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MEETING GOD IN CYBERSPACE

PAGE 10



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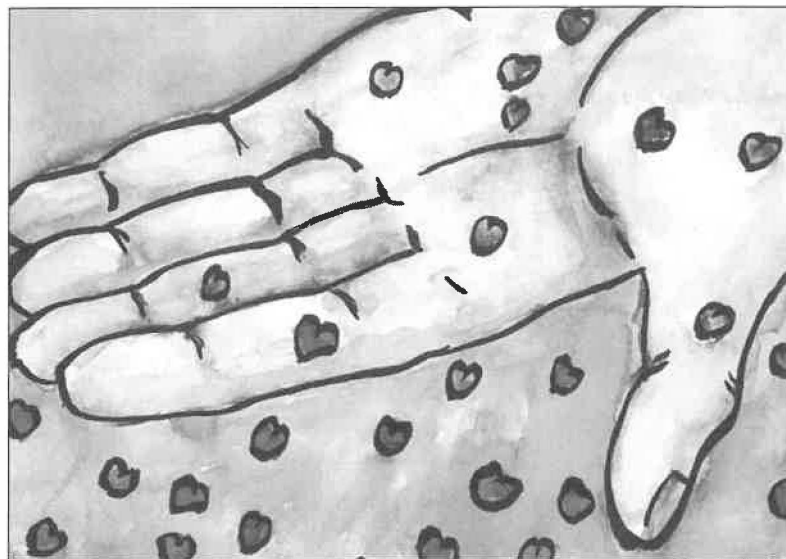
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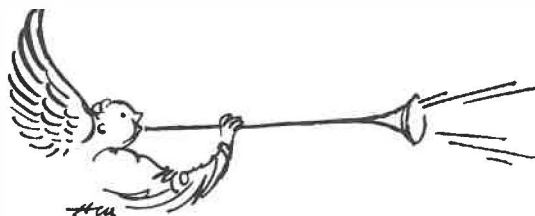
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TRAVELING?



**TAKE ALONG
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GUIDE.
(SEE PAGE 23)**

Trials Lead to Blessings

*“Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go
unless you bless me’” (Gen. 27).*

Pentecost 20, Proper 24

Gen. 32:3-8, 22-30; Ps. 121; 2 Tim. 3:14-4:5; Luke 18:1-8a

At first reading of the gospel lesson, it sounds as if Jesus is teaching that God is like the unrighteous judge, who delays giving justice because he is indifferent. There are many Christians who, in a time of personal trial, come to a similar conclusion. But a deeper reading shows that the only parallel is the delay in having one's requests answered.

Jesus assures us that God's vindication of the elect is sure and speedy, though it may not come in the time frame we would like.

Insight is given in the reading from Genesis: the account of the homecoming of Jacob after two decades of self-imposed exile after he had defrauded his older brother, Esau, out of his inheritance. Jacob, who had himself been defrauded in exile more than once by his father-in-law Laban, has matured a great deal during his absence. On the eve of his reconcilia-

tion with Esau, Jacob's 20-year struggle culminates in his wrestling with a man, whom at dawn he recognizes as a manifestation of God himself. Through the years away from his brother, Jacob has "striven with God and men" and "prevailed."

As a sign of his maturity in the knowledge of God, the Man changes his name from Jacob (Deceiver) to Israel (He strove with God). Jacob's vindication, then, though long delayed by human measure, has come at the right time, and therefore "speedily."

Jacob's trials have been the instrument of his maturing, thereby making his vindication possible, at the earliest possible moment. Jacob was finally reconciled to the one whom he had offended and from whom he had fled.

Our own trials, which at times can seem like the absence or indifference of God, are in fact necessary means to later blessings.

Look It Up

In Jesus' parable, why did the widow keep coming to the unrighteous judge?

Think About It

Where in your life does God seem to be absent or his action tardy? What ought you to be learning about your relationship to God in those places?

Next Sunday

Pentecost 21, Proper 25

Jer. 14(1-6) 7-10, 19-22; Ps. 84 or 84:1-6; 2 Tim. 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

'Inspired Speech'

THEORY AND THEOLOGY IN GEORGE HERBERT'S POETRY

By Elizabeth Clarke.
Clarendon. Pp. 299. \$75

Clarke explores the much beloved Anglican poet George Herbert as a poet who sought to apply aspects of Renaissance rhetoric within the milieu of Reformation theology that, in light of courtly flattery and love poetry, saw poetry as "mere husk of words that hid the kernel of truth." How could Herbert, "unambiguously Calvinist in doctrine and spirituality," be the first English poet to claim his work as "sacred poetry"?

Clarke compares Herbert's work to that of three other writers: Savonarola's, *The Simplicity of the Christian Life*; de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* and Valdes, *The Hundred and Ten Considerations*. All

three authors were theologians and men of letters. Each presented a different model of sanctification, at the same time having "a strong doctrine of the Holy Spirit and a concern for content and production of inspired speech."

Savonarola's book, owned and loved by Herbert, emphasizes purification of the soul, which will then be manifest in external simplicity, including speech.

De Sales' counter-Reformation spirituality presents issues of spontaneous and rhetorical prayer, recollection and the immediacy of scripture.

Herbert's close friend, Nicholas Fer-

rar, published Valdes' book in order to provide a needed text on spirituality. Herbert found much of Valdez' thought congenial regarding such matters as election, predestination, the significance of works, God's motions in the soul and signs of Christian sanctification, particularly "mortification."

Finally, Clarke examines what made inspired human speech. How did a poet justify and "mortify" his work at the same time? And, if a poem was one of the soul's dialogues with God, how might a poet represent God's speech?

To complete her very helpful study there is a bibliography and notes.

(The Rev.) Robert C. Walters
Marblehead, Mass.

The Nitty-Gritty
URBAN THEOLOGY

A Reader

Edited by Michael Northcott for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Urban Theology Group Cassell. Pp. 347. No price given, paper

Urban Theology is a splendidly diverse collection of writings by British and North American authors on the theology of the city. This is not academic theology, but theology springing out of the lives of people, especially the lives of poor and marginalized people.

Among other concerns, the structure of an unfettered market economy is challenged as perhaps the most profound underlying cause of the misery and despair of the poor.

This is not a pessimistic book, however. The hope of the gospel is juxtaposed against the misery and despair of much of inner-city life. For instance, a chapter on practical methods of evangelism spells out its underlying principle: "Above all, the missionary church is a church for whom outsiders matter as much as insiders."

(The Rt. Rev.) Paul Moore, Jr.
New York, N.Y.

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Parish Takes Stand Against Its Bishop

Bishop Shaw Asked to 'Repent' of His Views on Homosexuality



Bishop Shaw

'We don't want to mock them, we want them to repent.'

The Rev. Judith Gentle-Hardy

The rector, wardens and vestry of Holy Trinity Church, Marlborough, Mass., have taken a firm stand in opposition to the Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE, Bishop of Massachusetts.

In the wake of the "sexuality resolution" passed at the Lambeth Conference, the leadership at Holy Trinity said in a letter mailed to Bishop Shaw Sept. 18, "we have been in a state of broken communion with you, and have not been able to recognize your ministry as a bishop ... for almost two years now."

The Rev. Judith Gentle-Hardy, rector, said the parish is taking a stand against Bishop Shaw's "failure ... to teach and preach the truth of the gospel," specifically as it relates to practicing homosexuals ministering in the church and the blessing of same-sex unions.

Ms. Gentle-Hardy emphasized "we ... must show care to all our brothers and sisters who are in sexual bondage, be that heterosexual or homosexual bondage. We don't want to mock them, we want them to repent."

At the same time, Ms. Gentle-Hardy said, we "want to get the word out that parishes are taking tough stands" when bishops fail to "preach and teach the Good News of the Lord's transforming power which can heal our

brothers and sisters who struggle with homosexual desires and lifestyles."

The tough stand taken by Holy Trinity states, "If there is no movement toward repentance on your part by the end of this calendar year, we will give the monies set aside for our diocesan assessment to ministries of the larger Anglican Communion which are faithful to the Lord, his truth, and his redeeming work."

Bishop Shaw, through a spokesperson, said he would make no comment on personal correspondence.

Ms. Gentle-Hardy also has resigned from the American Anglican Council's board because, "... it will not stand against the bishops who signed the Koinonia Statement." She said, in her letter of resignation, that "orthodox Christians in ECUSA, especially priests and bishops, must declare and live into the broken communion that exists between orthodox Christians and those bishops and other clergy who have stepped outside the bounds of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Faith ... (including) the primate of ECUSA, Frank Griswold, until and unless he sincerely repents and undergoes conversion."



Holy Trinity Church, Marlborough, Mass.

The Church Is Alive and Well, P.B. Says

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, talking of the church at large, lamented that the press often seems to foster a sense of dismay with its focus on conflict. His remarks came at the 175th anniversary of St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia, on Sept. 25.

As he travels, Bishop Griswold said, he finds a deep sense of devotion in all sorts of parishes: urban, suburban and country. He has found an overwhelming number of Episcopal churches are alive, faithful and reach-

ing out beyond themselves.

Bishop Griswold suggested "the house of God," the church, should always be looked upon as a sacred place of contact, an encounter that is carried on both beyond and within church buildings.

The celebration at St. Stephen's was something of a homecoming for the Griswolds, going back to his tenure at St. Andrew's, Yardley.

(The Rev.) Charles F. Penniman, Jr.

Bishop Told He's Not Welcome to Visit

Some parishes in the Diocese of Pennsylvania have made it known that their diocesan, the Rt. Rev. Charles E. Bennison, is "unwelcome" to make pastoral visitations. The parishes formerly were visited by more conservative bishops from outside the diocese through an arrangement known as the "Parsons' Agreement," made with retired Bishop Allen Lyman Bartlett, Jr. Retired Bishop Donald Parsons visited the parishes with Bishop Bartlett's permission.

The Rev. David A. Ousley, rector of St. James-the-Less Church, Philadelphia, said he had frequent discussions with Bishop Bennison and was "prepared not to welcome" him at a planned visit Sept. 27. Fr. Ousley said that a time for the visit had never been arranged. He said that Bishop Bennison told him his "position is unacceptable."

Fr. Ousley received a fax from Bishop Bennison, dated Sept. 22, in which the

bishop said he decided not to visit the church because the canons call for a visitation every three years and he had been bishop only a few months. Bishop Bennison wrote that Fr. Ousley was in violation of several canons but he did not indicate he was planning any action.

The Rev. Philip Lyman, rector of St. John's, Huntington Valley, said "our position is non-reception when a bishop has promulgated false teachings and been disobedient to scripture and his ordination vows." Fr. Lyman has not talked with Bishop Bennison regarding his visit, on the calendar for Dec. 20, but, he said, "I don't see anything changing. Our policy is plain to everybody. We stand on scripture and, apparently, 82 percent of the Anglican Communion agrees with us."

Bishop Bennison could not be reached for comment.

New National Church Secretary Named

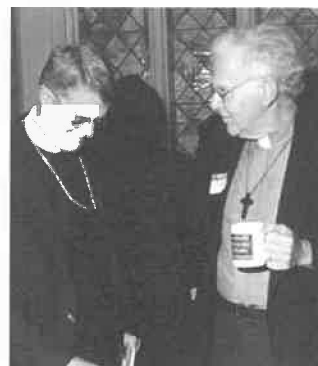
The Very Rev. Rosemary Sullivan, rector of the Church of St. Clement, Alexandria, Va., has been appointed secretary of the Episcopal Church and executive officer of General Convention. Ms. Sullivan succeeds the Rev. Canon Don Nickerson, who retired in June.

Ms. Sullivan, the first woman to serve as secretary of the national church, has been a deputy to several General Conventions and

served as chaplain at the 1997 convention in Philadelphia.

Ms. Sullivan is a native of Scranton, Pa. After high school she spent four years in a cloistered religious community. She is a graduate of Catholic University of America and Virginia Theological Seminary.

"It's like a tectonic plate shift," Ms. Sullivan said of her new position. "I'm really honored to be invited to accept this ministry."



Bishop Griswold visits with the Rev. William Mills during a break at St. Stephen's, Philadelphia.

BRIEFLY

The Rt. Rev. **Frank K. Allan**, Bishop of Atlanta, has announced his resignation after 12 years as eighth bishop of the diocese. Bishop Allan's resignation becomes effective upon the installation of his successor, sometime after Jan. 1, 2000. Although he is not formally retiring from ministry and work, Bishop Allan plans time for personal activities.

The *Instituto Pastoral Hispano*, an institute greatly influenced by liberation theology, is closing. Founded in the Diocese of Connecticut in 1977, it has been housed at General Theological Seminary for the past 12 years. The closing follows an unsuccessful attempt to merge the institute into GTS.

BRIEFLY



Bishop Gray

The Rt. Rev. **Francis Campbell Gray**, Bishop of Northern Indiana since 1987, has been called as Assistant Bishop of Virginia [TLC, Oct. 11].

The **Presiding Bishop's Fund** for World Relief has announced the release of emergency funds to aid in flooding, food and war relief efforts around the globe. The grants include \$23,000 to help remote Alaskan villages receive packaged frozen fish, due to shortage of salmon; \$20,000 for flood victims in China; and \$15,000 for war refugees in Senegal and Guinea Bissau, Diocese of The Gambia, for healing, education, food, shelter, medicine and spiritual development.

Rwandan Bishop Postpones Visit

Was Scheduled to be at St. Andrew's Church, Little Rock, Ark.

Bishop John Rucyahana did not go to Little Rock, and neither did Bishop John Spong.

The Rt. Rev. John Rucyahana, Bishop of Shyira in Rwanda, was scheduled to visit St. Andrew's Church for an episcopal visit and confirmation. His visit was postponed at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda, who were concerned about a violation of the resolution on diocesan jurisdiction reaffirmed at the Lambeth Conference [TLC, Aug. 30].

The decision, he said, was made neither lightly nor in response to financial threats, but after "much prayer," to provide a "grace-filled time" for the American church to sort out its differences and, in the view of some, to repent of actions contrary to other Lambeth resolutions.

Some 50 Episcopal priests, who came to Little Rock for a First Promise business meeting, participated Sept. 20 in St. Andrew's first Sunday morning Eucharist, a combination of traditional hymns and contemporary praise songs, and including three baptisms.

The congregation, formed over the objections of the Rt. Rev. Larry Maze, Bishop of Arkansas, meets at Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church. The rector, the Rev. Thomas Johnston, transferred from the Diocese of South Carolina to the Diocese of Shyira after refusing to

renounce his orders. The Rev. Chuck Murphy, rector of All Saints', Pawleys Island, S.C., recently named chairman of First Promise as a legal foundation, preached and Fr. Johnston celebrated.

Bishop Spong had planned to address the South Central Regional Conference of Integrity, meeting at St. Mark's Church, Sept. 18-19. Conference convener Ted Holder said, "He didn't make it. He had viral meningitis." Instead, he said, Christine Spong, wife of the bishop, attended and spoke at both a Friday evening session, and to the conference session on Saturday.

Mr. Holder said Mrs. Spong felt that the liberal bishops at Lambeth had "had no leadership, no coordination. It was a complete rout." She denied that the bishop had accused Africans of witchcraft. She pledged that "she and her husband would continue to do all they could for their gay and lesbian friends. They have many colleagues whose lives had been impacted" by negative attitudes.

Bishop Spong is reported to be home from the hospital and "on the mend."

Saturday's sessions included a panel discussion by Bishop Maze, Integrity founder Louie Crew, and national president Fred Ellis, on activities to introduce the organization and its goals in parishes. The afternoon closed with a Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Maze.

Nominations Sought for 2000 Convention

The Joint Standing Committee on Nominations for General Convention 2000 is requesting nominations for members of the Executive Council, the General Board of Examining Chaplains, trustees for the Church Pension Fund and the General Theological Seminary, all of whom will be elected at General Convention in Denver. The committee will nominate twice the number of candidates that is available for each vacant office.

Nomination proposal forms must be

completed in full, including the nominee's signature and biographical data on page two. Forms are available from the General Convention Office, Joint Standing Committee on Nominations, Attn.: Mr. Vincent C. Currie, Jr., 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017, or by calling the office at 1-800-334-7626.

Nominations should be received by the committee by Dec. 1, 1998. Nominees for positions will be notified by the committee by Sept. 30, 1999.

Musicians Program Plans to Include Lutherans



William Bradley Roberts, chair of the LPM board, leads a session during the conference.

The Leadership Program for Musicians Serving Small Congregations (LPM) is exploring the possibility of an interdenominational collaboration which would expand the LPM curriculum to include Lutheran musicians and clergy. Forty church musicians from 21 states took part in recent discussions of the program's course contents, use of language inclusive of both denominations, and similarities and differences in our two liturgical practices and historical experiences.

At the fourth annual conference, held at Virginia Theological Seminary, morning and evening liturgies alternated between the two traditions. The Rev. Theodore Schneider, Bishop of ELCA's Metro DC Synod, was presider at Sunday's Eucharist; the Rev. John Hooker (LPM board) was preacher and David Cherwien (St. Louis Park, Minn.) was organist. The dean and president of Virginia Seminary, the Very Rev. Martha

Horne, was presider at the closing Eucharist on Tuesday evening; the Rev. Randall R. Lee (ELCA national staff) was preacher and Marilyn Keiser (LPM course writer) was organist.

Other conference events included plenary sessions centering on music from both groups' newest supplementary hymnals (the Lutheran *With One Voice* [1995] and Episcopal *Wonder, Love and Praise* [1997]), worship planning materials and a panel of experienced LPM coordinators, who described the ups and downs of setting up their local programs.

The Leadership Program for Musicians Serving Small Congregations consists of six courses (with 10 class meetings per course) offered one Saturday each month over a two-year period (three courses each year). Worship together and the building of collegial relationships are important aspects of the leadership program.

Carol Doran

Church Near Pittsburgh Will Have Ugandan Oversight

Christ Church, Grove Farm, Sewickley, near Pittsburgh, Pa., has placed itself under the leadership the Rt. Rev. Wilson Turumanya, Bishop of Bunyoro-Kitara, Uganda.

Christ Church separated itself from St. Stephen's, Sewickley, in 1995. At that time, the churches "worked to bless and not to curse," said the Rt. Rev. Robert Duncan, Bishop of Pittsburgh. Christ Church has no affiliation with the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and exists as a non-denominational church.

The church's action was compared to that of St. Andrew's, Little Rock, Ark., which placed itself under the jurisdiction of the Rt. Rev. John Rucyahana, Bishop of Shyira, Rwanda [TLC, April 19]. That is not the case, said Bishop Duncan. In fact, he said, he encouraged the congregation to find a bishop so that they could be Anglican. "This has my blessing," Bishop Duncan said.

There is no theological separation between the congregation and the diocese, Bishop Duncan said, but members of Christ Church felt alienation from issues in the national church over the last decade.

By agreement with the Rt. Rev. Alden M. Hathaway, Bishop Duncan's predecessor, the Rev. John Guest, rector of Christ Church, became, canonically, an institutional chaplain and remains a non-canonical priest of the diocese. "My goal is to help this congregation," Bishop Duncan said. He hopes that in time Christ Church will choose to become part of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Tom Allen, senior warden, said the Rev. David Valencia, a minister of an evangelical alliance, and minister of evangelism and discipleship at Christ Church, desired ordination in the Anglican Communion. The son of an Anglican priest in Chile, Mr. Valencia's

desire had been discussed with the Rt. Rev. Colin F. Bazley, Bishop of Chile. Conversations were held during the Lambeth Conference, where Bishop Duncan agreed to allow Bishop Turumanya to ordain Mr. Valencia in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The ordination was set for Sept. 27.

The relationship with Bishop Turumanya and the Diocese of Bunyoro-Kitara is an informal association, Mr. Allen said. Fr. Guest has a long-term relationship as an evangelist with the Ugandan church. The association will be missionary in its focus. A large portion of the church's mission giving will go to the church in Uganda.

"Christ Church ... desires to be an 'Anglican parish.' They need a bishop. They shall have one," Bishop Duncan said in a letter to the diocese. He said he consulted with the leadership at St. Stephen's, who supported his plan.

MEETING GOD IN CYBERSPACE

By Carroll Anne Sheppard

We ought to expect to meet God in cyberspace, I think. The wide open, relational, unpredictable nature of the place just feels as though the Holy Spirit is there. Our new frontier boggles and enchants the 20th-century mind. We are used to tight time schedules, rigid structures and known landscapes.

Naturally the first thing we humans did when we began to experience the cyberworld was to create baffles, bridges and boundaries — just to get it wrestled down to grasping size. It's one of our skills, especially in the West. But I wonder how Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross and Julian of Norwich would have built its structure. Would Hildegard of Bingen have defined it musically?

We tend, because our minds work and have been trained in certain ways, to look at things as though their "definitions" were real. (It does make daily life easier, I admit.) But I have a friend, Charles McIlvaine, who has been amusing himself for several years by putting together a list of English words for which there is no obvious root meaning. For example, his most recent find is "disgruntled." What's "gruntle"? I appreciate his insight, because it reminds me that even if we know the definition, there is no guarantee we know the reality.

That's one of the reasons why I think the Holy Ghost pervades virtual reality, and why we are likely to find ourselves in conversation with God's Spirit there. We know our own spaces too well to let God in easily, and so we often resist the changes and transformations that God offers us with habits and language shaped by a lifetime of experience.

It is the very newness of cyberspace that offers us freedom and a wild new hope. Instead of knowing the definitions, we and millions of others are creating definitions for the virtual world. We are mining its newness as we invent its gems and rare metals. We know that we don't know its reality, for





Timothy Schenk drawing

like a dark mass condensing into a star, the ultimate shape of the net, the web and the strange meeting ground of on-line presence is vague, shifting and still too new for certainty.

Until this century, few but poets and saints could stand at the door of the virtual world and gaze into it with any regularity. They walked in the formless space out of which God's Spirit brought forth substance. Some went mad; some were purified. No wonder John of the Cross spoke of the darkness.

For some there was light. Teresa of Avila received infused knowledge of the nature of the Trinity and spoke with authority about God's three persons. She knew she had spoken with Jesus; she knew that the Father had spoken to her (although she could not remember the words); and she knew that for reasons mysterious to her, the Holy Spirit had never spoken.

In short order, she would have scented the Spirit in cyberspace. Where else do intuition and love have such possibility of rapid deployment today? The ghostly specificity of connection among millions of surfers riding the *tsunami* of information as it hurtles in myriad packets around the globe cannot help but be a metaphor for the equally ghostly specificity of God's Spirit.

Should this idea disgust the information engineers? It ought not. Successful cyberspace architecture is limited only by the limits of their code-writing. Code, whether DNA, language or program, is executable only because existence is. They need not ask about the nature of the existence in which their code operates. Most of us don't spend too much time thinking about the nature of existence. Luckily for us Christians, we already have the answer. And if we understand what Jesus was trying to tell us, we understand that the existence we inhabit has been called into being by love. Love sustains it. Love powers it. Love of a sort we can barely comprehend allows, blesses and enables our existence.

How did Julian of Norwich describe this?

"You would know our Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was his meaning. Who showed it you? Love. What did he show you? Love. Why did he show it? For love. Hold on to this and you will know and understand love more and more. But you will not know or learn anything else ever!

"So it was that I learned that love was our Lord's meaning. And I saw for certain, both here and elsewhere, that before ever he made us, God loved us; and that his love has never slackened, nor ever shall. In this love all his works have been done, and in this love he has made everything serve us; and in this love our life is everlasting. Our beginning was when we were made, but the love in which he made

us never had beginning. In it we have our beginning. (From Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*).

The love that courses through being and is being, working its relentless power again and again, moves at the speed of love. And love requires a mutuality that cyberspace encourages. The new space simply operates at a speed that will trans-

**FOR PRAYERS FLY AROUND
JUST AS FAST AS DANCING BABIES,
AND CONNECTIONS
OF THE BEST SORT
CAN BE MADE
AS FAST
AS THOSE
OF THE WORST.**



form our understanding of human mutuality.

I read a few weeks ago in *Wired* yet another neologism that helps me sort through this new space of the Spirit: “mutual reality.” It was explained as a contraction of “multi-user virtual reality,” a way of describing what happens when two or more persons are engaged in an on-line relationship, whether work or play. Mutual reality. It so well describes the experience of contemplative prayer.

When two persons, you and God, are engaged in a deep prayer relationship, it takes on a special, particular quality — a mutual reality. The Holy Spirit at work again, of course, but now we understand a little more about this intense, absorbing, creative project called prayer. In cyber terms you and God are on-line together, willing participants in a new, uniquely personal reality, connected by the force of your mutual interest, and yes, love. I can’t resist describing it as virtuality — a sort of virtuous reality.

St. John of the Cross describes the powerful flow of love between soul and God in prayer as a “living flame of love.” Such deep movement of the Spirit cannot be compared to inconsequential noise in a

chat room, it is true. But then communication describes a very broad spectrum of experience. Who is to say that God brings souls to himself only through the flames his saints endure? What is important for us here is to catch the glimpse of God’s action in our newest medium — not our oldest!

Yet those glimpses are not always easy to see. God’s Spirit moves with disconcerting subtlety as well as overwhelming power. We can’t hope, like some virtual alchemist, to find God’s URL. It won’t be that simple. Some of the same old, tried and true tools of Christian life, such as faithful witness, loving example, and simple presence will stand us in good stead on the net and the web. For prayers fly around just as fast as dancing babies, and connections of the best sort can be made as fast as those of the worst.

Consider that in this new cyber space, there will be many millions of opportunities for virtuality daily, and the work of evangelism takes on new meaning.

Consider the concept of prayer in all its richness and variety, and think how well the emerging mutual reality supports it. Imagine to yourself the work of the Spirit enclosing the earth

in a network of new possibility. For me, the closing words of the Second Song of Isaiah come to mind:

For as rain and snow fall from the heavens
and return not again but water the earth,
Bringing forth life and giving growth,
seed for sowing and bread for eating,
So is my word that goes forth from my mouth;
it will not return to me empty;
But it will accomplish what I have purposed,
and prosper in that for which I sent it.

(BCP, p. 87)

We have a new network of prayer opening up before us — words sent forth in the web of God’s presence can move out purposively to accomplish God’s work of love. Indeed, I think we have a realm in which God’s Spirit will rejoice.

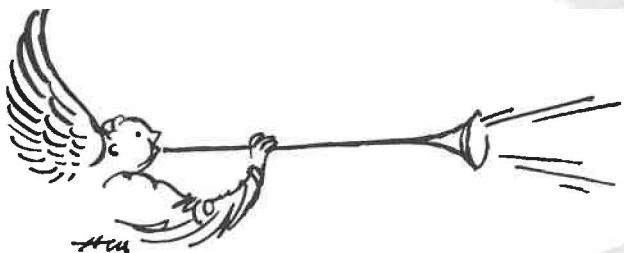
Carroll Anne Sheppard is an Episcopal lay person and writer. She works in strategic planning and organizational development to assist churches and cultural organizations. She resides in Beach Haven, N.J.

Singing

with

the

Angels



By H. Boone Porter

The passing summer has offered us a long series of ordinary Sundays. We presume that most Episcopal parishes, on many if not all of these Sundays, have used the preferred chant, *Gloria in excelsis*, near the beginning of the liturgy.

Why, among all the possible canticles and hymns, has this one been given such a conspicuous and privileged position? The answers to this question may give us a reinvigorated use of this ancient act of worship.

Older worshippers may recall its former position, in previous editions of our prayer book, near the end of the service. Our present 1979 edition restores it to its historic position, where it was used for many centuries, near the beginning. In this respect, our earlier American prayer books, excellent as they were, were less traditional than our present edition.

As an opening, near the beginning of the liturgy, the *Gloria* fits remarkably well. It starts with the angels at Bethlehem giving glory to God. We are joining them. Here, as in the *Holy, holy, holy* later on, we remember that worship is not just something we happen to choose to do. God is eternally worshiped by the angels. It is our privilege to join with them. We join too with the saints and millions of other Christians down through the centuries, and still today, who chant this great hymn. Let our hearts be stirred by this great company. The *Gloria* is one of the greatest ecumenical texts of Christian worship.

The opening words of the angels neatly summarize the purpose of the liturgy into which we are entering: to give glory to God in heaven, and on earth to bring peace in the fullest sense: blessing, grace, reconciliation

and favor. This is what our worship is all about. These words agreeably re-echo the opening acclamation, "Blessed be God ..." This all fits also with the Summary of the Law.

The *Gloria* praises God and then focuses on the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, our Redeemer. The title Lamb of God evokes the glorious scenes of the Book of Revelation, which were held up to us in our epistles this past Eastertide. He is the one sacrificed for us whose sacrifice will be solemnly held up before God and God's people in the liturgy. Again, this is basic: We don't wait until the end of the service to speak of it. Our entire liturgy, from beginning to end, is offered up through our Lord and Savior.

Not much is said here of the Holy Spirit. This chant, going back to the 4th century A.D., reflects an era when

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the doctrine of the Spirit was not yet so fully spelled out (the same is true of *Te Deum*). In our Anglican usage, however, this is balanced by the good emphasis on the Spirit in the Collect for Purity.

Granted the suitability of the *Gloria* and the privilege of using it with the angels and saints, with millions of other Christians, why does the prayer book give pride of place to this particular chant for use week after week? There is a great advantage to beginning a service with something all regu-

lar worshipers can know by heart. Even if people come late, even though they may be confused (as many are by the numerous directions in a Sunday bulletin), they won't have to thumb through pages for this familiar text. If the same, or a very few, musical settings are repeatedly used, the worshiper can start singing at once. There probably has been an opening hymn from the hymnal, but the person in the pew does not need to touch the prayer book until we get to the psalm. If it is done right, one really does not need

six fingers in each hand to master our liturgy!

The use of the *Gloria in excelsis* in the Daily Office (pp. 52 and 94-5) should not be ignored. It provides an agreeable alternative to other canticles after the New Testament lesson from time to time, especially of course in the Christmas and Paschal seasons. In the ancient church, we know it was used as a morning hymn.

Finally one must mention the difference between our Rite I and Rite II versions. The latter is not the work of our Standing Liturgical Commission, but of an international ecumenical group. Many feel that they shortened the text too much. At choral celebrations, including those of Rite II, many parishes with reason prefer using the Rite I *Gloria* with the wonderful musical settings our hymnal offers. In any case, the *Gloria* is a glorious part of the liturgy and should be cherished as such. □

Hitting Home

A recent article distributed by Catholic News Service reported the delight of the Roman Catholic Bishop of San Pedro de Macoris, in the Dominican Republic, over the home run hitting feats of Chicago Cub slugger

Sammy Sosa. "Those who know the Sosa family say members are regular churchgoers and practicing Catholics, like most Dominicans," the article reports.

Not quite. Sammy, who hit 66 home runs this year, was baptized in the Episcopal Church in June 1997 at *Nuestra Senora de las Americas*, a Hispanic mission congregation attached to the Church of the Advent, Chicago.

"His mother is a friend of a regular member here," said the Rev. John Graham, vicar, who performed the baptism. "She asked if I would be willing to talk to a friend of hers about baptizing her two adult sons."

The friend was Luz Grecia Sosa, Sammy's mother, who lives primarily in the Dominican Republic but also spends time in Chicago. Sammy and his brother, Jose, received instructions from Fr. Graham before the baptism took place one summer evening when the Cubs had a day off.

"It was a pleasure to do it," Fr. Graham said. "He approached the matter very reverently and humbly. Both he and his brother impressed me that way."

With major league baseball in action on the weekends and Sammy spending off-seasons in Miami and the Dominican Republic, Fr. Graham and his congregation have not seen the outfielder since the baptism, but the priest has followed his exploits perhaps a bit more closely.

"As a White Sox fan of 30-some years, it's been painful to see him have such a good season," Fr. Graham said. Baseball followers will recall that Sosa played for the White Sox before being traded across town a few years ago.

Sosa, a citizen of the Dominican Republic, reportedly is pursuing U.S. citizenship. *USA Today* reported that he and his wife, Sonia, and their four young children have

begun the immigration process, which could take five to seven years.

The Rev. Canon Patrick Mauney, director of Anglican and global relations at the Episcopal Church Center, writes to correct the name of a diocese in Papua New Guinea mentioned on this page [TLC, Oct. 4]. It's Aipo, not Alpo, he notes.

Bob Walters, of Marblehead, Mass., sends along this item: On July 23, the heat wave in eastern Massachusetts ended with a "smashing thunderstorm" during which a bolt of lightning struck the First Baptist Church of Marblehead, setting it afire. Shortly after the fire was extinguished, the pastor put this message on the announcement board: "If you have been waiting for lightning to strike before you come to church, now is the time."

License plate spottings: Jane Ayres, of Santa Barbara, Calif., saw DT 6:5, the Rev. Robert K. Bernhard, of Ruidoso, N.M., reports his tag is FR BOB. Kenneth Kerr, of Raleigh, N.C., saw ILOVGSUS. Staff member Patricia Nakamura was busy, seeing MERCYFL, ACTS4 12, 1PETER1 and PSLM42 2. My contributions: JST PRAY, REV3 8, GO PRAY and BY F8TH.

Note to either Marvin or Mervin in metro Washington, D.C.: Yes, finally we can say we have a website. Check out the back cover of this issue.

David Kalvelage, executive editor

Did You Know...

**TLC has subscribers
in 27 countries.**

Pray for the President

One of the saddest aspects of the scandal involving President Bill Clinton is that there are sizable numbers of Christians noting with glee the president's predicament. Since the Lewinsky scandal unfolded, Christians of all sorts have been pointing fingers, gossiping and judging the chief executive. What's made matters particularly difficult, the president has been using words familiar to Christians, like repentance and forgiveness and redemption. President Clinton, like the rest of us, is a sinner, in need of the saving power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Starr report has brought to light in vile detail the moral aspect of President Clinton's behavior. It has presented us in embarrassing detail reprehensible violations of trust by Mr. Clinton. The moral authority of the president has been weakened to the point that legitimate questions are being asked about his ability to lead this country.

President Clinton needs our prayers. We must hope he is serious and sincere about his apology and his promise to repent, for if he is honest about facing up to his sins, a change of attitude and behavior is possible. His plan to have weekly meetings with two members of the clergy is an encouraging start, as he tries to regain the trust of his family, his confidantes and the American public. Americans, and Christians, are generally quick to forgive. And, most important, our God is more willing to forgive than we to ask. Let us pray that through God's grace, the lessons learned from this scandal may help to bring healing to the president and to all of us.

Quote of the Week

The Rev. Robert Cromey, rector of Trinity Church, San Francisco, responding to John Cardinal O' Connor's boast about Roman Catholic home run hitters: "No Episcopalian would be caught dead hitting little balls great distances unless they are golf balls."

On the Web

On the back cover of this issue you'll notice a full-page advertisement which promotes the Living Church Foundation's new website. We are pleased to announce that the new site is up and running. It's been in the works for some time, but we have moved deliberately in order to produce a quality site which we believe will be helpful in a number of ways. By typing our web address, **www.livingchurch.org**, you will be able to subscribe to any of our publications, obtain information about the Living Church Foundation, send us e-mail, take a look at the contents of the current issue of THE LIVING CHURCH, obtain advertising information or send us letters to the editor.

We are convinced that websites are more than a passing fancy. Ours offers our foundation an additional way to do its business, opening up the lines of communication to many who might never learn of us in any other medium. We invite you to check out the website. We apologize in advance for any glitches you might encounter in the website's early days of operation. We hope they will be few in number.

Two Similar Issues

By Wayne H. Carlson

I find the Lambeth statement on homosexuality [TLC, Aug. 30] to be troubling. However, it challenges someone like me who is rather traditional theologically to wrestle with ideas which are sometimes uncomfortable, and that is good. While I am glad to hear that persons of homosexual orientation are to be accepted and ministered to as children of God, somehow these words sound hollow, even condescending.

I agree that the scriptural ideal is lifelong heterosexual marriage as normative with healthy celibacy as an entirely acceptable alternative. This suggests to me that in a perfect world these would be the only two options, but we have no experience of a perfect world.

Few Christians would condone promiscuity, of either orientation. In between there is a large gray area occupied primarily by remarriage after divorce while an ex-spouse is still living, and the stable and committed relationship of two persons of the same sex. Scripture speaks often and vehemently against remarriage, and the gospels quote our Lord as being so uncharacteristically specific on this subject that many scholars question whether he actually said it at all. Homosexual relationships get much less mention, and the passages proscribing homosexuality can be understood more than one way. It is not mentioned in the gospels. Why is it that we are fairly comfortable with the one (probably two-thirds of the weddings I have performed have included at least one divorcee), and quite vehement about the other? I suspect that the reason has little to do with scripture.

I can remember when the Episcopal Church, at least in some dioceses, took a position on remarriage after divorce which differed little from the

Roman Catholic position. About 30 years ago, General Convention amended canon law to provide for remarriage after divorce with permission from the bishop without going through what was often the charade of getting an annulment. I do not take those requests for permission lightly, and I give them a great deal of thought and prayer. While I hope I am never entirely comfortable about them, since scripture has not been changed, I think it is right that we can do this, and I have seen people who have gone through disastrous first marriages go on to build healthy and rewarding second marriages.

Homosexuality was not mentioned until recently. Same-sex couples in cities and in rural areas as well were

tion, the issue is not so much homosexuality as it is honesty with oneself, and those among whom one lives. Honesty, and the fact that sexuality touches us on a deep and sometimes insecure place which many people don't want to disturb.

I do not think that putting second marriages and homosexual relationships in the same category is inappropriate. Both are about complex relationships, one component of which is sexuality. Both are about living in a committed relationship with another person which should bring out the best in each partner. Both are about finding a way to redeem a situation which one did not choose, or in the case of divorce, frequently did not choose. No one goes into a marriage with the intent of being miserable. Many divorced persons were opposed to the divorce, and many persons who initiated a divorce felt, often rightly, that they had little choice.

No one knows what causes homosexuality and the nature vs. nurture debate will probably not end anytime soon. What is clear is that rarely, if ever, was homosexuality chosen. The homosexual people with whom I have discussed this speak of great struggle culminating in the conclusion that "this is who I am."

We have reached a fairly comfortable toleration for people whose first marriages were unsuccessful and who in this part of their lives occupy a gray area. It is my hope that we can turn down the heat and approach the whole matter of sexual orientation with prayer, and the sort of compassion mixed with realism which has informed the other issue. □

The Rev. Wayne H. Carlson is the rector of the Church of the Holy Family, Park Forest, Ill.

**Why is it that
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the other?**

not unheard of, and no one asked questions about what was clearly no one's business. It would appear that at least some of these were healthy and rewarding relationships. Everyone knew there were many homosexual priests, and it was often no great secret. At the same time, they had to exercise great discretion in their personal lives, and indeed some really led double lives.

It seems that in the present discus-



Buying Votes

‘Are we to believe that these (Third World) bishops can be bought with the price of a Texas-style barbecue?’

Yes, we do have some very good barbecue in Dallas and Fort Worth, and indeed most of us here in Texas would contend that our state is the barbecue capital of the world.

With that said, however, I am appalled at some of the accusations I have read that African and other Third World bishops at Lambeth sold their votes (and presumably their souls as well) for a taste of Texas barbecue. I am referring not just to Bishop Righter’s allegation of vote-buying at Lambeth by manipulative Dallas people with an agenda [TLC, Sept. 13]. I am referring also to a lengthy article concerning Bishop Richard Holloway in the *London Times* (Aug. 7).

Bishop Holloway did not accuse American conservatives of handing greenbacks to the Africans, but rather of **winning** their votes by **furnishing** facilities and throwing barbecue parties for them. He is quoted as saying, “These Americans have lost the battle in their own Episcopal Church so they hired a proxy army.”

Last year, when they were in Dallas and Fort Worth, I had the opportunity to meet and listen to some of these Third World bishops. Whether or not one agrees in every instance with their perspectives, one must admire the courage of Christians who risk harassment, torture, imprisonment, and even death for professing their faith. Are we to believe that these bishops can be bought with the price of a Texas-style barbecue?

What strikes me is that this is racist stereotyping of the most insulting and demeaning nature. It portrays persons of color as ignorant, shallow, gullible and mercenary. Anyone in a position of institutional authority outside the church who used such language would quite rightly be accused of creating a hostile and negative work environment.

Do we Anglicans now tolerate and condone blatant and offensive racist stereotyping if it comes from Right Reverend lips?

*Susan Skelton
Dallas, Texas*

Predictable Response

The response of the revisionist bishops to the most gracious and caring resolution on human sexuality passed at Lambeth [TLC, Aug. 30], a resolution which named the sin and expressed compassion and welcome for the sinner, was just as predictable as was their failure to censure the outrageous statements against faithful African bishops by their leader, Bishop Spong. Even now, seeds of deceit and confusion are being sown as some bishops attempt to explain and rationalize their crushing defeat at Lambeth. The day of the vote on the sexuality resolution may have been a very disappointing one for the Bishop of El Camino Real [TLC, Sept. 6] but it was not so for the “whole Communion of Anglicans around the world,” as he

reported. Rather, for more than 80 percent of the Communion, it was a day of humble thanksgiving and praise to God. To report otherwise is grossly deceptive.

Bishop Griswold is right when he says “... we must explore more fully the whole question of what is compatible and incompatible with scripture.” It will, however, be a frustrating, one-sided quest if the foundational issue of revelation is not addressed and resolved first.

At the bottom of the wide, conflicted chasm within the Episcopal Church, and between some Episcopal leaders and the vast majority of the Anglican Communion, is the question of the origin of the biblical record. Who is responsible for the Bible and,

therefore, who is its authority? Is human reason the source of revelation data or is it a faculty of discernment given by God who already has revealed his unchanging truth? Are we to sit in judgment on the Bible or is the Bible to judge us?

As the church enters the 21st century, the majority of Anglicans have made their choice. They prefer to live under the authority of a gracious and loving heavenly Father who has not left them confused and wondering, "Did God really say . . . ?" Believing in a God-given revelation that is trustworthy in its plain meaning, they reject the shifting sands of late 20th-century thought, and they will continue to resist the efforts of Bishop Spong and his friends to return them to the 19th century.

*(The Rev.) R. James Tasker
St. Barnabas Church
Bay Village, Ohio*

Old Arguments

Thank you for the article "Mountains Made Low" [TLC, Sept. 13]. (And thank you for the new layout of the magazine!)

The arguments against ordaining persons with physical disabilities are not new. They were raised in 1876 when the Rev. Henry Winter Syle of Philadelphia was made a deacon — the first deaf person to be ordained.

The first Episcopal church using sign language as its main method of communication was St. Ann's Church for the Deaf, New York City, begun by the Rev. Thomas Gallaudet in 1852. This congregation is still in existence, using the facilities of Calvary Church, Manhattan. The rationale for services in sign language is found in Article XXIV of the 39 Articles of Religion.

Gallaudet and Syle are commemorated each year on August 27. We deaf people owe much to both; one was a hearing person and the other a deaf person.

*(The Ven.) Jay L. Croft
Archdeacon for Deaf Work
Diocese of Alabama
Birmingham, Ala.*

It's Deliberate

After reading two issues of the new format of TLC, I have come to the conclusion that there has been a deliberate move to reduce the intellectual level of your publication. As a reader of TLC for 50 years, it is with great regret that I have decided to cancel my subscription.

*Charles S.J. White
Fairfax, Va.*

Letting Off Steam

I am puzzled at why "The Tangled Web We Weave," by Sally Campbell [TLC, Aug. 16], was published. I wonder what editorial judgment placed it there.

I read and then re-read the article endeavoring to determine what it was all about — was this to be taken seriously or was it intended in jest and I just didn't "get it"? If the latter, it really missed the mark.

Try as I might to find some value here, I concluded that the article served no useful purpose. It came across to me as petty and mean spir-

ited. Having read this person's criticism, how quickly would one be prepared to volunteer for the altar guild, lay reader or other service in the church? Most of us are fallible human individuals who occasionally make mistakes — and pity the poor harassed clergyman in his tardiness.

Perhaps the author needed to write this to let off steam — perfectly understandable — but why then publish it? While the matters cited can be understandable concerns, to call attention to them in this negative manner is not helpful.

*Lucille H. Pierce
Ocean Park, Wash.*

Considerable Talent

Rachel Wright is not only an English major, she is also a writer and a theologian of considerable talent [TLC, Sept. 20]. Thanks to her for the article and to TLC for printing it.

*(The Rev.) Peter Keese
Chaplain, U. of Tennessee
Medical Center
Knoxville, Tenn.*

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

John Morris is chaplain at Methodist Hospital, Lubbock, TX.

The Rev. **Mark B. Pendleton** is rector of Our Saviour, 1700 Powder Mill Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20903.

The Rev. **E. Nathaniel Porter** is priest-in-charge of St. Mary's, 730 23rd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

The Rev. **John Shepard** is rector of St. Stephen's, 5720 S Perry St., Spokane, WA 99223-6349.

The Rev. **Mary Siegmund** is vicar of St. John's, 624 Englewood Rd. NW, Kansas City, MO 64118.

The Rev. **Susan Sims-Smith** is deacon at Trinity Cathedral, 310 W 17th St., Little Rock, AR 72206.

The Rev. **Craig F. Smith** is rector of Trinity, PO Box 9, Shelburne, VT 05482.

The Rev. **J. Douglas Storment** is rector of St. Francis', 4242 Bluemel Rd., San Antonio, TX 78240.

The Rev. **Eugene T. Sutton** is assistant at St. Columba's, 4201 Albemarle NW, Washington, DC 20016.

The Rev. **Helen Svoboda** is curate at Grace Cathedral, 701 SW 8th Ave., Topeka, KS 66603-3219.

Kathryn Truman is chaplain and faculty member at Trinity School, Midland, TX.

John Wells is lay vicar of Trinity, PO Box 1598, Jasper, TX 75951.

The Rev. **Eugene E. Woods, Jr.**, is priest-in-charge of St. Andrew's, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

The Rev. **Michael H. Wyckoff** is rector of Christ Church, 605 25th Ave. N., Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

Change of Address

The Office of the Bishop of Southwest Florida has moved to DaySpring Episcopal Center: mail, PO Box 763, Ellenton, FL 34222; location and shipping, 8411 25th St. E, Parrish, FL 34219.

Correction

The Rev. **Jo Anne S. Wright** resigned as rector of St. Luke's, Wamego, KS.

Ordinations

Deacons

Massachusetts — John Clarke, Heidi Fieldston, William Messenger, Eleanor Panasevich.

Northern Indiana — Kristine Graunke

Southeast Florida — Virginia Brewer, Charles Cannon, Ruth Hahne, Anne Scupholme.

Priests

Massachusetts — Suzanne Colburn, Mary Eleanor Gee SSM, Elizabeth Grundy, James Weiss.

Retirements

The Rev. **John Thompson Brown**, as canon of Advent Cathedral, Birmingham, AL.

The Rev. **Austin R. Cooper, Sr.**, as rector of St. Andrew's, Cleveland, OH.

The Rev. **John F. Hoover**, as rector of St. Paul's, Philipsburg, and Good Shepherd,

Hawk Run, PA. Fr. Hoover is serving as part-time priest-in-residence at St. Paul's, PO Box 206, Lock Haven, PA 17745.

The Rev. **Monroe Freeman, Jr.**, as rector of St. Titus', Durham, NC; add. 2110 Buck Quarter Farm Rd., Hillsborough, NC 27278.

The Rev. Canon **Mark McCullough**, as vicar of St. Gabriel's, Coles Creek, PA.

The Rev. **Alfonso Narvaez**, as rector of Christ Church, Laredo, TX.

The Rev. **Robert E. Stevens**, as rector of Emmanuel, Orlando, FL.

The Rev. **Charles Taylor**, as professor of pastoral theology at Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, CA.

Deaths

The Rev. **Gerald William Mason**, retired priest of the Diocese of Arkansas, died after a long battle with cancer on Sept. 11. From the time of his retirement until his death, Fr. Mason served as associate at St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, WA.

A native of Tacoma, WA, Fr. Mason was certified by the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest. He was ordained deacon in 1963 and priest in 1964. He served as vicar of St. Paul's, Brownsville, TX, 1963-66; institutional chaplain of West Texas, 1966-69; vicar of St. Paul's, Vernal, St. Martin's, Roosevelt, Community Church, Dutch John, UT, 1969-75; vicar of St. Elizabeth's, Whiterocks, and Holy Spirit, Randlett, UT, 1969-78; vicar of Whirlwind Mission, Watonga, OK, 1978-89; Indian Missioner, Oklahoma City, OK, 1978-88, vicar of Immanuel, Lake Village, St. Paul's, McGehee, and St. Clement's, Arkansas City, AR, 1989-93. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, four children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



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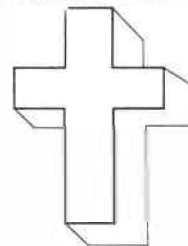
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Next week...
**Walsingham
Pilgrimage**

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Betty A. Glatzel
Business Manager

in the darkness...

In the darkness

of festering anger,
remembered hurts,
and bewildered thoughts

Remember the Light.

In the silence

of unanswered cries,
aching need,
and unspoken fear

Remember the Word.

In the dark and the quiet

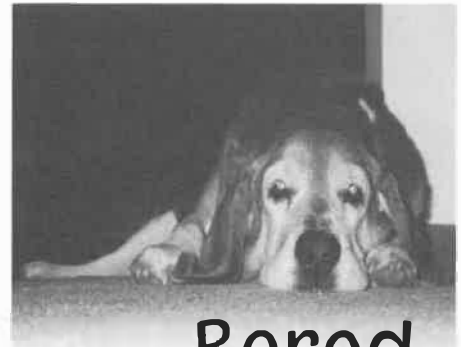
let the anger be healed,
the hurts be soothed,
and your mind be cleared

hear the whisper of God,
open your eyes to His day,
and rejoice

In the Word and the Light

For they are always
with you.

Julie Murdoch



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