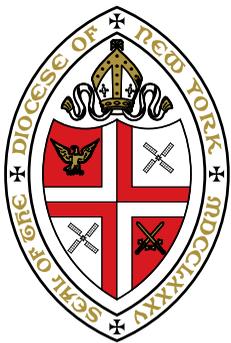


# Doubt Issue

# THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER

THE OFFICIAL NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NEW YORK SPRING 2022



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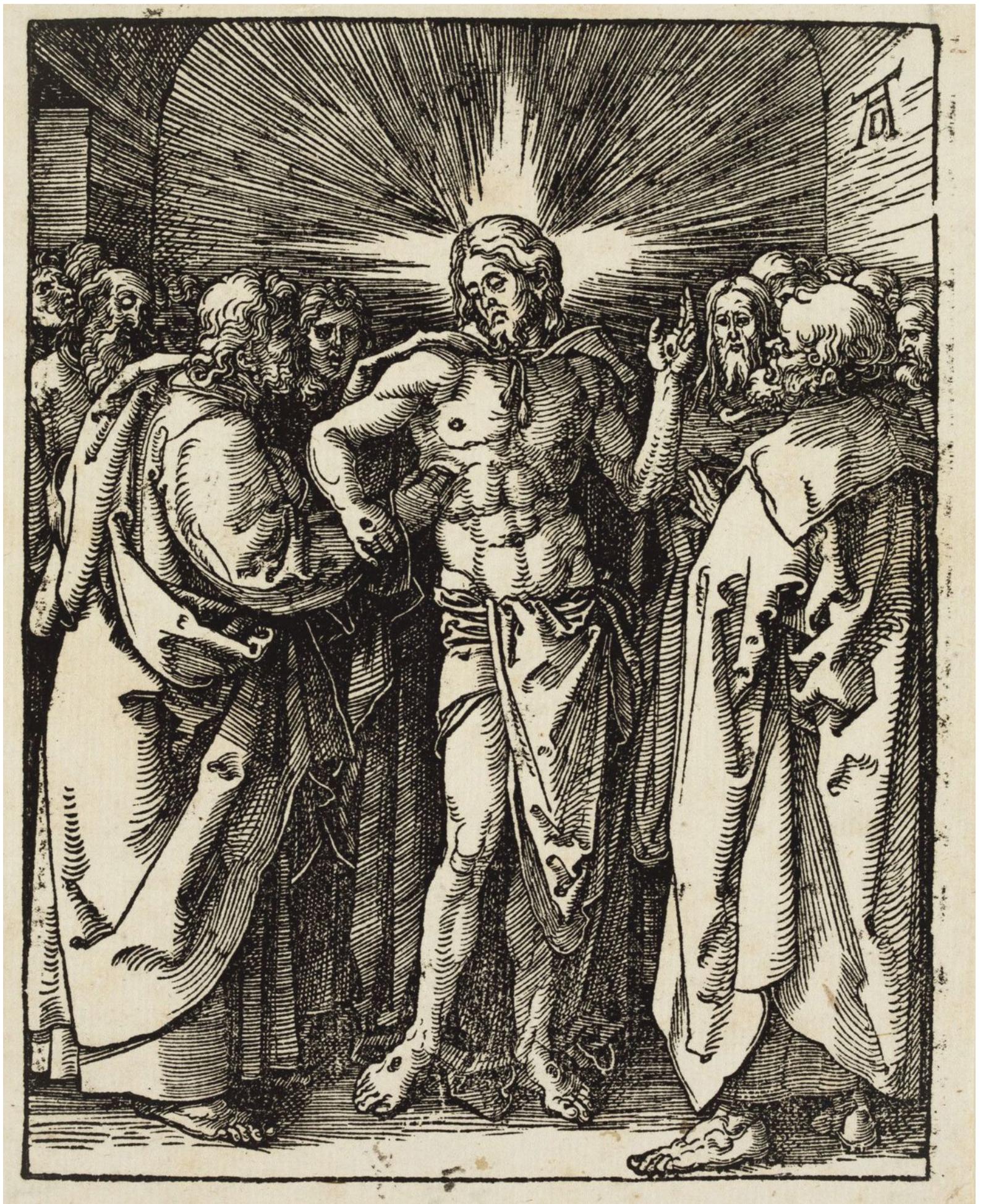
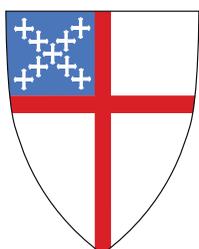
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The Doubting Thomas, woodcut by Albrecht Dürer, between 1509 and 1511. From *The Small Woodcut Passion*.

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#### THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER

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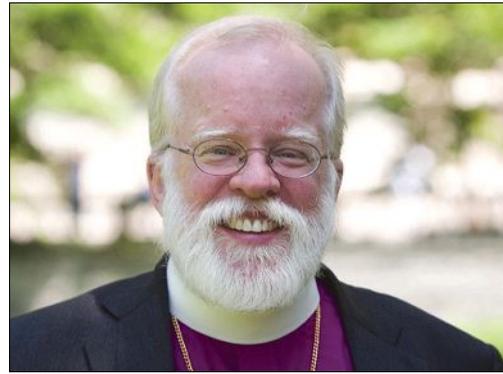
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# No Belief Without Doubt

By the Rt. Rev. Andrew ML Dietsche



There is a stream that runs through the Christian tradition that disparages doubt as an expression of unfaith. The gospels themselves extol those who “believe without seeing.” The most famous or familiar examination of doubt in the Bible occurs after Jesus’ resurrection, when Jesus made an appearance among the disciples in the upper room, but Thomas was not present. When Thomas did not believe the incredible claims of the disciples that Christ was raised from the dead and they saw him with their own eyes, Jesus appeared again, to Thomas especially, to silence his doubts. So, Thomas is known to history and the tradition as “Doubting Thomas,” and that appellation is understood to be pejorative, a criticism, a disdainful repudiation of Thomas’ weakness.

But I have always been profoundly uncomfortable with what appears in the tradition to castigate the doubter. First, because my own faith has been marked from childhood with constant and nagging questions about the things I have been taught. But also because the condemnation of doubt seems to me to reflect a kind of frantic defensiveness on the part of the faith, fearing that the claims of the faith cannot stand up to scrutiny and the demands of reason, and therefore questioning and scrutiny itself is to be forbidden. But nothing could be more destructive to the natural inquiry of the spiritual seeker, nor as ultimately destructive to faith as well.

It is my view that the doubts with which we may receive the tenets of the faith and approach even our Lord himself are essential to believing, because it is by our doubts that we demonstrate our willingness to take the claims of the faith seriously. Christ asks everything of us and demands our whole selves. The invitation to faith is utterly comprehensive of us and our lives, and if we are to make a meaningful response to God’s call, it must be with discernment, exploration, and the willingness to make the deep dive into all the fears and joys, anticipation and anxiety, of having our lives transformed. Here is where all our natural doubts in the face of the utterly different and fantastic and seemingly irrational meet possibility and promise and gentleness of being, and where the Holy Spirit may rise up within us and bring us to a place we never knew. Perhaps this is what lies behind all those gospel stories of the inability of the disciples to truly cross over into a full understanding of Jesus, even after casting their lives and their lot upon him.

At Saint Thomas Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, there is, over the altar, a carved stone reredos which depicts the scene from the Gospel of John where Thomas, in the presence of the risen Christ and in the presence of the other disciples, falls to his knees in humility and adoration, with arms extended, and in the middle of his self-offering makes his declaration: “My Lord and my God.” When I stand at that altar, with my hands on the eucharistic elements and my eyes on that carving, it reminds me that even as we approach the altar, we bring with us not only our belief, but our desire to believe as well, the obstacles to that belief, the questions which plague our hearts, the struggle we make all our lives with the teachings of church and faith, and our deep desire for God. All this we lay before our Lord as we receive his sacrament and blessing. It is a well-executed carving, but its strength comes from its placement immediately over the altar. Doubt and faith and revelation and exaltation are mingled in the image, as they are also, every time, mingled at the altar itself. In the upper room, we see the transformation of Thomas, and it is emotional, searing, terrible and majestic. The fall onto his knees, the exclamation of belief, the sudden, overpowering knowledge of God—all of this had been bound up in Thomas’ doubts and fears, and now pour from him at exactly the place where his doubts meet Jesus Risen.

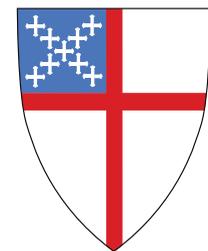
But one of the most famous images of this biblical scene is a painting by Caravaggio called “The Incredulity of Thomas.” If you don’t know it, look it up on Google; it is an amazingly intimate picture. Jesus is seen drawing his garment aside to expose the spear wound in his side, and in this painting, it is not Thomas who reaches for Jesus, but it is Jesus himself who grasps Thomas’ hand with his own and pulls him in and draws him to that wound and pushes Thomas’ finger into that wound. Thomas, his other hand on his hip, with piercing eyes and with wrinkled brow, stares at his hand and finger and Jesus’ wound with the serious, exploring, inquiring eye of a detective or medical examiner. But along with the encounter between Jesus and Thomas, what I find as striking is the position of two others of Jesus’ disciples, standing behind Thomas, but leaning in, just as intent, with eyes just as searching, staring at the same wound with the same intensity. Because, while Thomas alone may have been made to bear the label of Doubter, the fact is that they all needed to know. They too needed to see. It may be that Caravaggio was pouring his own needs and struggles into his painting, but it is a certainty that he gave picture and life to mine.

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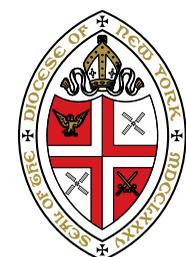
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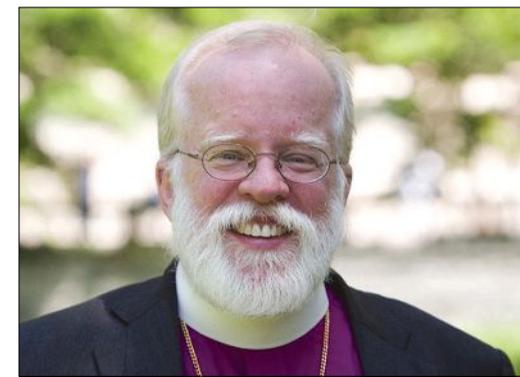
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## No Hay Creencia Sin Duda

Por el Revdmo. Obispo Andrew ML Dietsche

**E**xiste una tendencia en la tradición cristiana de considerar la duda como una expresión de falta de fe. Los mismos Evangelios ensalzan a aquellos que “creen sin ver”. La prueba de duda más famosa o familiar en la Biblia tiene lugar justo después de la resurrección de Jesús, cuando él se apareció ante sus discípulos en el aposento alto, pero Tomás no estaba presente. Cuando Tomás no creyó las increíbles afirmaciones que hacían los discípulos de que Cristo resucitó de entre los muertos y de que lo vieron con sus propios ojos, Jesús apareció de nuevo, especialmente ante Tomás, para acallar sus dudas. Así que a Tomás se le conoce histórica y tradicionalmente como “Tomás el incrédulo”, apodo que se considera como un repudio peyorativo, crítico y despectivo a la debilidad de Tomás.

Pero siempre me he sentido profundamente incómodo con lo que parece ser la tradición de castigar a quienes dudan. Primero, porque mi propia fe ha estado marcada desde mi infancia con constantes y persistentes preguntas sobre las cosas que me han enseñado, y además porque me parece que condenar la duda refleja una especie de frenética actitud defensiva por parte de la fe, temiendo que sus afirmaciones no puedan soportar el escrutinio y las exigencias de la razón,

por lo tanto, el cuestionamiento y el escrutinio en sí deben prohibirse. Nada podría ser más destructivo para la indagación natural del buscador espiritual, así como para la fe.

En mi opinión, las dudas con las que recibimos los principios de la fe y con las que nos acercamos a nuestro Señor son esenciales para creer, pues es a través de nuestras dudas que demostramos nuestra voluntad de aceptar los principios de la fe con seriedad. Cristo nos lo pide todo y exige todo nuestro ser. La invitación a la fe es exhaustiva abarcándonos íntegramente a nosotros y a nuestras vidas, y si queremos responder al llamado de Dios de manera significativa, debemos hacerlo con discernimiento, exploración y la voluntad de adentrarnos en todos los miedos y las alegrías, la expectativa y la ansiedad de transformar nuestras vidas. Es aquí donde todas nuestras dudas naturales, frente a todo lo diferente, fantástico y aparentemente irracional, se cruzan con la posibilidad, la promesa y la gentileza de ser, y donde el Espíritu Santo puede surgir en nosotros y llevarnos a un lugar que nunca habíamos conocido. Tal vez esto es lo que hay detrás de todos esos relatos del Evangelio sobre la incapacidad de los discípulos para alcanzar una comprensión plena de Jesús, incluso después de haberle entregado sus vidas y su suerte.

En la iglesia de Santo Tomás de la Quinta Avenida, sobre el altar, hay un retablo tallado en piedra que representa la escena del Evangelio de Juan donde Tomás, en presencia del Cristo resucitado y de los demás discípulos, se arrodilla con humildad y adoración extendiendo sus brazos, y en medio de su ofrenda, afirma: “Señor mío y Dios mío”.

Cuando me paro en ese altar, con mis manos en los elementos eucarísticos y mi mirada posada en ese tallado, me recuerda que incluso al acercarnos al altar, llevamos con nosotros no solo nuestra creencia sino también nuestro deseo de creer, los obstáculos de esa creencia, las preguntas que atormentan nuestros corazones, la lucha que libramos toda nuestra vida con las enseñanzas de la iglesia y la fe, y nuestro deseo profundo de Dios. Todo esto se le ofrecemos al Señor al recibir su sacramento y su bendición. Es un tallado bien ejecutado, pero su fuerza proviene de su ubicación, justo sobre el altar. La duda, la fe, la revelación y la exaltación se mezclan en esta imagen al igual que se mezclan siempre en el propio altar. En el Aposento Alto, vemos la transformación de Tomás, y es emotiva, mordaz, terrible y majestuosa. La caída sobre sus rodillas, su expresión de creencia, su súbito y abrumador conocimiento de Dios—todo esto había estado oculto en las dudas y temores de Tomás y ahora emanaban de él en el lugar exacto donde sus dudas se encontraron con Jesús resucitado.

Pero una de las imágenes más famosas de esta escena bíblica es una pintura de Caravaggio llamada “La incredulidad de Santo Tomás”. Si no la conocen, búsquenla en Google. Es una pintura increíblemente íntima. Se ve a Jesús apartando su manto para revelar la herida de lanza en su costado. En esta pintura, no es Tomás quien se aproxima a Jesús, sino que el mismo Jesús toma la mano de Tomás con la suya propia y lo hala hacia sí mismo, hacia su herida, e inserta el dedo de Tomás en la herida. Tomás, con su otra mano en la cintura, con ojos penetrantes y el ceño fruncido, observa su mano, su dedo y la herida de Jesús con la mirada seria, exploradora e inquisitiva de un detective o de un médico forense. Pero además del encuentro entre Jesús y Tomás, algo que me parece igual de impresionante es la posición de los otros dos discípulos de Jesús, quienes están detrás de Tomás, inclinados, igual de decididos, con miradas igualmente inquisitivas, observando la herida con la misma intensidad. Y es que, aunque solo Tomás llevó el apodo de incrédulo, la verdad es que todos ellos necesitaban saber. Ellos también necesitaban ver. Puede que Caravaggio haya depositado sus propias necesidades y dificultades en su pintura, pero es una certeza que les dio imagen y vida a las más.

+Andy

## Doubt: We Need It

By the Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin

The Bible story about doubt that most readily comes to my mind is that of the doubting Thomas in John, chapter 20. When his companion disciples told him that they had seen the risen Jesus, Thomas said, “unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” This is also the Gospel story for the Second Sunday of Easter every year, which, in turn, creates a tension between faith and doubt in the most important tenet of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus. Another example of doubt is the story of Zechariah in Luke, chapter 1: When an angel appeared to him and told him that his aged wife, Elizabeth, would bear a son, Zechariah doubted God’s messenger, and was struck dumb until she did exactly that.

Doubt is an intellectual and emotional response to the uncertain and unknown in life. Although he would not take his companion disciples’ words as truth, Thomas was nonetheless curious: He yearned to see and touch for himself the nail marks on Jesus’ body, the marks of his crucifixion death. Deep down, he understood the mystery of resurrection: that there can be no resurrection without death, and that resurrection does not erase the wounds. His curiosity and desire led him not only to his life-changing encounter with the risen Jesus but also eventually to his own spiritual resurrection as an apostle. Zechariah, on the other hand, could not tolerate even for a moment the angel’s unexplainable and uncertain message. The paradox of Zechariah is that his preference for rational clarity stopped him from accepting the possibility of the impossible—the work of God’s grace. “How will I know that this is so?” he challenged the angel, and the work of God’s grace unfolded right before his eyes in silence. To his credit, he clearly changed in his heart and mind, as he fol-

lowed the angel’s instructions in naming his new-born son John.

In his book, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Thomas Merton wrote, “The function of faith is not to reduce mystery to rational clarity, but to integrate the unknown and the known together in a living whole, in which we are more and more able to transcend the limitations of our external self.” When it comes to faith in God, the doubt borne of the intolerance of uncertainty and driven by rational clarity can lead to a blindness to the mystery of God’s grace or even a denial of God, because God, by definition, is not fully knowable by human minds. God is an ever-unfolding mystery who desires a dwelling place in human hearts. This is why God’s grace is an intolerable uncertainty to those who seek only the rational certainty.

The doubt borne of curiosity, on the other hand, can inspire in us a courage of faith as we journey through life’s unknown and uncertain landscapes, learning to integrate the unknown and unexplainable mysteries of God into our daily living in a dynamic and concrete way. The unknown of life remains unknown. The uncertainty of God remains uncertain. We learn to integrate the unknown and the known, the uncertain and the certain, to live into the wholeness and the fullness of life. I believe it is impossible to live life solely based on rational certainty and clarity, intolerant of uncertainty. Doubt can arouse curiosity and courage in an amazing journey of grace and faith. In that sense, doubt is not the opposite of faith. Rather, doubt is an important part of our spirituality and faith.

+ Allen



## La Duda: Lo Necesitamos

Por el Revdmo. Obispo Allen K. Shin

Quizás la historia bíblica sobre la duda que más me viene a la mente es la de Tomás el incrédulo en el capítulo 20 de Juan. Cuando sus compañeros discípulos le dijeron que habían visto a Jesús resucitado, Tomás dijo que “a menos que vea la marca de los clavos” en sus manos y meto mi dedo en la marca de los clavos y mi mano en su costado, no lo creeré. Esta es también la historia del Evangelio del segundo domingo de Pascua de cada año, que, a su vez, crea una tensión entre la fe y la duda en el principio más importante de la fe cristiana, la resurrección de Jesús. Otro ejemplo de duda es la historia de Zacarías en Lucas capítulo 1: cuando un ángel se le apareció y le dijo que su anciana esposa, Isabel, daría a luz un hijo, Zacarías dudó del mensajero de Dios y se quedó mudo hasta que ella hizo exactamente eso.

La duda es una respuesta intelectual y emocional a lo incierto y desconocido de la vida. Aunque no tomaría como verdad las palabras de sus compañeros discípulos, Tomás tenía curiosidad: anhelaba ver y tocar por sí mismo las marcas de los clavos en el cuerpo de Jesús, las marcas de su muerte en la crucifixión. En el fondo, comprendió el misterio de la resurrección: que no puede haber resurrección sin muerte, y que la resurrección no borra las heridas. Su curiosidad y deseo lo llevaron no solo a su encuentro con el Jesús resucitado que le cambió la vida, sino también a su propia resurrección espiritual como apóstol. Zacarías, en cambio, no pudo tolerar ni por un momento el inexplicable e incierto mensaje del ángel. La paradoja de Zacarías es que su preferencia por la claridad racional le impidió aceptar la posibilidad de lo imposible: la obra de la gracia de Dios. “¿Cómo sabré que esto es así?” desafió al ángel, y la obra de la gracia de Dios se desarrolló ante sus ojos en silencio. Para su mérito, claramente cambió en su corazón y mente, al seguir las instrucciones del ángel y llamar Juan a su hijo recién nacido.

En su libro *New Seeds of Contemplation* (Nuevas semillas de contemplación), Thomas Merton escribió que “La función de la fe no es reducir el misterio a la claridad racional, sino integrar lo desconocido y lo conocido en un todo vivo, en el que somos cada vez más capaces de trascender las limitaciones de nuestro ser externo”. Cuando se trata de la fe en Dios, la duda nacida de la intolerancia a la incertidumbre e impulsada por la claridad racional puede conducir a una ceguera ante el misterio de la gracia de Dios o incluso a una negación de Dios, porque Dios, por definición, no es plenamente comprensible por mentes humanas, Dios es un misterio en constante desarrollo que desea una morada en los corazones humanos. Por eso la gracia de Dios es una incertidumbre intolerable para quien busca sólo la certeza racional.

La duda nacida de la curiosidad, por otro lado, puede inspirarnos el coraje de la fe mientras caminamos por los paisajes desconocidos e inciertos de la vida, aprendiendo a integrar los misterios desconocidos e inexplicables de Dios en nuestra vida diaria de una manera dinámica y concreta. Lo desconocido de la vida permanece desconocido. La incertidumbre de Dios permanece incierta. Aprendemos a integrar lo desconocido y lo conocido, lo incierto y lo cierto, para vivir la totalidad y la plenitud de la vida. Creo que es imposible vivir la vida basándose únicamente en la certeza y la claridad racionales, intolerante con la incertidumbre. La duda puede despertar la curiosidad y el coraje en un asombroso camino de gracia y fe. En ese sentido, la duda no es lo opuesto a la fe. Más bien, la duda es una parte importante de nuestra espiritualidad y fe.

+ Allen

## Faith As Creative Insecurity

By the Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool

One of my all-time favorite cartoon series is “Peanuts” by the late Charles Schulz. I grew up with Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, and that wonderful dog who could be anybody’s pet, Snoopy. In one episode, Linus is characteristically sitting with his beloved blanket in one hand, and his thumb in his mouth. He is suddenly attacked by Snoopy, who latches onto the blanket and heads out the door with Linus hanging on for dear life. Snoopy does everything to get the blanket away from Linus: he jumps on him, trips him, and pulls him around for all he’s worth. Finally, battered and worn, Linus reappears at the door. “Are you crazy?” says common-sense Lucy. “It’s cold outside. You could catch pneumonia rolling around out there in the snow!” To which Linus replies, wearily, “The struggle for security knows no season.”

Doubt and faith, security and insecurity are concepts inextricably related to one another. We strive for security, and yet we live in an insecure world. We want to be solid in our faith, yet at times we are wracked by doubt; and no insistence on the part of preachers that *Doubt is a part of Faith* quells the underlying unease of uncertainty. Perhaps in order to deal with my own doubts, I try to think about faith as “creative insecurity.”

A Talmudic interpretation of the Red Sea crossing tells how the waters did not part and allow Moses to pass simply because God looked down from heaven and saw that unless God opened the waters, the Israelites would all be drowned. This interpretation suggests that the reason the sea opened was in response to Moses putting his toe into the water, risking that the sea would drown him, but being determined and filled with that much faith. The story ends, as does each Talmudic interpretation, with a moral: “Do not just stand there on dry land waiting for miracles!”

Christianity is not a salvation, but a call to adventurous living. Eternal life is *not* the perpetuity of the status quo—it is becoming alive at such depths that nothing can ever kill you. It is life to participate in the Eternal Spirit: It is not found in playing it safe,

but in risking all. The way of faith—of creative insecurity—is the way of growth, of maturing, of becoming.

The church as a community of faith is to create faith, provoke faith, nurture faith—as well as to consider doubt! But what the church resists more than anything else—because this is what we resist as persons—is to live by faith in the living God. Faith is not something to rest on, to take one’s ease on, but it beckons one to the growing edges of the self, to the frontiers of life, to creative insecurity. It isn’t safe to believe in the God of the Bible. In fact, it isn’t safe to live. Security is little more than sterility. Only insecurity is ever creative.

For us, living lives of faith, committing ourselves to lives of creative insecurity means acting on the conviction that *nothing* can separate us from the love of God in Jesus, the Christ. It means “hanging in there” with our faith, our creative insecurity, even when times are rough, doubts are prevalent, and spirits are low. It means loving people and using things—not the other way around. It means treating life—every aspect of it—as a *gift* and living it in the adventurous Spirit of the Giver. It means having the spirit of giving in all we do: our relationships, our decisions, our attitudes, the use of our time, our energies, our talents, our money, and our possessions. It means being keenly aware of and concerned for the hurts and hungers and thirsts and imprisonments and nakedness of the world around us—physical and spiritual—and being determined to respond to them. It means taking seriously Jesus’ command to reach out to others—physically and spiritually—with the love and care of Christ. Living a life of faith, committing ourselves to lives of creative insecurity, means that we must risk ourselves in the cause of justice: for that is where Christ is.



## La Fe Como Inseguridad Creativa

Por la Revdma. Obispa Mary D. Glasspool

Una de mis series favoritas de dibujos animados de todos los tiempos es “Peanuts” del difunto Charles Schultz. Crecí con Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus y ese extraordinario perro que podía ser la mascota de cualquiera: Snoopy. En un episodio, Linus está típicamente sentado con su amada manta en una mano y el pulgar en la boca. De repente lo ataca Snoopy, quien se aferra a la manta y sale por la puerta con Linus aferrándose por su vida. Snoopy hace todo lo posible por quitarle la manta a Linus: salta sobre él, lo hace tropezar y lo jala con toda su fuerza. Finalmente, maltratado y desgastado, Linus reaparece en la puerta. “¿Estás loco?” dice Lucy con su sentido común. “Hace frío afuera. ¿Te podría dar una neumonía rodando por la nieve! A lo que Linus responde, cansado: “La lucha por la seguridad no tiene temporada”.

La duda y la fe, la seguridad y la inseguridad son conceptos indisolublemente relacionados entre sí. Luchamos por la seguridad y, sin embargo, vivimos en un mundo inseguro. Queremos ser sólidos en nuestra fe, pero a veces nos asalta la duda; y ninguna insistencia por parte de los predicadores de que la duda es parte de la fe sofoca la inquietud subyacente de la incertidumbre. Quizá para hacer frente a mis propias dudas, trato de pensar en la fe como “inseguridad creativa”.

Una interpretación talmúdica del cruce del Mar Rojo cuenta cómo las aguas no se separaron y permitieron que Moisés pasara simplemente porque Dios miró desde el cielo y vio que, a menos que Dios abriera las aguas, todos los israelitas se ahogarían. Esta interpretación sugiere que la razón por la que el mar se abrió fue en respuesta a que Moisés metió el dedo del pie en el agua, arriesgándose a que el mar lo ahogara, pero estaba decidido y lleno de tanta fe. La historia termina, al igual que cada interpretación talmúdica, con una moraleja: “¡No te quedes en tierra firme esperando milagros!”.

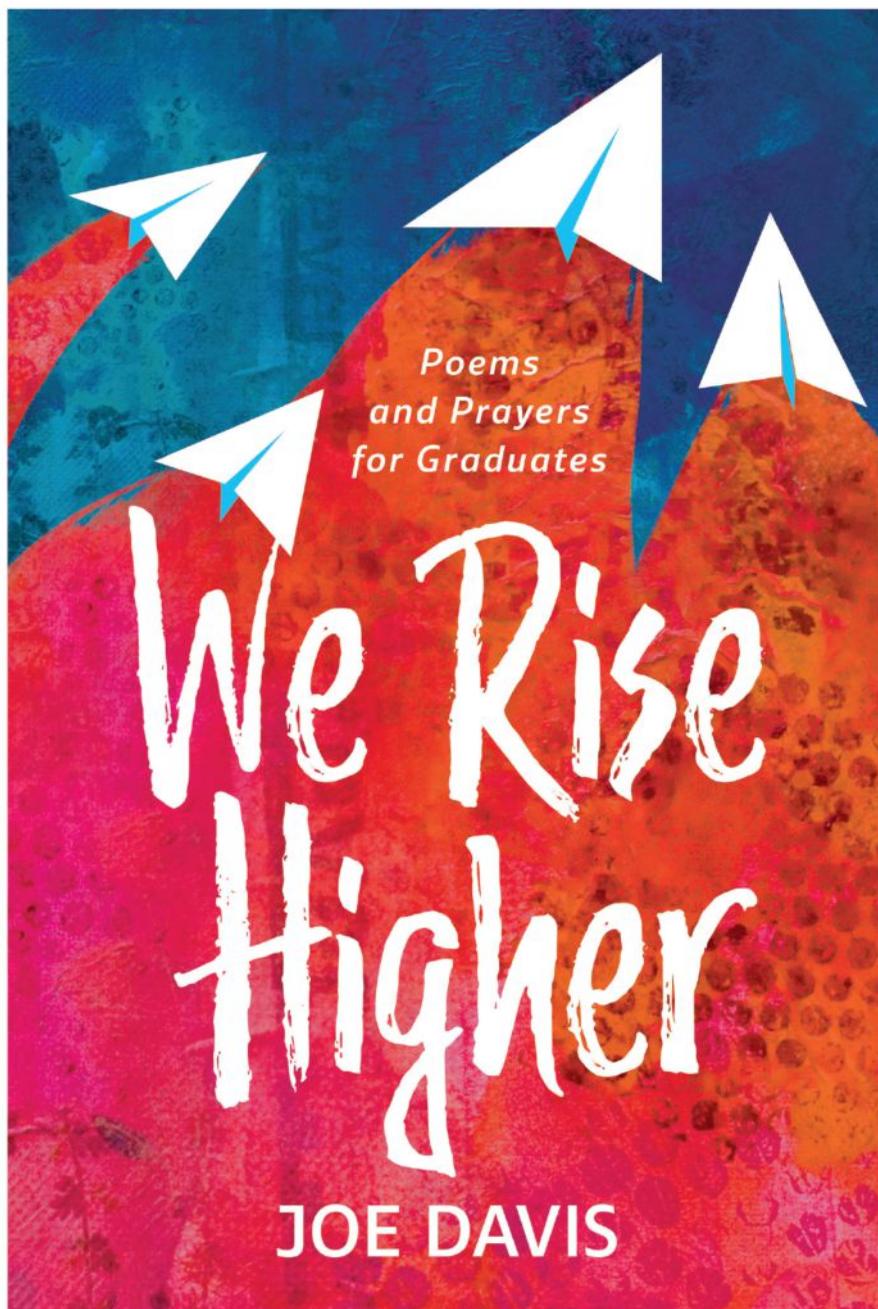
El cristianismo no es una salvación, sino un llamado a una vida de aventuras. La vida eterna no es la perpetuidad del *status quo*: es cobrar vida a tal profundidad que nada podrá matarte jamás. Vida es participar del Espíritu Eterno: no se encuentra en ir

por lo seguro, sino en arriesgarlo todo. El camino de la fe —de la inseguridad creativa— es el camino del crecimiento, de la madurez, del devenir.

La iglesia como comunidad de fe debe crear fe, provocar fe, nutrir la fe, ¡así como considerar la duda! Pero lo que la iglesia resiste más que cualquier otra cosa, porque esto es lo que resistimos como personas, es vivir por fe en el Dios vivo. La fe no es algo en que descansar, en que relajarse, sino que nos llama a los bordes crecientes del yo, a las fronteras de la vida, a la inseguridad creativa. No es seguro creer en el Dios de la Biblia. De hecho, no es seguro vivir. La seguridad es nada más que esterilidad. Sólo la inseguridad es siempre creativa.

Para nosotros, vivir una vida de fe, comprometernos en una vida de inseguridad creativa significa actuar con la convicción de que nada puede separarnos del amor de Dios en Jesús, el Cristo. Significa “aguantar ahí” con nuestra fe, nuestra inseguridad creativa, incluso cuando los tiempos son difíciles, prevalecen las dudas y los ánimos están decaídos. Significa amar a las personas y usar las cosas, no al revés. Significa tratar la vida, cada aspecto de ella, como un regalo y vivirla en el Espíritu osado del Dador. Significa tener el espíritu de dar en todo lo que hacemos: nuestras relaciones, nuestras decisiones, nuestras actitudes, el uso de nuestro tiempo, nuestras energías, nuestros talentos, nuestro dinero y nuestras posesiones. Significa estar profundamente consciente y preocupado por las heridas, el hambre, la sed, los encarcelamientos y la desnudez del mundo que nos rodea, físico y espiritual, y estar decidido a responder a ellos. Significa tomar en serio el mandato de Jesús de llegar a los demás, física y espiritualmente, con el amor y el cuidado de Cristo. Vivir una vida de fe, comprometidos en vidas de inseguridad creativa, significa que debemos arriesgarnos por la causa de la justicia: porque allí está Cristo.

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to be you is not a crime here.

We are all divine here,  
we shine brighter when we all shine here,  
we rise higher when we all rise here,  
we practice being kind here,  
we celebrate the fact that we are still alive here.

You can make mistakes here,  
no guilt, blame, or shame here,  
there's only grace here,  
we know you by name here,  
we've been waiting for you,  
so glad you came here,  
we hope that you stay here,  
all that you are can be reclaimed and embraced here.

10

## An Invitation:

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Go and do that.

11

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# Reasonable Doubt

By *Andrea Strout*

I have my certainty,” a Catholic school principal says in the 2008 film *Doubt*, defending her campaign against a priest she believes is molesting a student. Based on John Patrick Shanley’s Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning play, *Doubt* is set in the Bronx in 1964, decades before the Roman Catholic Church would be rocked by revelations of child sex abuse by priests. It is a measure of the film’s brilliance that we never know whether the principal, Sister Aloysius, is the hero or the villain of the piece. Is she a brave woman battling a patriarchal church and an old-boy network of abusers and enablers? Or is she a blue-nosed martinet, punishing Father Flynn for working toward a more welcoming church?

Either way, she was ahead of her time. More and more of us these days have our certainty: personal, religious, political. I have mine, God knows; chances are you do, too. Certainty is an emotion for our times. It is economical. Cocktail-napkin concise. Time-saving, even: tailor-made for short attention spans and 140-character missives. Best of all, it can be dressed up as one’s personal truth to render it bulletproof. Note that Sister Aloysius doesn’t say “I feel certain,” but “I have *my* certainty.” Or, as we would say today, “I have my truth.” What is doubt, on the other hand, but a mealy-mouthed pulling of one’s punches, a time-sucking luxury like nuance and long-form writing? So 20th century!

Unshakable and not reliant on facts, certainty in the 21st century looks a lot like something else, especially in its more bizarre and destructive forms. Call it “unreasonable doubt.” Often framed as healthy skepticism, it presents as an inability to trust anyone and anything outside of one’s immediate experience, belief system and “community,” though that community is more apt to be virtual than actual. The broadly shared assumptions that fueled our success as a nation, and that gave us the social capital to face our challenges, however imperfectly and incompletely, have given way to millions of individual “truths,” none more credible or deserving than any other. Nor is this cynicism confined to our country. “How do *you* know what’s really happening in Ukraine—what’s real and what’s fake?” I have heard first- and

second-hand from two young people, one in Europe, the other in the U.S., using almost identical words. “Everybody lies,” added the one in Europe.

We’d all do well to remember the adage about truth in wartime. But the comments I heard from different sides of the globe represent a corrosive type of unbelief. Strange as it is to say, I believe the antidote to toxic suspicion is more doubt, not less, albeit doubt of a certain kind. Call it “reasonable doubt.” As Episcopalians, we have a certain comfort level with this idea, given that reason is one leg, along with scripture and tradition, of the famous three-legged stool that grounds our faith. And what is reason if not the application of our God-given intellect and discernment, i.e., our capacity for doubt? What is our capacity for doubt if not an acceptance of the limits of our own understanding—the humility to be open to continued growth?

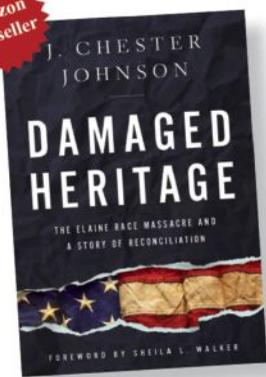
That said, openness to other viewpoints can feel both dangerous and enabling these days. Watching unreason tear apart our schools, libraries, emergency rooms and Thanksgiving tables, the temptation to disengage is overwhelming, lest we be sucked into the breach rather than become repairers of it. For me at least, there is a strong element of self-preservation in this: I don’t want to be bitten by the same bug, to have my anxieties hijacked for bad ends or my shaky hold on hope made more so. I don’t want to be gaslit, to question my own sanity as I meet a wall of unyielding resistance to facts in someone I otherwise respect. And I understand the allure of certainty too well. I know my immunity to it isn’t so much natural as carefully acquired and in need of regular boosting.

How do we boost our antibodies to unreasonable doubt, which is really a kind of despair? I only know what works for me: spending time with those who are wiser than I am. A phone conversation with my 96-year-old friend Joe often does the trick. So does hanging out with little kids. The wisdom of dogs is always a sure thing, as is the healing power of nature. There is Tolstoy and Dickens, Margaret Renkl and Anne Lamott. There is my little house of worship: still the simple, white-washed room it was when it educated the sons and daughters of small farmers from about 1810 to 1919. I often think of those children as I pass the rows of hooks in the narthex where they once hung their coats.

Then I plunge into the pre-service chaos that is my parish today, letting the ringing laughter and shared sorrows of my fellow parishioners wash over me. The coffee-maker is just stirring to life in its corner. Its labors always seem to reach a crescendo at the same point in the service—The Gospel According to Mr. Coffee, my husband calls it. I shut my eyes. I let go, borne along in the spirit of inquiry and belief, the latter roomy enough for all the doubting reasoners among us.

We see through a glass darkly, after all.

*Formerly a member of the Church of the Resurrection in Manhattan and Zion Church, Dobbs Ferry, the author is now a member of St. Philip’s, New Hope in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.*



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# Beyond Doubt: *What if you really believed you were enough?*

By Kathy Bozzuti-Jones, PhD

**W**hat if you really believed you were enough? What if you really believed there is nothing more you need to do or be, other than to be yourself?

What if showing up and trying to do your best under present circumstances is exactly what makes you happy or causes you to grow—but you just don't realize it?

What if we truly believed that God loves us exactly as we are, right now, in this moment, despite our familiar lists of flaws and foibles? Despite the certainty of the inner critic-perfectionist reminding us that we have fallen short in some ways, again? What if...

**What if we were to get very quiet and sit with God in the silence? Right now.**

No prayers. No petitions. No promises. No guilt. No anxiety. No fear. Not even striving. Nothing but the felt sense of God's unconditional love for you... God cherishing you... And you... taking... it... all... in. The way that dry soil takes in the falling rain. The way a single loving touch can soothe a crying baby.

**Try this simple breath practice.** Begin by recalling the warm and comfortable feeling of being loved unconditionally. **Place a hand on your heart and breathe rhythmically:**

*Breathing in God's love*

Breathing out guilt

*Breathing in grace*

Breathing out perfectionism

*Breathing in acceptance*

Breathing out self-criticism

*Breathing in spaciousness*

Breathing out anxiety

*Breathing in freedom*

Breathing out attachments

*Breathing in kindness and compassion*

Breathing out struggle, desire, and effort

Notice the Holy Spirit breathing in you—breathing you! God's very breath! Breathing life into your perfectly-imperfect self, God's Beloved—you—the one who practices being fully present to reality, the one who tries to be fully present to others. The one who is more than enough. The one whom God meets and accompanies and cherishes. *You are the Beloved.*

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*The author is associate director of Spiritual Practices, Retreats, & Pilgrimage at Trinity Church Wall Street.*



Photo: Kathy Bozzuti-Jones

# Whatever We Know of God, We Know Through Jesus

By *Judith Mason*

**G**od *qua* God is beyond our understanding. God is just, holy, infinite, other. We are none of the above.

And yet all God's creation is self-revelation. And truths about God are imparted in all religions and wisdom traditions.

Jesus in his person, life, teachings, ministry, death, resurrection, and continuing work in the world is the most complete revelation of God—God's nature and God's truth—that we very incomplete, finite, sinful human beings can begin to comprehend.

And it is through participation in Jesus' continuing work in the world—perhaps most profoundly beyond the sacraments through suffering and lovingly working in

community to prevail against injustice and suffering—that we grow in our understanding of God and of our own life and purpose here.

In Spanish, there are two verbs for "to know": *saber*, to know something intellectually, and *conocer*, to know someone or something from one's own experience. By definition, God would not be God if within the range of our finite human minds. But whatever mortal flesh can know about God and about itself, we learn through the experience of our shared life in Jesus.

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*The author is a member of St. Bartholomew's Church, Manhattan.*

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# Where There Is Doubt, There Is Hope

By *Stanley J. Weinberg LCSW, BCD*

**A**s a practicing psychotherapist, I frequently encounter individuals who doubt to a fault, as well as those who fail to suffer doubt at all. The former are more likely to respond well to psychodynamic psychotherapy; the latter are more resistant to therapeutic interventions and more likely to persist in destructive behavior—even behavior that is dangerous to self and others.

Those who doubt to a fault and those who fail to experience doubt both present problems with critical thinking. Their thoughts and emotions are rooted in beliefs that cannot be verified, but nonetheless have a powerful hold on their behavior. Those who doubt to a fault are more likely to experience anxiety, insecurity, lack of confidence, and indecisiveness, as well as other symptoms that compromise their thinking and performance in life; they are therefore more likely to seek out therapy. For other doubters, their own solutions to their psychological problems, such as dependence on alcohol, drugs, or sex, have become problems in their own right that lead to their seeking, or being persuaded to seek, therapy. Those who fail to experience doubt, however, risk further compromising their sanity to shore up their beliefs and can become hostile and sometimes dangerous to those who challenge those beliefs, whom they perceive as a threat.

One definition of doubt is a hesitancy to believe without proof and verifiable facts. But there are few things in life of which to be certain, other than death: Belief without doubt therefore requires an absence of critical thinking, questioning, and intellectual curiosity. It's what we find in White supremacy, authoritarianism, classism, misogyny, environmental exploitation, all forms of oppression, and too many other evils to mention—and it has led to wars and all forms of atrocities.

Our social systems and institutions too often fail to teach critical thinking or encourage doubt and questioning. We are taught what to think, not how to think; and we are too often indoctrinated rather than educated. Our Episcopal Church, founded though it is on Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, has been no exception. Though we are commanded to love God with all our heart and soul and minds,

we have often failed to use our minds well and to respect the minds of all our neighbors.

In her book, *The Church Cracked Open*, Stephanie Spellers tells us that "Southern slaveholders were encouraged to use tools like the catechism written especially for slaves by Bishop William Meade of Virginia. It read in part:

Q. What is the duty of servants?

A. To be obedient to their masters, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ...

Q. What directions are given servants?

A. Servants, obey in all things your masters..."

In John 20:24-29, Jesus says to Thomas "Do not doubt but believe..." and "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." This text implies that belief without doubt is a higher level of piety: it thereby discourages critical thinking and can contribute to confusion and even guilt in those who engage in it. "Doubting Thomas" has always been given a bad rap. But how sure can we be that this is what Jesus actually said, when the rest of his life and his teachings counter it? Jesus challenged conventional wisdom, religious beliefs, and traditions. He was not an obedient follower; but rather the perfect role model for critical thinking, for having a mind of one's own, and for having the freedom and courage to speak and act on what can be proven to be right and good and true.

I have chosen to understand "Doubting Thomas" as a metaphor for the known meeting the unknown, and the not yet known; not in conflict with, but in pursuit of greater knowledge, wisdom, and truth; a journey, not a destination fixed in time. I believe that our faith is in conflict neither with reason nor with science and history—and that assures me that where there is doubt, there is indeed hope.

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*The author is a psychotherapist and a member of the Church of the Ascension in Manhattan.*

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# Enlivening and Enriching Doubt

By Suzanne Martinucci

**W**hoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” These well-known words of Jesus, as reported in Luke’s Gospel (17:18), are often interpreted to mean that our faith should be simple and accepting, even unquestioning—just as we imagine innocent little children believe. Yet, as any parent or teacher knows, children actually ask a lot of questions. When they do, it is often not that they doubt what they’re told, but because they want to understand more fully.

In the context of religious faith, doubt often gets a bad rap. One need only consider that personification of skepticism, “Doubting Thomas,” the apostle who would not believe that Christ had risen from the dead until he personally saw Jesus’s wounds and touched them with his own fingers.

The word “doubt” has long been part of our language. Its Latin root, *dubitare*, means “to doubt, question, hesitate, waver in opinion.” In Old French, *doute* meant “uncertainty with regard to the truth of something.” Could it be that we have too long focused on doubt’s negative aspects? If instead we considered “doubt” in its questioning guise—as in opening a path to learning—mightn’t it potentially enliven and enrich our journey in faith?

It seems to me that a more questioning posture in our world in general would benefit us in various ways. Take our news sources. We hear so much about “misinformation,” “fake news,” “Big Tech censorship,” and “media bias.” It seems naïve, if not dangerous, not to probe beyond what we’re fed so that we get a more complete pic-

ture. Surely our faith is likewise strong enough to bear sincere and honest scrutiny in our quest for knowledge.

These days it seems that certainty in anything at all is scarce, and chances are we questioners have plenty of company. As Father Flynn, the priest whose alleged misdeeds are the play’s fulcrum, declares in John Patrick Shanley’s *Doubt: A Parable*, “Doubt can be a bond as powerful and sustaining as certainty. When you are lost, you are not alone.”

But daring to question long or rigidly held beliefs, or to express an unpopular opinion, often requires courage. In today’s world, we risk the wrath of the “cancel culture.” In 1615, the astronomer and polymath Galileo Galilei (who was a devout Catholic) paid a high price when he endorsed the Copernican theory that the earth revolved daily around the sun. Galileo’s pronouncements, based on his own scientific work, contradicted the Church’s own position. The Roman Inquisition found Galileo guilty of heresy and forced him to recant; he spent the rest of his life under house arrest. History, of course, has since proved Galileo correct.

Obviously, Galileo did not find religious faith and intellectual honesty mutually exclusive, a point we all might remember as we deal with our own doubt. As he wrote in a 1615 letter in his own defense, “I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect intended us to forgo their use.”

*The author is office administrator at the House of the Redeemer in Manhattan.*



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# Forms of Faith

By Yvonne Davies

I grew up in a Protestant denomination with certainty. God was the Father of us all, Jesus was his Son who died on the cross to save us from our sins, and the Holy Spirit was sent to guide us in our day-to-day lives. I knew all the Bible stories and could quote John 3:16 and Psalm 23.

This kind of certainty only carries you so far when growing up, though. Why did some people in my extended family believe strongly and others accept nothing of this story? If you actually read the Bible, there seem to be a lot of passages that contradict one another. Which one is true? Why are some rules followed and others not? The actions of some in church didn't seem to match what Jesus was saying. I saw more greed and rejection and insular thinking in church than out in the world.

Things weren't hanging together; certainty was disappearing.

I went to a Christian college despite my questions. I was full of doubt but met many who were sure. I wrote papers about liberation theology and accepting all people. I cut chapel, slept in on Sunday morning and read Bonhoeffer and Romero.

My first job as a teacher was connected to a church; attendance was required in the contract. It was a new denomination for me and even more conservative than my upbringing. I railed against rules that seemed to have nothing to do with spirituality. It felt like rules and behavior were more important than anything. I wanted out.

Circumstances and life changes led me into the Episcopal Church. The liturgy moved me and touched me in places that I didn't know existed. Questions were both allowed and encouraged. People read and discussed different theologians who opened up worlds to me that made more sense. Love was central to faith and community. A breath of fresh air washed over me: Not everything had to make sense; not everything was literal. Stories, actions, service, reading, discussing, the common cup... I learned, I grew, I questioned, I meditated...love bloomed in and around me. Here, finally, was good news. I was home.

I served in and outside of church for years. I prayed and felt loved and accepted by God. I felt a communion with other like-minded Christians. I learned and grew and gave voice to this. Until one day I didn't.

Life is hard. We don't always get what we pray for. We learn disturbing things about our faith's history. Was it an accumulation of unanswered questions and prayers? Was it loss of love and deep sadness? Somehow after years of fruitful growth and communion...it was gone. I did not feel God's presence. Prayers didn't

come. Books and conversation didn't help. All I felt was loss. I had learned so much...but it was all gone. I was flat.

I had been meeting with the same group of women for years to share our struggles and successes in our spiritual walks. Month after month I had nothing to say. Then year after year. They stayed by me. I had nothing to bring to them. Each week they pointed out something I said which showed a sliver of hope to them in my darkness. I didn't see or feel it but they believed it for me.

I took time off from church, I went back to church, I talked with priests, I tried to pray without success. The void remained. Is any of this true? Is this all made up? What does it really benefit me or the world for that matter? I had no words for people who experienced loss. I couldn't with honesty say, "I'll pray for you."

Is this what happens when we mature? We have to lose our faith in order to put it back together? What should we do when we are in the void waiting? Do we throw our faith out? Do we sit? How long do we wait? I couldn't give up. Something in me couldn't forget that God and I used to walk together. It's all I had ever known. Even when I was young and railing against rules, I still believed in God. Would God's presence ever return? Does maturity just mean you have to do it on your own? Take what you learned...love, community, sacrifice and go forth?

There was never a moment... a return. A relaxing began. I stopped worrying about why I didn't feel and hear God anymore. Was it my friends' steady encouragement—believing for me when I couldn't believe myself? Was it the steady support of my husband who loved me, whether I believed in God or not? It somehow didn't matter whether I had answers to my questions anymore. Life is not certain. Maybe it's OK if my beliefs are not, too. An unexpected gift of silence came with a mindfulness practice and a restorative yoga class. Emptying my mind of clutter allowed inspiration and creativity. Was this God working in me because I stopped clenching my fists and worrying about my loss of faith?

Life will continue to be hard. Wisdom and peace are available. Sharing and giving must happen. Joy will come. I must embrace it when it happens and be thankful for slivers of hope. I'm OK with not feeling God's presence anymore. I still hope to feel it again. For now, I want to do more in my church and community. I want to use my gifts where and when I can and support others in their gifts.

Maybe God is working in me after all?

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*The author serves on the vestry of Christ Church, Tarrytown.*

# INCARNATION CAMP WE KNOW CAMP

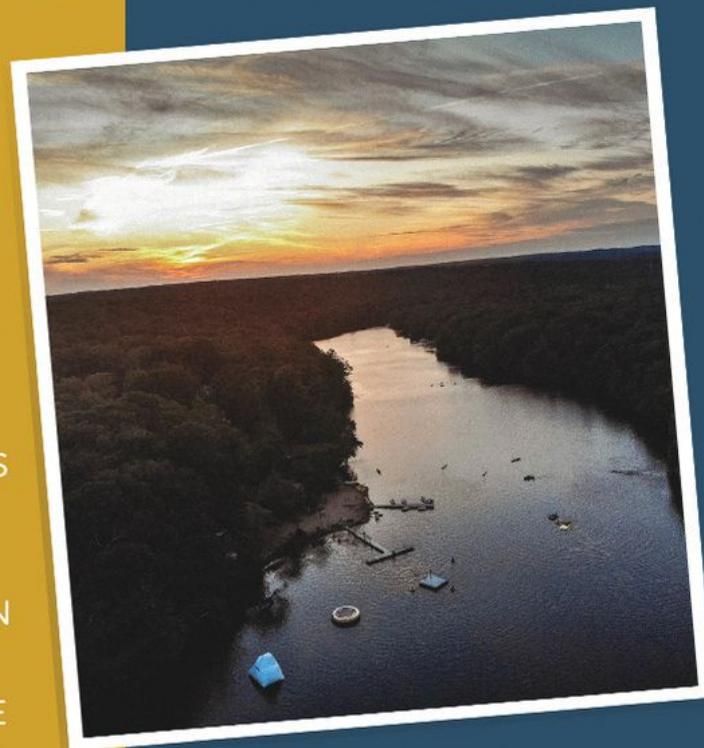
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# UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT A BISHOP

## LISTENING LENT SUMMARY

We are tremendously grateful for everyone who answered the survey and joined one of the Listening Lent Sessions. Your openness, commitment, and engagement helped us to get a full, deep, and honest picture of what people throughout the Diocese are seeking in the next bishop. This was truly a holy process.

Your responses in writing and on zoom are informing the “What We Seek” section of the profile, as well as other profile content. We will also use your input in developing interview questions for candidates.

Here is a brief synthesis of major themes that emerged:

### *Spirit*

- “A joyful, humble, spirit-filled person”
- “Someone deeply grounded in prayer, who takes himself on retreat”
- “A person who walks the way of Christ, reaching out to the community, across faiths, and to the religiously unaffiliated”
- “We need someone to ignite spiritual growth to bring the revolution that we know the Diocese of New York can be”

### *Vision*

- “Someone attuned to the movements of the Spirit, who can help us listen where churches are being called”
- “A leader who sees where there is life in small churches, and not just where we are dying”
- “Someone with a vision of boldness and fearlessness to enter into the future of our Diocese and the wider Episcopal Church with hope”
- “The ability to seek out communities where smoldering fires of faith are present and to fan them”
- “An understanding of how big systems work, and the challenges of leading a small parish”
- “Someone who can guide us in a vision of hope and renewal, pastoring to us while listening with us”
- “A leader with a prophetic voice who is unafraid to speak to events in our world – the climate crisis, Jan 6, BLM, Ukraine, and others”

### *Collaboration*

- “A bridge builder, who can bring all the regions together with a common purpose”
- “Someone who is pastorally attentive to the needs and gifts of lay leaders and clergy, care and celebration of the hard work people are doing”
- “A leader who sees other people’s gifts and engages them in mutual ways – ways for parishes and non-parish settings to collaborate”
- “Someone who can put together a strong team and empower them, someone who empowers congregations”
- “Getting committees and parishes out of our siloes, developing systems and processes to help us work together”

### *Priorities*

- Prioritizing youth and young adult involvement and leadership
- Empowering lay leadership
- Promoting the diaconate
- Creating a sustainable diocesan financial structure that partners with churches

through transparent and pastoral approaches to apportionment

- Seeing and knowing congregations from many contexts and regions and in all areas of ministry
- Strengthening Latinx ministry
- Addressing racial injustice in our Diocese and our neighborhoods
- Considering undertaking a Capital Campaign
- Pastoring to clergy and lay leaders exhausted from two years of pandemic ministry

The profile and applications are due to go live later this month.

Please circulate them widely, and consider nominating someone!

If you have questions or further input, please get in touch with us at [committee@electabishop.org](mailto:committee@electabishop.org).

## RESUMEN DE LA CUARESMA DE ESCUCHA

Estamos profundamente agradecidos por todos los que respondieron a la encuesta y participaron en una de las sesiones de escucha de la Cuaresma. Su apertura, compromiso y participación nos ayudaron a obtener una imagen completa, profunda y honesta de lo que la gente de toda la Diócesis busca en el próximo obispo. Éste fue un proceso verdaderamente sagrado.

Sus respuestas por escrito y por Zoom sirven de base para la sección del perfil titulada “Lo que buscamos”, así como para otros contenidos del mismo. También utilizaremos sus aportes para elaborar las preguntas de las entrevistas a los candidatos.

A continuación, presentamos una breve síntesis de los principales temas que surgieron:

### *Espíritu*

- “Una persona alegre, humilde y llena de espíritu”
- “Alguien profundamente arraigado en la oración, que se lleva a sí mismo a un retiro”
- “Una persona que recorre el camino de Cristo, llegando a la comunidad, a través de las religiones y a los no afiliados religiosamente”
- “Necesitamos a alguien que encienda el crecimiento espiritual para causar la revolución que sabemos que la Diócesis de Nueva York puede llegar a ser”

### *Visión*

- “Alguien que esté en sintonía con los movimientos del Espíritu, que pueda ayudarnos a escuchar dónde están siendo llamadas las iglesias”
- “Un líder que vea dónde hay vida en las iglesias pequeñas, y no sólo dónde estamos muriendo”
- “Alguien con una visión de audacia y valentía para entrar en el futuro de nuestra Diócesis y de la Iglesia Episcopal en general con esperanza”
- “La capacidad de buscar comunidades donde los fuegos ardientes de la fe están presentes y poder avivarlos”
- “La comprensión de cómo funcionan los grandes sistemas y los desafíos de liderar una pequeña parroquia”
- “Alguien que pueda guiarnos en una visión de esperanza y renovación, pastoreándonos mientras escucha con nosotros”
- “Un líder con una voz profética que no tenga miedo de hablar de los acontecimientos de nuestro mundo: la crisis climática, el 6 de enero, BLM, Ucrania y otros”

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### Colaboración

- "Un constructor de puentes, que pueda reunir a todas las regiones con un propósito común"
- "Alguien que esté pastoralmente atento a las necesidades y dones de los líderes laicos y del clero, el cuidado y la celebración del arduo trabajo que las personas están haciendo"
- "Un líder que ve los dones de otras personas y los involucra de manera mutua - formas de colaboración entre parroquias y entornos no parroquiales"
- "Alguien que pueda reunir un equipo fuerte y potenciarlos, alguien que potencie a las congregaciones"
- "Sacar a los comités y a las parroquias de nuestros silos, desarrollar sistemas y procesos que nos ayuden a trabajar juntos"

### Prioridades

- Priorizar la participación y el liderazgo de los jóvenes y adultos jóvenes
- Potenciar el liderazgo de los laicos
- Promover el diaconado
- Crear una estructura financiera diocesana sostenible que se asocie con las iglesias a través de enfoques transparentes y pastorales para la repartición
- Ver y conocer congregaciones de muchos contextos y regiones y en todas las áreas del ministerio
- Fortalecer el ministerio de los latinos
- Abordar la injusticia racial en nuestra Diócesis y en nuestros barrios y comunidades
- Considerar la posibilidad de emprender una campaña capital
- Cuidado pastoral a clérigos y líderes laicos que están agotados por dos años de ministerio en pandemia

El perfil y las solicitudes se publicarán a finales de este mes.

Por favor, difúndalos ampliamente y analice la posibilidad de nominar a alguien para la candidatura.

Si tiene preguntas o más información, póngase en contacto con nosotros en [committee@electabishop.org](mailto:committee@electabishop.org).

Para acceder a este documento en español o francés y estar al tanto de nuestros progresos, visite nuestro sitio web: [bishopsearch.diocesenyny.org](http://bishopsearch.diocesenyny.org)

## RÉSUMÉ DU CARÊME D'ÉCOUTE

Nous sommes extrêmement reconnaissants à tous ceux qui ont répondu au sondage et qui ont participé à l'une des sessions du Carême d'écoute. Votre ouverture d'esprit, votre engagement et votre participation nous ont permis d'obtenir une image complète, profonde et honnête de ce que les gens du diocèse recherchent chez le prochain évêque. Ce fut vraiment un processus sacré.

Vos réponses par écrit et sur le zoom alimentent la section «Ce que nous recherchons» du profil, ainsi que d'autres contenus du profil. Nous utiliserons également votre contribution pour élaborer les questions d'entretien avec les candidats.

Voici une brève synthèse des principaux thèmes qui ont émergé :

### Esprit

- « Une personne joyeuse, humble et pleine d'esprit. »
- « Quelqu'un de profondément ancré dans la prière, qui se met en retraite. »
- « Une personne qui suit le chemin du Christ, en tendant la main à la communauté, à toutes les confessions et aux personnes non affiliées à une religion. »

- « Nous avons besoin de quelqu'un qui amorce la croissance spirituelle pour apporter la révolution dont nous savons que le diocèse de New York a besoin. »

### Vision

- « Quelqu'un qui est à l'écoute des mouvements de l'Esprit, qui peut nous aider à écouter où les églises sont appelées. »
- « Un leader qui voit où il y a de la vie dans les petites églises, et pas seulement là où nous sommes en train de mourir. »
- « Quelqu'un qui a une vision audacieuse et qui n'a pas peur d'entrer dans l'avenir de notre diocèse et de l'Église épiscopale au sens large avec espoir. »
- « La capacité de rechercher des communautés où les feux de la foi couvent et de les attiser. »
- « Une compréhension du fonctionnement des grands systèmes et des défis que représente la direction d'une petite paroisse. »
- « Quelqu'un qui peut nous guider dans une vision d'espoir et de renouveau, en étant notre pasteur tout en écoutant avec nous. »
- « Un leader avec une voix prophétique qui n'a pas peur de parler des événements de notre monde - la crise climatique, Jan 6, BLM, l'Ukraine, et d'autres. »

### Collaboration

- « Un bâtisseur de ponts, qui peut rassembler toutes les régions autour d'un objectif commun. »
- « Quelqu'un qui est pastoralement attentif aux besoins et aux dons des dirigeants laïcs et du clergé, qui prend soin et qui célèbre le travail difficile que les gens accomplissent. »
- « Un leader qui voit les dons des autres et les engage dans des voies mutuelles - des moyens de collaboration entre les paroisses et les milieux non paroissiaux. »
- « Quelqu'un qui peut mettre en place une équipe solide et la responsabiliser, quelqu'un qui responsabilise les congrégations. »
- « Sortir les comités et les paroisses de leurs silos, développer des systèmes et des processus pour nous aider à travailler ensemble. »

### Priorités

- Donner la priorité à la participation et au leadership des jeunes et des jeunes adultes.
- Renforcer le leadership des laïcs
- Promouvoir le diaconat
- Créer une structure financière diocésaine durable, en partenariat avec les églises, par le biais d'approches transparentes et pastorales de la répartition.
- Voir et connaître des congrégations dans de nombreux contextes et régions et dans tous les domaines du ministère.
- Renforcer le ministère des Latinos
- Lutter contre l'injustice raciale dans notre diocèse et nos quartiers
- Envisager d'entreprendre une campagne de financement
- Pastorat auprès du clergé et des responsables laïcs épuisés par deux années de ministère en cas de pandémie.

Le profil et les candidatures devraient être mis en ligne dans le courant du mois. Veuillez les faire circuler largement, et pensez à nommer quelqu'un !

Si vous avez des questions ou des commentaires supplémentaires, veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse [committee@electabishop.org](mailto:committee@electabishop.org).

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# Responding to Uncertainty

By Thomas Vaillancourt

**U**ncertainty is difficult. It is a state of mind for which I have a new respect, as my wife has recently survived multiple hospitalizations due to brain cancer, seizures, and strokes. I don't know if tomorrow will bring victory or catastrophe—but my response will always be the same: How can I best serve my wife and the people in my life on this particular day?

Sometimes this requires courage—and when we don't think we have courage, we can act as *if* we do. In my younger days, I used to do theater, in which I'd have to act as if I were a certain character, to try to become that person, if only for a moment.

I found this skill could be applied to life: If I didn't think I had enough of a certain strength or virtue, I just acted as if *I did*. In the case of courage, I could envisage my father, who survived the great depression and an alcoholic father, and raised his seven children on an uncertain income. He survived combat in Okinawa in World War II, and multiple strokes that left him speechless for his last seven years. He lived his life with grace and composure, and never complained. So, when my time of testing was upon me, I would ask myself, what would my relatives do? If I couldn't draw on relatives as models, I could visualize a character played by Gregory Peck, Denzel Washington, Robert Redford, Sidney Poitier, or some other person who embodied in my mind the necessary courage.

If you do this and it works, a little miracle happens. Because you actually did it, you discover that you did in fact have the courage deep inside—much like the cowardly lion in *The Wizard of Oz* discovered he had courage inside himself.

Many years ago, I created a website called “Posters from the Heart.” Some of the posters I created were on the subject of courage. Some of the quotes I used were:

From Anaïs Nin:

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage.” So, if you find the courage to do what life is calling you to do, you will have an incredibly rich life.

Amelia Earhart said:

“Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace.” If you can't find the courage to rise to the challenge, you will have a hard time finding peace.

William Blake said:

“Why stand we here trembling around calling on God for help, and not ourselves, in whom God dwells, stretching a hand to save the falling man.”

On another poster, I wrote:

“What all true heroes have in common is a willingness to sacrifice all or part of themselves.”

It's the sacrifice that we are sometimes afraid of, that keeps us from doing what we need to do, and courage is the virtue that enables us to accomplish the necessary. Freedom is the knowledge of necessity.

Where did Jesus find the strength to face the horrors that were to besiege him? He looked straight to his Father in meditation and prayer. Where will we look for our strength? From whence do we search for our security?

We have many resources in our faith, in our families and friends, and in the incredible histories of great people and the saints. We may need all of them when the time of testing comes for us.

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*The author is a member of St. Paul's Church, Chester.*

# What I Wish I Would Have Realized Years Ago

By the Rev. Benjamin DeHart

**I**n Genesis 18, the biblical patriarch Abraham welcomes three mysterious visitors. These men ask Abraham about his wife Sarah. Up to this point, the book has emphasized that Sarah has been unable to have children. What's more, she is now well beyond the age of childbearing. Nevertheless, the visitors tell him, “This time next year your wife Sarah will have a son.”

At this, Sarah, who's been eavesdropping from afar, can't help but burst out laughing. There's no way; this is all too much.

The visitors, who are instantly and mystifyingly revealed to be the LORD, ask, “Is anything too hard for me? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

Reflecting on this passage, the late biblical scholar Ernst Käsemann wrote, “Sarah's laughter is faith's constant companion.” When asked whether he doubts, the priest in the British television series *Fleabag* says roughly the same thing: “Yes, of course. Every day. It's



**Abraham Entertaining the Angels. Etching and drypoint by Rembrandt van Rijn. 1656.**

part of the deal.”

I have found great comfort in Käsemann's reflection. Doubt and even unbelief have been an ever-present companion on my Christian pilgrimage. Feeling bad about it hasn't done my faith any favors; trying to have more faith hasn't helped either. What I wish I would have realized years ago is that the Christian faith isn't really about my faith. It's about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's about the one who “raises the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.” (Rom. 4:17) It's about the one who creates faith where there is none.

So next time you find yourself in the midst of doubt, don't look to your faith. Fear not, and look to the one who, just like for Sarah, makes a way out of no way.

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*The author was until recently associate rector at Calvary–St. George's in Manhattan, and now serves as canon for Parish Life at the Cathedral Church of the Advent, Birmingham, Alabama.*

# The Excitement of Doubt

By the Rev. Dr. Edwin H. Cromey



God Creating the Cosmos. Illuminated illustration from a 13th century *Bible Moralisée*. The author had early and exciting doubts about God doing it in six days. Photo: Wikipedia.

**M**y first experience of excitement in doubting something that I'd believed without question to be true was a long, long time ago. You may call it childishly simplistic, but it was honest.

For years, I believed it only took God six days to make the heavens, the earth, and everything in it. Then someone told me the Genesis story was only a story and not the way it really happened. Doubt was planted in my mind. I decided to check it out. In doing so, there was excitement in going from the little garden of Eden to the magnificence of a cosmos billions of years old and a God much bigger than I first imagined. From this experience I purposely doubted other beliefs, beginning with God.

Countless people—among them philosophers and theologians with names like Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Anselm—have written about God. Their writings were interesting, but I saw them as holy speculation and not as the last word on the matter. Multitudes are still writing about God. I wanted to be one

of them and see where my own holy speculation would take me. This became exciting: heretical maybe, but definitely exciting.

Religious questions in my Anglican expression of Christianity have been measured by standards proposed by Richard Hooker (1544-1600), the originator of the triad of “Scripture, Tradition, and Reason.” In my case, I added Experience to these, because of a definition of the Bible by my General Seminary Old Testament professor as man’s written response to his experience of God. Now I never find it boring to read written responses to God in any and all religious traditions—Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam among them.

There was a time when I doubted the existence of God. But all that thinking, deliberating, pondering and using my imagination—all those experiences—resulted in excitement and exhilaration.

Was God up there? Out there? Within me? What was God? He, She, It, Spirit, Intelligent Force?

Today I have no problem about the existence of God. Nature, life itself, and creation make me believe there is someone or something behind it all. For that someone or something, I like the term God.

My difficulty now is how we describe God: Omnipotent (all powerful)? Omniscient (all knowing)? Omnipresent (everywhere)? Trinity? Incarnate? Just? Forgiving? Loving? These descriptions are our attempts to know and understand God—and in doubting that they are complete descriptions, the excitement continues.

*The author is rector emeritus of St. Mary's Church, Tuxedo Park.*



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# Communion

By Dana Y. Wu

**W**hen our college kids were ordered to leave their campuses abruptly in March 2020 and return home, I immediately rented a 7'x7' portable unit from PODS, a storage and moving company. The container was delivered onto the driveway and held the contents of their dorm rooms as they tried to finish the semester on-line, sitting in their childhood bedrooms.

We soon understood what staying healthy in a pandemic pod was about. Every day brought more bad news of death, loneliness and uncertainty as we grappled with the reality of a lock-down that was not going to go away by Easter. When our son's May 2020 graduation from college was officially cancelled, we were dejected, but numb from the soaring Covid-19 infection rates.

Thankfully, all our four children were safely doing remote learning and my husband, Mike, and I were able to continue working virtually. Outside our bubble, nearby neighborhoods were groaning with the pain of overwhelmed hospitals, food pantry lines, and unemployment. Our family pulled on gloves and masks to help with collections for essential workers. The images of systemic racial injustice and violence erupting across our country was further evidence to me of a void in moral leadership, a contactless world spinning out of control.

Our anxiety increased as the daily barrage of discouragement crescendoed – the Tokyo Olympics, swarms of locusts in Africa, California wildfires and record-breaking hurricanes. The assaults on our fragile mental states continued as the death toll rose. A native New Yorker, I mourned that the lights were still down on Broadway and feared that economic impact from the eerie emptiness of restaurants, Chinatown, museums and office buildings would be irreversible. Under the stress of social distancing and the sobering reality of limited quantities of groceries like meat, toilet paper and even Grape Nuts cereal, we were impatient to feel normal again. We missed seeing our family and friends.

After months of sheltering in place at home, my husband Mike and I made an effort to clear out the garage to make room for the stuff still in the PODS unit. We filled a dumpster with junk. In the pile to take to Goodwill (if they ever reopened for donations), I put an ornate lamp made of the steel rollers that once pressed patterned wallpaper in a Kimberly-Clark paper mill where my husband's grandfather worked his way up. We had items that were bequeathed years ago by his uncle, including a handmade clock and sets of Spode dishes. There was the antique sideboard, with the Larkin Soap Co. label certifying it was a genuine heirloom; it had perfectly matched the tiger oak floors in our first apartment.

The garage was dusty, cobwebs everywhere. Each time I opened a box, I stepped back when I lifted the lid in case something scurried out. I peered in a stack of books. A swarm of insects moved on the side of the cardboard. I nearly chucked the entire thing into the dumpster but something caught my eye when I saw a glint. The size of a hardcover encyclopedia, it was a maroon pleather jewelry case with a tarnished clasp. I brought it out into the sunlight and opened it. There were small suede boxes, deluxe in their glory days, and leather pouches filled with medals and pendants, less than an inch long, mostly silver colored.

Some medals were oval, some were round. I fingered the engraved images – a person in robes, a head encircled in a halo, hands in prayer, a symbol of the cross, angel wings. Words stamped on the pendants read, “St. Francis,” “Pray for Us,” “Guardian Angel.”

“It's junk,” my husband said. “Toss it.”

Part of me knew these were souvenirs, or as he explained, faux jewelry purchased from a church's gift shop or trinkets mailed in acknowledgment of a charitable donation. The other part of me recognized mercy and hope.

I paused on my driveway with the saint medals, the angel medals, the Our Lady medals, the pendants with the sign of the dove cupped in my hands. I aspired for them, all the ridiculous and miraculous charms, to crown me with the aura of peace. In the tumult of this frightening, maddening and lost year, I longed to be adorned with the remnants of faith gathering in the cardboard shadows of my garage.

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*The author is a member of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Chappaqua.*

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*This article first appeared in the 2021 anthology, Voices from the Attic, Vol 27/The Carlow University Press.*

## Both/And

By the Rev. James Lee Burns

Beyond the pond  
and the wetlands  
autumn's artistry  
glows warm in the morning sun,  
while  
rising from the marsh  
long lifeless pines  
rise starkly.  
Sentinels?  
Reminders of the fate  
that awaits  
even the richest and most beautiful?  
Or a kind of bas relief matting  
which  
by the absence of color  
enhances the watercolor it displays.

We cannot look directly  
at the sun.  
Blinded by the brilliance  
of the light  
we can only look  
where it shines  
giving birth to colors  
and shadows  
cast  
like branches of another reality.  
Both necessary parts  
of a greater whole.

The paradox of the spiritual journey  
is the desire to be filled  
and to be empty at the same time.  
To be at once  
dead and alive,  
image and shadow,  
silent with song.

And perhaps  
occasions of God's silence  
or seeming absence  
like sentinel and shadow  
are proof of God's existence.  
When by paradox  
we come to the sanity  
of discovering our deepest and truest  
longings.  
Dead and bare.  
Alive with beauty.  
Both.  
And.

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*The author is a priest in the diocese.*

# Not All Certainties Were Created Equal

By the Rev. Margaret Sullivan

**D**oubt is not something I've struggled with in my faith or in my relationship with God. I've struggled mightily with it, however, when it comes to my experience growing up in Christian Science, a religious tradition that claimed to be Christian when it was actually more of a cult. Even though it's nearly 25 years since I began to leave that tradition, the discernment continues between my baptismal promise (at the age of 45) to "continue in the Apostles' teaching, the breaking of bread and the prayers" and the convoluted mixed messages and un-Christian teaching that I received as a child and young adult. In that context, I have been giving some thought to two mindsets that to me seem completely opposite: doubt and certainty. I've also recently been reading materials about deconstructing faith and religion as I continue to reflect on my own experience growing up in a high demand religion of a type that does not encourage questions or doubt but for some reason does foster certainty. And while doubt led me to seek God and Christ more deeply, my certainty in what I believed I knew about following Jesus was my Achilles heel.

As a visual learner, my method of problem-solving and decision-making through visualization has become integrated into my prayers, especially when my prayers are centered on discerning God's will. Doubt and certainty in tandem bring up an image of a scale for me. My focus lately has been visualizing that scale of doubt on one hand and certainty on the other. At the very least, I pray to keep that scale in balance, and it has become a spiritual discipline to strive for that. At this point in my life, a quarter century after leaving my former religion, I think I've understood the process of leaving something that wasn't working and of finding my way home to a place of real spirituality, genuine common sense, meaningful liturgy, and of course the three-legged stool of scripture, tradition, and reason. One of my first discoveries was that I didn't doubt for a minute that this change process had been brought about by God, although I did, at times, wish I had a map. But the process taught me something that I value highly: God let me know in many different ways (some of them humorous) that it was ok for me to be on a "need to know" basis. When I needed to know something, I would know it, if I was faithful to prayerful discernment and was paying attention. Worrying and ruminating were not going to bring about the changes. That message came through again and again.

More simply, I found that God really had made a covenant with me and that it resided safely in my heart. The paradox of doubt and certainty did not change the relationship—in fact, it enriched it. I had a resource—really more of a reservoir—for my questions. When I began to differentiate between the insights that came to me in prayer, and in studying the Bible, and their sharp contrast with what I'd been taught as a child about prayer and how to understand the Bible, it became clearer to me that what I really doubted was my upbringing in a tradition that was cultish rather than authentically Christian.



Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, "a religious tradition that claimed to be Christian when it was actually more of a cult".  
Photo: Wikipedia.

I learned instead to follow the founder of the religion—and when I could really see and understand that, I felt reassured that I was on the right path. Doubt served a purpose then, because my response to the process of leaving Christian Science was to put my hand in God's and trust that I was in God's care.

One of the things that I struggled with was to overcome a tendency to be certain of the direction my life was taking. In this, certainty did not serve me well. I was used to (and proud of) making decisions and sticking to them; and I was certain and prideful of my own goodness and faithfulness—and not because I felt that they came from God, but because of the religion I'd been raised in. It used to seem so important to me to be certain of the veracity of what I'd grown up with. As it turned out, though, even when I thought I was certain about spiritual truth, I was really only certain of my own sense of certainty. I had a lot to unlearn. Spiritual arrogance and certainty were traits that I'd acquired and while it is embarrassing to admit that—in writing no less—I am grateful to those companions on the way who were not afraid to question me and challenge me and push back on my assumptions.

What I did not doubt was my relationship with God in Christ. In fact, it was the steadfast love and faithfulness of God and the companionship and advocacy of the Holy Spirit and the saving love of Jesus that revealed this relationship to me. It gave me the strength and courage to "...

hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful." [Hebrews 10:23] Of the many Bible verses I collected during my pilgrimage from a cultish religion to the day I was baptized, I think this verse sums it up best. And I'm grateful for every step of that journey and the support I received along the way.

*The author is a priest in the diocese.*

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# Gladness: In Doubt

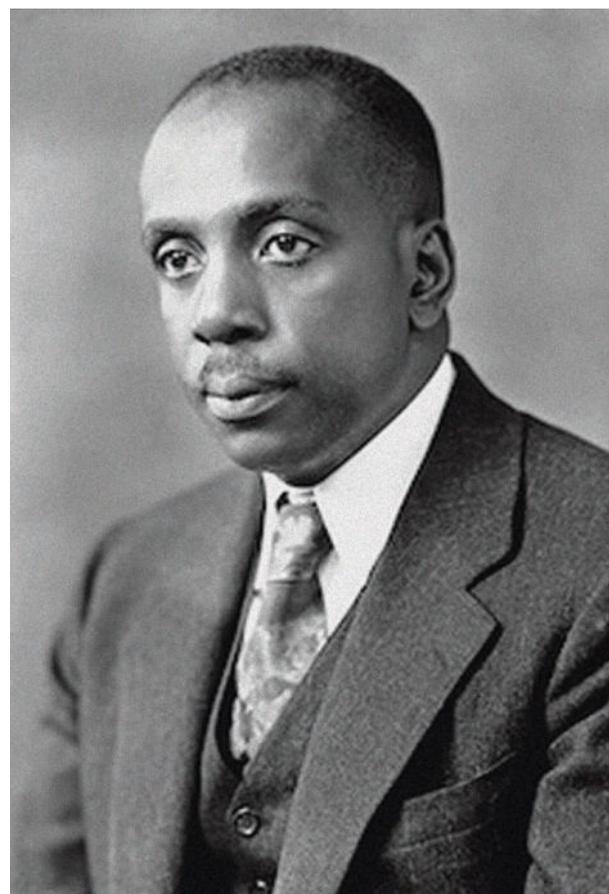
By the Rev. Paul Anthony Daniels

**T**he late Martinican psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon concluded his monumental text *Black Skin, White Masks* by exclaiming, “My final prayer: O my body, make of me always a man who questions!”

Indeed, at the heart of every question, and the desire to question, is something of doubt. The main entry of doubt in the Merriam-Webster dictionary is its transitive verb form: “to *call* into *question* the truth of...”; and only secondarily comes the noun form: “a lack of confidence.” However, it isn’t until the *third* definition of the secondary entry (the noun form) that we get what would seem to be the sense intended by this issue: “a state of affairs *giving rise* to uncertainty, hesitation, or suspense.”

A global pandemic and the gratuitous death it has brought have given rise to kinds of doubt that many of us have, perhaps, never before quite known. And yet, Fanon invites us to *invite* doubt—to invite, as it were, a participatory shaking of our foundations, a calling into question of the viability of everything: from our socio-political commitments and allegiances, to our personal habits and sins, to our religious institutionality. The burden of this imposed doubt is more, it would seem, than many of us can bear to sit with.

In the first week of quarantine (March 2020), I began reading a little book on Negro Spirituals by the 20th century African American mystic Howard Washington Thurman. Of all the texts, sermons, and meditations of Thurman’s that I have regularly returned to and studied over the years, this one, *Deep River: The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*, had failed to capture my attention. But there, in its introduction, speaking to a subgenre of the Negro Spiritual known as the “sorrow song,” I came upon what occurred to me as a singularly instructive insight for understanding not only slave religion, but also faith more generally, in a time of existential and spiritual destabilization. “Sometimes the load is so heavy,” Thurman argued, “that nothing is of any avail. *Hope is destroyed by its feeding on itself, and yet their destiny is deliberately placed in God’s hands. It was a maniacal kind of incurable optimism.*”



Howard Washington Thurman. “Sometimes the load is so heavy that nothing is of any avail.”

Photo By Addison N. Scurlock - Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives

There is a tendency—much to my own frustration—to read Thurman as a run of the mill optimist and “spoon full of sugar” sentimentalist. But to the extent that he spoke, until his dying day, out of what he called “the negro idiom”—inherited from his formerly enslaved grandmother—we are better off hearing Thurman as a *maniacally incurable* optimist. And the chasm between the run of the mill and the maniacally incurable optimist is the abyss of doubt. Whereas the former turns away from the abyss, the latter approaches it exclaiming “O my body, make of me always a man who questions.” This is what French theorist and lapsed Catholic George Bataille called “an immense alleluia lost in the inter-

minable silence.” It is what theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, not long before his execution at the hands of the Third Reich, said was the uniqueness of the Christian faith: that it compels us “to *look* in [our] distress to the power of God in the world.” Or, as Thurman wrote in 1938,

The way over which I had come in  
the day’s journey—  
Tired, groaning beneath the weight of  
ancient ills,  
Choking with the dust of dullness  
and despair—  
The way over which I had come in  
the day’s journey  
Was radiant with the light of the  
meaning of Life.  
I wept. —  
Through my tears, I begged  
God for the journey.

From Fanon (Algeria), to Bataille (France), to Bonhoeffer (Germany), to Thurman (U.S.), what’s reflected here is the inextricability of doubt and hope, of *nothingness and optimism*. It is what W.E.B. Du Bois calls in *The Souls of Black Folk* “double-consciousness.” We hear the Apostle when he says that “the present form of this world is passing away” (1 Cor. 7:31); both because we *need* it to, and because *that* is the instructive *will to/desire* to doubt (about the present order of things) that runs through the apocalyptic promises of the Gospel account—that the Kingdom is at hand if only we had ears to hear and eyes to see.

I am met, at this moment, by a cool breeze through an open window. To me it brings the proclamation of spring. The long winter is over. But the heart of the world remains cold. No longer does commercial news, in even its own faint way, debate the efficacy of abolition—the brave injunction of imaginative emancipation spoken by activists all over this land—as it had for a brief moment in the wake of George Floyd’s and Briana Taylor’s slayings. There is a new war in Europe—the weight of ancient ills. We mourn for Ukraine. But also, for those rarely recognized in Aleppo, and Palestine, and Tigray, and Afghanistan, and the Congo, and, and, and.

We await, now, the resurrected Christ. But even those who knew Jesus in the flesh, and to whom he appeared at his rising, did not recognize him. How do we, then, expect such ease of proclamation? Indeed, it is hard to look upon the unbelievable and the unfamiliar.

So often, resurrection comes with interpretations of wholeness—that Christ’s risen body points us not only to our own eventual rising in Glory, but to the possibility of a redeemed here and now. However, queer theologian Linn Tonstad has keenly observed that “Christ is not only resurrected; he is ascended. Resurrection then *disallows* the simple extrapolation of the whole-healed [person] and its projects into the future. Resurrection’s representational register requires apophasis and disidentification rather than identification.” In other words, resurrection’s meaning for us, here and now, requires us to *embrace* uncertainty about the future rather than certainty; doubt rather than doubtlessness. For, if we move too quickly to redeem a past “normal” what we risk redeeming is a loveless forgetting of those who have never known “normal.”

“Straddling Nothing and Infinity,” as Fanon wrote, through his own weeping, may we be always on the scent of the unbelievable, unfamiliar risen body of Christ—making himself known, in gladness, where he always has and always will: with those in doubt.

*The author is assisting priest at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine.*

# Do Not Cease from Exploration!

By Helen Goodkin

*And doubts appall and sorrows still increase;  
Lead us through Christ, the true and living Way.  
(The Hymnal 1982, 703)*

**L**ately, I have been working with a physical therapist to try to return my aging body to its pre-Covid quarantine self. I, of course, envisioned a bodily return to myself at 25 or 30. “Not so fast,” warned the therapist, “First, we must work on balance.” So, I stand for as long as I can on one foot and then the other. I can do this without falling over until he says, “Now close your eyes.” Then I immediately collapse. I can do it eyes open, but closing my eyes, I lose my focus—I doubt I can do it. Then I *don’t* do it.

I wonder if this is how Peter feels when he tries to walk on the water. Seeing Jesus walk on the waves, he calls out to Jesus who tells him to come to him. Peter believing, trusting, gets out of the boat and starts to walk. A wind on the water distracts him, he loses his focus, he doubts, and he begins to sink, yelling, “Save me, save me.” Jesus says “You of little faith! Why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:22-31)

How human Peter is! He believes, until he doubts. This is not the only time in the gospels that Peter fails to demonstrate belief, but, in the end, perhaps no other apostle did more to spread the Good News.

The necessity of belief in Jesus is a strong thread that flows through the Gospels. The man born blind testifies to everyone that he believes Jesus has healed him (John 9). The friends of the paraplegic are so convinced that Jesus can heal him that they push through the crowds and climb up to the roof to lower him down to Jesus in the certain belief that Jesus will heal him. (Mark 1:1-12; Luke 5:17-36)

The woman with the flow of blood is so convinced that Jesus can heal her that she sneaks up to touch his cloak. Realizing the “power has gone out of him,” Jesus says to the woman, “your faith (belief) has made you well.” (Luke 8:40-55) This Greek phrase, which demonstrates a direct correlation between belief and healing or salvation, appears seven times in the Gospels, and depending on the version may be translated, “your faith (belief) has made you well, saved you, healed you, or made you whole.”

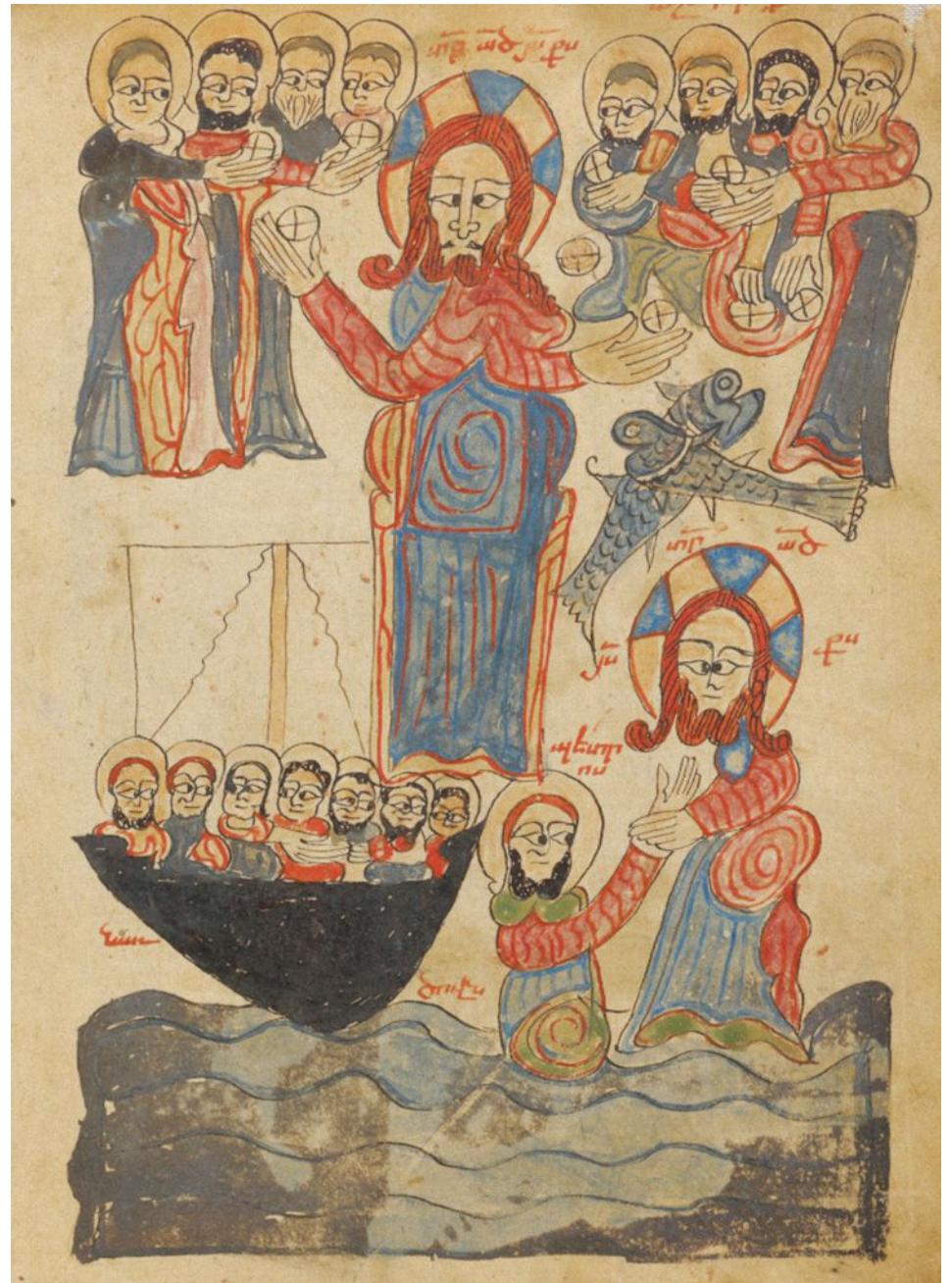
For those of us wondering if our belief is strong as these Biblical folks, there is one story which provides a glimmer of hope. (Mark 9:14-28) Jesus is asked to heal a boy who suffers from a spirit. The father pleads, “if you can, help us.” Jesus replies, “Everything is possible for one who believes.” The boy’s father exclaims, “Lord, I do believe; help me to overcome my unbelief!” At last, a story that recognizes the human experience of doubt, even in believers.

In Greek, there is one word for both faith and belief, *pistis*, and the reader is at the mercy of translators’ who determine what is on the page. I would suggest that there is a nuanced difference between faith and belief.

*Belief* is the core tenet of Christianity, the basic story of God’s acting in the world through his son Jesus Christ to set the world on a new path. “I believe,” we say, when we recite the Creeds.

*Faith* is the reservoir of belief in my soul that responds to Jesus’ call to live a faithful life of service in the world, despite or maybe because of the enormous troubles that beset it. Faith is an action verb, calling us to seek justice, even as we question how the world has gotten into such a mess! It is in the struggle for answers that one finds greater understanding of what one believes. Dostoevsky wrote that his faith was “born of the furnace of doubt.” So too is mine.

The poet T.S. Eliot expressed both deep faith and sincere doubt in his life and his writing. His poem *Little Gidding* (from *The Four Quartets*), describes the faith community that gathered around Nicholas Ferrar during the religious upheavals of the 17th century. Dedicated to a communal life of prayer and ministry in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, the community was harassed and then violently dispersed by



Peter and Jesus Walk on Water. Illumination. Armenian. 1386. Photo; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Cromwell in 1646. Was their faith so strong that the community lived without doubt or questions? Or did their trials bring them to greater faith? Eliot writes:

We shall not cease from exploration,  
and the end of all our exploring  
will be to arrive where we started  
and know the place for the first time.

Do not cease from exploration! Recognize the doubts that appall and the sorrows that increase, while hanging on to your core belief in the Triune God. Keep this focus, and you won’t collapse in a heap. Your faith will grow rich and vital. Like my PT exercises, it takes practice, but, through testing and questioning, you will know—in a new way—the place where it all began: the mystery of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, love and hope.

*The author is a member of the Church of the Holy Trinity and leads the Wednesday afternoon Bible Study at the House of the Redeemer.*

## ARTS AND LITERATURE

**MYSTERY AND FAITH:  
THE SHROUD OF TURIN**  
**THE MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE**  
**400 4TH STREET, SW**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C.**  
**FLOOR FIVE**  
**THROUGH JULY 31, 2022**

*Reviewed by Pamela A. Lewis*

**P**ope John Paul II, upon seeing the Shroud of Turin, declared it "the mirror of the gospel." Pope Benedict XVI advised that it should be seen through "the eyes of faith." And Pope Francis has referred to the Shroud as an "icon of a man scourged and crucified."

Inspired by the words of these pontiffs, the Museum of the Bible is presenting an innovative, high-tech, and digitally interactive exhibition about the Shroud of Turin (also known as the Holy Shroud), the most studied and debated fabric in the world. Organized over five sections and eight interactive displays (including a facsimile of the cloth), and displayed in a roomy, circular gallery, the expansive and detailed exhibition acquaints visitors with how the Shroud has been understood by some as a true reflection of the Passion narratives, about the place it has occupied in European history, and its spiritual effect on millions of people. But it also includes sections that discuss when and by what methods the Shroud has been subjected to scientific testing to determine its authenticity.

The Shroud is a rectangular cloth measuring about 14-1/2 and 3-1/2 feet, woven in herringbone-patterned twill composed of flax fibrils. It bears the faint brownish, negative images of the front and back of a man, his hands folded across his groin, on a non-photographically sensitive linen cloth. The muscular, nearly six-foot figure has a beard and moustache, and shoulder-length hair parted in the middle. The two views are aligned along the midplane of the body, pointing in opposite directions, and the front and back views of the head nearly meet at the middle of the cloth. Lacerations on his body and scalp suggest that he was brutally beaten, his wrists and feet were pierced, and there is what appears to be a gash on the right side of his body. In the view of proponents of the cloth's authenticity, reddish-brown stains (some of

which are burn marks and water stains resulting from a fire in 1532), are consistent with blood from the five wounds on Jesus' body, as described in Gospel accounts of the crucifixion.

All of the synoptic gospels refer to Jesus's burial, but they differ about the cloth's form. Whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke state that Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Jesus' body in a piece of linen cloth and placed it in a new tomb, John's gospel says that "strips of linen" were used. In a striking example of the show's extensive use of technology, the museum subtly gives its position on this point through a brief video showing that the entire length of cloth was used, and that the body was placed on one half, with the other folded over it, thereby explaining the back and front images of the figure imprinted on the fabric.

The Shroud has had a long and complex journey, beginning (according to one popular theory) with its removal from Jerusalem after Jesus' crucifixion, until it came into the possession of King Umberto II of Italy, who gave the cloth to the Holy See in 1983. With the exception of during World War II, it has remained in the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, protectively encased in bulletproof glass. Traditional wall labels and innovative technology, in the form of interactive digital tables, have been brought together to tell the story of the Shroud and of the various individuals who were associated with it. The interactive displays enliven the exhibition and also serve as additional tools for accessing information.

The Shroud is very fragile, and therefore rarely displayed in public; thus, the inclusion of the show's centerpiece, a full-size, digitally printed replica of the cloth (certified by the Museum of the Shroud), created by the Lino Val Gandino Project (Bergamo, Italy). Waving one's hand over any of the several sensors that have been placed on specific points of the Shroud



Negative image of the face on the Shroud, 1978 STURP tests. ©1999 Barrie M. Schwartz Collection, STERA, Inc.

replica activates a voice that reads either a Gospel passage or a brief historical account relating to that part of the copy.

Since the 14th century when it reemerged in France, the Shroud has been hailed as sacred and dismissed as a forgery. When lawyer and photographer Secondo Pia traveled to Turin in 1898 and took the first pictures of the Shroud (his bulky camera and photographic paraphernalia are on view), he opened the door to the various modes of scientific testing it was subjected to in the 20th century: pigment analysis, anatomical forensics, and, most

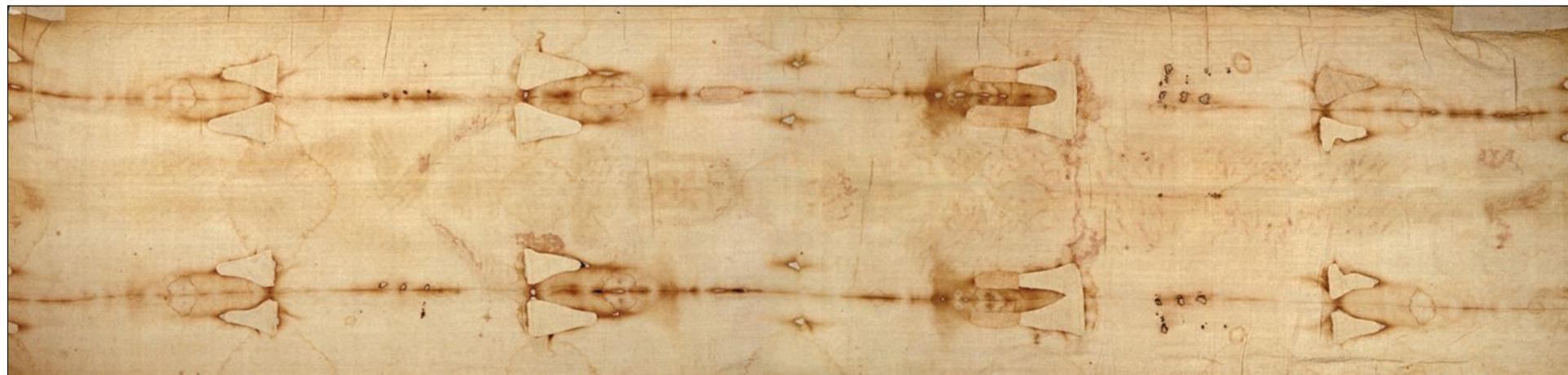
notably, radiocarbon dating, conducted with the Holy See's permission in 1988, and which determined that the cloth dated from the 13th to 14th century. In 2019, an independent researcher reported that the 1988 tests were seriously flawed and unreliable, which inspired demands for new tests.

The Church takes no position as to the Shroud's authenticity.

The exhibition stands in clear but subtle support of the cloth as a holy relic showing the figure of Jesus, whose features and markings correspond directly to the Passion accounts. However, recent scholarship has provided new perspectives about what Jesus might have looked like, thereby presenting challenges to long-accepted representations of him. For this reviewer, these iconographic considerations inspire doubt rather than devotion.

"The Shroud of Turin" is nonetheless respectful and makes room for science, which can interrogate and disagree with faith without threatening it. Well researched and engaging, this is an exhibition worth seeing and pondering.

*The author is a member of St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.*



Full image of the Shroud, 1978 STURP tests. ©1999 Barrie M. Schwartz Collection, STERA, Inc.

# LGBTQ+ Pride in Northern Westchester: Raising the Flag, Raising Awareness

By *Julia Whalen*

In June 2021, I—a high school student in Yorktown and member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Granite Springs—advocated raising the pride flag for a day as part of my confirmation project, to show that our church was a welcoming place.

The rector and wardens advised against doing this at that time, aware that, while the Diocese of New York supports the LGBTQ+ community, there are many in Westchester who may not share this view, and warning that some churchgoers wouldn't understand what the gesture meant. I realized they were right: Just sticking the flag up for a day wouldn't have the big impact I sought if people didn't understand the significance.

Instead, my rector, the Rev. Hal Roark, the wardens, the vestry, fellow members of Good Shepherd, and I developed the Educate/Validate Program—a series of four free Zoom seminars, open to all and designed to help eliminate misconceptions about the LGBTQ+ community. Each of the program's seminars covered (or will cover) different aspects of LGBTQ+ experience. On February 27, David Diamond, program specialist at the Westchester Jewish Community Services' Center Lane program for LGBTQ+ Youth, gave an interactive presentation about LGBTQ+ history. On March 27, it was the turn of politics and law, with a variety of lawyers, judges, and politicians participating. The seminar we call "People" will be hosted on April 24 by a panel of LGBTQ+ people, allies, and anyone who wants to talk about their experience and answer questions. And the series will culminate on May 22 with a seminar led by Bishop Mary Glasspool, with whom I've also worked throughout the process. She will speak about the place of LGBTQ+ issues in faith and in Episcopal life.

After that, the members of our parish will vote on the issue of whether to raise the pride flag annually every June in solidarity with LGBTQ+ persons and issues. If the majority approves it, there will be a celebration and flag raising on Sunday, June 5, at which Bishop Glasspool will be the celebrant and to which all are invited.

Every person I know has been ignorant at some point about the LGBTQ+ community. Even adamant allies, supporting parents, and members of the community itself (including me) have harbored homophobic thoughts. This is okay; in fact, this is natural. As long as we work as hard as we can to address, acknowledge, and resolve them, there is nothing to be ashamed of. It is undeniable that some people have made no attempt to try to understand "the queers"—but in the face of this, it is up to us allies to remember times when we've been ignorant ourselves, and to resist the urge to push away those who just can't seem to understand. The only way to help them towards the path of love is to stay close to them, gently and steadfastly teaching them how to become more nurturing of the LGBTQ+ community.

People can hate what they fear, and fear what they don't understand. I am fortunate to be in a position where I can take action to create more understanding for those who need it the most, understanding of the LGBTQ+ community's truth, history, and place in the world. I know the Educate/Validate Program will become an inspiration for people in the community, and help their allies continue to love them as they are. I hope the deeper understanding gained will bring about positive change, action, and nurturance that the LGBTQ+ community needs.

Are you ready to Educate/Validate? Visit <https://sites.google.com/view/educate-validate-program/home> for Zoom link registration. All are welcome to attend.

Look for Part 2 this summer where I'll share reflections on the finished program!

*The author is a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Granite Springs.*

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# Holy Trinity, Manhattan, Explores Christianity in the Arabian Gulf

By Helen Goodkin

**D**uring Epiphany, Holy Trinity, Manhattan, devoted three Sundays to exploring Christianity in the Arabian Gulf. Using the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf as a starting point, Helen Goodkin shared her knowledge of the 14 congregations in the 10 countries in the Gulf where Christianity is thriving. Because countries such as Qatar and Dubai rely heavily on guest workers, many of whom are Christians, the Anglican church often becomes the “shepherd” to a very diverse group of Christian congregations. In Qatar, for example, the religious center in Doha (managed by the Anglican congregation there) hosts over 14,000 worshippers on Friday, the day of worship. From 6 a.m. to 10 at night, worship spaces of varying sizes are “rented” for two to three hours at a time by congregations, allowing Christians to worship according to their own traditions and in their own languages. Because Indians remove their shoes to worship, the halls are strewn with sandals, boots, sneakers; and because Evangelical and Pentecostal faiths practice baptism by immersion, this Anglican facility features a baptismal pool. A similar congregation, the Church of the Holy Trinity in Dubai, hosts as many as 20,000 worshippers on a Friday.

The second week of study focused on Iraq, where St. George’s, Baghdad, is a thriving congregation with a medical clinic and a tuition-friendly school welcoming students from all religious communities. From there, the Rev. Christopher Bishop “zoomed” in to discuss his work with Christians in northern Iraq who were driven from their homes in the middle of the night by ISIS. Chris founded an organization called Stand With Iraqi Christians (SWIC) which has helped to revitalize a traditional occupation of Christians in the area—chicken farming. To date, funded in part by a Sustainable Development Goals Fund Grant from the Diocese of New York, SWIC has “re-birthing” 20 farms through grants to farmers so that chicken coops may be rebuilt, and feed, clean water, veterinary services, and an initial flock of chickens may be purchased. Chicks go to market in about 55 days, at which time the farmers use the profits to buy another flock. So far, all farms are successful and self-sustaining, and SWIC has plans to expand to additional farms. In addition to helping individual farmers, the program has created countless jobs and provided a much-needed source of protein to the food supply.

The final week, the Rev. John Beddingfield, rector of Holy Trinity, furthered the conversation through a video discussing the ancient roots of the Christian community in Iraq which is thought to have been begun by St. Thomas around 50 CE. The

most moving segment was an interview with a young woman studying to become a dentist, who at 14 fled from her home in the middle of the night when ISIS soldiers told the family that they could convert, flee, or be killed. Despite the terror and the loss, the young woman has not lost her faith and remains devoted to her Christian community which is struggling to rebuild.

As Archbishop Michael Lewis, president bishop and primate of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East explains, the role of the Anglican church in this part of the world is one of presence, of faithful witness and inclusion, and of service to God through service to the community. That service ranges from



Archbishop Michael Lewis (3rd from left), Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf and Primate for the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, on a visit November 2021 to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Also in the picture (from l. to r.) the Rev. Yamily Bass-Choate, Cathedral Dean the Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel III, the Rev. Canon John Perris, the Rev. Canon Steven Yong Lee, and the Rev. Canon Jeanne Person.

Photo: Nicholas Richardson

support for migrant Christians of every denomination living away from home, to the amazing work of SWIC and of Father Faiz at St. George’s in Iraq, and to the Ras Morbat eye clinic in Aden, which has struggled mightily throughout the civil war in Yemen to provide not only the eye care it was created for, but also now to treat injuries from the war working with *Medécins Sans Frontières* (Doctors Without Borders).

Holy Trinity’s members came away with a desire to learn more about how to help Christians, both longstanding residents of the Arabian Gulf area as well as those whose life journeys have taken them to new lands. We pray the Spirit will direct our path.

*The author is a member of the Church of the Holy Trinity and leads the Wednesday afternoon Bible Study at the House of the Redeemer.*

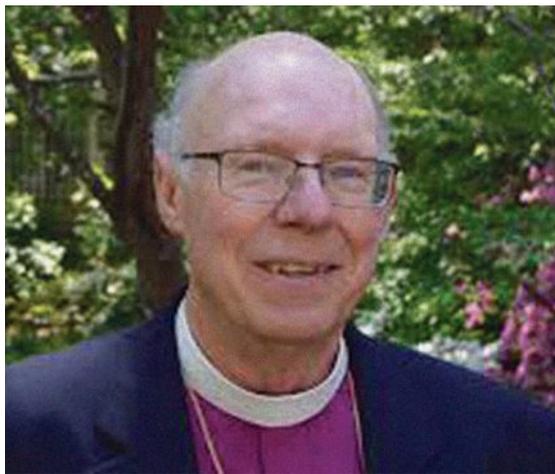
## Return of the Common Cup

**O**n March 14, two years almost to the day after the suspension of public worship in the diocese, Bishop Dietsche wrote to the diocese to authorize, with immediate effect, the return to Communion in Both Kinds, and to “permit, and encourage, the restoration of the Common Cup in the worship of our churches.” At the same time, he recognized people’s varying levels of comfort during the continuing pandemic, writhing that he wanted to be clear that “no one is required to drink from the chalice. Nor is any parish required to do this until they are ready.”

*Read the full letter in which Bishop Dietsche announced this change at [dioceseny.org/return-of-the-common-cup](http://dioceseny.org/return-of-the-common-cup).*

## Dean Daniels Departs

**T**he Dean of the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, the Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel III, announced March 15 that he would be leaving the post that he has held for the past five year on June 30, 2022 in accordance with the terms of his original agreement with the Bishop and Board of Trustees. “Serving as Dean of this great Cathedral has been a signal honor of my ordained ministry,” he wrote, “and I am profoundly grateful.”



## Absalom Jones Celebration at St. Philip’s

**I**n a departure from recent practice, the diocese this year celebrated the life and ministry of the Blessed Absalom Jones not at the Cathedral, but at St. Philip’s Church in Harlem. Bishop Dietsche officiated, and the preacher was the presiding bishop, the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry preached.

*Video is available in English at <https://vimeo.com/edny/absjones22-eng> and with voice-over Spanish translation at <https://vimeo.com/edny/absjones22-sp>.*



Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry Preaching at the Absalom Jones Celebration. Photo: The Rev. David M. Rider



Photo: The Rev. David M. Rider

## Memorial Service for Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931-2021)

**A** service in honor of Archbishop Tutu’s legacy and memory took place February 13 at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, with the presiding bishop, the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, preaching.

*Video of the full service is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQysR9gqxs>. More photos at [episcopalnewyorker.org/2022/tutu](http://episcopalnewyorker.org/2022/tutu).*

## Taizé Pilgrimage



**21** young members of Christ Church, Bronxville, Christ’s Church, Rye, Trinity Church Wall Street, and St. Peter’s, Port Chester went on pilgrimage to the Taizé Community in Burgundy Feb 18-27, accompanied by four clergy and eight lay chaperones – making a party of 33 in all. For more photos, please visit [episcopalnewyorker.org/2022/taize](http://episcopalnewyorker.org/2022/taize).

Photo: Crispian Thorne.

## Parochial Reports Reminder

**C**ongregations are reminded that the due date for submission of Parochial Reports was March 1. If you haven’t already done so, please submit yours now through the General Convention website. For full information, forms, and instructions, please go to <https://www.general-convention.org/forms-and-instructions>.

# Sustainable Development Goals Fund Grants Application Deadline Extended

The deadline for applying for a 2022 Sustainable Development Goals Fund Grant has been extended to Friday, June 3. The Sustainable Development Goals Fund (SDGF) aims to provide support for partnerships between congregations, schools and mission networks within the Episcopal Diocese of New York (EDNY) and global entities outside of the EDNY. The EDNY partner applies for funding to support the project to be conducted with the global partner. Projects for which applications are made must be approved by the EDNY parish vestry or governing board, as well as the equivalent leadership of the global partner, before submission for consideration.

Grants will be awarded for projects that directly address one or more of the SDGs. Effectiveness, accountability and sustainability (addressing one or more SDGs, as well as financial sustainability) will be essential criteria which applicants must identify, define and measure. The global partner should be in communion with the Episcopal/Anglican church, and the EDNY partner must be in good standing within the church. Awards will be made out to the EDNY partner.

## Alternative Audits Extended to All Congregations

For the past several years, the diocesan trustees have extended the simplified Alternative Audit Procedure to all congregations regardless of size (unless they require a certified audit for other reasons). This extension has been continued for the 2021 audit that is due this year.

This means that all congregations in the Diocese of New York should carry out the audit internally this year (that is, without engaging an individual or firm outside the congregation), unless they need a certified audit for another reason or are already planning to have a certified audit prepared.

For more information and the necessary form and workbook, please go to <https://diocesenewyork.org/2021audits/>

## BISHOPS' VISITATION SCHEDULE

### APRIL 24 (2 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Heavenly Rest, Manhattan

**Bishop Shin:** St. John's, Ellenville

#### Bishop Glasspool:

Christ Church, Riverdale

### MAY 1 (3 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Michael's, Manhattan

**Bishop Glasspool:** Grace, Millbrook

### MAY 8 (4 EASTER)

**Bishop Dietsche:** St. James',

Manhattan

**Bishop Glasspool:** St. John's, Cornwall

### MAY 15 (5 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Christ & St. Stephen's, Manhattan

#### Bishop Glasspool:

St. Matthew's, Bedford

### MAY 22 (6 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Thomas, Manhattan

#### Bishop Glasspool:

St. Bartholomew's, Manhattan

### MAY 26 (ASCENSION DAY)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Ascension, Manhattan

#### Bishop Glasspool:

Ascension, Staten Island (p.m.)

### MAY 29 (7 EASTER)

#### Bishop Glasspool:

St. Andrew's, Walden

### JUNE 5 (PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Trinity Church Wall Street

**Bishop Glasspool:** Grace, Manhattan

### JUNE 12 (1 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Grace, Hastings on Hudson

**Bishop Glasspool:** St. Peter's, Lithgow

### JUNE 19 (2 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. James', North Salem

#### Bishop Glasspool:

St. Mary's, Cold Spring

### JUNE 26 (3 PENTECOST)

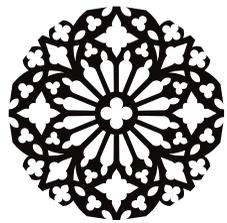
#### Bishop Dietsche:

Ste Esprit, Manhattan

## CLERGY CHANGES

NAME	FROM	TO	DATE
<b>The Rev. Jarrett Kerbel</b>	Rector, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Philadelphia, PA	Priest-in-Charge, All Angels', Manhattan	June 1, 2022
<b>The Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel III</b>	Dean, Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, Manhattan	Retirement	June 30, 2022
<b>The Rev. Judith Ferguson</b>	Rector, Holy Innocents', Highland Falls and St. Mark's, Fort Montgomery	Retirement	July 30, 2022
<b>The Rev. Michael Corrigan</b>	Pastoral Associate, Trinity, Santa Barbara, CA	Priest-in-Charge, St. Margaret's, Staatsburg	May 8, 2022
<b>The Rev. Dr. Kurt Gerhard</b>	Rector, St. Patrick's Church & School, Washington DC	Rector, Christ Church Bronxville	May 8, 2022
<b>The Rev. Robert Gahler</b>	Priest-in-Charge, Trinity St. Paul's, New Rochelle	Retirement	May 30, 2022
<b>The Rev. Anne Sawyer</b>	Rector, St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery, Manhattan	Diocese of Arizona	April 30, 2022
<b>The Rev. Kyle Martindale</b>	Rector, St. Stephen's, Pearl River	Priest-in-Charge, St. Mark's, Mount Kisco	March 1, 2022
<b>The Rev. Heather Sisk</b>	Pastoral Fellow and Assistant, All Saints', Manhattan	Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul's, Pleasant Valley	March 3, 2022
<b>The Rev. Margaret Tuttle</b>	Chaplain, Hospital for Special Surgery, Manhattan	Interim Priest, St. Mary the Virgin, Chappaqua	March 7, 2022
<b>The Rev. Lisa Graves</b>	Priest-in-Charge, St. John's, Tuckahoe, Yonkers	Priest-in-Charge, St. Stephen's, Waretown, NJ	March 27, 2022
<b>The Rev. Yein Kim</b>	Rector, St. Alban's Westwood, Los Angeles, CA	Priest for Congregational Life, Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan	February 6, 2022
<b>The Rev. Charles Mayer</b>	Grace Church, Ossining	Retirement	February 13, 2022
<b>The Rev. Sammy Lee Wood</b>	Rector, St. Bartholomew's, Nashville, TN	Interim, St. Mary the Virgin, Manhattan	February 15, 2022
<b>The Rev. Luis Gomez</b>	Assistant Priest, Intercession, Manhattan	Priest-in-Charge, Mediator, The Bronx	February 16, 2022
<b>The Rev. Nils Chittenden</b>	Retirement	Supply & Consulting, Diocese of New York	January 1, 2022
<b>The Rev. Phillip Jackson</b>	Priest-in-Charge, Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan	Rector, Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan	January 1, 2022
<b>The Rev. Zack Nyein</b>	Associate Rector, All Saints', Atlanta, GA	Senior Associate Rector, St. Bartholomew's, Manhattan	January 3, 2022
<b>The Rev. Deacon Shiane Lee</b>	Deacon, St. Mary's, Chappaqua	Deacon, Christ Church & San Marcos, Tarrytown	January 9, 2022
<b>The Rev. Tami Burks</b>	Interim Priest, St. Thomas', Mamaroneck	Priest-in-Charge, St. Thomas', Mamaroneck	January 15, 2022
<b>The Rev. Este Gardner</b>	Vicar, Mediator, Bronx	Supply, Diocese of New York	January 15, 2022
<b>The Rev. Stephen Gerth</b>	Rector, St. Mary the Virgin, Manhattan	Retirement	December 19, 2021
<b>The Rev. Dr. Chip Graves</b>	Rector, Grace/La Gracia, White Plains	Priest-in-Charge, St. Stephen's, Waretown, NJ	December 31, 2021
<b>The Rev. Mark Schultz</b>	Curate, St. Philip's, Tucson, AZ	Associate for Pastoral Care, St. Thomas, Manhattan	November 7, 2021
<b>The Rev. Juyoung Prisca Lee-Pae</b>	Ordained Priest September 2 (Diocese of Long Island)	Associate for Pan-Asian Ministry, St. Thomas, Manhattan	November 28, 2021
<b>The Rev. Deacon Denise LaVetty</b>	Deacon, St. Peter's (Chelsea), Manhattan, and Director, Diaconal Formation & Transition	Deacon, Incarnation, Manhattan, and Director, Diaconal Formation & Transition	October 1, 2021
<b>The Rev. Canon Franklin Reid</b>	Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul's, Spring Valley	Retirement	July 1, 2021

## APRIL – JUNE 2022



### The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine

#### PLEASE NOTE:

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, dates and times may change. Please visit [stjohndivine.org](http://stjohndivine.org) for updates and COVID attendance policies, as well as tickets to concerts, tours, and programs.

#### WORSHIP SERVICES

Holy Eucharist, Sundays 10:30 a.m. (in-person and livestreamed)  
New Community Service, Sundays 2 a.m.  
Compline, Sundays 7 a.m.

Holy Eucharist, Mondays – Fridays  
12:15 p.m. (in-person)

Virtual Morning and Evening Prayer,  
Mondays – Saturdays 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.  
(via Zoom)

#### HIGHLIGHTS TOURS

Wednesdays 1 pm  
Fridays 1 pm  
Saturdays, 11 am and 1 pm

#### VERTICAL TOURS

Mondays 2 pm  
Fridays 2 pm  
Saturdays 12 and 2 pm

#### APRIL

##### EASTER SERVICES

Sunday, April 17, 10:30 a.m. and 4 a.m.

##### ZIP CODE MEMORY PROJECT: IMAGINE REPAIR EXHIBITION OPENING

Saturday, April 23, 4 – 8 a.m.  
Exhibition on view April 23 – May 15

##### SUNDAYS AT 4: ART IN THE AFTERNOON

Sunday, April 24, 4 a.m.

##### GREAT MUSIC IN A GREAT SPACE: SAMUEL KUFFUOR AFRIYIE AND RAYMOND NAGEM

Tuesday, April 26, 7:30 a.m.  
Livestream and in-person

##### BLESSING OF THE BICYCLES

Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m.

#### MAY

##### NYBC BLOOD DRIVE

Monday, May 2, 9 a.m. – 7 a.m.  
Synod Hall

##### DIACONATE ORDINATIONS

Saturday, May 14, 10:30 a.m.

##### SUNDAYS AT 4: ORGAN DEMO

Sunday, May 15, 4 a.m.

##### GREAT MUSIC IN A GREAT SPACE: CALEIDOSCÓPIO! UNSUNG VOICES FROM PORTUGAL

Monday, May 23, 7:30 a.m.  
Livestream and in-person

##### NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT

Monday, May 30, 8 a.m.

#### JUNE

##### DIOCESAN CONFIRMATIONS

Saturday, June 4, 10:30 a.m.

##### ACT SUMMER CAMP

June 27 – August 26

## Ordination of Transitional Deacons March 12



Front row left to right: The Rev. Alexander James Herasimtschuk; The Rev. Stacey Marie Carpenter; The Rev. Nicole Regina Hanley; The Rev. Meredith Ann Marguerite Hawkins; The Rev. Molly Jane Layton; The Rev. Mary Katharine McCarthy. Back row left to right: The Rev. Canon Charles W. Simmons; The Rev. Deacon Eliza Davies; The Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin; The Rt. Rev. Andrew ML Dietsche; The Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool; The Rev. Deacon Pedro L. Rodriguez, Jr.; The Rev. Susan Fortunato (Preacher).  
Photo: The Rev. Canon John Perris.

# The Climate Crisis: Reflections on Family, Politics, and Our Common Home

*By the Rev. Canon Jeffrey Golliber, PhD.*

**W**e all know how helpful it is to remember important lessons that we've learned in life – lessons from mom and dad, family and friends, co-workers, teachers, clergy, political leaders, or whoever it might be. This is especially true in difficult and confusing times.

I want to share one of the last face-to-face conversations I had with my mother, nearly two years ago. We were watching a news report about the climate and ecological crisis. She was well-aware that I had been working on that issue my whole adult life. Knowing that she wouldn't be with us much longer, she turned to me with the kindest and most determined look. Her eyes held my attention for several seconds, and then she said, "Jeff, please don't ever stop working on this." As she spoke, she was thinking of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and she wanted to encourage me from the bottom of her heart.

We talked about it a while longer. I had recently retired from nearly 30 years as the environmental justice staff person for the Anglican Communion, attending many UN conferences and helping to organize our member churches. Aware of that change in my life, she asked about my similar global work with the Anglican Franciscans today. She wanted me to impress upon me that she perceived the depth of the crisis. As we spoke, I remembered something my father, who was sitting with us, once said to me when I was a child: "always tell the truth, and remember how hard it can be sometimes to know what the truth really is." He wanted me to reflect deeply on what I might say to others, and what I might hear others say. In his distinctive way, he was instilling what the church understands as faith, morality, and discernment.

A few months later, my mom passed away peacefully at home with my father by her side. I thought a lot about them during the recent United Nations Climate Summit (COP 26) in Glasgow. The disappointing outcome wasn't a surprise. Some positive decisions were made, but those were mainly commitments and promises. The gist of it is that we must seriously double down on our efforts now if we want future generations to inherit a habitable earth. The crisis is already here. The question is how severe we will let it become, how many millions of human lives will be lost, and how many endangered species

and ecosystems will be destroyed. Official representatives gathered in Glasgow knew all this—heads of state, government delegates, corporate spokespersons, religious and civic leaders. Yet the outcome did not come close to reaching reasonable goals.

Increasingly, what we hear or read in the mass media about the climate is a kind of performance designed to shape public opinion and attract viewers. Some political and corporate interests work behind the scenes to shape the message. While this is business-as-usual in many ways, its power has become much more technologically sophisticated; and its consequences, unthinkably severe. I'll give only two examples. During the climate summit, one national spokesperson plainly stated to the press that his country is committed to stopping "illegal deforestation." He omitted the fact that his country has redefined "illegal" so that many kinds of deforestation are now legal—which includes the exploitation of indigenous people who live in those forests. Another well-known head of state said that to stop the climate crisis, we must "lead by example." At about the same time, his administration proposed new oil and gas drilling leases. Generally, countries that do the most damage create the most deceptive performances. Those who suffer from it the most, suffer even more.

There is hope for our generation and those to come, but genuine hope is not the same as wishful thinking. The latter makes us susceptible to those corporate and political forces, whether on the right or left, that distort what we think, how we think, and how we relate to each other. The good news is that genuine hope is real and within our reach. It depends on our faithful action and discernment in the here and now. Both can be cultivated and strengthened within our selves and families, within our communities, and in our lives everyday. We can do this. Let us pray now, discern now, and act now. If we do, then we will give generations to come a bright future.

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*The author is missionary at St. John's Church, Ellenville and assisting minister provincial, The Society of Saint Francis, Anglican Third Order.*

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