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#145

Founder's forum

Like trees with healing leaves

Three departed souls were at the gate of heaven. Peter the gate-keeper told them they had to answer a question to test their faith. "What is Easter?" The first, somewhat unsure of himself said: "That's where you have a tree and presents and everybody is together as a family." Peter said, "Wrong!" The next answered, "That's when you have a turkey and many guests for dinner." "Wrong," answered Peter. The last said confidently, "That's easy. Jesus died on Good Friday; he was in the tomb on Saturday. Sunday the stone was rolled away, Jesus came out, didn't see his shadow and there were six more weeks of winter."

Funny to some, but a real commentary on the lack of knowledge on the part of many Christians today. I remember when my father and mother taught me the Lord's Prayer. Basic, yes, but an essential of the faith. We were encouraged as children not to go to bed without praying first. These are the words our Father gave us. He asked us to pray them.

These basics should be foremost in our Christian education. I wonder how many remember the service, The Churching of Women. When I joined the Episcopal Church in 1960 my rector said everyone should know the whole Prayer Book. My Sunday School class learned about the Lord's Prayer, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. I remember that the

Holy Communion is on page 67 of the 1928 Prayer Book. Without looking, can you remember on what page Rite Two Holy Eucharist begins?

I would suggest that instead of searching for a curriculum published by someone else, we look to what we already have. The Catechism in the Prayer Book is a good place to start. It's time to stop feeding pabulum and get on to solid food. It's nice to have the children bring crafts and doo-dads home from Sunday School—but these things do not make for a strong faith; these things do not remain in our hearts into our adulthood, thereby rooting us firmly in the church and its faith.

As a start, I would suggest we eliminate the convenient "proper insert" used in many churches. What's wrong with pew Bibles? We are a scripturally starved

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church—and that is sad for a church which claims to have the Scriptures at the center. Except for finding Matthew, Mark, Luke and John many of us would be hard pressed to locate a particular section of Scripture on demand. If we had been doing our homework, these basics would now be cherished as part of everyday life. There would be no searching for the correct page. If a Bible was in each pew, how many could find Amos, or a section of the Apocrypha?

By the reading and study of Scripture, by the study of the Prayer Book and Hymnal, we are invited to taste the riches of the church. Think of this scenario. Something new appears in the service. What is our reaction? Fear of the unknown? Dislike for things new? What we should do is ask what the particular action means, why we do it and how it benefits or enhances the liturgy. Instead of saying, "We never did that before!" or "I don't like that!" why not ask questions? Why not look at the Prayer Book and read the rubrics or directions for the conduct of worship. Many of us would find that what we do is set out for us to be done. That is precisely why we are a liturgical church—not a fundamentalist sect.

When was the last time any of us can remember hearing someone say, "Did you hear that second reading—powerful stuff," or, "The readings today made me

upset. I need to discuss those with someone." Why? I was at a seminary commencement recently and was struck by the fact a majority of those attending carried their Bibles. At first I was disturbed at the prospect of those behind me chatting about the readings to be used. Instead, they located the readings and closed the books with a mark set for later reference. Imagine that—the witness of being seen in the street carrying a Bible! You're probably thinking, "Great; he's asking us to fiddle with another book!" No—but I am suggesting that we place at least one or two Bibles in the pews—so those who prefer not to carry their own can look up the texts.

Revelation gives us these words: "On either side of the river is the tree of life," and further on in the same passage, "The leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations." Like the leaves of a book ... Through the reading and the hearing of Scripture; through the singing of hymns and spiritual songs we sow the seeds of faith. Compare our reading and digesting of the word—our knowledge of the Bible, Prayer Book and Hymnal—to something many of you know, the beautiful flower the iris. Have you ever noticed the way they spread? They know no boundaries and they will grow where they want—in the confines of your garden or outside! This is the way our faith will spread if it is alive, and finds fertile soil for growth.

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The riches of the Prayer Book and the Hymnal are manifold. There are four offices: Morning Prayer, Noonday, Evening Prayer and Compline, and there are shorter prayer services for family use. I wonder how many of us open our Prayer Books during the week? The Prayer Book and what it contains is the blood stream of our life and faith in the church. When I became an Episcopalian, I was blessed to have a priest who really knew how to keep the young people as lifelong members of the congregation—or someone else's congregation, as they went off to school, to work, to raise their own families. He had some strange customs but they worked. At the 9:30 Family Service we went through the entire Prayer Book over the course of a year! One Sunday was Baptism, the next Ante-Communion. Another would be the wedding service and another still would be the Churching of Women! It seemed

very strange to me then, but as I look back on those days, this exposure to the contents of that book brought me into the fullness of the church.

I think that it's time we studied the books of the church. It's time to have Sunday School lessons based on the Prayer Book. In

fact, I sometimes wonder what our seminaries are teaching about the use of the book as it relates to the Episcopal way. I can remember the day when I stood in horror as my late rector had to show a new curate how to celebrate the Eucharist! And then I realized that my first rector had shown me and all the young people just that! We knew what the fraction meant as children. We knew what the Holy Communion did for us from the roots up. We often hear fellow church members asking why the fundamentalist and literalist churches seem to be thriving. One reason is that these people take their doctrine and their Scriptures very seriously. They are rooted in their beliefs.

What about us Anglicans? We have Scripture, tradition and reason—the Anglican way. Have we given this to our children? Have we taken time to give it to ourselves? It seems to me that we have baptized maybe several hundred children since I joined the staff at my parish. Where are they now? Surely not in our Sunday School. This problem is not just ours. Many churches suffer from the empty pew syndrome. We just haven't gotten down how to *keep* people. We have not discovered how to get them excited. And why? Because *we're* not excited! Several of the couples married in the last few years have remained to become integral parts of the parish family. But what happened to the rest? Many of them are or were members or children of members. Where are they now?

We are a community of believers. If we see younger members sitting in the pew, and they do not know what page we're on, or what we are doing, or why we are doing it, we have a responsibility to nurture and help them. We come to church, or ought to come to church, so that in worship we may expose ourselves to the mighty influences of the streams of life. Then we can become sturdy trees planted by the living stream, bearing fruit, and leaves that heal the nations.

RTB



Richard Thomas, with the new organ in the Chapel of Christ the Lord at "815," where he works in the General Convention Office. The organ was recently dedicated as a memorial to the Rev Gene White, who served on the staff of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief.

Violence and strife in the city

'... I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night the watchmen make their rounds upon her walls, but trouble and misery are in the midst of her. There is corruption at her heart; her streets are never free of oppression and deceit.'—Psalm 55:10b-12

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

How true these familiar verses seem to us in the City of the Angels, these last few days. Though, by this morning, calm seems to prevail, there can be no overestimating the agony of this city since Thursday afternoon: the shock over the acquittal of all four police officers; the horror of seeing innocent people pulled from vehicles and beaten senseless; the tragedy of businesses, public service agencies, libraries, and apartments going up in smoke; the frenzy of otherwise peaceful citizens gone mad with hope of easy gain through looting; the heartbreak of those who did not take part, but saw their neighborhood food stores burned or empty and, with no bus service or gasoline for cars, were unable to find food; the labor of those who sought to help or protect others, to plead for calm, to keep the public informed.

As many of you know, neither I nor my home were hurt. I have spent the last two nights staying at the home of a friend. My neighborhood, though not my street, suffered a good deal of violence and damage and I determined Thursday night, after driving right into a place where (about 15 feet away) people were smashing a car in the middle of an intersection only about five blocks from my home, that it was best to make a U-turn over the sidewalk and go spend the night at a friend's house a mile or two from the area. By the next night, as I stood on the roof of my friend's building, there were fires burning on three sides of us, some within eight blocks. The smoke hung over the city like a grey-orange funeral pall, reflecting the glare from hundreds of fires. The smell was powerful, and bits of ash would drift down, here and there, like confetti. Due to the citywide curfew, the only sounds were helicopters and sirens; the streets were deserted except for emergency vehicles or the occasional car. The effect, in a city that never

sleeps, whose streets are never empty of traffic, was eerie beyond belief. The tension and fear were much greater than when I lived in Jerusalem in 1978-79, amid bomb threats or actual explosions. Others, who remember the Watts riots in the 60s, have said this is worse. It is certainly more wide-spread. Many of the areas which have experienced looting and fires are miles away from "South Central"—where the trouble began.

Todd, our parish sexton, spent all night Thursday on the roof of his mother's house with a garden hose, working to prevent the fire next door from spreading. The husband of one of our vestry members lost nearly everything when his shopping center (leased to Korean merchants) was torched; several parishioners felt compelled to leave their homes near the rioting; one of our parishioners, a doctor, has been at Daniel Freeman Hospital where most of the injured have been taken, almost non-stop since the trouble began. As for me, my grocery store (three blocks from home) was looted, but is still standing. All the other stores in its little shopping center, "Western Plaza,"

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were looted, and a big shoe store was burned to the ground. I **have** been home briefly, yesterday afternoon, to get some clothes and feed the bird, but did not stray too far afield to check on other dam-

age. I do know that many of the larger apartment buildings that burned were not too far away from mine, a matter of a few blocks. I plan to go home this evening, and try to resume normal life.

Here at the church, we have tried to remain open as a place of calm. We have run a special "Prayer Vigil for the City of the Angels" during daylight hours and encouraged people to lift up the city in prayer. Many have come here seeking to reaffirm their faith in the Lordship of Christ, in the vitality of the Easter message of tragedy turned to triumph, darkness turned to light, sadness turned to joy, death turned to life. The Paschal Candle has burned during the Vigil, in the center of the chancel, as a sign of the hope and life that, by God's grace, are within us. And so we have, at the daily office and the eucharist, been careful to offer, along with our urgent intercessions for the people of the city, joyful praise for ". . . all the blessings of this life; but above all for [God's] immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory." Many of us have experienced this as a time to proclaim to those around us the good news entrusted to us by Christ: we are convinced that now is the "acceptable time" to remember that the brokenness, pain, injustice and hatred we experience, though all too real, are not the ultimate reality in this world.

Yes, "I have seen violence and strife in the city." But I have also seen courage, kindness, faithfulness and hope. I have seen people of all political affiliations question whether justice was done in the trial of those who beat Rodney King. I have seen blacks risk their lives to save whites and Koreans. I have seen people turn away looters and tell them that they will not wreak havoc in their neighborhood, regardless of who runs a store. I have seen people from unscathed areas

urgently asking how they can help those left homeless or unemployed.

The city: "There is corruption at her heart ... " Not only this city, either. These words speak powerfully of the sad truth that what has happened here in the last few days must not be seen or treated as an isolated occurrence. The problem lies much deeper than either a questionable verdict or an outbreak of opportunistic lawlessness. What a terrible way to be reminded that our way of life still encourages oppression, still traps people in poverty. We often think we have come so far along towards social justice, but the truth is we have not come nearly far enough. We need to ask ourselves if we, in the

"liberal" church, do not tend to rest on our laurels from the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s. We need to look into our hearts and see if we have been content to fund programs, rather than to touch people. I know that I ask myself if I have not preferred to be a member of a committee to being a member of a community. Was it right that, "fear and trembling have come over me . . . I would hasten to escape" and flee my own neighborhood? Could I, should I, as a religious, have stayed and tried to be a voice of calm for my neighbors? Or did I do the right thing in staying with a friend who also lived alone and frightened, not all that far from trouble? Just what is the right way to *live into* those so-familiar

words, "Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep"—words so often on my lips in the last two days? Here, indeed, are questions for reflection. Here, indeed, is a good reminder not to judge others for their actions *in* a time of crisis. Here, indeed, is reason to pray that we Christians may again take a lead in proclaiming, by word and deed, Jesus' answer to the question—so ancient, yet so contemporary—"Who is my neighbor?"

Francis Andrew

Meeting the community

Engineering diversity



Ciarán Anthony

They say that Episcopalians received from other denominations are among the most fervent members of the church. Having been raised Roman Catholic, but with an insatiable desire to question the status quo, it occurs to me that I fit this saying rather well. It also explains the zeal found in a large portion of the Episcopal Church, but it leaves me to wonder what accounts for the zeal to be found in the rest.

Back in April of 1986, a few weeks before I was received into the church and about a year before I became a postulant in the Brotherhood, one of the brothers asked me what made me want to be received into the Episcopal Church. I thought that a rather odd question and told my brother as much. Nothing made me decide to *become* an Episcopalian, I have *always been* an Episcopalian. It was just that until about that point in my life I hadn't bothered to ask myself what denomination I thought I belonged to. To assume that since I was raised Roman Catholic then I certainly must *be* Roman Catholic never quite washed with me.

In one sense that anecdote is a small key to who I am, someone who believes that you learn a lot less in searching for an-

swers than you do in learning to ask better questions. I quickly found out that a lack of interest in searching for answers combined with a natural inclination to question just about everything was at least going to make certain that my life is anything but boring. In fact, having adopted this philosophy at an early age probably explains why I now find myself in the seemingly unlikely situation of living as a religious and working as a software engineer.

I was educated at MIT, graduating in 1984 with a BS in computer science and engineering. For the last four years I have worked at Digital Equipment Corporation, specializing in software architecture. I like to say that software architecture is one-quarter software engineering, one-quarter art and one-half diplomacy. A software architect is like the architect of a building—responsible for drawing the big picture. Just as an architect is responsible for conveying a vision to, and coordinating the work of the hydraulic, electrical and structural engineers responsible for the detailed design of the building, so must a software architect convey a vision to, and coordinate the work of the software engineers responsible for the detailed design of a software system.

In turn these people direct the work of the system programmers, who are roughly the equivalent of plumbers, electricians and steel workers.

As a religious, my life has centered around continuing with others the work I began within myself during my years at MIT. That work is learning to recognize, understand, accept, value and celebrate the dynamics of diversity in God's creation. M. Scott Peck, in his book *The Road Less Traveled*, defines love as the willingness and desire to foster the spiritual and emotional growth of oneself or another. In accepting this work and this definition I bring substance to the words of my vow of chastity, "I dedicate myself, my soul and mind and body, to the pure service of the love of God."

In doing this work my focus has been on working to help others understand the dynamics of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual difference. At Digital I do this work as a trained valuing differences educator for the company and as the representative of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community to the U.S. Diversity Office. Within the church I do this work as a member of my parish's pastoral care team. I hope to begin taking this work out into the diocese and the greater church in the future.

Community notes



Gordon Stanley and Ernestine Burke were admitted as postulants at last Convocation

Province I

Claudia-Michael, visiting from Province II, joined **Roy, Donovan, Laurence Andrew** and **Benet** for a day of prayer and fellowship with the ecumenical Brothers of the Mercy of God. +++ **Roy, Benet,** and **Claudia-Michael** at-tended the eucharist at Trinity, Newport RI, at which Bishop Hunt received Charles LeTour into the Episcopal Church. +++ **Roy** attended the Easter Vigil divine liturgy at St George's Orthodox Cathedral.



Bishop Mason and James at The Cloisters.

Province II

Claudia-Michael serves on the Albany Diocesan Committee on Ministry on Aging, and participated in the educational design, and as a panelist in a videotape on aging titled, "Vital Health Care Issues, Part II." +++ She gave talks on her journey as a member of the Companion Sisterhood at St Paul's, Albany, and Redeemer, Rensselaer NY.

Andrew has relocated to Pulaski NY, and he and **Maurice John** both serve on the Syracuse Pastoral Care visiting team. **Andrew** is now part of the cathedral staff, working at making new and repairing old vestments.

Richard John is organizing a not-for-profit charitable agency for distributing emergency funds on short notice to people with AIDS, in order to assist them with utility bills, rent, clothing, and medical needs. The organization is called The Agape Fund, and is operating through St John's Church, South Salem NY 10590.

Tobias Stanislas led a two-day workshop, and preached at the Sunday eucharist at Trinity, Williamsport PA. The workshop focused on *Discipleship and Community*, and the central paradox of the church as an apostolic community: "called together to be sent out." Approximately forty members of the parish attended the workshop.

Bishop Dennis presided at the Easter Vigil at St Luke in the Fields, Manhattan. **James** served as subdeacon for the service.

Vacationing Australian Bishop Ken Mason paid a visit to St Augustine's House, Bronx, and enjoyed a trip to The Cloisters with **James** and **Tobias Stanislas**. While in New York he preached at St Luke in the Fields.



James prepares for the Easter Vigil.

Province III

Edward, his wife Barbara and daughter Nancy, and several other members of Holy Trinity Parish, Bowie MD, at-tended the celebration held at Washington's Mision San Juan for visiting Bishop of Honduras Leo Frade. The people of Holy Trinity have raised \$10,000 for the Diocese of Honduras, which has a companion relationship with the Diocese of Washington. Nancy plans to be a part of a group of parishioners visiting Honduras this summer.

Province V

Gordon Stanley, who was-admitted as a postulant at last Convocation, has been doing fund-raising work for Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois. He is



At St Peter's, Chicago: (l-r) Gordon, the Rev James Dunkerley, Roger, Ronald Augustine, and Thomas Joseph.



The Brotherhood and Companion Sisterhood sang some of the BSG music for the eucharist at Graymoor last winter. They also sang portions of "Mountain Vespers" in an impromptu concert for the Sisters of the Atonement, as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity observances.

also assisting his parish, St Peter's, Chicago, in its new capital campaign. His birthday was observed with due pomp, including a visit from Provincial **Thomas Joseph**.

Erratum

It was incorrectly reported in issue #143 that John Raphael Aguilar Cruz, cofounder of the Brothers and Sisters of St Francis, had met with the Rev James Forbes of Riverside Church, New York, before the foundation of his community. The meeting was not scheduled to take place until after the foundation ceremony.

Publications

We are pleased to announce the publication of a new version of the *Music of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory*. This new edition includes all of the music from the first edition, and adds complete new settings (including the full text of the offices) for Noonday and Compline. All of the music has been newly typeset, and the texts for the offices are in large, clear type. A sample page, slightly less than actual size, is at the right. The booklet is 24 pages long, and contains additional simplified Anglican chants, a form for the Gospel Alleluia, all three parts of "Mountain Vespers" (*Phos, Mag* and *Nunc*), and a number of "People's Communion Anthems." The cost for the music booklet is \$2.00. Use the order form on the back cover.

The Song of Simeon, from Mountain Vespers, 1987

Lord, now let your ser- vant go in
Not a lone for me did he ap-
Light to lone light be en those that sit in
Glo- ry to be to God Most High: e-

peace ac- cord- ing to your word, for my
pear in- car- nate in my sight, but for
dark- ness, bound for death and hell, and to
ter- nal Fa- ther, bless- ed Son, Ho- ly

eyes have seen at last my Sav- ior
all the world to be a bea- con
be the glo- ry of your peo- ple
Spi- rit; One in Three, al- might- y

and my Lord.
and a light.
Is- ra- el.
Three in One. men.

Mountain Vespers, 1987, TSH