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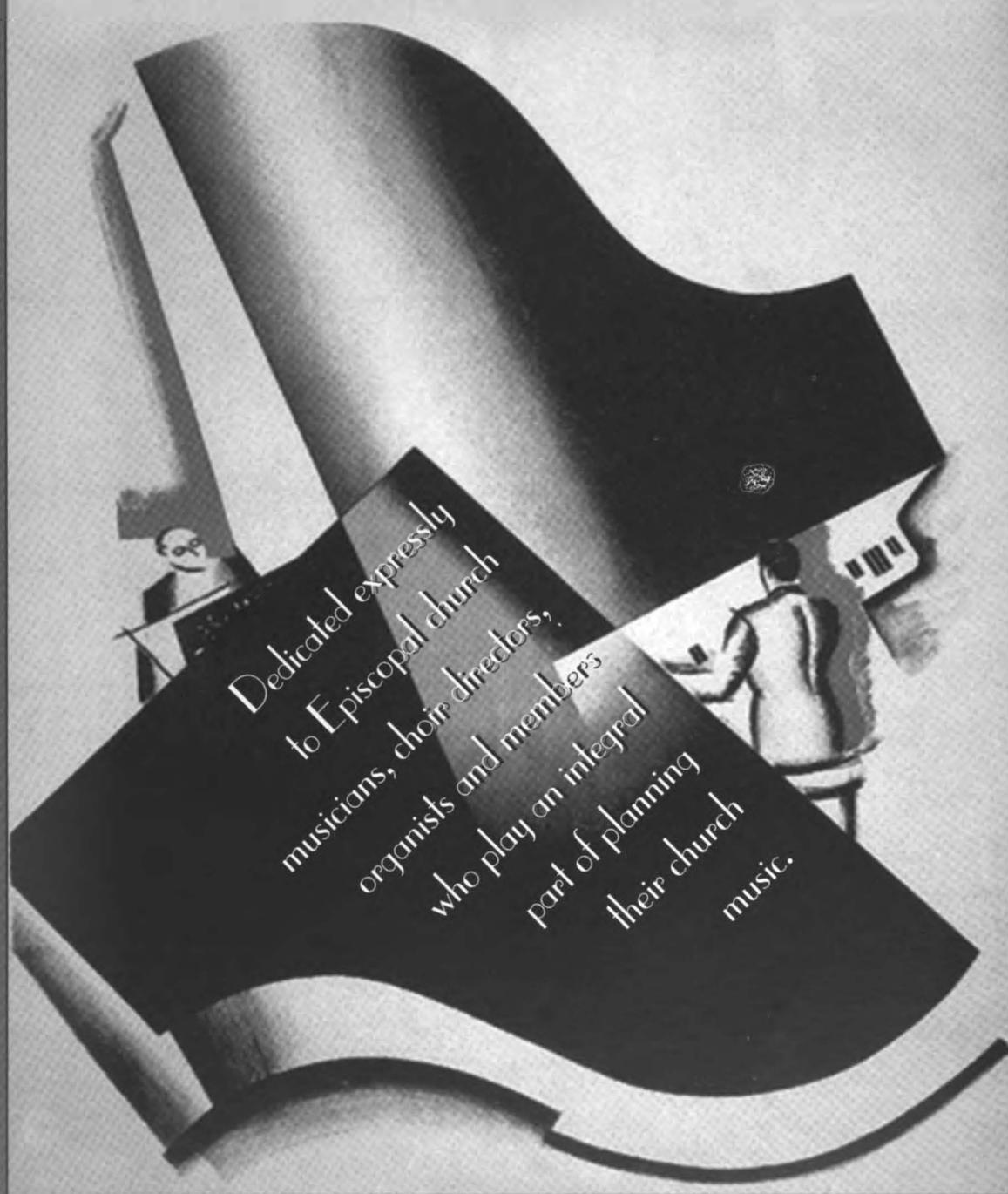
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P.O. Box 514036, Milwaukee, WI 53206

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Executive Editor
Glatzel
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Editorial and Business offices:
212 E. Juneau Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202-2793
Mailing address: P.O. Box 514036
Milwaukee, WI 53203-3436
Telephone: 414-276-5420
414-276-7483
E-mail: tlc@livingchurch.org
www.livingchurch.org

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The objective of THE LIVING CHURCH magazine is to build up the body of Christ, by describing how God is moving in his Church; by reporting news of the Church in an unbiased manner; and by presenting diverse points of view.

THIS WEEK



“Christ Blessing the Children” — the triptych above the altar at Trinity Church, St. Augustine, Fla.

Linda Caffey photo

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The Cover

The entrance used today at Trinity Church, St. Augustine, Fla.
Linda Caffey photo

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SUNDAY'S READINGS

Faith in a Reliable God

'He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter and from the deadly pestilence' (Psalm 91:3)

The First Sunday in Lent, Feb. 29, 2004

Deut. 26:(1-4)5-11; Psalm 91 or 91:9-15; Rom. 10:(5-8a)8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

When we pray the opening phrase of the collect for the First Sunday in Lent, we are immediately reminded of the connection between our 40-day observance of this season of penitence and the 40-day fast of our Lord in the wilderness after his baptism in which he victoriously struggled against temptation. The Son of God "was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan."

We who proclaim this same Son of God as our Lord are likewise led by the Spirit to struggle against the temptations to which we have succumbed, to turn from our sins, and to amend our lives to conform to the gracious will of God whom we prayerfully acknowledge is "mighty to save." The readings appointed for this Sunday in Year C encourage reliance on this divine might to save.

The Old Testament lesson gives instruction for the offering of the first fruits of harvest. These were to be offered to God by the people of Israel in recognition of the saving deeds of the Lord who "brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders." The good that the living God continues to do for his people evokes worship that expresses remembrance of his providential care in the past as well as thanks for present

blessings received. Thus may be seen God's constancy, his trustworthiness, his reliability.

In the verses from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, the apostle contrasts "the righteousness which is based on the law" with "the righteousness based on faith." Faith from the heart is what inspires us to hope for salvation, even though in this penitential season we may be aware of how far we are from attaining any personal righteousness. The quotation from the prophet Joel that ends the passage encourages such hopeful faith. "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

In the account of the temptation of Jesus from the Gospel according to St. Luke, Jesus provides us with the example of utter commitment and reliance upon God. Twisting the words of scripture like a false preacher, the devil attacks the very identity of Christ proclaimed by the heavenly voice at his baptism: "Thou art my beloved Son." The voice of temptation calls the faith of Jesus into question: "If you are the Son of God..." But Jesus knows on whom he relies to be sustained by more than "bread alone." He remembers the promises of scripture that affirm that God alone is worthy of worship and service, and that our trust in him need not be put to test.

Look It Up

Read the brief account of the baptism and the temptation of Jesus in Mark 1:9-13. Reflect on the presence of ministering angels in the wilderness in addition to that of the tempter.

Think About It

If faith is a matter of the heart, how might our Lenten observance involve practices that move us to deeper belief?

Next Sunday

The Second Sunday in Lent, March 7, 2004

Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27 or 27:10-18; Phi. 3:7-4:1; Luke 13: (22-30)31-35

BOOKS

Spirit Walk

By Joseph Acton and Mary Curran-Downey.
White River Press. Pp.130. \$15.
ISBN 0972190805.

This book is disarming.

Don't go expecting flowery language. Expect instead an honest conversation among you, the authors, and God. At times, you are asked to listen to them. At others, you have a say in the conversation. At still others, you listen for God's contribution.

Spirit Walk is a series of reflections on a variety of topics, some seemingly mundane, others obviously profound. Each consists of a page or two of the authors' reflections, a short prayer of focus, and space for a journal response. Readers are encouraged to make daily time to sit with the meditation, turn it over in their minds, plumb the depths of the prayer, and then respond through the journal entry.

Fr. Acton is rector of St. Timothy's Church, San Diego, Calif., and Ms. Curran-Downey is a columnist for the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. They understand that the spirit walk is at times very difficult, uncomfortable, even lonely, and it is through their down-to-earth honesty that they speak to readers for whom the long-winded spiritual answers of professional theologians are no longer working (or perhaps never have).

This book is for those of us who are taking the first few tentative steps into the unknown country of discipleship. It is also for those of us who have reached a stage along the way, but have become stuck.

In that sense, it is a good book for beginners because it presupposes no sophisticated spiritual vocabulary, and those who are new to exploring their faith will be able to jump right in. More experienced seekers will find ways to deepen their faith through these meditations, though the book's focus on the beginnings of spiritual growth will force these readers to work harder for kernels of wisdom.

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Decline in Giving Estimated at \$3 Million

With 51 of the Episcopal Church's 110 dioceses having submitted pledge estimates by the Jan. 27 cutoff, the treasurer is predicting that the financial impact from the controversial General Convention votes on sexuality last summer would be \$3 million in 2004. The reduction, which represents approximately 6 percent of the overall budget, according to Kurt Barnes, is almost entirely due to diversion or withholding of financial assessments.

The reduction is well below what nay-sayers and doom-sayers were predicting last August, he said. "Speaking in investment banking terms, the reduction is almost not material. The overall budgets have been reduced 4 percent. However the ministries that General Convention voted to focus on, like youth ministry, are continuing."

Mr. Barnes briefed Executive Council, which functions between General Conventions similar to a national church vestry, at the council's meeting Feb. 9-12 in Tampa, Fla.

He stated that 51 dioceses had submitted pledges to the treasurer's office by Jan. 27, totaling approximately \$16 million. An additional 33 dioceses had



Steve Waring photo

Mr. Barnes and Bishop Griswold in Tampa.

given verbal assurances of \$8.1 million. Several of the remaining 26 dioceses that had not responded as of the 27th, he noted, were about to hold conventions and were expected to contribute an additional \$3.3 million toward expected diocesan commitments of \$27.5 million of the \$45 million budget.

Of the 84 dioceses that had returned pledges to the treasurer's office, 40 were equal to, or greater than, the 21 percent assessment rate. Pittsburgh and Dallas reported a pledge of zero, while Newark and Connecticut pledged more than 21 percent. The

remaining 42 reported pledges ranged from 3 to 20 percent.

Diocesan commitments are expected to provide 61 percent of national church revenue this year. Income from investments of \$10.6 million is expected to contribute a further 23 percent, with revenue from government contracts generating \$4.3 million or 10 percent of income, and revenues from *Episcopal Life*, Episcopal Parish Services and the Episcopal Bookstore in New York generating about \$2.7 million.

Asked whether the expected decline of \$3 million was due to economic reasons, Mr. Barnes responded that though some dioceses were facing a difficult financial climate, overall the economy in 2003 had been good. In 2003 there was a "\$40 million gain in the national church endowment portfolio," he noted, adding the "economy did not have an impact" on the budget figures.

Approximately \$1 million of the \$3 million shortfall was recouped from two sources. The Executive Council voted in 2003 to increase the payout ratio of endowed funds to 5.5 percent from 5 percent. The additional half percent increase in income from the Church's trust funds adds \$800,000 to income.

Overseas and domestic appropriations are to be cut by 5 percent in 2004, while authorizations appropriated for the support of the Anglican Consultative Council, the Episcopal Church's overseas covenants and ecumenical appropriations will remain unaffected. Staff salary increases will be reduced from 3 to 2 percent.

"Our focus is the commitments that we broadly made at the General Convention," said Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold. "We are fully focused on those things and very clear that a Church that overly focuses on its own internal well being often does so at the expense of opening out to the world and to the world's people."

(The Rev.) George Conger
and Steve Waring

Network Gets Support of 13 Primates

Primates from 13 of the 38 provinces within the Anglican Communion have called upon the "faithful" in the Episcopal Church to "resist and confront" infidelity and to join the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes [NACDP]. In a Feb. 6 letter addressed to the Eames Commission, which held its first meeting at St George's Chapel, Windsor, on Feb. 9, the primates gave their support to the network and accused the General Convention of shattering the unity of the Church and promoting "false teaching" by condoning same-sex blessings and approving the consecration of a sexually active homosexual person as Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire.

The 13 provinces are: Nigeria, the West Indies, the Southern Cone, the Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Congo, Tanzania, Central Africa, South India, Pakistan, Southeast Asia, and Philippines. They wrote that the "election, confirmation, and consecration of Canon Gene Robinson" was a "direct repudiation of the clear teaching of the holy scriptures, historic faith and order of the church."

The Nov. 2 consecration, they argued, was in "clear defiance of the primates of the Communion," citing the unanimous primates' statement issued last October when the primates, as a body, urged the Episcopal Church not to shatter the Anglican

(Continued on page 8)

Communications Strategy Aims to Diffuse Conflict

Dan England, director of communications for the Episcopal Church, demonstrated the new Internet website (www.episcopalchurch.org) to Executive Council members during their winter meeting, Feb. 9-12 in Tampa, Fla. Mr. England described the website as the centerpiece of a new communications strategy which will emphasize reconciliation toward dissidents and accuracy in reporting from media.

Opening with a statement he attributed to the Very Rev. George Werner, president of the House of Deputies, Mr. England said, "Some people seem to want to start a war, but we're not going to show up."

He explained that the communications staff at the Episcopal Church Center was working to find a way toward reconciliation with those who are unable to accept the controversial General Convention votes on

sexuality last summer. Communications staff members are also working "behind the scenes" to help secular media obtain correct information, such as the actual number of people

"I think that message and our focus on reconciliation is starting to get through."

Dan England

upset over General Convention and other facts, some of which may not be intuitive to those unfamiliar with the Episcopal Church. He cited a recent article about Virginia Bishop Peter Lee that appeared in *The New York Times* as an example.

"I think we are finally beginning to

convince the press that the church is not going to split down the middle," he concluded. "I think that message and our focus on reconciliation is starting to get through. If they don't have conflict, the press is not going to be interested. We are not going to strike back at anybody, but we do want to get our message across."

Regardless of whether negative coverage continues to decline or flares up again in the future, Mr. England said the new website will be pivotal in attracting newcomers who have heard about the church in the news and find its diversity appealing, and also in squelching rumors, hopefully before they become published.

"We think the controversy is beginning to die down," he concluded. "But even if it doesn't, we intend to use the bad press to get our message across. If it goes well, that will be like free publicity."

Minnesota Priest Elected Bishop of North Dakota

The Rev. Canon Michael Smith, who serves two small congregations on a reservation in the Diocese of Minnesota, will become the next Bishop of North Dakota. Canon Smith, 48, was elected Feb. 7 at Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo on the seventh ballot.

The bishop-elect is a member of the Potawatomi Nation. He will become the first Native American to head the Diocese of North Dakota.

Canon Smith has been director of the Department of Indian Work in the Diocese of Minnesota since 2000. He is vicar of Breck Memorial Church, Ponsford, and St. Columba's, White Earth. He was born in Purcell, Okla., and graduated from Oklahoma State University, Mary-

mount College, the University of Oklahoma, and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon in 1991 and priest in 1992 in the Diocese of Oklahoma, then served as curate at St. Philip's, Ardmore, Okla., and vicar of Samuel Memorial in Nantahwaush, Minn., before moving to his current position. He and his wife, Lisa,

also a priest, have three children.

Canon Smith said through a representative at the electing convention that he was "elated" by the outcome of the election.



Canon Smith

Pending consents from bishops and standing committees, he will be consecrated May 8 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Bismarck. He will succeed the Rt. Rev. Andrew Fairfield, who has retired.

Others who were nominated are: the Rev. Christopher Chornyak, the Rev. George Martin, the Rev. John Shepard, the Rev. Canon Peter Stebinger, and the Rev. Henry Thompson.

NORTH DAKOTA														
Ballot	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
L = Laity; C = Clergy	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L	C
Needed to Elect													52	17
Chornyak	19	9	20	12	25	14	31	14	36	15	45	15	43	14
Martin	7	5	3	2										
Shepard	5	1	0	0										
Smith	23	6	25	5	24	5	35	11	42	15	50	17	53	19
Stebinger	29	5	36	7	36	7	31	7	24	3	8	1	6	0
Thompson	20	7	19	7	18	7	6	1	1	0				

Archbishop Williams: Network Has Valid Place

In remarks delivered on the opening day of General Synod of the Church of England Feb. 9 in London, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Rowan Williams, endorsed the creation of the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes (NACDP), noting that it had a valid place within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Archbishop Williams told synod delegates that the Oct. 16 primates' statement "called on provinces to make adequate provision for episcopal oversight in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury for those in conscience unable to accept certain dispositions made by their provinces."

"I want to say that I remain fully committed to searching for arrangements which will secure a continuing place for all Episcopalians in the life of the Episcopal Church in the United States," Archbishop Williams said. He added that he had "been involved in working with several parties" in the United States in creating adequate alternative episcopal oversight for those opposed to the actions of the 74th General Conven-

tion in approving the consecration of a non-celibate homosexual person as Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire.

"It is in that light" said Archbishop Williams, "that I've been following sympathetically the discussions around the setting up of a network within the Episcopal Church of the United States of America engaged in negotiating some of these questions of episcopal oversight."

Archbishop Williams declined to speculate as to what recommendations the Primates' Study Commission, chaired by Archbishop Robin Eames of Ireland [TLC, Feb. 22] would make, stating that it would be "inappropriate for either myself or the House of Bishops or synod to attempt to second-guess the work of that commission and its recommendations and reflections on these large issues of communion, maintenance of communion and breakage of communion."

The Primates' Commission held its first meeting at St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, near London, Feb. 9 and is scheduled to report to the primates in October.

(The Rev.) George Conger

Support from Primates

(Continued from page 6)

Communion over this issue.

"The world needs to know that the rebellious and erroneous actions of ECUSA are contrary to the teaching of the Anglican Communion and represent a departure from five thousand years of Judeo-Christian teaching and practice," they wrote. "By their actions, ECUSA has separated itself from the remainder of the Anglican Communion and the wider Christian family."

The primates, representing a majority of persons, though not provinces, pledged their "support and the full weight of our ministries and offices to those who are gather-

ing in a 'Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes'."

Until recently there have been few direct consequences from the declarations of impaired communion that have come from 21 primates, but in the past week, the Archbishop of Uganda, the Most Rev. Henry Orombi, withdrew from preaching at the consecration of the Bishop Coadjutor of West Texas after he learned that Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold would be the chief consecrator. Archbishop of Kenya Benjamin Nzimbi has forbidden a Kenyan deacon from being ordained a priest by the Bishop of Los Angeles due to the Rt. Rev. Jon Bruno's vote in favor of the New Hampshire consecration.

(The Rev.) George Conger

AROUND THE DIOCESES

'No Business as Usual'

A strategic plan for the Diocese of Atlanta was presented at the annual council of the diocese when it met Nov. 7-8 at the Georgia International Convention Center in College Park. The strategic plan is intended to set forth guiding principles for the diocese during the next few years.

In business sessions, the diocese rejected a resolution affirming the 1998 Lambeth Conference resolution on marriage and voted against repudiating General Convention's consent to the consecration of the Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire. It approved entering into a companion relationship with the Diocese of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), and adopted a vision statement for the diocese.

In his council address, the Rt. Rev. Neil Alexander acknowledged differences of opinion in the diocese regarding human sexuality and decisions of General Convention, and he said it cannot be "business as usual."

Helpful Attitude

The Diocese of Eau Claire celebrated its 75th anniversary when it gathered in convention Nov. 7-8 at St. Katherine's Church, Owen, Wis.

The convention adopted no legislation and acted quickly and unanimously in adopting the proposed budget.

The Rt. Rev. Keith B. Whitmore, Bishop of Eau Claire, spoke of the turmoil in the Episcopal Church in his convention address.

"This struggle that we face, collectively as a Church and individually as congregations, will not go away," he said. "So we need to embrace an attitude that helps us to deal with the kind of chaos that we face in the world in which we live — both the church world and the secular world."

The Rev. Charles Henery, professor of church history at Nashotah House, spoke on the history of the Church in Wisconsin.

Past Meets Present

Trinity Parish, St. Augustine, Fla., thrives in America's oldest city.

By Linda Caffey

Not far from the old 17th-century Spanish fort Castillo de San Marcos, and even closer to the striking Bridge of Lions which spans the intracoastal waterway, stands Trinity Episcopal Church, home of Trinity Parish, marking its 183rd year in 2004. The church resides in St. Augustine, Fla., America's oldest city and one of the sites where Christianity was first practiced in the New World. St. Augustine's storied history has been forging ahead for more than 400 years.

Founded in 1565 by Pedro Menendez de Aviles, a Spanish admiral and privateer, on behalf of King Philip II of Spain, and named San Augustin, the city maintains much of its early Spanish influences, particularly in its architecture.

The present-day Trinity Parish traces its roots to 1821, following Florida's acquisition by the United States. The Anglican presence in St. Augustine, however, reaches back into the 18th century. From 1763 to 1783, the British controlled the city. A young Scot, the Rev. John Forbes, held services in the house of the former Roman Catholic bishop on the very corner of King and St. George streets where Trinity is located today.

Forbes went to work repairing the accompanying Roman Catholic parish church, and by 1771 it had become St. Peter's Anglican Church.

The Rev. Andrew Fowler, sent from Charleston, is credited with the founding of Trinity Parish during his ministry from 1821 to 1825. The Rev. Raymond Henderson organized the early efforts for a church building, and the initial service was held in that structure on the first Sunday in June, 1831.

The church building itself, unlike so much of St. Augustine, is Gothic revival. It has gone through many changes and additions over the years. The original building was "a very small 60'x 30' structure," according to G. Michael Strock, the church historian and author of a history of Trinity titled *By Faith, With Thanksgiving*. To accommodate a growing congregation, a major renovation began in 1902 to add a new section reflecting the Spanish influence to the existing church. The old and new were shaped into a cross, with exposed arched ceiling



ing beams reminiscent of the ribs of a great wooden ship, appropriate for this historic coastal city. The Bishop of Florida, the Rt. Rev. Edwin G. Weed, consecrated the new church on April 7, 1905.

Twenty-eight exquisite stained glass windows illuminate Trinity, including one Tiffany and a triptych above the altar. Most of the windows were given as memorials, the first several in 1859 and the last in 1972. One is of St. Augustine of Hippo. The city was founded on the day of the Feast of St. Augustine.

Since 1967 an Aeolian-Skinner organ with 2,349 pipes has graced Trinity. A fund raiser was held recently to restore the organ to its full splendor. Trinity today has approximately 20 adults in the senior choir and 15 children in the junior choir.

The present-day congregation, led by the Rev. Robert D. Askren, interim rector, includes about 800 members with approximately 450 attending on an average Sunday. "Attendance can go way up in the wintertime," says historian Strock, due to the influx of winter transplants from other parts of the country. There are three Sunday services and a healing Eucharist on Wednesday mornings.

Trinity's many outreach projects include several organized by youth ministry coordinator Deborah Mills. "My program focuses around spirituality, fel-

lowship, education, and service," says Ms. Mills. During the past year her youth group has worked with the homeless, acted as liaisons between incarcerated parents and their children, and helped to heighten the awareness of world hunger. "It's a small group," she says, "but it's an energetic group."

Trinity Church, steeped in history, is moving forward with a host of new plans for the future. It recently purchased the other buildings on its block and is busy converting the back portion into a new parish hall and kitchen.

Across the street from the Castillo de San Marcos, one can stroll through the Old City Gate along the outdoor pedestrian mall, past the oldest wooden school house in the United States and other reminders of a bygone time. It's a wonderful mixture of past and present, all thriving in old St. Augustine. □

Linda Caffey is a free-lance writer and photographer living on St. Simons Island, Ga.



"The Good Shepherd" window in the church

Inset: The older part of Trinity Church.

Linda Caffey photos



The Many Waters of

BAPTISM

Part 2: The Water of Decision

Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served beyond the River. Or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Josh. 24:15).

The second in a seven-part series meditating on images of water in holy scripture and their reflection of the Christian life.

By Daniel Muth

Human history begins with Adam's "no" to God. Salvation history begins with Abram's "yes." Upon entering into the covenant, he loses the ironic name Abram, *exalted father* (he has no children), and becomes Abraham, *father of a multitude*, a name tied to God's promise, a promise kept in son Isaac and grandson Jacob.

Jacob, the conniving mama's boy, has fled brother Esau's wrath, met his match in Uncle Laban, and now must return. Having in fear divided his household so as to have some legacy after facing the brother he cheated, Jacob comes at night to the shores of the Jabbok, the water he must cross to return home, and there he wrestles a divine being. He seems to be winning, but is injured and, thankfully, loses – no one should ever hope to win a wrestling match with God – and so gains the greater victory. He hangs on, demanding a blessing, and so is given the parabolic name

Israel, *God strives*, or *strives with God*, and so his descendants, both physical and spiritual, are known. Defeated, humbled, and chastened, he is now ready for his brother's mercy. For a man needs little preparation to receive punishment, but a great deal to accept the gift of forgiveness.

Into the land of Egypt goes Israel and his descendants, and there comes in time a pharaoh who begins to "deal shrewdly with them," making "their lives bitter with hard service." In his time (not theirs), God sends his servant Moses to lead them out, and they enter the Wilderness of Sin, and are brought to the mountain and receive the covenant. Thereafter he leads them to the springs of Kadesh Barnea, whence they are to enter the land he has promised. And they, fearing, send spies into the land who return with a terrifying report of giants. There, by the waters of Kadesh Barnea, the Lord's people choose fear over obedience and for that, and not the golden calf, they are

condemned to 40 years in the wilderness until all that generation has perished.

When the time for their wanderings is coming to an end, God's servant Moses leads them nigh to the Jordan and there makes his farewell oration, in the midst of which he bids them choose: "Behold this day I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that your descendants may live." And they so choose and cross the river and there they are circumcised, making the sign of the Old Covenant by the shores of the Jordan. They then come to possess the land in the time and the way God has bidden them.

When they fulfill God's command to take and occupy the land, his servant Joshua leads them to Shechem and bids them again to choose whom they will serve, the gods of their fathers across the river or the God who has brought them to this side. They choose and will be his people.

The waters of choice flow on through scripture. Gideon discerns God's voice by water on a fleece and selects an army based on how they drink at a stream. Ruth the Moabitess, ere she crosses the Jordan, speaks those great words of faith to her mother-in-law: "Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God." So does the foreigner often come into the household of faith: friendship with one of God's people, fellowship in the Church, leading thence to service of her Master.

Having begged of Elijah a double portion of his spirit, the prophet Elisha follows his master across the river. Having been instructed to watch his master's ascent, he elects not to be distracted by the chariot of fire sent from above, but obeys the command, and so the faithful servant of the prophet becomes the faithful prophet of God.

Time flows on and in the fullness of time, God himself comes to pitch his tent among us, the Way incarnate. And he comes to the fishermen by the waters of the Sea of Galilee and bids them come and be fishers of men. And so they choose, and in later years they are "taken whither [they] do not wish to go," and so the choice is proved a costly one.

At Caesarea Philippi, the headwaters of the Jordan, having been informed of whom men say he is, he asks of the apostles. And they acknowledge him as Lord and Messiah, though they are unclear just what this means and what price will soon be paid. But each of them has been answering that question since that day of decision by the Sea of Galilee. It is more by their lives and their actions that they answer the Lord's question than by any verbal confession. And so he turns to each of us. Who, by our lives, do we say he is? □

Daniel Muth is a nuclear engineer who is a member of Christ Church, Port Republic, Md.

Discussion Questions

Recommended Hymns: 661, 550, 9

Jacob does not start off as one of the more satisfactory people in holy scripture. It takes time and effort for him to be prepared to serve the living God. What was required to prepare you to accept God's call?

The children of Israel accept the call to leave Egypt but fail at Kadesh Barnea. How has your resolve to obey God been tested? How and through whom have you found strength to follow him? How have you responded to failure?

First Moses, on the plains of Moab, then Joshua, at Shechem, places before the people a stark choice: to serve God and live or reject him and die. Have you understood your decision for God in terms as clear? How do you feel challenged by the question? What action should you take in response?

Ruth's great declaration of faith follows a definite pattern: She will follow and lodge with Naomi (fellowship with a person), become one of Naomi's people (fellowship with a community), and serve her God. Has this been the pattern in your life? What "Naomis" did you follow in coming to the Lord? Have others followed you as Ruth followed Naomi? What can you do to be more encouraging? Is your congregation the sort of community that would attract the "Ruths" of the world and direct them to God?

Elisha manages not to be distracted by the chariot of fire and watches Elijah as he is taken up, as he has been instructed. What distractions do you see in your life that draw you from the straight path of your pilgrimage? What encouragement do you need to avoid them? How can your faith community help?

Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine Jesus standing before you at the shore of the Galilean Sea. What is he asking you to do? Where is he asking you to go? What kind of person is he asking you to be? How are you doing in answering his call? What sacrifices do you need to make to be more faithful?

Next week: The Water of Sadness

Reactions from the Dioceses

It has been nearly four months since the consecration of the Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire, and some patterns are beginning to emerge, especially in diocesan conventions.

In assessing the results of conventions that have taken place since the New Hampshire consecration, we're finding similarities. In many cases there is a harmless resolution acknowledging there is division within the diocese over the consecration of Bishop V. Gene Robinson, and that it is important to maintain unity while dialogue continues. Most of the time, resolutions like this are adopted. Many dioceses have acted upon resolutions that affirm the ministry of the bishop, who is trying to maintain unity under difficult circumstances. Sort of a vote of confidence. Usually these resolutions are adopted. After all, who's going to challenge the bishop in a public setting?

Some dioceses have had to deal with a resolution calling for the diocese to affirm the statement of Anglican primates issued last October. A few dioceses have adopted versions of this, but for the most part such measures have been either defeated or discharged. Too negative, opponents charge. Too disruptive to the goal of unity.

Some dioceses have been able to keep resolutions like these off the floor of their conventions. They concentrate on positive developments (and there are often many to report) and try to maintain that it's business as usual.

As a result of their conventions, dioceses seem to fall into one of at least three groups. There are 12 or 13 dioceses which would be regarded as hard-liners. They are generally supportive of the new Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes. Another 18-20 dioceses are led by bishops who would regard themselves as centrists. Some of them probably are closer to the right or the left, but basically, they don't want to rock the boat. Most of the rest of the dioceses are supportive of New Hampshire and the decisions of General Convention. Many would like to maintain unity, but not at the cost of slowing the progressive agenda.

So what happens now? Most probably will wait for the report of the theological commission headed by Archbishop Robin

Eames [TLC, Feb. 22], although there will continue to be scattered defections of



They seem to fall into one of at least three groups — hard-liners, centrists, and those supportive of the General Convention decisions.

clergy and groups of parishioners to a variety of destinations. The next six months should be an extraordinary time.

*

In a related matter, I try to stay out of the banter that takes place in our letters to the editor, but personal experiences (sound familiar?) have necessitated comment.

In the special convention of the Diocese of Florida [TLC, Dec. 14], Bishop Stephen Jecko called upon his diocese to overcome the image of the Episcopal Church being a "gay church."

The Very Rev. Allen W. Farabee took issue with that remark. In his letter to the editor [TLC, Jan. 4], he wrote, "...it would never occur to me that we have an image as a 'gay church'."

Two recent experiences would indicate otherwise. In the first, a man with whom I have done personal business for several years asked me what I did for a living. When I told him I edit a magazine, he asked what the magazine was. Next he asked what our audience was. I told him our readership was comprised of perhaps 99 percent members of the Episcopal Church. "Isn't that a gay church?" he asked. I assured him it was not.

A second incident took place during a recent vacation. I struck up a conversation with a man on a beach, and, as meetings like that often do, we asked each other about our jobs. When I related work to this vacationer from North Carolina, he professed to know about the Episcopal Church. "That's the gay church," he said. My effort to correct him was only mildly successful.

Like it or not, the publicity generated by the New Hampshire consecration has brought about some strange opinions of the Episcopal Church. The image of "the gay church" probably will be with us for awhile.

David Kalvelage, executive editor

Did You Know...

Three Bishops of North Dakota have gone on to become bishops of other dioceses.

Quote of the Week

The Very Rev. Peter Moore, dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, on Episcopalians' knowledge of the Bible: "Since so few Episcopalians have even a modicum of knowledge of the Bible, the gospel that evangelical rectors preach sounds 'Baptist' to untutored ears."

Immense Task

The Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of the Presiding Bishop [TLC, Jan. 25] has begun its work in preparation for the election of the next primate of the Episcopal Church at the 75th General Convention, to be held in Columbus, Ohio, in 2006. The committee, comprised of one bishop, one other ordained person and one lay person from each of the Church's nine provinces, all elected at the last General Convention, and two youth members appointed by the president of the House of Deputies, will identify potential nominees who could become the 26th Presiding Bishop. That person will be elected by the House of Bishops in Columbus.

Needless to say, this committee has an immense task. The successor to Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold will have to lead the Church through what promises to be a difficult time, as it is likely the controversies brought about by the consecration in New Hampshire will not have been settled. The Church will need a person with patience, vision, strong leadership skills, and probably a sense of humor in order to keep this part of the Anglican Communion together. The joint nominating committee will need our prayers as it carries out its work.

**The Church will need a person
with patience, vision, strong
leadership skills, and probably
a sense of humor . . .**

Hearing God

In the liturgy for Ash Wednesday, we were invited to observe "a holy Lent." The Book of Common Prayer mentions that such an observance can be done by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (p. 265). We usually don't spend a great deal of time on the meaning of a holy Lent. The word "holy" is used because it refers to our relationship with God. Lent is supposed to be a time when we turn to God. By living within the discipline of our prayer book, we can be prepared to search for the Holy during this season. Through meditation and prayer we can address what in our lives is preventing us from having a closer relationship with God. Might a Lenten fast help clear our minds so that we might see and hear God? Can we be more faithful to the promises of the baptismal covenant? We hope this holy season will be a time of growth, a time when we may seek and find God.

The Ember Days

Unless you're a bishop or a candidate for ordination, you may not be paying much attention to the Ember Days — three days which occur in the church calendar four times each year at about the turn of the solar seasons. Falling on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday this week, they are occasions on which postulants or candidates for ordination report to their bishop, either in person or by letter, reflecting on their academic experience and personal and spiritual development. At one time the Ember Days were occasions for ordinations, but now they are times when the Church can offer prayer for those pursuing ordination. Appropriate prayers can be found on pages 256-257 of the prayer book and readings are listed on p. 929. Those preparing for ordination should be remembered in prayer.

Theological Termites

By Clyde S. Angel

Quite often these days I meet people, or read about folks, who are deeply concerned about “the sad state of the Church.” Some are quite angry. Some are ready to leave the Church. Some have left. Others say that they intend to stay and fight the “termites” that are gnawing at the Church’s foundation. Some cite the heretical priests who are Unitarians in Episcopal vestments. Others are very angry that some homosexual persons are allowed to serve as priests. Perhaps the biggest grievance cited is “same-sex marriage.” Complaints about female priests and the “new prayer book” are not heard too loudly of late.

It seems that many people are so busy condemning the “wrong doers” that they have no time or inclination to try to bring unchurched people into the Church. Some forget their baptismal vows or feel that to exercise them is a useless gesture given the bad press and immoral climate. After all, they ask, who would want to come into a Church that harbors so many “bad apples”?

This is to suggest, please, calm down, don’t panic. Instead, let’s take a little time to review Church history. We might do a little self-examination, also. It may be helpful to evaluate where we stand. Are we ready and qualified to cast the first stone?

Let’s try to see what we really believe as the true faith of the Church and why we so believe. Then we may be able to seek our Lord’s help as to how best we can get going with the task to which we are called.

Almost from the beginning, the Church has been beset by all sorts of problems involving wrong behavior and wrong theological beliefs by Christians. A lot of imperfect people have been doing a lot of imperfect things.

It is probably safe to say that the Church has always had theological “termites” gnawing at its foundations, but it still stands strong. And it will always so stand. It is the body of Christ.

It’s easy and natural to get worked up over the pronouncements and actions of people in the Church whom we see as very wrong or very evil. Few, if any, of us are totally immune from such reaction. But the long view of Church history shows that the “bad guys with the black hats” are not alone as the trouble makers. The so-called “good guys” can become merciless bigots. We have the Inquisition, the burning of Joan of Arc and the murder by burning, hanging, drowning and torture of untold thousands of people as proof. The “good guys” sometimes do bad things for “the good of the Church” that are as bad or worse than anything the “heretics and degenerates” have ever done.

It seems that the more we condemn or persecute the so-called wrong people, the more we play into their hands. That’s the way to create more cults, more divisions in the

Church. Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, most likely would not be around today if Charles Russell and Judge Joseph Rutherford had not been persecuted by people with good intentions.

The Mormons are a classic example of martyr-making. One of my Angel clan, Mary Ann Angel, was the one and only lawful wife of Brigham Young. That couple would, most likely, have lived out their days in New York and been long

Almost from the beginning, the Church has been beset by all sorts of problems involving wrong behavior and wrong theological beliefs by Christians.

forgotten if, instead of severe persecution, people had laughed at what some would call Joe Smith’s fantasy of the golden plates.

A modern example of potential cult-making is same-sex “marriage.” I would guess that few, if any, of its proponents realize that same-sex “marriage” mimics an ancient pagan rite. Yes, the infamous Roman Emperor Nero most likely initiated the rite. He took Sporus, a boy, had him castrated, then in a very public ceremony, took him as his “wife.”

So, what can be done about same-sex “marriage” and/or those who promote its use by the Church? What can we do about this and any other “wrong” which we see in the Church? We could do all sorts of condemnation. We could call those “same-sex termites” Neroites, or some similar label. We can rant and rave. We can gnash our teeth. We can get ulcers or worse — we can leave the Church. But before we do anything drastic, let’s look a little closer at those we see as heretics or super sinners.

Through the long history of the Church, heretics have served the Lord in peculiar ways. Through them he has caused the people of the Church to take stock of who they are and what they truly believe. That’s how our Nicene Creed came into being. He can put our back to the wall and cause us to see more clearly where we stand as Christians.

So let’s pray for the transforming power of our God to change our self-consuming anger into Christian *agape* (love). We can also pray that the same transforming power will change the hearts and minds of those we see as enemies of the faith. Consistent, persistent and sincere prayer of the faithful of the Church is a potent “insecticide” for contending with “theological termites.” Besides, it is user friendly and good for the ecology of the Church. And by all means let those “termites” know that they are the object of that “insecticide.” □

The Rev. Clyde S. Angel is a retired priest who lives in Fredericksburg, Va.



Questions to Ponder

George Lockwood's Viewpoint article on the problems of the Diocese of El Camino Real [TLC, Feb. 1] suggests a growing condition in many dioceses. We are returning to a decentralized vision of mission and ministry, wherein less is better in matters of diocesan program. This condition is not all bad and need not be condemned as congregationalism.

What if diocesan ministries were solely focused on faithfully fulfilling basic canonical ministries well? What if the bishop was primarily a teaching and preaching apostle in the field, out among the people, and a readily available pastor to the clergy? What if mission and ministry often associated with diocesan structure were originated and carried out by coalitions of parishes related by location and/or common cause? What if a large portion of the human and financial resources absorbed into diocesan ministries were devoted to accountable ministry at the local level? What if the ministry of bishop became more that of chief pastor, evangelist, and "fire starter" and less that of executive of an unwieldy franchise? These questions might have exciting answers in the future church.

*(The Rev.) J. Blaney Pridgen III
St. Mary's Church
Columbia, S.C.*

My heart goes out to George Lockwood. His article about El Camino Real points out the devastation to the morale of a diocese caused by a troubled episcopacy. To experience such anguish during four consecutive episcopacies is enough to bring a sour mood and a dark vision to almost any parishioner.

Mr. Lockwood's bleak assessment of the Episcopal Church's future is understandable based on his own California experience. What he neglected to mention in his litany of California pathologies is the health felt in San Diego with Bishop Hughes or in Los Angeles with five great bishops of late or with Bishop Lamb in Northern California. I was bishop in the area of El Camino and presided at its first elec-

tion convention and have served the Diocese of California, with joy, for 25 years. Yes, El Camino Real needs a time of soul searching. But the mission of Jesus Christ is alive and well in the state of California.

*(The Rt. Rev.) William E. Swing
Bishop of California
San Francisco, Calif.*

George Lockwood's Viewpoint article ably and accurately addresses a string of failures in the Diocese of El Camino Real. He closes by stating that El Camino Real must ponder the multiple causes of its past failures and make appropriate changes.

As a delegate to the diocesan convention that elected bishops Shannon Mallory and Richard Shimpfky, and as a witness to the remarkably inefficient election methods employed thereat, I believe an immediate, appropriate change should be made in the selection/election process, perhaps along these lines:

First, applicants should be barred from consideration.

Second, a search committee comprised of elected representatives of every deanery in the diocese should activate a nationwide search for parish priests who demonstrate outstanding pastoral and administrative skills. The apparent best should be interviewed and closely questioned: Do they believe in the Ten Commandments, the Nicene Creed, the seven sacraments, the evil of abortion?, to name just a few.

When the top choice is discerned, that priest should be persuaded to accept the larger priestly responsibility as bishop, and should be paid at a level appropriate to that responsibility.

El Camino does not have to be a "bishop-killing" diocese.

*Ronald H. Bailey
Hemet, Calif.*

I was glad to see that George Lockwood's Viewpoint on my former Diocese of El Camino Real put its

problems in historical context. I can add my own experience in support of his insights.

When Bishop Shimpfky was elected, I helped welcome this popular new bishop into the diocese as its southernmost rector. Then I left the diocese for nine years. When I came back in retirement, and rejoined my old deanery clericus, there was much dissatisfaction. It was a true Rip Van Winkle experience.

I noticed that the criticisms in many cases were identical to those for Bishop Shimpfky's predecessor, Bishop Shannon Mallory. Often even the same phrases were used. Now these were two very different men in style and personality. Also, the members of the clericus had all changed with one exception. What was the same was the diocesan community and its culture.

El Camino Real is a wonderful diocese, and each bishop I knew there had both strengths and weaknesses. I hope it can get a grip on itself and not continue to relive its troubled history. Are our bishops the patients who act out the illness of the larger family?

*(The Rev. Canon) Chuck Atcheson
Kingston, Wash.*

Can't Be Separated

Never have I been so struck with the feelings of sadness and anguish more than upon reading the Rev. Don L. Robinson's letter [TLC, Feb. 1]. His feelings about homosexuality are apparently strictly "founded" in the way he accepts "biblical truth" while feelings toward his son are "based" upon the nature of the love between father and son. Ultimately, he concludes, "The two cannot be made into a composite." Wow! Ever hear about the Incarnation?

Indeed, the same God of law, judgment, and repentance of the Old Testament is the One who gave: God's own self, incarnate, fully God, fully man, to a death on the cross that all people might be enfolded in his saving

(Continued on next page)



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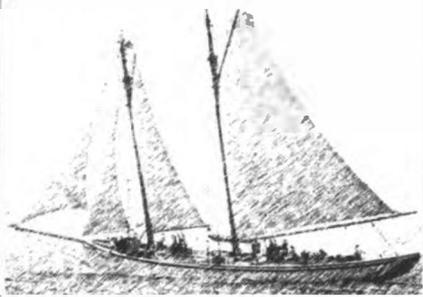
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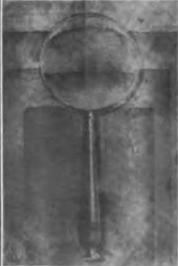
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LETTERS

(Continued from previous page)

embrace. You see, the "composite" has been modeled for us in Christ. In fact, they cannot be separated — the revelation of God in scripture and the love as of a "... father for his son" — a Creator for the creation.

Moreover, to say that he would not "reinterpret scripture to make it more comfortable for (your)self or (your) son," should he announce that he was gay shows, quite clearly, that this is nothing more than "concept" to him.

It would have been nice, and certainly helpful, if Christ had rendered a judgment on sexuality — he certainly did on divorce, money, servitude, prostitution, to name a few — but he did not. Why do we spend so much time contending with issues that, apparently, were of little significance to God in Christ?

*Bruce J. Barber II
Albuquerque, N.M.*

In response to a letter, the Rev. Don Robinson writes that if his son announced that he were gay, he "would continue to love him" and "would tell him plainly that adopting an openly gay life-style is a violation of scripture and the historic teaching of the church."

If his son were to adopt a "gay life-style," would Fr. Robinson's love welcome and serve his son at the family dinner table? Would he continue to administer the Holy Communion to his son at the Lord's altar in his parish?

*(The Rev.) Michael Fill
Scranton, Pa.*

It's Not Clear

I notice that the letter from the Presiding Bishop [TLC, Feb. 22] to everyone (more or less) made reference to our unity in baptism. This is a common theme in his writings. However, it is not very clear what he means by it.

On the one hand there is the unity of all Christians in baptism (including, I believe, the Mormons). And on the other hand, with the increasing practice of (wide) open communion, it is possible to be an Episcopalian in good standing without being baptized.

*(The Rev.) Joseph P. Frary
Portland, Maine*

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Tom E. King** is rector of Grace, 419 S Main St., Lexington, NC 27292-3234.

The Rev. **Sharon Mahood** is rector of St. Andrew's, 5720 Urbandale Ave., Des Moines, IA 50310-1295.

The Rev. **Thomas A. Neyland** is interim at St. Mark's, 1908 Central Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82001.

The Very Rev. **Robert A. Schiesler** is dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, 815 High St. Des Moines, IA 50309-2714.

The Rev. **Barbara Schlachter** is associate at Christ Church, 220 40th St. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402-5616.

The Rev. **Richard Smiraglia** is rector of St. Philip's, 2631 Wharton St., Philadelphia, PA 19146.

The Rev. **Mark Stanley** is rector of Old St. Paul's, 309 Cathedral St., Baltimore MD 21201.

The Rev. **Beverly Tasy** is rector of Grace, 2002-2006 Spring Gate Ln., Las Vegas, NV 89134-6246.

The Rev. **Richmond Webster** is rector of St. Luke's, 3736 Montrose Rd., Birmingham, AL 35213.

Retirements

The Rev. **Carl Bright**, as rector of Christ the King, Santa Rosa Beach, FL.

The Rev. **Margaret Irwin**, as rector of All Saints', Palo Alto, CA.

The Rev. **Walter Sherman**, as rector of St. Paul's, Brighton, MI.

The Rev. **Barry Whonal**, as rector of Intercession, Stevens Point, WI.

Religious Communities

Society of St. Francis — Brother Gabe Cleary, life vows.

Deaths

The Rev. **Richard H. Humphrey**, 65, of Upper Marlboro, MD, priest of the Diocese of Washington, died of prostate cancer Oct. 13 at his home.

He was a graduate of Monmouth University and Philadelphia Divinity School. He was ordained to the priesthood in the Diocese of New Jersey in 1965. He served as vicar of St. Mark's, Carteret, and St. John's, Sewaren, NJ; rector of Good Shepherd, Pawtucket, RI; St. Paul's, Oxford, NY; and St. Thomas', Croom, MD. In retirement, Fr. Humphrey served parishes in Maryland on a supply and interim basis. He was a police chaplain in Pawtucket, and fire chaplain in Oxford, NY, and Upper Marlboro. He is survived by his wife, Carole, two sons and a granddaughter.

Next week..

Two Neglected Issues

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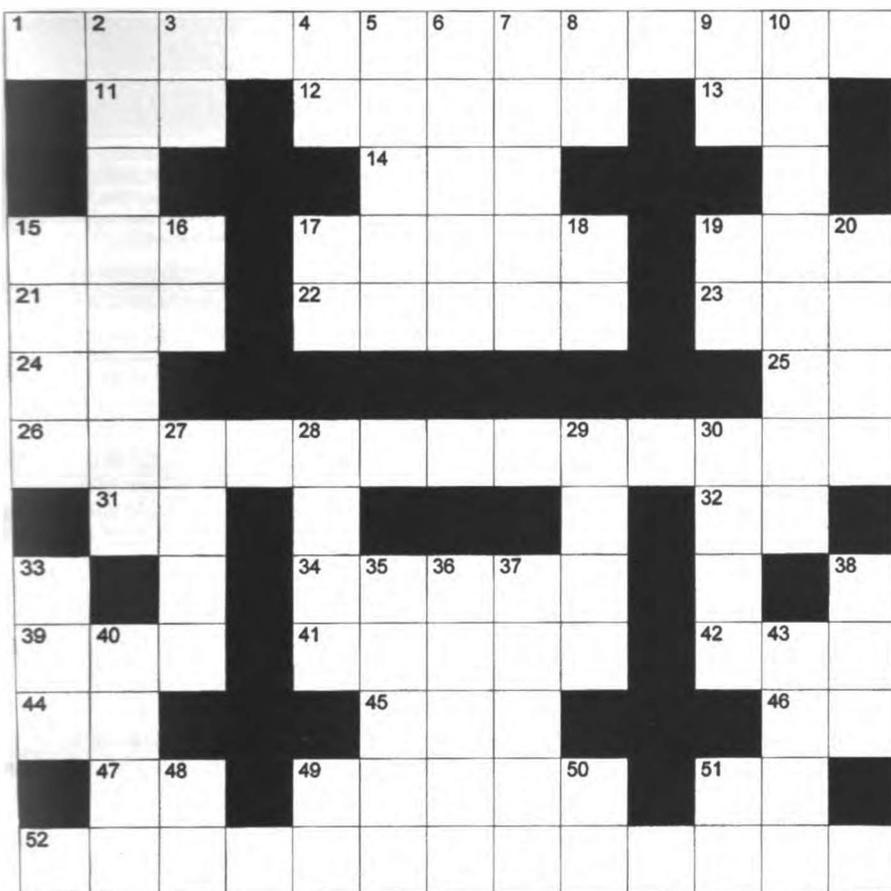
POSITIONS OFFERED

FULL-TIME RECTORS: For two parishes in the Diocese of Western Kansas. Being in the middle of the country, Western Kansas is accessible from any direction and enjoys the quiet beauty of God's creation as well as some of the best people whom God has created. Sometimes conservative in politics, the people of Western Kansas have ever been concerned for those who need the help of their fellow human beings, especially as it relates to the Christian Mission which we have focused on by declaring our Diocesan Mission to be, "To Grow in Love, Truth, Spirit and Body in Christ." The two openings are St. Michael's, Hays, and St. Andrew's, Liberal.

If there are priests who love to work with the laity to build a firm foundation of ministry and service in local communities that strive, not just to stay alive, but to prosper and move forward, you should contact Bishop James Adams at P. O. Box 2507, Salina, Kansas 67402-2507, call him at (785) 825-1626 or E-mail him at bishopadams@sbcglobal.net.

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Lenten Discipline

Across

1. Seasonal action
11. Sodium symbol
12. Abraham's wife
13. "___ how a rose ..."
14. Cereal
15. Some GI's
17. Urge
19. Episcopal acad. journal
21. Taize: "___ this bread"
22. Daniel: "The ___ furnace"
23. What the devil is given
24. German pronoun
25. Med. professional
26. Seasonal charge
31. Prosecutor (abbrev.)
32. Creed start
34. Wall painting
39. Exploit
41. Entrap
42. Map abbrev.
44. Proceed in peace?
45. News org.
46. Fields or Handy, Informally
47. "Rest ___ peace"
49. Tease
51. Stereo component?
52. Seasonal attitude

Down

2. Neutral
3. Sun god
4. "on earth ___ it is in heaven"
5. Ruth's mother-in-law
6. Curtain
7. Evaluator
8. "What did you say?"
9. Hebrew God
10. Night music
15. "Blessed are the ___"
16. Military command with "ease"
17. Possibility
18. Like suffix
19. College sports offic.
20. Lease
27. Chapel of ___
28. Charity
29. Christmastide
30. Baptismal pitcher
33. Schlep
35. Doff
36. It's home to some animals
37. Biblical river
38. Dry wine
40. French evening
43. Jacob to Esau
48. Greek letter
49. Unleavened bread?
50. Japanese two
51. "Blessed is ___ who comes ..."

One in a monthly series by the Rev. Timothy E. Schenck, rector of All Saints' Church, Briarcliff, N.Y. Answers to appear next week.

CHAPLAIN: The Saint Francis Academy is seeking a chaplain for our residential unit in Central Kansas. Candidates should be ordained clergy with some experience working with conduct-disordered youth. The chaplain is responsible for pastoral assessments, pastoral care and counseling, and leading the liturgical life of the unit. The chaplain is also a member of the treatment team whose insight and feedback is considered valuable to the care and outcome of each youth. Candidate must be a spiritually centered person who understands the struggle of spiritual and emotional growth. We are a health care agency affiliated with the Episcopal Church treating troubled youth since 1945. Saint Francis is a spiritually based ministry, fully accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations. (JCAHO) Please apply with resume and cover letter to: **The Rev. John Zachritz, Area Chaplain, The Saint Francis Academy, 1515 E. Kansas Ave., Garden City, KS 67846-6232**, E-mail: john.zachritz@st-francis.org EOE.

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