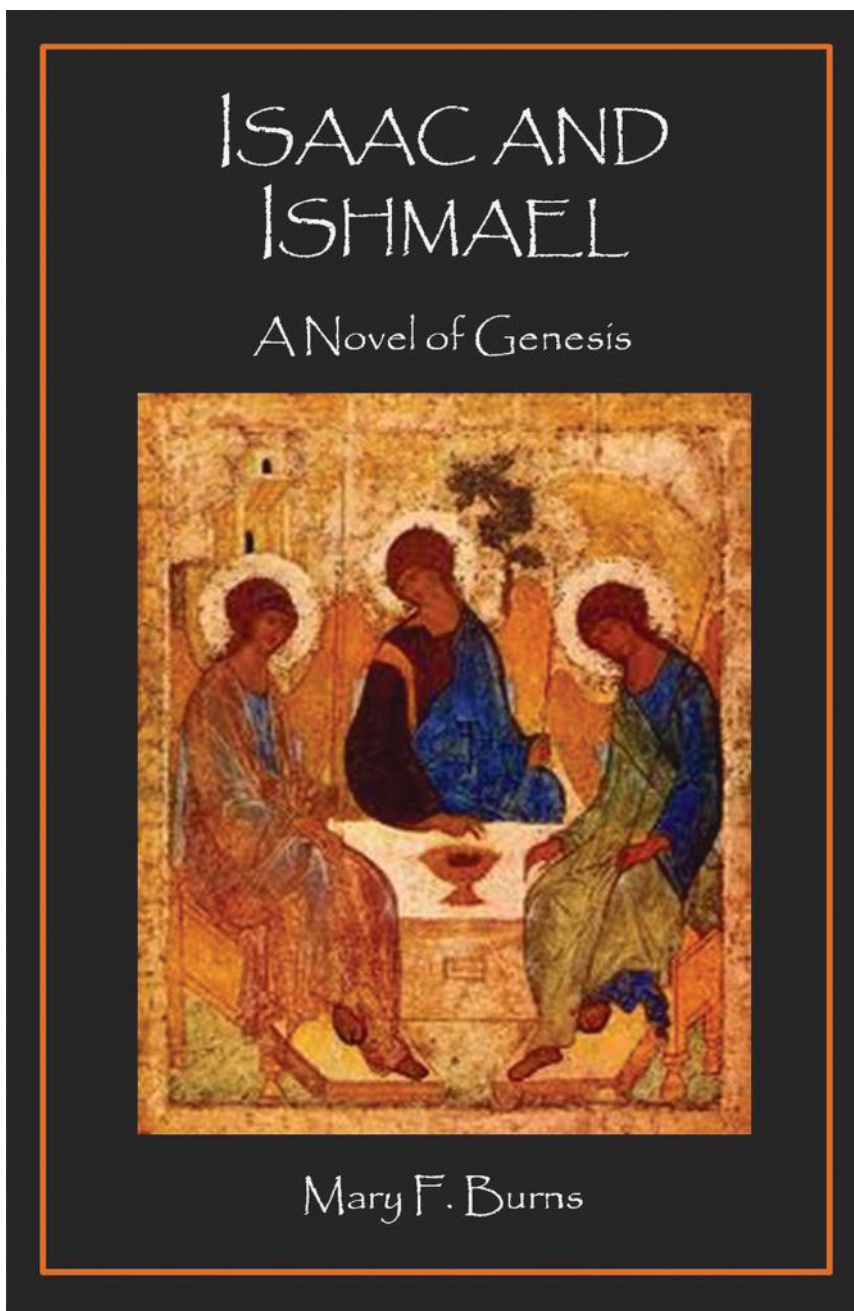
I recently fell in love with two novels based on stories from the Old Testament. I had found them in a little bookshop and then to my joy, was able to meet the author, Mary F. Burns, at a national conference for historical novelists. Since then we have carried on such a vivid e-mail correspondence and long phone conversations that it seems impossible we live on opposite sides of the country.

I read and reread *J: The Woman Who Wrote the Bible* and *Isaac and Ishmael*. *J* is the story of Janaia, the eldest daughter of King David; at first a prophet, she will later learn to write to preserve the legends of her people and the songs of her father. In *Isaac and Ishmael*, we have the story of Abraham's sons and their world-making influence on each other's lives.

I was drawn into the novels' poetry and vivid story telling; people spring to life in a few sentences. It seems the author inscribes her stories on clay tablets seated cross-legged in the desert in a tent somewhere around 1000 BC. This is the young married Janaia in childbirth: "Flickering lights, rain and damp, a rush of water...I floated in ice and fire, high above mountains, deep under the earth..." And when Ishmael returns a grown man to his father, the reconciliation is so poignant that I read it several times: "[Abraham] dismounts as Ishmael draws near and, staff in hand, strides toward the running man, calls out his name, gathers him in his arms like a babe, a lost lover, a prize he will never let go of again."

Mary F. Burns began writing novels at fifty when she enrolled in a workshop and began on her first book. Most of her novels take a year of research, 6-8 months of writing/editing.

As a "moderately scholarly" Catholic, she pored over the New Testament in Greek/English translations, and then did the same with Genesis, only in Hebrew/English, fascinated by the translation choices from the original languages. She read Professor Harold Bloom's "The Book of J"—his "literary critique" of the Hebrew Bible. He used as his source a newly translated, exceedingly beautiful version (by David Rosenberg) of only those passages that scholars have deemed attrib-



utable to the original "J-Writer", i.e., in Genesis and Exodus, and promulgated the theory that "J" was a woman, probably of the court of King David or Solomon.

From Professor Bloom's idea, Mary used her imagination to bring J to life as Janaia, David's beloved daughter. She also thoroughly read the books of Samuel and Kings to get a good grounding in the time period when Hebrew writing was created and "someone" began recording the stories. Writing was forbidden to most people, especially women; Janaia's special position allowed her this unusual opportunity, but it still had to be kept secret.

Both *J* and *Isaac and Ishmael* seem as if they were written in a trance. Mary writes to a particular piece of instrumental music for each book that plays in the background, helping her get in the same state of mind each time she sits down to write. For "J" it was the soundtrack for *The Hours*, music that seemed somehow to inspire and inhabit the magic/religious world she was trying to depict.

"Everything [then] was simple, compared to how we live now; uncrowded with science and facts, but rich in meaning and signs," Mary said. "The stories Janaia hears which we now find in the early pages of the Old Testament are told simply, and are rather different from the given versions we have shared for the past few thousand years. For centuries after the first recorded stories, those books were edited again and again, changed to suit the times."

I asked her, "So if the psalms of David were first written in such simplistic pictorial language, how did they ever change into what we know today? Did they have the ability to write something like "Out of the depths have I called unto Thee, O Lord," and have the richness of the meaning known?"

She replied, "Early Hebrew writing was tied to the world of everyday things. There were no 'abstract' words like love, anger, contempt, war. The descriptions for these things were how they appeared in the real world—anger, for example, was 'nostrils flaring' and war is 'strong arm.' A gifted writer/interpreter could express and understand the meanings."



Of the character of David himself, she added, “He is a much larger-than-life person, ‘enlightened’ for his times. I think the dilemma of being the child of an out-sized parent must be incredibly challenging but I wanted Janaia to be able to know herself and rely on her own resources to stand up to him, that as a prophet she was doing God’s will, which was more important than her father’s will.”

Mary’s other Old Testament novel *Isaac and Ishmael* is a subtly depicted relationship between stepbrothers; the scene where the boy Isaac is nearly sacrificed which Ishmael watches secretly is pretty harrowing. Isaac is a simple, plain, happy man. His world has no shades and no subtleties, and he accepts what is given to him. As the son of very old parents, he was doted on and prized. Ishmael, even from the womb, felt the scourge of contempt and the anger of being outcast. And yet you feel the pull of

love between them through this engrossing novel. *Isaac and Ishmael* is the first novel of a trilogy—*Joseph in Egypt* (nod to Thomas Mann) is next, followed by *Moses*.

Mary is also the author of a novel about the painter John Singer Sargent; of *The Spoils of Avalon*, which is a dual-time-period mystery that reaches back to 1539 as Henry VIII is despoiling the Catholic monasteries; and of *Ember Days*, about a priest and his long lost beloved younger brother. Her website is <http://www.maryfburns.com>. All of her work is available at Amazon print and Kindle and makes wonderful book club reading.

*The author is the author of five novels and a member of St. Ignatius of Antioch where she serves on the vestry. [www.stephaniecowell.com](http://www.stephaniecowell.com)*

## PRAY FOR ME: FINDING FAITH IN A CRISIS

BY RICK HAMLIN

FAITHWORDS, 224 PAGES.

*Reviewed by the Rev. Frank C. Strasburger*

**P**ray for Me is a riveting interior account of what it’s like for a man who has spent much of his adult life writing and editing for a religious magazine suddenly to find himself face-to-face with the ultimate spiritual challenge: his mortality.

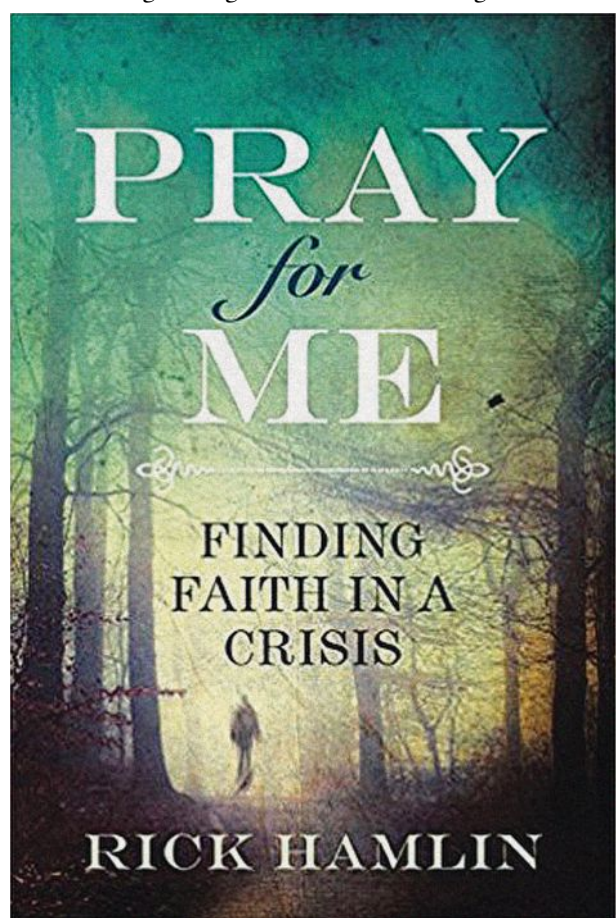
Of course, there’s nothing unique about that. All of us at some point are confronted with the fact of death, both of those we love and of ourselves. But one of the strange things about human beings is the ease

with which even the most aware of us manage to forget that. What Rick Hamlin does is to welcome us into this most intimate of experiences with complete honesty and humility. He lets his fear, his doubts, and his spiritual awkwardness hang right out there for all of us to see and in so doing gives us permission to put our own fear, doubts, and awkwardness on the table. Rick (full disclosure: I know and admire the author) is artful in the way he moves back and forth between his hospital bed and the rest of his life, referring to the very people and experiences he himself would have thought about during his illness, but in a way that turns those into metaphors of his own condition. The result is that this isn’t just a personal catharsis but more of an object lesson.

I think in many ways Rick’s whole point is that while it was an extraordinary experience for him, from a more universal point of view, the experience is quite common. We must all face our deaths at some point; most of us, at many points. And some of us will, like him, spend an extended period unsure of whether or not death is just around the corner. People of faith hope to have the resources to meet such moments, but Rick warns us that even the most faithful of us can find themselves a bit empty-handed—that things like prayer don’t always work quite the way we think they will. After

reading the book, I shared with Rick something that came to me when my daughter was mortally ill (she thankfully recovered) and I found myself unable to pray. Suddenly it dawned on me that “Pray for me” has two meanings: “Pray on my behalf,” and “Pray in my stead.” Immediately, the pressure was off, as I knew many hundreds of people were praying FOR us. The principal message of “Pray for Me,” I think, is that though our mortality leaves us without control when we think we need it most, it turns out everything we truly need is given to us. That’s what grace is all about.

*The author is a retired priest in the Diocese of New Jersey.*



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## God's Farm: How Burmese Refugees Rescued a Tennessee Church

By Pamela A. Lewis

Even the most fertile imagination would be stretched to think that a group of refugees from a country 12 time zones away from the U.S. East Coast could save a struggling Episcopal church in Tennessee. But the Rev. Michael Spurlock would attest that such thinking is not far-fetched at all.

It certainly seemed like an unlikely outcome when Spurlock arrived in July 2007 to serve as vicar at All Saints' Church in Smyrna.

A Tennessee native, he'd taken a winding path to the Episcopal priesthood, exploring Roman Catholicism, painting, and publishing before attending Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Wisconsin and graduating in 1997. (Since 2010 he has served on the clergy staff of Saint Thomas Church in Manhattan.)

During the ten years before his arrival at All Saints', the church had progressed from mission to full parish status. In 2006, however, it broke apart over the controversies then roiling the Episcopal Church. All but 12 members of the congregation left, taking its bank accounts, furnishings, vestments and Communion ware, but leaving a \$850,000 mortgage with interest-only monthly payments of \$5,500.

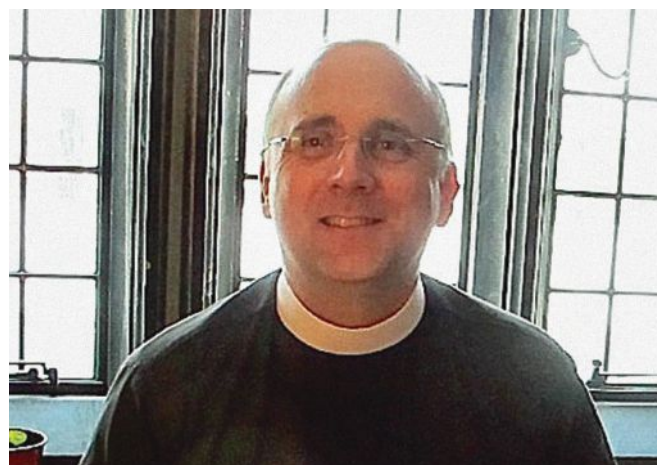
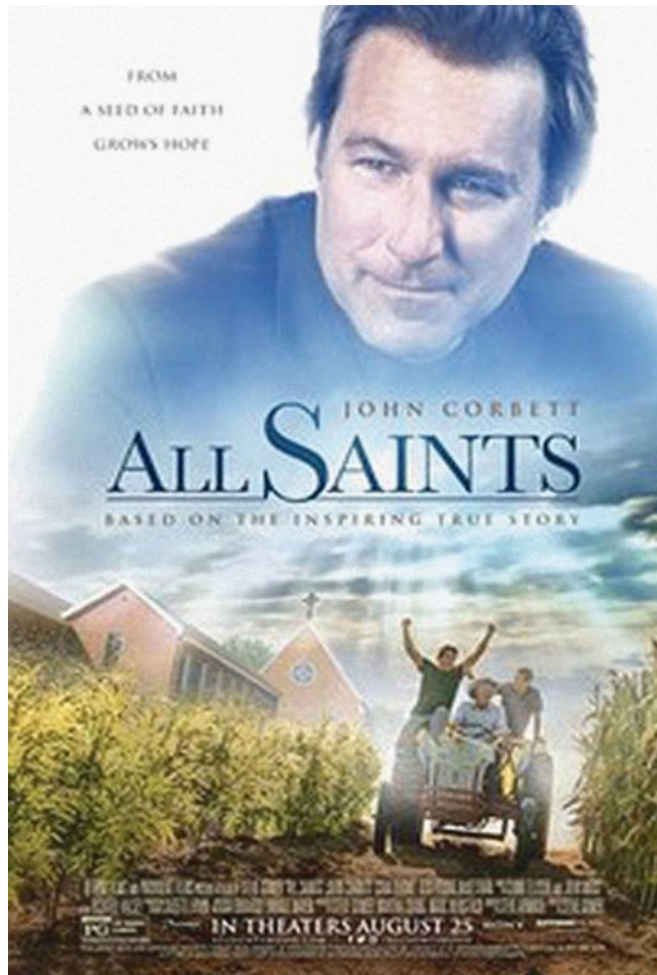
Both Spurlock and Diocese of Tennessee Bishop John Bauerschmidt were reluctant to sell the property, although that appeared to be the best option. Bauerschmidt advised, "Just go down and be a good priest to them," Spurlock recalled. Karl Burns, a friend from Spurlock's seminary days, told him, "If you turn that place around, you'll be a hero. But if you don't, no one will blame you, because that's impossible!"

In 2008, three newcomers arrived at All Saints'. They were members of the Karen (pronounced *kub REN*) ethnic minority from eastern Myanmar (formerly Burma) that had been persecuted for having sided with the British against the Burmese, who collaborated with the Japanese during World War II, and for being Christians. The three journeyed to America to escape continuing oppression.

The Karen in Myanmar, said Spurlock, were "subsistence farmers who lived off the land." Led by Ye Win, a man in his late 20s or early 30s, and a former resistance fighter against the Burmese collaborators, the refugees needed housing, food, and a place to worship without fear. In Smyrna, about 70 Karen joined the original group of three, filling All Saints' pews, Sunday school, and youth group.

Spurlock was truthful with the Karen. "We don't have a lot of resources to help your community," he told them. "But you are welcome here. You come on and join us, and we'll all figure it out together."

But it became increasingly difficult to keep up All Saints' expenses, and it was decided to sell the church. All Saints' received a purchase offer, the diocesan



The Rev. Michael Spurlock

Photo: Pamela Lewis

council made its necessary inspections, and requisite permissions were given. But "nobody wanted to sell the church," recalled Spurlock.

Taking a break from preparing the budget for the church's sale, Spurlock went out on the church property. "While I was out walking, God spoke to me and said that he had given us farmland, had sent farmers from the other side of the world, and that we were to start a farm here on the property." This could provide enough food to feed the Karen, and the church might be able to sell the surplus to cover its costs.

"Michael, isn't it just like God to show up at the 11th hour?" said the bishop when Spurlock told him of his encounter.

Within three months, the All Saints' congregation cultivated the rich dirt on the church farm's 22 acres, growing 20,000 pounds of produce, including sour leaf, a staple in Southeast Asian cooking. Ten percent went to feed the refugees, and the rest was sold locally or donated to food pantries. The revenue was enough to keep All Saints' alive. Having sensed so strongly since his powerful encounter with God that this was God's plan and not his own, God's farm and not his own, Spurlock decided that "Kurios," the Greek word for "lord," would be the name of the farm project. The name would be a reminder to Spurlock, his parish, and to the world that this was God's farm and it was God who was truly in charge of it.

The All Saints' congregation now numbers about 350 – 80 per cent Karen, 20 per cent Anglo, according to Spurlock.

"This is a story that "started with 'Hello,' " recalled Aimee Spurlock, Fr. Michael's wife, who had opened All Saints' church door and welcomed the Karen visitors. Out of that first and simple greeting, a relationship formed and grew into something that changed the lives of many people. For Michael Spurlock, after years of searching, this was the story to which he could fully devote his life,

because Jesus Christ was at the center of it.

"God is *philoxenos* [Greek for lover of the stranger]," Spurlock said. "If you are not a lover of strangers, you are working against God's own heart. You don't get to pick who comes through your church door, but you are entirely responsible for how you treat them."

*"All Saints," a film based on the story of the Rev. Michael Spurlock and the Karen refugees, opened in August in select theaters. This article was originally published, in slightly different form, in the Episcopal Journal.*

*The author is a member of St. Thomas Church, Manhattan, and a regular contributor to the Episcopal New Yorker.*



# A Youthful Summer

By Sunny Lawrence

As the weather gets cooler and the new school year begins, summer is starting to feel far away. Travel a couple of months back in time with us and check out how some of the programs that Episcopal Charities funds made this summer special for the kids they serve!

All of these programs and more receive funding through Episcopal Charities' Youth Opportunity Grants, which fund educational, arts, and outreach programs for youth. We're proud to help make programs like these possible, and to help provide exciting and enriching summer experiences for children across the diocese!

*The author is program fellow at Episcopal Charities.*



Small clowns prepare for showtime at Amazing Grace Circus in Nyack. Photo: Amazing Grace Circus.



Campers practice their literacy skills at St. Peter's, Port Chester. Photo: St. Peter's Church, Port Chester.



Campers reach new heights in circus class at the Pied Piper Children's Theater, a ministry of Holy Trinity, Inwood. Photo: Pied Piper Children's Theater.



Campers at St. Andrew's Summer Camp in the Bronx strike a pose on a field trip.

Photo: St. Andrew's, Bronx.



A student at the Manhattan North Inter-Parish Council Summer Educational Project takes a closer look at the natural world.

Photo: Manhattan North Inter-Parish Council.



Students at Nesin Cultural Arts Summer Music Academy, a program sponsored by St. John's, Monticello, rehearse for a recital.

Photo: Nesin Cultural Arts Project.



# Diocesan Budget

## Narrative to the Proposed Diocesan Budget for 2018

### PART 1 – BACKGROUND

As you know, the Budget Committee was unable to include a budget narrative and spreadsheet in the Calendar of Convention. The reasons for this are twofold.

First, we did not have final 2016 numbers. This meant that our projections for 2017 were incomplete. Our projections for 2017 are still incomplete and for that reason we do not enumerate them in the Proposed Budget. Parts 2 and 3 of this memorandum identify changes to lines from the 2017 Budget; where applicable we note that a budgeted change is based on our working projections.

Second, our working projections indicate sizable deficits for 2017 and 2018.

The Proposed Budget included in the 2016 Calendar of Convention projected a deficit of \$280,000. You may recall that the budget presented at Convention included a correction to the Assessment of the National Church. This correction increased the projected deficit for 2017 to about \$355,000. This increase eliminated the \$100,000 contingency built into the original budget.

The \$355,000 deficit was to be covered by a budgeted transfer from our cash reserves. At the time, we indicated that transfers of that sort were unsustainable in the long term, but necessary as we began to live into the canonical and systemic changes recommended by the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee and adopted by the 2016 Convention. As 2017 has unfolded the projected deficit has increased to between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

Based on our working projections and on the requests from Commissions, Committees, and the Bishop's Staff, our mid-August draft of the 2018 budget project-

ed a deficit of about \$1,200,000. Some of the deficit was increased expenses and requests. The bulk of the problem, however, is income.

By mid-August 33 congregations had not paid any of their canonically agreed upon and required Apportioned Share for 2017. 59 congregations were paying adjusted Apportioned Shares in 2017.

The Budget Committee believed that presenting a deficit of that sort would be unwise. We also believed that a budget based on numbers which we were not confident were accurate would be less than transparent. We immediately informed the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and the Trustees. Together we determined that the best course of action was to present to Convention a budget based on the best numbers we had that would temporarily cut back in every area possible without affecting our current employees, contractual obligations, or substantively undermining any of our ministries. We assumed, correctly, that we would not be able to reduce the deficit to a sustainable level. We were able to reduce the deficit from \$1,200,000 to about \$400,000.

The 2018 Proposed Budget is balanced by a substantial and unsustainable transfer from cash reserves. We expect and recommend that the 2018 Budget, once passed by Convention, will be materially adjusted by the Trustees in accordance with Canon 17.1.6 to limit the size of that transfer as much as possible. We envision that the 2019 Budget will have a smaller, but still unsustainable, transfer from cash reserves. We intend to move to a zero-deficit budget by 2020.

Based on the report and findings of the Strategic Plan Task Force on Financial Matters that were provided to the 2016 Convention, this reality is not unexpected.

### PROPOSED 2018 BUDGET: SUMMARY

Budget Line	Description	2017 Budget	2018 Proposed Budget	Variance 2017 & 2018
<b>INCOME FROM APPORTIONED SHARES</b>				
001	Gross Calculated Apportioned Shares	\$ 12,204,000	\$ 12,272,549	\$ 68,549
002	Total Adjustments due to 12.5% Cap & Adjustment Board	\$ (1,447,000)	\$ (1,249,434)	\$ 197,566
003	CSP Transition Apportioned Share Reductions	\$ (57,000)	\$ -	\$ 57,000
004	Projected Unpaid Apportioned Shares	\$ (834,000)	\$ (1,104,150)	\$ (270,150)
005	<b>Net Income From Apportioned Shares</b>	<b>\$ 9,866,000</b>	<b>\$ 9,918,965</b>	<b>\$ 52,965</b>
<b>INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES</b>				
006	Allocation from the General Endowment	\$ 725,000	\$ 815,000	\$ 90,000
007	Contribution to General Endowment (25% Cap)	\$ (103,125)	\$ (299,541)	\$ (196,416)
008	Trust Income	\$ 106,700	\$ 97,000	\$ (9,700)
009	Fee Income	\$ 97,700	\$ 97,700	\$ -
010	Diocesan Convention Fee Income	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ -
011	Trinity Grant in Support of Liaison for Global Mission	\$ 82,700	\$ 82,700	\$ -
012	Matching Transfer of Trinity Grant (from other funds available to the Bishop)	\$ 82,800	\$ -	\$ (82,800)
013	<b>Net Income From Other Sources</b>	<b>\$ 1,066,775</b>	<b>\$ 867,860</b>	<b>\$ (198,916)</b>
014	<b>Contingency</b>	<b>\$ (100,000)</b>	<b>\$ (500,000)</b>	<b>\$ (400,000)</b>
015	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 10,832,775</b>	<b>\$ 10,286,825</b>	<b>\$ (545,951)</b>
<b>DISBURSEMENTS SUMMARY</b>				
100	Canonical Requirements of a Diocese in the Episcopal Church	\$ 1,057,500	\$ 1,102,386	\$ 44,886
200	The Episcopate and Support	\$ 1,727,500	\$ 1,733,000	\$ 5,500
300	Staff & Support for Ministries & Congregations	\$ 1,261,500	\$ 1,293,000	\$ 31,500
400	Total Funding for Clergy in Strategic Settings	\$ 2,601,500	\$ 2,304,400	\$ (297,100)
500	Grants & Programs for Congregations	\$ 649,000	\$ 527,500	\$ (121,500)
600	Diocesan Ministry & Outreach Programs	\$ 350,500	\$ 285,500	\$ (65,000)
700	Diocesan Administration	\$ 2,801,000	\$ 2,765,000	\$ (36,000)
800	Communications & Archives	\$ 386,000	\$ 414,500	\$ 28,500
900	Diocesan Convention Costs and Meetings	\$ 178,000	\$ 178,000	\$ -
1000	Provision for Salary & Benefit Increase	\$ 175,000	\$ 75,000	\$ (100,000)
1100	<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$ 11,187,500</b>	<b>\$ 10,678,286</b>	<b>\$ (509,214)</b>
1200	<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$ (354,725)</b>	<b>\$ (391,462)</b>	<b>\$ (36,737)</b>
1300	<b>Transfers from Reserves</b>	<b>\$ 354,725</b>	<b>\$ 391,462</b>	<b>\$ 36,737</b>



**PROPOSED 2018 BUDGET: DETAIL**

Budget Line	Description	2017 Budget	2018 Proposed Budget	Variance 2017 & 2018
101	Assessment to The Episcopal Church	\$ 992,000	\$ 1,036,886	\$ 44,886
102	Assessment to Province II	\$ 15,500	\$ 15,500	\$ -
103	Reserve for Deputies to General Convention	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ -
104	Reserve for Delegates to Provincial Synod	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -
105	Reserve for Future Episcopal Elections	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ -
106	Reserve for Lambeth	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -
<b>100</b>	<b>Total Canonical Requirements of a Diocese in The Episcopal Church</b>	<b>\$ 1,057,500</b>	<b>\$ 1,102,386</b>	<b>\$ 44,886</b>
201	Bishop of New York	\$ 268,500	\$ 285,000	\$ 16,500
202	Bishop Suffragan	\$ 234,000	\$ 244,000	\$ 10,000
203	Bishop Assistant	\$ 222,000	\$ 244,000	\$ 22,000
204	Bishops' Office Expenses (TOTAL)	\$ 513,000	\$ 480,000	\$ (33,000)
205	Reserve for Discretionary Fund-Hospitality	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ -
206	Bishops' Shared Travel	\$ 70,000	\$ 50,000	\$ (20,000)
207	Canon to the Ordinary (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 225,000	\$ 238,000	\$ 13,000
208	Canon for Pastoral Care (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 165,000	\$ 162,000	\$ (3,000)
<b>200</b>	<b>Total Episcopate &amp; Support</b>	<b>\$ 1,727,500</b>	<b>\$ 1,733,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,500</b>
302	CSP Coordinator / Director of Strategic Planning (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 164,500	\$ 167,000	\$ 2,500
303	Canon for Ministry (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 230,000	\$ 235,000	\$ 5,000
304	Canon for Transition Ministry (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 230,000	\$ 235,000	\$ 5,000
305	Canon for Congregational Vitality (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 180,000	\$ 185,000	\$ 5,000
306	Liaison for Global Mission (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 165,500	\$ 180,000	\$ 14,500
307	Property Support Director (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 156,500	\$ 154,000	\$ (2,500)
308	Mid Hudson Region (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 135,000	\$ 137,000	\$ 2,000
<b>300</b>	<b>Total Staff &amp; Support for Ministries &amp; Congregations</b>	<b>\$ 1,261,500</b>	<b>\$ 1,293,000</b>	<b>\$ 31,500</b>
401	CSP Transition Clergy Compensation	\$ 59,000	\$ 39,400	\$ (19,600)
402	Harlem Initiative	\$ 160,000	\$ 145,000	\$ (15,000)
403	South Bronx Initiative	\$ 100,000	\$ 75,000	\$ (25,000)
404	Regional Pastorate Initiative	\$ 593,500	\$ 445,000	\$ (148,500)
405	Growth & Transitional Clergy Compensation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
406	Hispanic Clergy Compensation	\$ 420,000	\$ 440,000	\$ 20,000
407	Congregations in Strategic Settings Clergy Compensation	\$ 900,000	\$ 730,000	\$ (170,000)
408	Campus Ministry Clergy (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 359,000	\$ 430,000	\$ 71,000
409	Wisdom Year Seminar for Canturbury Downtown	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ (10,000)
<b>400</b>	<b>Total Funding for Clergy in Strategic Settings</b>	<b>\$ 2,601,500</b>	<b>\$ 2,304,400</b>	<b>\$ (297,100)</b>

Budget Line	Description	2017 Budget	2018 Proposed Budget	Variance 2017 & 2018
501	Congregational Development Commission Programs	\$ 30,000	\$ 10,000	\$ (20,000)
502	First Step Grants	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000	\$ (10,000)
503	Next Step Grants	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ (30,000)
504	Christian Formation Commission Programs / Young Adult Ministry	\$ 80,000	\$ 70,000	\$ (10,000)
505	Property Support Committee Grants & Loans	\$ 375,000	\$ 350,000	\$ (25,000)
506	Hispanic Ministries Grants	\$ 75,000	\$ 50,000	\$ (25,000)
507	Operational Support for Strategic Hispanic Congregation	\$ 24,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 1,000
508	Multicultural Ministries (New Community)	\$ 15,000	\$ 12,500	\$ (2,500)
<b>500</b>	<b>Total Grants &amp; Programs For Congregations</b>	<b>\$ 649,000</b>	<b>\$ 527,500</b>	<b>\$ (121,500)</b>
601	Commission on Ministry Programs	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ (10,000)
602	Ecumenical and Multi-Faith Councils Contribution	\$ 10,500	\$ 10,500	\$ -
603	Ecumenical & Interfaith Commission	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -
604	Global Mission Commission	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ -
605	Sustainable Development Goal Grants	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ (35,000)
606	Rural and Migrant Ministry	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ -
607	Social Concerns Commission	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ -
608	Support for Episcopal Charities	\$ 120,000	\$ 100,000	\$ (20,000)
<b>600</b>	<b>Total Diocesan Ministry &amp; Outreach Programs</b>	<b>\$ 350,500</b>	<b>\$ 285,500</b>	<b>\$ (65,000)</b>
701	Cathedral Cost Sharing and Rent	\$ 576,000	\$ 576,000	\$ -
702	Office Services (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 270,000	\$ 315,000	\$ 45,000
703	Administration (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 1,375,000	\$ 1,100,000	\$ (275,000)
704	IT Expenses	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ -
705	Overhead and Fixed Obligations	\$ 430,000	\$ 624,000	\$ 194,000
<b>700</b>	<b>Total Diocesan Administration</b>	<b>\$ 2,801,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,765,000</b>	<b>\$ (36,000)</b>
801	Public Affairs & Archives (Expenses & Compensation)	\$ 285,000	\$ 313,500	\$ 28,500
802	Episcopal New Yorker	\$ 92,000	\$ 92,000	\$ -
803	Web Management	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ -
<b>800</b>	<b>Total Communications &amp; Archives</b>	<b>\$ 386,000</b>	<b>\$ 414,500</b>	<b>\$ 28,500</b>
901	Journal and Directory	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -
902	Diocesan Convention Reserve	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000	\$ -
903	Council/Convention Meetings	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ -
<b>900</b>	<b>Total Diocesan Convention Costs and Meetings</b>	<b>\$ 178,000</b>	<b>\$ 178,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>



# Diocesan Budget

2016 and 2017 have seen the implementation of many of the recommendations from the Task Force on Financial Matters, including two principal changes. First, the Finance Office of the Diocese has undergone significant transition, including a new Chief of Finance and Operations, a new Controller, and a new Accounting Manager. Second, the Budget Committee and the Finance Committee are now formed so that the Treasurer, Chief of Finance and Operations, and the chair of each committee all serve on both committees. These are significant improvements, and they have allowed the Finance Office and financial committees to move toward more financial transparency and accountability. We have made much progress, and the work of the Finance Office has been exemplary.

## PART 2 – INCOME

The majority of our income comes from Apportioned Shares.

**Line 001: Gross Calculated Apportioned Shares** is the total calculated amount of Apportioned Shares before any adjustment. These project basically flat for 2018. We are concerned, based on available numbers and recent trends, that Gross Calculated Apportioned Shares may remain flat or even decrease in 2019. Many of our congregations have been reporting decreasing Normal Operating Income for the past few years. This decrease translates into decreased Calculated Apportioned Shares.

**Line 002: Total Adjustments due to 12.5% Cap & Adjustment Board** is the total amount adjusted through the Adjustment Board and through the 12.5% year-over-year cap increase. The canonical changes made in 2016 have allowed the Adjustment Board to eliminate the loophole that allowed some congregations a 12.5% maximum annual increase on apportioned shares temporarily reduced by the Adjustment Board. In every case that resulted in a congregation's billed Apportioned Share increasing more than \$1000 from 2017 to 2018, the Adjustment Board has offered one of three options. Congregations with relatively small increases were offered a choice to reach full payment in 2 years or pay in full for 2018. Congregations with larger increases were offered a choice to reach full payment in 3 years or pay in full for 2018. Congregations with substantial increases were offered a choice to appeal in person to the Adjustment Board or pay in full for 2018. The work of the Adjustment Board has ensured that Line 002 has decreased and will continue to decrease in 2019 and 2020 as formerly adjusted apportioned shares are phased back to normal.

**Line 003: CSP Transition Apportioned Share Reductions** is the amount paid by CSP congregations in transition. This line is zeroed out for 2018. The amount due from those congregations still in transition is included in Line 001.

**Line 004: Projected Unpaid Apportioned Shares.** Payment history suggests that a certain amount of Apportioned Shares will be unpaid in 2018. This line includes: \$429,485 of phased in Adjustments that are unlikely to be paid and \$674,566 from congregations that have paid nothing in 2017. From a canonical standpoint, there is no reason for Line 004 to exist. From a budget standpoint we have to be honest that a significant number of congregations are either unable or unwilling to pay their Apportioned Share.

**Line 005: Net Income from Apportioned Shares** is projected to be increase about \$50,000 from 2017 to 2018.

**Line 006: Allocation from the General Endowment** is the amount of income from our Unrestricted Investments. It is projected to increase by \$90,000 in 2018.

**Line 007: Contribution to General Endowment (25% Cap)** is the so-called Trinity Cap. No one congregation can pay more than 25% of the total disbursements. The diocese still receives the money, but anything above 25% is transferred from income to the General Endowment. Because our disbursements for 2018 are projected to be significantly lower than 2017, the 25% Cap increases, about \$191,000. Every \$1 we cut from disbursements also means losing \$0.25 from our income. This reality complicates cutting expenses when building a budget. In the long run, the 25% Cap is a very good thing since it builds up the General Endowment and forces the diocese to rely on all of its congregations, rather than just the largest ones.

**Line 008: Trust Income** is the amount of income from Trusts generated by two of our congregations for support of the Episcopate. The amount is projected to decrease in 2018 by just under \$10,000.

**Line 009: Fee Income** is the amount of income from a variety of fees, including but not limited to payroll fees. This amount has not been changed from the 2017 Budget.

**Line 010: Diocesan Convention Fee Income** is the amount of income from fees for Convention. These are budgeted at the same level as 2017. Since 2016 convention expenses and fees have been set up in such a way that the fees are basically the same regardless of whether Convention is one day or two days.

**Line 011: Trinity Grant in Support of Liaison for Global Mission** is the amount of income from a Grant from Trinity Church Wall Street to the Diocese that supports half of the position of Liaison for Global Mission.

**Line 012: Matching Transfer of Trinity Grant (from other funds available to the Bishop)** is the amount of income from one of the Bishop's Discretionary Funds to support half of the position of Liaison for Global Mission. Matching support for this position from the Bishop's Discretionary Funds was temporary and intended for 2017 only.

**Line 013: Total Other Income** is projected to be down about \$200,000. This is due mostly to the 25% Cap, which increased because Disbursements were cut.

**Line 014: Contingency** is budgeted at \$500,000 which is about 5% of the budget. The Budget Committee routinely budgets in contingency amounts (in past years this has been built into Unpaid/Adjusted Apportioned Shares. We broke it out this year for clarity. In 2017 we built in a \$100,000 contingency which was about 1% and it proved completely inadequate.

**Line 015: Total Income**, including the contingency, is projected to be down by about \$550,000.

## PART 3 – DISBURSEMENTS

The Income & Summary page shows Summaries for Disbursements. Details are on the next page(s).

### 101 Assessment to The Episcopal Church

Our Assessment to the National Church has increased by \$44,886.

### 102 Assessment to Province II

### 103 Reserve for Deputies to General Convention

### 104 Reserve for Delegates to Provincial Synod

### 105 Reserve for Future Episcopal Elections

### 106 Reserve for Lambeth

These lines remain at 2017 levels. Line 105: Reserve for Future Episcopal Elections has been depleted and needs to be rebuilt.

### 201 Bishop of New York

### 202 Bishop Suffragan

### 203 Bishop Assistant

These lines remain at levels projected for 2017. Any increases were based on decisions made in 2016 and approved by Convention. All three lines saw normal increases in benefits. The Bishop Assistant line also included salary parity with the Bishop Suffragan.

### 204 Bishops' Office Expenses (TOTAL)

This line is budgeted based on our working projections. It seems that we overbudgeted for 2017.

### 205 Reserve for Discretionary Fund-Hospitality

This line remains at 2017 levels.

### 206 Bishops' Shared Travel

This line is reduced by \$20,000 for 2018.

### 207 Canon to the Ordinary (Expenses & Compensation)

### 208 Canon for Pastoral Care (Expenses & Compensation)

### 302 CSP Coordinator / Director of Strategic Planning (Expenses & Compensation)



**303 Canon for Ministry (Expenses & Compensation)**  
**304 Canon for Transition Ministry (Expenses & Compensation)**  
**305 Canon for Congregational Vitality (Expenses & Compensation)**  
**306 Liaison for Global Mission (Expenses & Compensation)**  
**307 Property Support Director (Expenses & Compensation)**  
**308 Mid Hudson Region (Expenses & Compensation)**  
These lines include compensation and all expenses necessary to each office. Each line is budgeted based on our working projections.

**401 CSP Transition Clergy Compensation**  
This line is decreased per agreements reached in 2016.

**402 Harlem Initiative**  
**403 South Bronx Initiative**  
**404 Regional Pastorate Initiative**  
**405 Growth & Transitional Clergy Compensation**  
These lines are decreased from 2017 budgeted amounts, but each still covers all current contractual commitments.

**406 Hispanic Clergy Compensation**  
This line is increased \$20,000 to cover all current contractual commitments.

**407 Congregations in Strategic Settings Clergy Compensation**  
This line is decreased from the 2017 budget amount, but it still covers all current contractual commitments.

**408 Campus Ministry Clergy (Expenses & Compensation)**  
This line is increased \$71,000 from the 2017 budget amount, but it still covers all current contractual commitments. The major increase is a new position for Canterbury Uptown that was planned for in 2016 and finalized in 2017.

**409 Wisdom Year Seminar for Canterbury Downtown**  
This is zeroed out for 2018.

**501 Congregational Development Commission Programs**  
This line is decreased from \$30,000 to \$10,000.

**502 First Step Grants**  
This line is decreased from \$20,000 to \$10,000.

**503 Next Step Grants**  
This is zeroed out for 2018.

**504 Christian Formation Commission Programs / Young Adult Ministry**  
This line is decreased from \$80,000 to \$70,000.

**505 Property Support Committee Grants & Loans**  
This line is decreased from \$375,000 to \$350,000

**506 Hispanic Ministries Grants**  
This line is decreased from \$75,000 to \$50,000

**507 Operational Support for Strategic Hispanic Congregation**  
This line are budgeted based on our working projections.

**508 Multicultural Ministries (New Community)**  
This line is decreased from \$15,000 to \$12,500

**601 Commission on Ministry Programs**  
This is zeroed out for 2018.

**602 Ecumenical and Multi-Faith Councils Contribution**  
**603 Ecumenical & Interfaith Commission**  
**604 Global Mission Commission**  
These lines are budgeted at 2017 levels.

**605 Sustainable Development Goal Grants**  
This is zeroed out for 2018. The Episcopal Church has resolved that every diocese move toward providing 0.7 of its disbursements to Sustainable Development Goal Grants. We are moving in the wrong direction, but this is a temporary reduction for 2018.

**606 Rural and Migrant Ministry**  
**607 Social Concerns Commission**  
These lines are budgeted at 2017 levels.

**608 Support for Episcopal Charities**  
This line is decreased from \$120,000 to \$100,000

**701 Cathedral Cost Sharing and Rent**  
This line is budgeted at 2017 levels.

**702 Office Services (Expenses & Compensation)**  
**703 Administration (Expenses & Compensation)**  
These lines are budgeted based on our working projections. There is a decrease of \$275,000 in line 703 Administration (Expenses & Compensation) which is due to overlaps during staff transitions.

**704 IT Expenses**  
This line is budgeted at 2017 levels.

**705 Overhead and Fixed Obligations**  
This line is budgeted based on our working projections. There is a temporary increase of \$194,000 which covers increased projections for auditing and severance.

**801 Public Affairs & Archives (Expenses & Compensation)**  
**802 Episcopal New Yorker**  
**803 Web Management**  
These lines are budgeted at 2017 projections.

**901 Journal and Directory**  
**902 Diocesan Convention Reserve**  
**903 Council/Convention Meetings**  
These lines are budgeted at 2017 levels.

Line 1000 through 1300 are on the summary page of the budget.

**Line 1000: Provision for Salary & Benefit Increase**  
This is budgeted to include medical and other benefit increases. The 2017 budget included an increase to cover a 4% cost of living increase for clergy who are not on the Bishop's Staff but are paid by the Diocese of New York (See Schedule 400) and a 2% cost of living increase for all other personnel paid by the budget.

**1100: Total Disbursements** are projected to be down about \$500,000.

**1200: SURPLUS (DEFICIT):** We are projecting a deficit for 2018 of just under \$400,000.

#### **PART 4 – BELOW THE LINE TRANSFER FROM RESERVES**

**1300: Transfers from Reserves** is the amount required to “balance the budget” if there is a deficit. As noted above, this was budgeted for 2017 at about \$350,000. Current projections put this number at about \$500,000 for 2017. For 2018 this number is budgeted at about \$400,000 since we are canonically required to pass a balanced budget. A transfer of this magnitude is unsustainable.

#### **PART 5 – CONCLUSION**

As noted, we face two problems. First, when building this budget we did not have confidence in 2016 or 2017 numbers. Second, the numbers we do have project sizable deficits for 2017 and 2018. Based on the report and findings of the Strategic Plan Task Force on Financial Matters that were provided to the 2016 Convention, this reality is not unexpected. Our strategic plan has allowed us to take a very close look at our finances and financial systems and make necessary updates.

The Finance Office has been working to correct the first issue, and in 2018 we will make regular and accurate financial reports to the *(continued on page 41)*



## Ordination of Priests, September 9



Front row left to right: The Rev. Matthew Daniel Jacobson, The Rev. Michael Joseph Horvath, The Rt. Rev. Andrew ML Dietsche, The Rev. Mark Daniel Schultz, and The Rev. Deborah Annette Lee Back row left to right: The Rev. Canon Charles W. Simmons, The Rev. Deacon Shiane M. Lee, The Rev. Deacon Kenton J. Curtis, and The Rev. Br. Robert James, O.H.C. Photo: Alito Orsini

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# The Bishop of Cuba Addresses Church Club Gathering at St. Bart's

By Susan Ridgeway

**M**ore than eighty-five members and guests attended “An Evening with the Bishop of Cuba” hosted Oct. 18 by the Church Club of New York at St. Bartholomew’s Church in Manhattan.

The evening began with a bi-lingual Eucharist in the sanctuary, at which the Rt. Rev. Dr. Griselda Delgado del Carpio and her husband, the Rev. Gerardo Logildes, presided alongside the Rev. Lynn Sanders and Bishop Dean Wölfe, the rector of St. Bart’s.

Following the Eucharist, attendees moved into the adjacent chapel for Bishop Griselda’s presentation on the state of the Episcopal Church in Cuba (ECC). Bishop Wölfe, serving as master of ceremonies, welcomed everyone on behalf of St. Bart’s, while Bishop Dietsche was on hand to offer welcoming remarks on behalf of the diocese.

Bishop Griselda provided an overview of the rich history of the Episcopal Church in Cuba, as well as the current state and plans for the future.

In the decades prior to the 1959 revolution, the Cuban Episcopal Church and the US Episcopal Church had a very close relationship, and all its churches and schools were built during this time.

Following the revolution, the ECC was limited to celebrating the sacraments, while the new government tried to fulfil all the material and spiritual needs of the people. Atheism was the declared state policy, and detention camps were established for those who openly practiced religion. An entire generation was lost from the church.

In the early 1960s, in the context of the embargo and during their time of greatest need, the Episcopal Church in Cuba was “granted independence” from the Episcopal Church of the US. Then in the early 1990s, after Cuba abruptly lost economic support from Russia, the Cuban government invited the church to assume an active role in the country’s recovery.

When she became bishop in 2010, Griselda Delgado del Carpio launched a “radical” agenda, transforming the ECC from a focus within four walls to a broader approach, making it the light of each community. In 2011, she developed the first strategic plan for the diocese and established a Missionary Development Program to develop opportunities and strengthen capabilities for a better quality of life in communities.

Today, the ECC is a growing church with an increasing impact in communities throughout Cuba, basing its pastoral and ministerial work on the philosophy that nourishing the bodies of their brothers and sisters will enable it also to nurture their hearts and minds. It has installed UV water purification systems in 19 churches that have been paid for and installed by various churches/church groups in the US. In many cases, these systems are the only secure source of water in the villages and surrounding areas. There are, however, still 25 churches/communities without these UV water purification systems, and of the 19 that exist, 10 are in need of upgrades or repairs.



The Rev. Gerardo Logildes (Bishop Griselda’s husband), the Rev. Yamily Bass-Choate, Bishop Dietsche, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio (Bishop of Cuba), the Rt. Rev. Dean Wolfe, rector of St. Bart’s, and Susan Ridgeway (Church Club executive director).  
Photo credit: The Rev. Canon Wm. Blake Rider

The ECC has a well-trained team, but not enough clergy or administrative staff to meet existing needs. Its current operating budget—which supports 46 churches, 23 clergy, an administrative team and all aspects of the church’s ministry and is financed by the Episcopal and Anglican churches, primarily of Canada and the United States—is, at only \$90,000 US per year, also insufficient.

As the ECC looks to the future, it has defined four key strategies to leverage all that it has accomplished, and to achieve its vision and transform the greatest possible number of communities and Cuban lives by 2022. Those strategies include:

- Expanding the missionary and pastoral work of the ECC
- Building an infrastructure that supports the vision
- Maximizing the potential of the team
- Pursuing new sources of funding.

Bishop Griselda’s presentation wrapped up with an engaging round of Q&A, and the evening concluded with a networking and social reception.

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*The author is executive director of the Church Club of New York and a member of the Church of the Incarnation.*

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*For more information and to learn about ways you can support the ECC, visit [www.friendsoficcuba.org](http://www.friendsoficcuba.org). To find out more about membership in The Church Club of New York visit [www.churchclubny.org](http://www.churchclubny.org).*



## Supporting Higher Education for Women; Fulfilling the Dreams of Our Families

By Lynnaia Main



Bishop Mary Glasspool with the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas at the Global Women's Fund event on October 5.

Photo credit: Lynnaia Main

About 40 New York Episcopalians united around the goal of furthering higher education were treated to stories of transformation at an Oct 5 reception held to thank donors for contributing to the diocese's Global Women's Fund's support for Anglican women's higher education and to look forward together to next chapters in our life of service. The reception, which honored the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, the new dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Seminary, was hosted by Bishop Andrew and Mrs. Margaret Dietsche in their home and co-hosted by Assistant Bishop Mary Glasspool and the Global Women's Fund board.

The guests joined in for fellowship, networking and thoughtful reflections on the central place that education holds as a dream shared between generations of family members. Sometimes that dream is realized; sometimes, it is not. Sometimes, it requires a community to dream that dream into being for others who don't dare dream it for themselves. The Global Women's Fund exists to help those who might not otherwise have the opportunity to realize their dream of a higher education.

Such was Dr. Douglas' central message. She drew parallels between the purpose of the Global Women's Fund and the dreams for a higher education that her grandmother held for her four grandchildren. Grandmother was a "poor, black woman from the South," who, out of her faith, "dreamed a dream" that her four grandchildren would one day finish high school. She knew that education was the key that offered the freedom to create the choices you have to make. She disrupted the cycle of generations who had not dreamt of an education, and planted within her grandchildren not only her faith, but the importance of a higher education.

But, Douglas continued, it's also important to recognize that some people can't dream that dream. Her grandmother couldn't imagine that her grandchildren would be educated beyond high school, and she died without knowing they would not only finish, but go on to get terminal degrees. Nevertheless, she "took care of

her now," and in doing so, she paved the way for the future. We, too, said Douglas, must through our faith and our belief in the justice of God "live our now," create the path and help others realize their dream: "One of the reasons we're here is that there remain so many young women who can't dream the dream. And in order to enable them to do that, it takes more than money. It takes inspiring and when they can't dream it, we have to dream it for them. We have to help people dream the dream."

The Rev. Theodora "Teddy" Brooks followed Dean Douglas' personal account with one from a Global Women's Fund recipient, Siede Williams of Liberia, who was awarded a scholarship to study theology at Cuttington University in Suacoo. Siede's studies were cut short by the outbreak of Ebola but that did not stop her: she worked to educate families in her community and tirelessly traveled to teach people best practices and offer pastoral counseling until the Ebola epidemic subsided and she was able to continue her studies, eventually obtaining the degree she dreamed of.

Bishop Glasspool then spoke of the Chinese proverb "Women hold up half the sky" which became the theme and title of a book by New York Times journalist Nicholas Kristof. She noted afterwards that "we always think of food, clothing and shelter as basic needs, but education is another. And it is a political situation, when women and girls are not treated equally in accessing an education."

"What [Dr. Douglas] gave us," reflected the Rev. Yamily Bass-Choate, the diocese's Liaison for Global Mission, afterwards, "was the gift to be able to dream bigger dreams." Dianne Roberts and Johanna Schafer, both GWF board members, noted the same dreams in the generations of women in their own families. Dianne mused, "When I heard her speak about her grandmother, I thought of my mother...My mother was not an educated woman and she lived her dreams through me. My success was her success." Johanna agreed: "Listening to that speech took me back. It was really powerful." Judi Counts, the Global Women's Fund board chair, went home that evening and wrote in her journal, "Just as I was feeling disheartened, the reception happened and God showed me that we're not finished with our work and that in fact we may not be living our dream yet!!"

There are many Anglican women in developing countries whose dreams for an education—and the betterment of their families, their communities and themselves—have not been lived yet. When we help them dream the dream, we roll back the societal sins of inequality, oppression and injustice that have withheld higher education from generations of women. Every donation helps, small and large, and 100 per cent of donor contributions go directly towards individual scholarships and higher education grants. Won't you "take care of the now", write that check today, and fulfill a dream?

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*The Global Women's Fund of New York seeks to effect positive societal change by educating Anglican women for the transformation of themselves, their families, their local communities, and the world. To make a donation online please visit [dioceseny.org/dn/gwf-give](http://dioceseny.org/dn/gwf-give); you will find instructions for making a donation by check on the same page.*

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*The author is a member of L'Eglise Francaise du Saint-Esprit in Manhattan.*



# Global Mission Fair Success

## \$15,000 Sustainable Development Goals Fund Grant Announced

**A**t the 2nd annual Global Mission Fair held Oct 14 at Christ Church, Bronxville, the diocese's Global Mission Commission announced the award of a 2017 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund grant of \$15,000 to All Saints' Church, Valley Cottage to support the Bishop George Ninan Memorial Mission Aurangabad Project.

This is the second year in which SDG Fund Grants have been awarded, following the passing at General Convention in 2015 of a resolution requesting that all dioceses put .07% of the annual diocesan budget into support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (see <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>).

Application for the next round of SDG Fund grants will be opened early in 2018, and all parishes in the diocese are warmly invited to apply. The Global Mission Commission also welcomes invitations to conduct forums at parishes wanting to know more about the SDGs in general, and about the diocesan SDG Fund grants and how to apply for one.



Bishop Glasspool presents the Sustainable Development Goals Fund award and grant to All Saints', Valley Cottage. Photo: Angela James.



Keynote speakers the Rev. Canon Paul-Gordon Chandler and the Rev. David Copley flank Bishop Dietsche. Photo: Angela James.



The 2017 Sustainable Development Goals Fund Grant certificate presented to All Saints', Valley Cottage. Photo: Angela James.



Elizabeth Boe with Hanadi Doleh (center right), program director with Park 51, and her nieces. Photo: Angela James.



Johanna Shafer at the India Network table. Photo: Angela James.



The New York Haiti Project table. Photo: Angela James.



## New Home for Cathedral Peacocks

**O**n October 18, Bishop Dietsche blessed a splendid new hutch for the Cathedral's resident peacocks, Jim, Harry and Phil. The bishop was accompanied by Cathedral Interim Dean Daniel, Susan Rodriguez of hutch designers Ennead Architects, LLP, the Brodsky Organization, Cathedral and Diocesan staff, visitors, and students and staff of the Cathedral School - whose 2002 graduating 8th grade class donated the peacocks in the first place.



A Cathedral School student contributing to the racket.

Photo: Nicholas Richardson



One of the residents, the exotically-hued (by peacock standards) Phil.

Photo: Helena Kubicka de Braganca



Watched by the Cathedral's interim dean, the Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel, III, Bishop Dietsche blesses the peacocks' splendid new residence. Canon Patrick Malloy assists.

Photo: Nicholas Richardson



Bishop Dietsche cuts the ribbon.

Photo: Helena Kubicka de Braganca



Pre-Kers on their way to the ceremony.

Photo: Nicholas Richardson



The crowd takes in the sun and the scene.

Photo: Nicholas Richardson





**Bishop Dietsche in full asperging mode. Note the peacock feather, previously shed by Phil.**  
Photo: Karin Almquist.

**MARINER** (continued from page 27)

As the Mariner says goodbye to the Wedding-Guest, he summarizes what the Wedding-Guest should always remember:

Farewell, farewell, but this I tell  
To thee thou Wedding-Guest!  
He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.  
(ll. 610-613)

This is the Mariner's "one-life" philosophy, expressing the unity of all creation. Still, the Wedding Guest is puzzled, but intends to work hard, understand and practice it fully:

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn:  
A sadder and wiser man,  
He rose the morrow morn.  
(ll. 622-625)

The hope is that the Wedding-Guest will ultimately, like the Mariner, become a "teacher" of that philosophy. Coleridge makes this very clear in the final marginal gloss where he reiterates that the Wedding-Guest should "teach by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth."

Sigmund Freud, who was not only a psychoanalyst but also an excellent literary critic, says of his indebtedness to poets: "Everywhere I go, I find a poet has been there before me." It should be noted that the Ancient Mariner employs what Freud would later call "the talking cure."

*The author is a member of the parish of Calvary-St. George's in Manhattan*

**DIOCESAN BUDGET** (continued from page 36)

Trustees. The Budget Committee and Finance Committee have worked with the Bishop to map out a plan to reduce and contain the deficit for 2018. We anticipate that we will have a truly balanced budget in 2020. We have also taken steps to update our budget process so that we will be working after summer vacations have ended, at a time when more informed decisions can be made about the coming year, and with full midyear financial information.

A quick solution to our 2018 budget problems would have been to eliminate the contingency of \$500,000. Eliminating the contingency would balance the budget on paper, but it would be very unwise and would almost certainly ensure that 2019 becomes about retrenchment rather than strategic growth and planning.

The true solution to our budget problems is addressing Projected Unpaid Apportioned Shares itemized in Line 004. Our assessment/apportioned share model is consistent with the models we find in other dioceses. We believe that it is fair, and, most importantly, it has been approved by Convention, most recently in 2016 and unanimously.

We believe we have built a prudent and transparent budget for 2018. We are confident that we have maintained support for all of our current ministries. We recognize that we are recommending that a number of ministries receive less financial support than previous years. These decisions were not made lightly but in an attempt to support all of our ministries while being mindful that our current income levels cannot support them at the levels we would prefer.

We invite your questions about any of the lines and changes we have suggested. We ask that you support this budget. The Bishops and members of the Budget Committee and Finance Committee unanimously support this Budget and Narrative.

- The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Chair of the Budget Committee
- Sr. Faith Margaret, CHS, Treasurer of the Diocese of New York
- Ms. Esslie Hughes, Chief of Finance and Operations
- Mr. William Wright II, Chair of the Finance Committee
- Ms. Wendy Cañas
- The Rev. Jennifer Reddall
- Ms. Marsha Ra
- Mr. Peter Saros
- The Rev. Margaret Sullivan
- The Rev. Matthew Moretz

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Photos by Janis Wilkins



**BISHOP ALLEN K. SHIN** (continuado de la paginación 5)

quinto, quien unificó las diversas teorías de los primeros teólogos para desarrollar la teología clásica del pecado original que tendría una influencia sólida en la forma occidental y cristiana de ver el mundo. Distinguía entre dos versiones del pecado original: *peccatum originale originans* (originando el pecado original) el acto del pecado cometido por Adán y Eva, y *peccatum originale originatum* (pecado original originado) la condición del pecado en la humanidad provocada por la transmisión del pecado de Adán y Eva a todos. Este concepto de pecado heredado explicó la solidaridad humana con Adán y Eva al pecar y de esa forma la necesidad universal de la redención de Cristo. En el siglo XI Anselmo proporcionó una definición metafísica del pecado original como privación de la justicia original—definiendo justicia original como la capacidad sobrenatural de la voluntad humana para la integridad moral. Luego, en el siglo XIII, Tomás de Aquino integró a Anselmo y a Agustín y formuló cuatro causas del pecado original: la causa formal era la privación de la justicia original; la causa material, la concupiscencia; la causa agencial, el corazón humano; y la causa instrumental, la transmisión del pecado de Adán a través de las relaciones sexuales. El Concilio de Trento perfiló la teoría de Tomás del

pecado original en términos sacramentales y eclesiásticos y la consagró como dogma de la Iglesia Católica. Martín Lutero y los teólogos protestantes aceptaron el concepto de pecado original de Agustín, pero rechazaron la necesidad de la mediación de la Iglesia para la redención.

La idea del pecado heredado a través de relaciones sexuales de generación en generación desde Adán y Eva es bastante absurda. Vincular el pecado con las relaciones sexuales ha contribuido además a devaluar la sexualidad humana. Y la misógina interpretación de Génesis 3 ha prolongado los prejuicios sistemáticos del sexismo. Por otra parte, establecer la salvación exclusivamente en Cristo y la Iglesia ha fomentado la idea de la superioridad cristiana y la denigración de otras religiones. Cualquier nueva interpretación del pecado original debería reconsiderar estas influencias negativas. Sin embargo, la noción contenida en la doctrina de la solidaridad humana en el pecado sigue siendo bastante relevante incluso hoy en día. Apunta a pecados sistemáticos como la esclavitud, el genocidio, el racismo, la supremacía blanca, el sexismo, el clasismo, etc. El pecado no es solo un error personal moral. El pecado tiene su propio sistema: la empresa malvada de división y odio en la que las personas conspiran y participan en solidaridad con los demás.

La dimensión sistemática del pecado es lo que el teólogo jesuita Bernard Lonergan tiene en mente cuando escribe, “Ser impío es diferente a la maldad moral; es la privación de todo el amor; es una dimensión radical en la que no existe el amor”. Las consecuencias de la solidaridad sistemática en el pecado pueden ser tan graves como el fin de una civilización, como Lonergan apunta de forma alarmante: “Una civilización en declive cava su propia tumba con incesante consistencia”. Para Lonergan, la humanidad es potencial, no es dada, y puede haber una realización auténtica o no auténtica de la potencialidad humana. *Peccatum originale originatum* (pecado original originado) para Lonergan es la falta de autenticidad sostenida de la humanidad. Al identificar la conversión religiosa con estar enamorado del divino misterio de Dios, él coloca la capacidad del amor como la máxima realización auténtica de humanidad. Y la humanidad revelada en Jesucristo es la más auténtica certeza del potencial humano. Reinhold Niebuhr una vez comentó que “la doctrina del pecado original es la única doctrina verificable empíricamente de la fe cristiana”. Lo que socava nuestro bienestar es nuestra alienación de Dios y como resultado el mal que nos infligimos los unos a los otros. Dios no ha dejado de buscarnos con su amor redentor, y el amor sigue siendo nuestra única esperanza de redención.



## BISHOPS' VISITATION SCHEDULE

**NOVEMBER 12 (23 PENTECOST)**

**Bishop Shin:** St. Peter's, Westchester Sq.

**Bishop Glasspool:**

Ascension/Holy Trinity, West Park

**NOVEMBER 19 (24 PENTECOST)**

**Bishop Dietsche:** St. Edward the Martyr, Manhattan

**Bishop Shin:** San Andrés, Yonkers

**Bishop Glasspool:** St. Andrew's, Bronx

**NOVEMBER 26 (CHRIST THE KING)**

**Bishop Dietsche:**

St. Margaret's, Staatsburg

**Bishop Shin:** Holy Nativity, Bronx

**Bishop Glasspool:**

Christ the King, Stone Ridge

**DECEMBER 3 (1 ADVENT)**

**Bishop Dietsche:** St. Martha's, Bronx

**Bishop Shin:**

St. Joseph of Arimathea, Elmsford

**Bishop Glasspool:**

St. Anne's, Washingtonville

**DECEMBER 10 (2 ADVENT)**

**Bishop Dietsche:** St. Mark's, Mt. Kisco

**Bishop Shin:** St. Stephen's, Woodlawn

**Bishop Glasspool:**

St. Stephen's, Armonk

**DECEMBER 17 (3 ADVENT)**

**Bishop Shin:** Good Shepherd, Greenwood Lake

**Bishop Glasspool:** St. Paul's, Poughkeepsie

**DECEMBER 24 (CHRISTMAS EVE)**

**Bishop Dietsche:** Cathedral

**Bishop Shin:** Trinity Wall Street

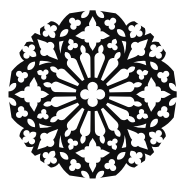
### CLERGY CHANGES

	FROM	TO	DATE
<b>The Rev. Leigh E. Hall</b>	Associate Rector, St. Paul's, Albany, GA	Rector, St. Nicholas-on-the-Hudson, New Hamburg	June 1, 2017
<b>The Rev. Terence L. Elsberry</b>	Rector, St. Matthew's, Bedford	Retirement	June 30, 2017
<b>The Rev. Dr. Richard Sloan</b>	Coordinator CSP & Stewardship Officer, EDNY and Chaplain, Columbia Campus Ministry	Chaplain, Columbia Campus Ministry	July 2017
<b>The Rev. Deacon Eugene A. Bourquin</b>	Ordained Deacon May 13 (Diocese of NY)	Deacon, All Saints, Chiang Mai, Thailand	July 2017
<b>The Rev. Michael J. Horvath</b>	Ordained Priest September 9 (Diocese of NY)	Curate, St. David's, Austin, TX	July 1, 2017
<b>The Rev. Robert M. (Robbie) Pennoyer</b>	Ordained Priest October 15, 2016 (Diocese of NY)	Assistant Head and Director of Studies, Grace Church School, NYC	July 1, 2017
<b>The Rev. Deborah A. Lee</b>	Ordained Priest September 9 (Diocese of NY) and Assistant Priest to the Rector, Christ Church, Warwick	Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul's, Chester	July 9, 2017
<b>The Rev. Matthew D. Jacobson</b>	Ordained Priest September 9 (Diocese of NY) and Assisting Priest, St. Mary the Virgin, Manhattan	Clinical Pastoral Education Resident, Mount Sinai, Manhattan	July 17, 2017
<b>The Rev. Mark D. Schultz</b>	Ordained Priest September 9 (Diocese of NY)	Curate, St. Philip's in the Hills, Tucson, AZ	July 17, 2017
<b>The Rev. Joanne Izzo</b>	Supply / Interim, Diocese of New York	Interim Priest-in-Charge, Good Shepherd, Bronx	September 1, 2017
<b>The Rev. Juan F. Perez, Jr</b>	Diocese of Michigan	Priest-in-Charge of the Congregations in the Harlem Valley (St. Andrew's, Brewster, Holy Trinity, Pawling, and La MESA, Dover Plains)	September 1, 2017
<b>The Rev. C. Alfred S. Loua</b>	Chaplain, Henry Ford Health System, MI	Priest for Pastoral Care, Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan	September 5, 2017
<b>The Rev. Pierce W. Klemmt</b>	Interim Assistant, Grace, Alexandria, VA	Interim Pastor, St. Matthew's, Bedford	September 9, 2017
<b>The Rev. Deacon Chisara R. Alimole</b>	Ordained Deacon May 13 (Diocese of NY)	Deacon, Christ Church, Bronxville	September 10, 2017
<b>The Rev. Deacon Richard P. Limato</b>	Ordained Deacon May 13 (Diocese of NY)	Deacon, St. Michael's, Manhattan	September 10, 2017
<b>The Rev. Deacon Geoffrey T. Smith</b>	Deacon, St. James, Keene, NH	Deacon, Holy Trinity (East 88th St.), Manhattan	September 10, 2017
<b>The Rev. Daniel L. Gross</b>	Rector, St. Alban's, Staten Island	Associate Rector, St. Peter's, Morristown, NJ	October 2, 2017
<b>The Rev. James A. King</b>	Associate Priest, Chalfont St. Peter, Buckinghamshire, UK	Interim Pastor, All Angels', Manhattan	October 15, 2017
<b>The Rev. Kristin C. Kopren</b>	Interim Pastor, Holy Communion, Mahopac	Rector, Holy Cross, Edgewood, NM	October 16, 2017
<b>The Rev. Canon Claire Woodley</b>	Rector, St. Mary's, Mohegan Lake	Canon for Ministry Support, Diocese of Long Island	October 16, 2017
<b>The Rev. Dr. Judith Lee</b>	Interim Rector, Calvary, Williamsville, NY	Interim Pastor, Grace / La Gracia, White Plains	November 13, 2017
<b>The Rev. Ruth Anne Garcia</b>	Interim Pastor, Grace, Middletown	Senior Associate, Epiphany Parish, Seattle, WA	November 19, 2017



# Cathedral Calendar

## NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2017



### 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

#### 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.

#### 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: \$12 per person, \$10 per student/senior. Vertical Tours: \$20 per person, \$18 per student/senior. Spotlight Tours: \$15 per person, \$12 per student/senior. For more information about Highlights Tours, Vertical Tours, Spotlight Tours and Medieval Birthday Parties visit [www.stjohndivine.org](http://www.stjohndivine.org).

#### HIGHLIGHTS TOURS

**Mondays, 11 a.m. – Noon & 2 – 3 p.m.**  
**Tuesdays – Saturdays, 11 a.m. – Noon & 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.**  
**Select Sundays, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.**

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. \$14 per person, \$12 per student/senior. No prior reservation necessary. Meet at Visitor Center.

#### VERTICAL TOURS

**Wednesdays & Fridays, Noon – 1p.m.;**  
**Saturdays, Noon – 1 p.m. & 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.**  
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. \$20 per person, \$18 per student/senior. All participants must be 12 years of age and older and reservations are recommended. For reservations visit the Cathedral website or call (866) 811-4111. Bring a flashlight and bottle of water. Meet at Visitor Center.

#### SPOTLIGHT TOURS

Select Saturdays and Sundays  
Spotlight Tours are specially created by Cathedral Guides to give visitors a closer look at unique aspects of the Cathedral’s extraordinary architecture, artwork, and history. \$18 per person, \$15 per student/senior, unless otherwise noted. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. For reservations visit the Cathedral website or call (866) 811-4111. Meet at Visitor Center.

#### TEXTILE TREASURES

Select Fridays, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.  
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. For the tour schedule and reservations visit the Cathedral’s website or call (866) 811-4111. Meet at Visitor Center.

#### NIGHTWATCH

The Nightwatch series offers two exciting and innovative programs: Nightwatch Crossroads 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-programs.org](http://www.act-programs.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.

#### PASTORAL EVENTS

The Cathedral offers a number of events and services through the Office of Pastoral Care. Every Sunday at 10:10 a.m., children of all ages are invited to be Little Pilgrims, exploring the mystery and wonder of the Christian faith by taking a pilgrimage to one of the thousands of religious symbols in this sacred worship space. Adults are invited to join rabbinical students from the Jewish Theological Seminary, Christian seminary students, and Cathedral clergy for a study of the Hebrew Bible on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. in Cathedral House. Inquirers’ Discussions and Dinners are held on Sundays throughout the season, introducing newcomers to religious life at the Cathedral.

#### SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### NOVEMBER

#### THE LAST CRUSADE: WORLD WAR I AND THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

**Sunday, November 12, 1 p.m.**  
This thought-provoking tour takes you to areas of the Cathedral constructed during World War I and its aftermath. Explore the war’s impact on the iconography, comparing images in glass and stone with Allied propaganda posters. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek. Tickets are \$18 per adult and \$15 for students and seniors.

#### THE AMERICAN POETS CORNER: INDUCTION OF JEAN TOOMER

**Sunday, November 12, 4 p.m.**  
Join authors, critics, and lovers of American literature at this special Choral Evensong as we celebrate poet, novelist, and leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance Jean Toomer, our 2017 inductee into the Poets Corner.

#### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP

**Thursday, November 16, 7 p.m.**

#### NIGHTWATCH CROSSROADS: CHRISTIAN

**Friday, November 17, 6:30 p.m.**  
A Friday evening and overnight spiritual retreat for middle and high school age students, youth groups and their adult chaperones. This Christian-oriented evening will focus primarily on the wisdom teachings of Jesus. Visit [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org) for more information and to register.

#### THE CATHEDRAL IN CONTEXT: SPOTLIGHT ON MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS

**Sunday, November 19, 1 p.m.**  
An illustrated walking tour of the neighborhood and its historic architecture and institutions. The tour begins at the Cathedral and ends at Riverside Church. Led by Cathedral Guide Bill Schneberger. All participants must be 12 years of age or older and reservations are recommended. This tour requires extensive outdoor walking and use of stairs. \$25 per person, \$20 per student/senior.

#### 21ST ANNUAL CRAFTS AT THE CATHEDRAL

**Thursday, November 30 – Saturday, December 2**  
This year’s Crafts at the Cathedral will be held in the Nave, turning the Cathedral into an even more delightful spot for lovers of handmade beauty! Join us for a celebration of the Cathedral’s 125th anniversary as well as the 25th anniversary of its Congregation on Thursday! Visit [craftsatthecathedral.org](http://craftsatthecathedral.org) for hours and more information

### DECEMBER

#### A SEASON OF LIGHTS: A WINTER WORKSHOP

**Saturday, December 9, 10 a.m.**  
In this special workshop, children and their families brighten up their winter with a reading of Nancy Luenn’s Celebrations of Light, learning about winter festivities from around the world. Activities include rolling beeswax candles; cutting Chinese and Taiwanese paper lanterns; and sculpting clay can-

delabras inspired by Hindu floating lamps, Jewish menorahs, and Kwanzaa kinaras. Recommended for children ages 4 – 8 years old. \$10 per child, with accompanying adult. Check in at Visitor Center upon arrival.

#### CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

**Saturday, December 9, 7 p.m.**  
Featuring choral music by Britten and Vivaldi. The Cathedral Choristers, joined by the soprano and alto voices of the Cathedral Choir, sing Britten’s exquisite setting of medieval poetry, the Ceremony of Carols. The Cathedral Chorale and Orchestra join for Vivaldi’s splendid and festive Gloria, while New York composer James Bassi’s radiant *Quem pastores laudavere* portrays the quiet beauty of the Christmas story. The whole audience is warmly invited to join in singing favorite Christmas carols, led by the choirs and orchestra!

#### EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK: BURGUNDIAN CHRISTMAS

**Sunday, December 10, 2 p.m., Chapel of St. James**

EMNY presents a series of holiday concerts featuring sacred and secular Renaissance motets and carols for voices and instruments. Also on December 17 at 2 p.m. and December 25 at 2 and 7:30 p.m.

#### PAUL WINTER’S 38TH ANNUAL WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

**Thursday, December 14, 8 p.m.**  
This multi-media event features musicians, vocalists, and the 25 dancers and drummers of the Forces of Nature Dance Theatre. Also on December 15 at 8 p.m. and December 16 at 2 and 7:30 p.m.

#### DZIECI THEATRE: FOOLS MASS

**Sunday, December 17, 5 p.m.**  
In Dzieci’s living example of “holy theater,” hymns and chants from the 8th to the 14th centuries combine with a robustly comic village tale, creating a seminal work that has been Dzieci’s signature piece since 1998.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE LESSONS AND CAROLS

**Sunday, December 24, 4 p.m.**  
Choirmaster Bryan Zaros, are joined by members of the Cathedral Choir in this family-friendly service, featuring readings, carols and larger-than-life puppets to tell the Christmas story. No passes are needed to attend!

#### CHRISTMAS EVE FESTAL EUCHARIST

**Sunday, December 24, 10:30 p.m.**  
Prelude music begins at 10 p.m. Bishop Dietsche celebrates the Eucharist and preaches. The Cathedral Choirs and Orchestra perform a festive mass setting and anthems, as well as classic Christmas carols. Special guests Paul Winter and Susanna Phillips join to celebrate the Christmas spirit. Passes are not needed to attend this service—there is plenty of seating! For information on reserving seats, please email [lcortoreal@stjohndivine.org](mailto:lcortoreal@stjohndivine.org).

#### CHRISTMAS DAY CHORAL EUCHARIST

**Monday, December 25, 10:30 a.m.**  
The Dean preaches and the Cathedral Choir sings. This special service will be the only liturgy of the day.

#### NEW YEAR’S EVE CONCERT FOR PEACE

**Sunday, December 31, 7 p.m.**  
Founded by Leonard Bernstein in 1984, the annual New Year’s Eve Concert for Peace is a signature Cathedral event, gathering old friends and new for more than a quarter of a century. This year we begin with Haydn’s glorious *Te Deum* and continue with the U.S. premiere of *See the Wretched Strangers* by composer Lucas Wiegink. A series of songs about our shared Earth continues the theme of neighborly compassion and the renewal of hope for the coming year. Wrapping up this year’s performance, we celebrate the concert’s founder by performing chorales from Leonard Bernstein’s own *Mass*. Visit [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org) for tickets and more information.

#### NEW YEAR’S EVE WATCHNIGHT SERVICE

**Sunday, December 31, 11 p.m.**  
Join the Cathedral community in ringing in the New Year with this special late-night service.



# It's All About Grace (Or Why I'm a Fan of Article IX)

By the Rev. Stephen P. Hagerty

I have this picture of myself in a church basement (or *undercroft*, if you would prefer), chairs arranged in a circle, burnt coffee on the table nearby with what appear to be stale donuts. I am sitting (*really slouching*) in one of the metal chairs with only a few others as we slowly begin to introduce ourselves. “Hi, my name is Stephen, and I find spiritual sustenance in the 39 *Articles of Religion*.” The few members present for this support meeting all say, in unison, though in somewhat defeated tones, “Hi, Stephen.” And the meeting begins.

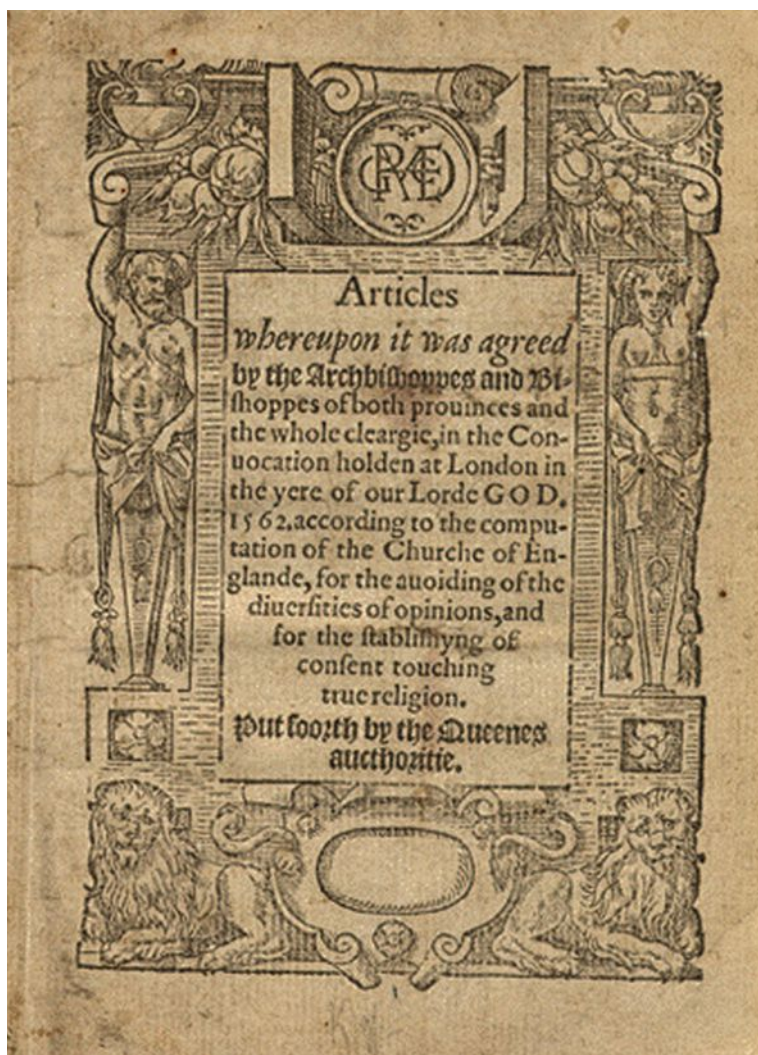
I know what you are thinking: couldn't happen! The room wouldn't be large enough to contain the number of Episcopalians (and High-Church leaning Presbyterians walking the Canterbury Trail) who are interested in the theology undergirding the 39 *Articles*. I mean in the Diocese of New York alone, we must number, oh, I would think in the high single digits at least? Let's be optimistic and say there are five of us at this day's meeting.

Back to the meeting. The chair says that today we will focus on Article IX, and immediately the grumbling ensues. “God, not that one.” “Yeah, I know, it's so depressing.” “Couldn't we talk about Article XIX? We all like talking about the church!” The chair tries to regain a semblance of control, “We go through each of them in order, one per meeting; you all know the drill.” I immediately sit up straight and slyly smile to contain my joy, since this happens to be a favorite of mine.

To refresh your memory, since you may not have ever attended a meeting, this is what Article IX, entitled, “About Original or Birth-Sin,” says:

*“Original sin is not about following the example of Adam (as the Pelagians wrongly say). It is the fault and corruption of the nature of everyone which is produced in the nature of the descendants of Adam. As a result humans have gone very far from original righteousness, and by their own nature are inclined to evil, so that the flesh always desires what is contrary to the spirit.”*  
(We use a modern translation for the meetings to help newcomers.)

The room has gone very quiet as the chair reads this quick summary of the Article. A few heads turn downward, while one person is tapping his fingers nervously on his knees. As a recovering extrovert, I internally count to ten before speaking to make sure I don't talk too much. Since I am the only one looking at the chair as she looks around the room, her eyes lock with mine and she says, “Stephen, would you like to begin sharing?”



“Well, I always find this one a comfort.” This perks the others up a bit. One snaps at me, “A comfort? What are you, a masochist?” The chair quickly intervenes, “Cuthbert, we've talked about your outbursts in the past.” “Sorry, Evelyn, and sorry, Stephen. It just that I don't get the appeal of this Article. Don't we already feel bad enough about ourselves?”

Evelyn gently invites me to reply. “Well,” I say, “the way I see it, I screw up on regular basis, even though I try really hard and I don't quite understand why that is. This Article gives me a framework, I guess.”

Another member, Alban, who rarely speaks more than a few words, raises his hand. “Yes, Alban, would you like to share?” the chair gently inquires. “Well, yeah, I guess I would.” (This is followed by a few seconds of awkward pausing, while everyone waits expectantly.) “I mean, I guess, if we didn't need help, why are we here?” I'm not quite following Alban's train of thought and say, “Alban, I'm not sure I get where you're coming from.” “Well,” he says, “I guess I kind of think we're all tempted...tempted to think we are spiritually healthier than, well, we really are. Why would I need a savior if I could basically just do it on my own?”

Everyone is now sitting up straight in their chairs, a bit more engaged since Alban spoke.

Cuthbert, who is very much an *unrecovered* extrovert, can't help himself. “But doesn't this Article just make you feel like a piece of sh\*t?” The chair, Evelyn, quickly intervenes, “Language, Cuthbert, please.”

Now, Etheldreda (who asks us to call her “Ethel”), who is also relatively new to the meetings, chimes in. “If I'm gonna be honest, I felt pretty bad about myself before hearing this Article. I know what I am capable of in my worst moments and, well, this Article seems to just be naming that for me.”

A bit surprised by how the conversation at today's meeting is going, I decide to speak up. “I guess why this article is important to me is because it helps me understand a phrase I really love.” Cuthbert, having calmed down a bit, gently asks, “What's the phrase, Stephen?” I say, “The phrase is simply, ‘There go I but for the grace of God.’ See I think this article is all about grace.”

Evelyn decides this is a good note to end on. “OK, we are just about out of time. Remember, everyone, when we meet next week we will be focusing on Article X: ‘About Free Will.’ Let's all stand, hold hands and say the prayer our Savior gave us.” In unison, but speaking with a bit more need, we all begin, “*Our Father, who art in heaven...*”

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