

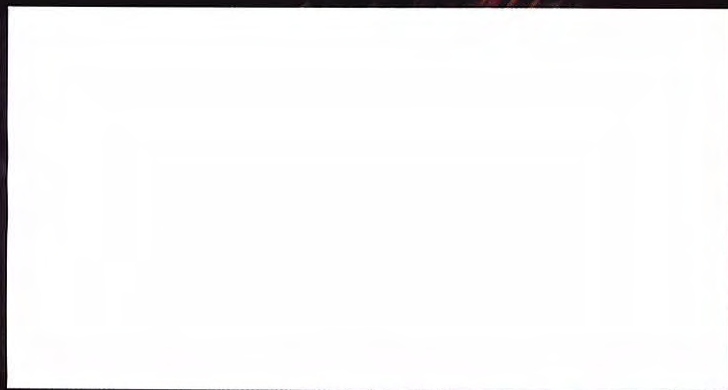
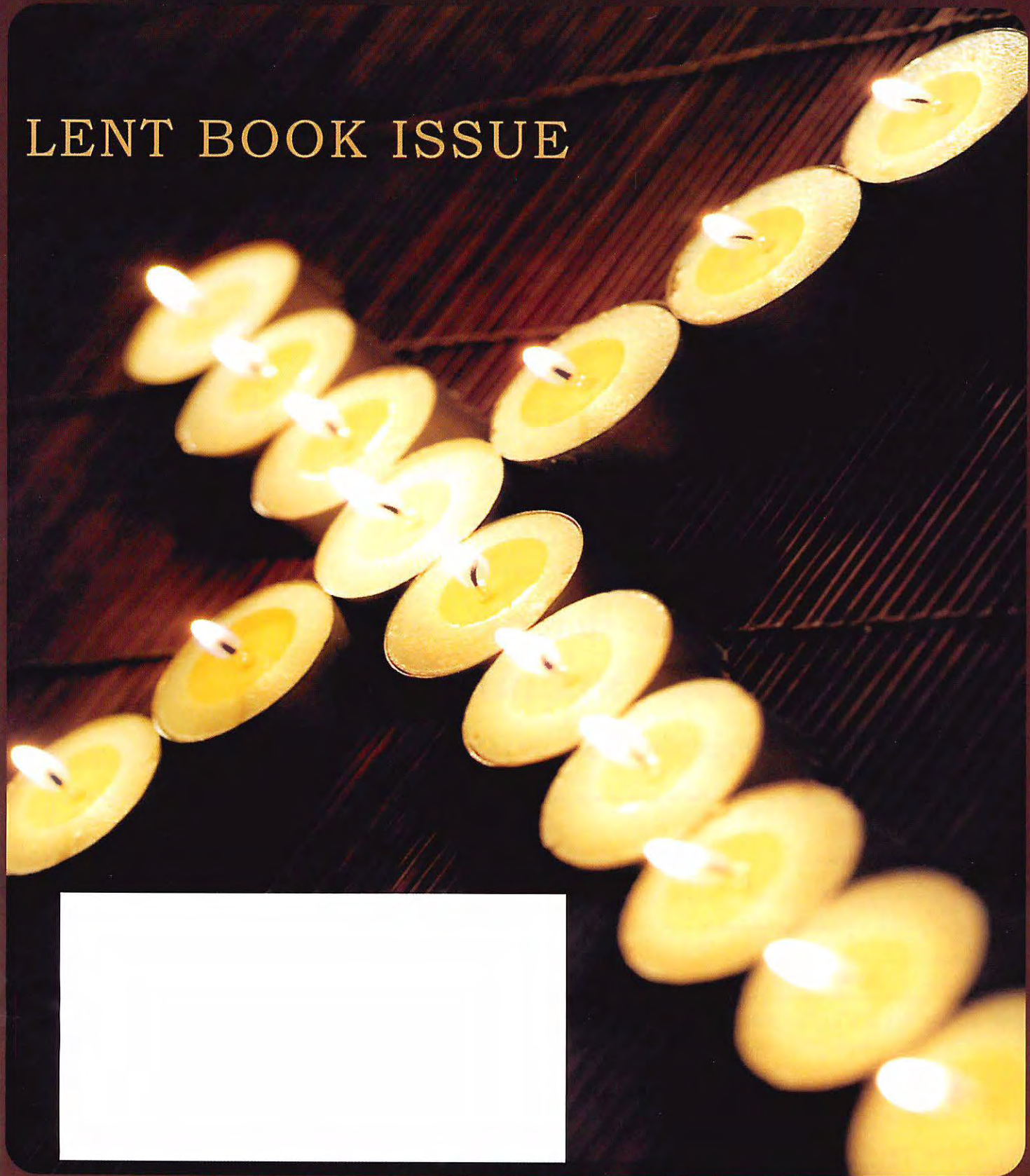
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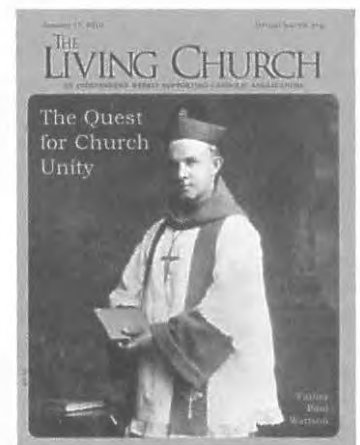
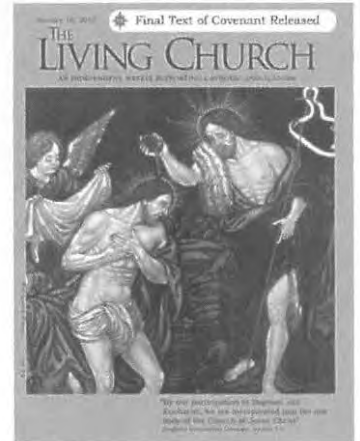
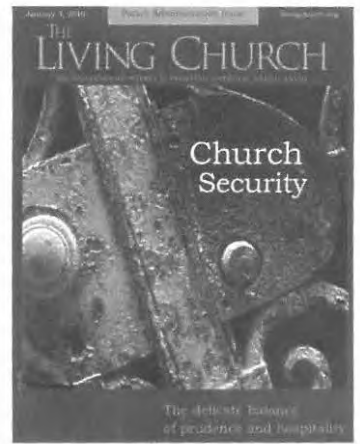
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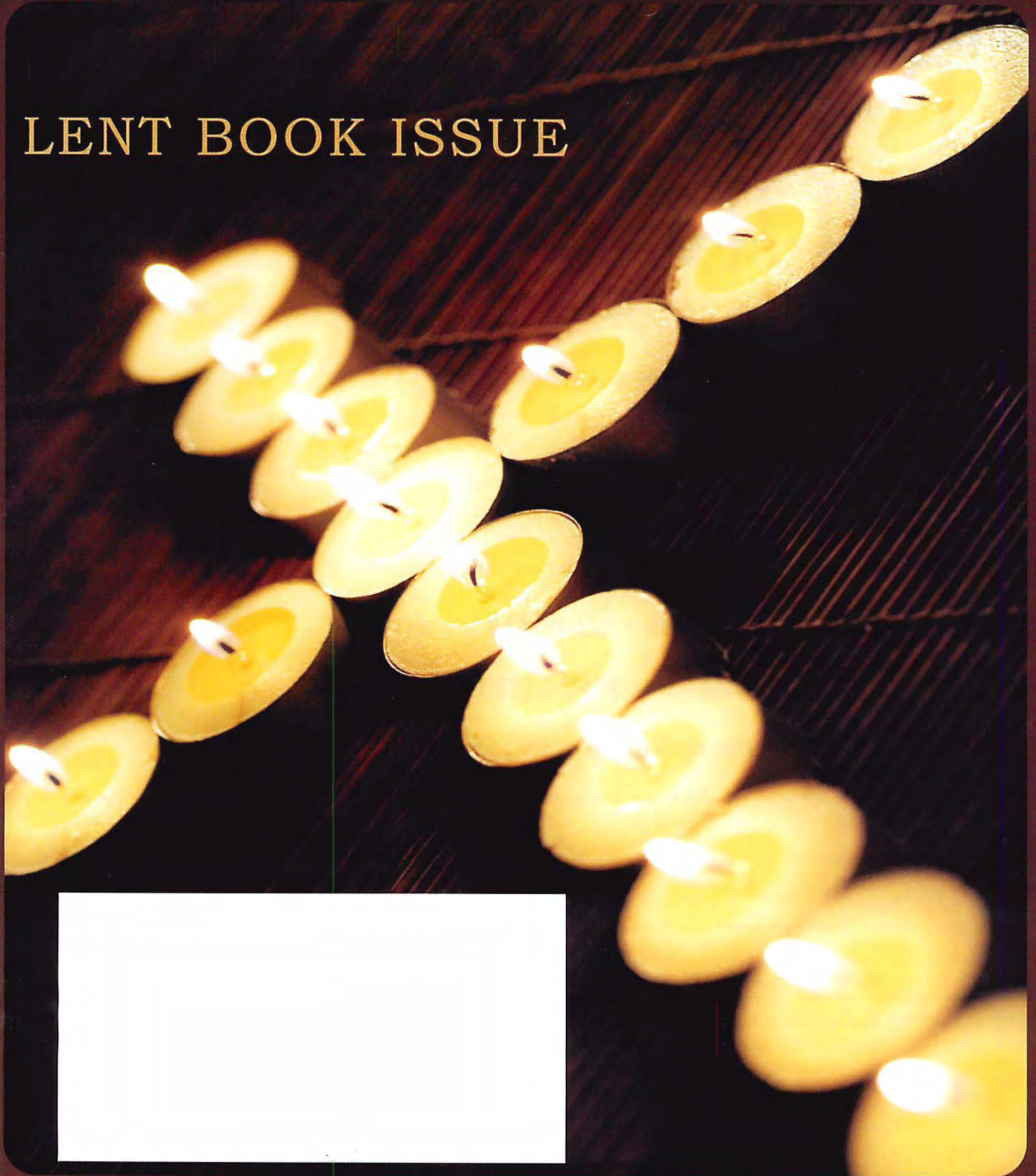
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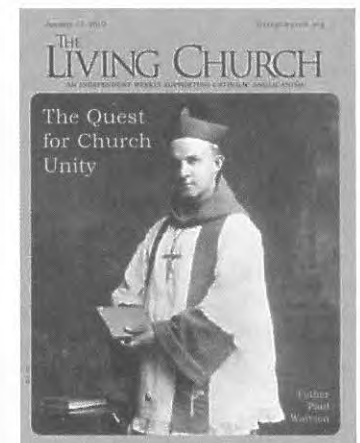
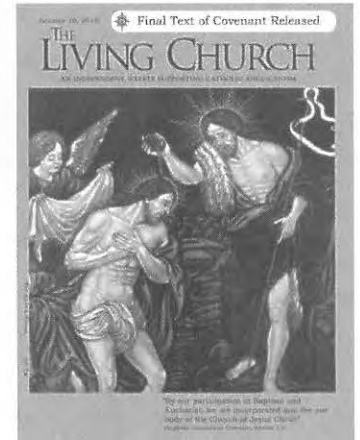
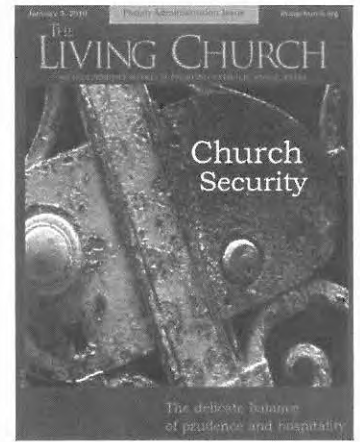
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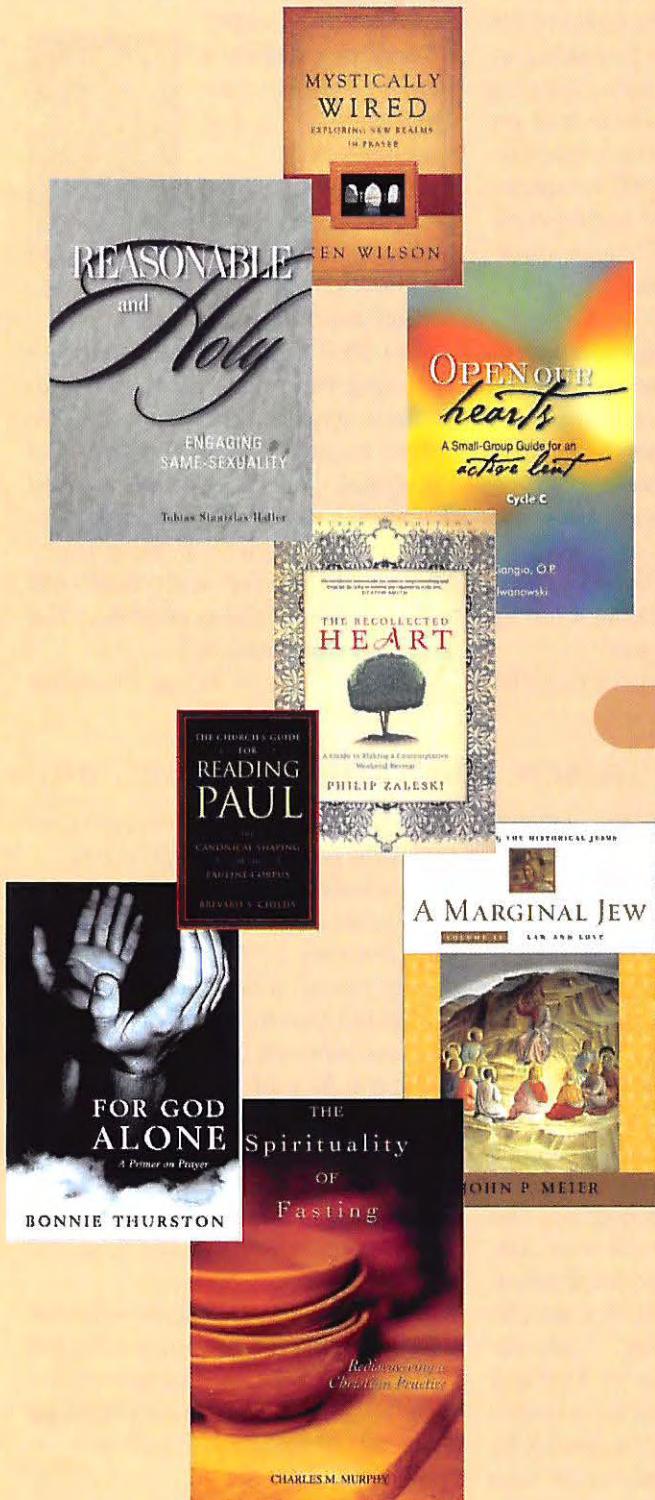
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## THE LIVING CHURCH

this week

February 21, 2010



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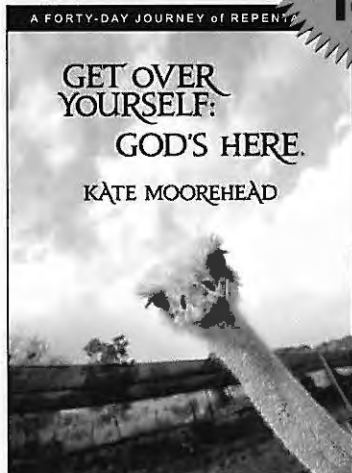


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## news

### Bishop Chane Explains Retirement Plans

The Rt. Rev. John Bryson Chane, eighth Bishop of Washington (D.C.), announced that he plans to leave his position by late 2011. Speaking at the diocese's 115th convention at Washington National Cathedral on Jan. 30, the bishop said that when he accepted his post in 2002 he promised he would serve for eight years.

"In June 2010 I will have completed eight years; come May I will be 66," he said.

The bishop, who has been ordained for 38 years, said he is not leaving for health reasons, because his health is excellent, nor because he is tired or burned out, but because it is time to turn over the reins to someone younger.

"I have never been bored in this diocese, and I am not burned out or scorched," the bishop said.

Bishop Chane proposed that the

diocese's standing committee appoint a search committee by March 2010, and that the search committee produce a slate of suitable candidates after a full year of work.

On another note, delegates passed a resolution of conscience "acknowledging that certain actions taken by the 2009 General Convention" — including the affirmation that non-celibate gays and lesbians may be called to any ministry within the Episcopal Church — "have caused deep concern among some members of the diocese, who believe those actions may be contrary to God's will and contrary to the positions of the Anglican Communion."



Bishop Chane

Peggy Eastman

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### Archbishop Praises 'Martyrial Ecumenism'

The Archbishop of Canterbury reflected on Pope John Paul II's concept of "martyrial ecumenism" on Jan. 25 when he received an award named for a Roman Catholic priest martyred by English Protestants.

*America*, a magazine published by North American Jesuits, chose Archbishop Rowan Williams as the 2009 recipient of its Campion Award, which honors Christian achievement in literature. The award is named in honor of Edmund Campion, S.J., the magazine's patron saint. He was martyred by hanging in 1581 after refusing to renounce his Roman Catholic faith. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England designate feast days for Fr. Campion.

Archbishop Williams was unable to attend an award ceremony in late 2009. At his suggestion, *America* rescheduled the ceremony for Jan. 25, the feast day of St. Paul's conversion.

Archbishop Williams, implicitly acknowledging early Anglicans' role

in the death of Fr. Campion, added an emphasis on seeking forgiveness.

"You have already heard the words *martyrial ecumenism*, and what they express is, to me, something utterly essential about the life of the Christian Church," he said. "From the moment when St. Paul recognized in Jesus the face of his victims, it has been a deep dimension of Christian holiness to be able to go to one's brothers and sisters in repentance and receive, from those you have offended or excluded, the grace of God's welcome."

James Martin, S.J., culture editor of *America*, said the magazine selected Archbishop Williams for the honor well before the Vatican extended an offer of personal ordinariates to Anglicans.

He said the archbishop's response to the award felt all the more personal because of the humble size of the audience that gathered at Amer-

(Continued on page 20)

## Bishop Mouneer: Talks Prompted Decision to Resign

The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Anis, who has resigned his position on the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, told THE LIVING CHURCH that discussions at the committee's meeting in December 2009 are what prompted his resignation from the committee.

"I had been in communication before the meeting that I needed to discuss the participation of the Episcopal Church on the standing committee. I found some resistance to this," said Bishop Mouneer, who is Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa, and President Bishop of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Bishop Mouneer announced his resignation in a five-page letter dated Jan. 30.

"I didn't see a way forward to follow through on the recommendations made by the primates and by the Windsor Report itself," Bishop Mouneer said regarding the Episcopal Church's continuing representation on the standing committee.

"When it comes to who will sign and adopt the Covenant, there is exclusiveness," he said. "This double standard hurts me."

The bishop said he sees the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, as retaining an important role in future discussions of the Covenant.

"The Archbishop of Canterbury is very important — very important," he said. "If he insists on following through on the recommendations [of the primates and the Windsor Report], people will listen to him."

Bishop Mouneer said he hopes Archbishop Williams will "stand by and follow through on the agreements made in his presence."

*Douglas LeBlanc*

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A Book for Doubters

# A Humble Scholar's Final Great Work

By Christopher Seitz

The prolific scholar Brevard Springs Childs influenced a generation of Episcopal students, among many others, during his 40 years as professor of Old Testament at Yale University. The Episcopal Church played a role through much of his life, beginning with his baptism at Trinity Church in Columbia, S.C., where his large family was active. Though ordained in the Presbyterian Church after training at Princeton Seminary and the University of Basel, he was a frequent worshiper at the parish next to his home, Christ Episcopal Church in Bethany, Conn., where the funeral service for him was held. He and his wife, Ann, split their later years between Connecticut and Cambridge, England, where they worshipped at St. Edward King and Martyr.

Shortly before his untimely death in 2007 he completed a manuscript for *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*. The book picks up concerns from his previous work on the Old Testament, New Testament, biblical theology and the history of biblical interpretation and is a fitting final tribute to an enormously creative, Catholic and confessional mind.

The concern with "the Church" referred to in the title points to Childs's previous work on the canon. *Canon* does not refer to lists of books or external determinations of the scope of the literature, but is intrinsic to the Bible's coming-to-be. Childs understands the form of the biblical witness as critical to its appraisal and interpretation, and he broke new ground in his long career by conceiving of authorship and inspiration in new ways.

The Church has an active role in

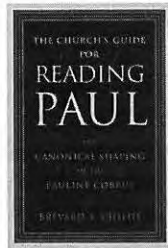
shaping and handing over the apostle Paul, through the vehicle of his letters, for those generations post-dating his apostolic ministry. The specificity of the letters is retained, but the transition from Paul the Apostle and church planter to Paul the steward of the mystery of God (including the eternal plan for his Church; see Eph. 3:1-6; Col. 1:23-27) to Timothy and the next generation all constitute "the

pendium of all the major Pauline themes, through which the subsequent witnesses gain their perspective and sharpness.

Childs had offered an *Introduction to the New Testament as Canon* in 1984, but he did not feel it achieved the critical attention it deserved. Observing the decade-long Society of Biblical Literature's quest to deal with the Pauline letters through a historical lens, and the problems for consensus this approach betokened, encouraged Childs to take up the project with a more focused look at the Pauline letters. Also addressed is the role of Acts and Hebrews, as well as the General Epistles. Acts serves to link the apostolic testimony of the Catholic Epistles with the Pauline corpus, while Hebrews and the Epistles acknowledge, with the Pastorals, both the received scriptural witness of the old covenant (2 Timothy and the reference to his being raised in the faith by these writings), now heard in fresh ways, and the letters of Paul themselves — though difficult to understand — ranged alongside these writings as scripture (2 Peter 3:16).

*The Church's Guide*, as with all Childs's previous work, presents a scholar totally at home in critical scholarship of an international scope. His interest in canon has been particularly well received in German Roman Catholic scholarship, and the engagement with this literature often reveals common ground. At a time when Protestants in North America are turning to the history of interpretation ("the tradition") and the canon/Rule of Faith, and Roman Catholic scholars are engaged in the enthusiasms of historical-critical questions and investigations, Childs always presents a fresh and creative handling of the Bible against which to plot these dual movements.

Aspects of the present work have their precursors in Childs's earlier



## The Church's Guide for Reading Paul

The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus

By **Brevard Childs**. Eerdmans.

Pp. 288. \$28. ISBN 978-0-8028-6278-5.

Church's guide for reading Paul," that is: the Church's guide for understanding the character of the Gospel's outreach from Jesus Christ to the present age.

Childs never lost interest in the specificity engendered by reading the Bible with historical-critical tools, and in this work he defends such inquiry against reader-response and even some forms of literary analysis claiming the title "canonical." Efforts to interpret Paul apart from the canonical form, however, create a developmental model which is captive to changing reconstructions, on the one hand, and which fails to note the historical character of the shaping enterprise itself. Categories such as "deutero-Pauline" may properly understand certain characteristics of Ephesians and Colossians, for example, but with no way to associate this understanding with the canonical form itself. Romans may be a mature letter and a "late witness" over against Galatians and the Corinthian correspondence, but in its present location its superscription serves to introduce the Pauline collection in its entirety, and the letter functions as a com-



undertakings. We have explicit exegetical engagement with specific texts, such as in *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (1970), including Paul's reference to Moses' veil in 2 Corinthians 3; Abraham's faith in Romans 4 and Galatians 3; Israel and the church in Romans 9-11; Paul's apostolate in 2 Corinthians, Colossians and Ephesians, and the Catholic Epistles. How one might properly assess the normative character of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament was a perennial concern for Childs (and one hotly contested today). The present work provides up-to-date engagement with New Testament scholarship (Ulrich Luz, Richard Hays, Frances Young, Luke Timothy Johnson, Wayne Meeks) in the manner of Childs's earlier introductions. And the concern for the life of the Church as ingredient in the shaping process, with its attendant views of inspiration, remind one of his masterful history of interpretation of the Book of Isaiah, which concluded: "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

It is probably this ability both to work with critical theory and never lose sight of the theological freight the methods were always meant to bear that marks off the work of Brevard Childs. The complexity of the questions he engages is always in direct proportion to their significance theologically. This means that one is asked to go on an occasionally arduous journey; but the reader is spared convolution in expression or protracted engagement with the discipline of New Testament scholarship for its own sake. Childs lets what is important remain clearly in view.

Those who were his students at Yale will remember his carefully composed prayers before lectures, but also his command of the material and sense of seriousness about what was being discussed and weighed. I was present at a tribute to him in Vienna

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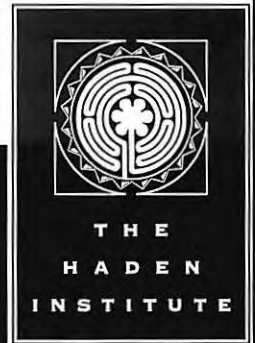
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One gets a sense that Childs is one of the last people to have a truly international grasp of the discipline of biblical and theological studies.

(Continued from previous page)

and was struck at his influence on people from so many different corners of the globe. Childs had learned rabbinic Hebrew in Israel, alongside Ancient Near Eastern languages at Basel. His Dutch was excellent, and he was much respected in Germany, where his works were translated, and in the United Kingdom, where he lived and studied.

At his funeral his son remarked that he never knew his father as an international scholar, but as a deeply prayerful man who always took the time to write and stay in touch with his two children. During his infantry service in World War II in Europe, with the war only slowly winding down, he carefully answered the letters written to him by his sister, who worried about questions being posed in her university Bible courses. He encouraged her to listen and think carefully and not to dismiss or fear.

One gets a sense, when reading Childs's work, that he is one of the last people to have a truly international grasp of the discipline of biblical and theological studies. At Yale he taught a two-semester course on the history of biblical interpretation. He could speak intelligently about the shifts in understanding of "the literal sense" from the rabbinic period, through Antioch and Alexandria, Augustine and Aquinas, Nicholas of Lyra and Rashi, to Luther, Calvin and the early 18th century historical-critical methods, but not omitting attention to an obscure French Roman Catholic from the 19th century.

This appreciation of the long march of Bible, Theology and Church also tempered his understanding of what he was up to, and how charity must be displayed with colleagues and students. In that sense, though his family members remembered one man, and

his colleagues and scholarly jousters another, they were one and the same person, who worked diligently, prayerfully and humbly all his life. A genuinely ecumenical thinker, unwilling to divide and conquer, or to misrepresent for advantage, he is probably that rare scholar whose technical work was grounded in his Christian walk and vocation, above all else.

He also liked to tell of how he had got things wrong — how he and his young graduate student friends had made fun of Karl Barth, only to learn the hard way how truly brilliant and well prepared he was to meet them on the ground they claimed was their own. Or how he once wrote the great Roman Catholic scholar Raymond Brown, wondering why he invested so much in historical verification rather than attending to the canon's own (Catholic) voice, only to receive a one-line postcard in return: "Bard, my enemies are not your enemies." Vatican II and Barth's Basel must both be honored for the questions they bring.

Only the deep respect that keeps challengers honest and careful on the field of battle can account for the friendships such an energetic and creative intellect was able to preserve, all the while hewing closely to the vision he believed the Bible called him to describe and commend for the next generations of students. In that sense, one can see in *The Church's Guide to Reading Paul* a model for faithful teaching and obedience, through suffering and hardship as well as enthusiasm and success, that Brevard Childs himself modeled.

*The Rev. Canon Dr. Christopher Seitz is Research Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Wycliffe College, Toronto, and Incarnation School of Theology, Dallas.*

# The Unsettling Jesus

By Michael Cover

## A Marginal Jew

Rethinking the Historical Jesus

Volume 4: Law and Love

By **John P. Meier**. Yale University Press.

Pp. xiii + 735. Cloth, \$55. ISBN 978-0300140965.

“Who needs the historical Jesus?” a Catholic Christian might wonder. “If the historical Jesus is not the Jesus of the Gospels, then he cannot be the Jesus of our faith.” Such a line of reasoning is, in an important respect, correct. More than once, the quest for the historical Jesus has been undertaken with the purpose of crafting a Jesus who might provide an alternative to the orthodox Christ with the Jesus of scholarly speculation.

Not so with the historical Jesus of John P. Meier’s series *A Marginal Jew*. At the beginning of volume one, Meier sets out, in a rhetorical style that would make Karl Rahner smile, a methodological distinction which guides his entire project: “The historical Jesus is not the real Jesus. The real Jesus is not the historical Jesus” (*MJ* 1:21). It should be stressed here that neither the real nor the historical Jesus is the “total reality” of Jesus, the Jesus who is the object of our faith and worship.

By the “real Jesus” Meier means only a reasonably complete portrait of a historical person, such as may be had of Cicero or Richard Nixon. The “historical Jesus” stands even further recessed in the corridors of time and is by necessity a “modern abstraction ... the fragments of a mosaic, the faint outline of a faded fresco that allows of many interpretations” (*MJ* 1:25). In admitting the very real limitations of his quest, Meier delivers a historical Jesus who is all the more fascinating and potentially important for those who hold with the Creed of Nicaea and Con-

stantinople that Jesus “was made man.”

*Volume Four: Law and Love* is a continuation of Meier’s nearly two-decades-long quest for the historical

Jesus. The previous three volumes of the series have considered (1) the birth and childhood of Jesus, his family, education, and the Hell-

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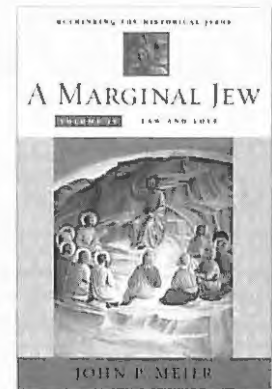
enized Palestine where he grew up, (2) the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, with a focus on his relation to John the Baptist, his proclamation of the Kingdom of God, and his reputation for performing miracles, and (3) the various "companions and competitors" in Jesus' ministry. Now, in *Law and Love*, Meier tackles his most difficult subject to date: the "enigma" of the historical Jesus and the Law.

In approaching this contested subject, Meier stands generally in the same scholarly camp as E.P. Sanders (*Jesus and Judaism*) and Geza Vermes (*Jesus the Jew*), members of the so-called "Third Quest" for the historical Jesus who argue for the "Jewishness of Jesus" as the *sine qua non* of his historical portrait. Far from merely rehashing old arguments, however, Meier notes, with his hallmark mixture of caution and bravado, that "although I may not be right in my positions, every other book or article on the historical Jesus and the Law has been to a great degree wrong" (*MJ* 4:2). Having thus thrown down the gauntlet, Meier proceeds to paint a nuanced picture of a Jesus who, far from uniformly overturning or accepting the Law, simultaneously does both in an unsystematic fashion.

The heart of the book are its five central chapters (numbering is continuous throughout the series), treating the topics of the historical Jesus and divorce (Ch. 32), the prohibition of oaths (Ch. 33), the Sabbath (Ch. 34), purity laws (Ch. 35), and the love commandments (Ch. 36). Although these five subjects are chosen by Meier somewhat arbitrarily on the basis of the material which the Gospels have preserved, one may perhaps also discern in the structuring of this core material an authorial "wink": five chapters mirroring the fivefold division of the Torah.

No summary can substitute for a

No summary can substitute for a careful perusal of Meier's meticulous exegesis and analysis, exhaustively researched and painstakingly executed.



careful perusal of Meier's meticulous exegesis and analysis, exhaustively researched and painstakingly executed. To whet the potential reader's appetite, I present here a brief summary of some of Meier's major conclusions. In Chapter 32, Meier argues that "Jesus absolutely forbade divorce and branded divorce and remarriage as the sin of adultery," noting also that this would have presented a striking challenge to the average Palestinian Jew who attempted to follow the law set down in Deut 24 (*MJ* 4:126).

In the subsequent chapter, Meier likewise concludes that Jesus absolutely forbade the swearing of oaths, although "in the Jewish Scriptures, as in the ancient Near East in general, oaths were taken for granted in the formal contexts of law and religion" (*MJ* 4:184). Turning to the subject of Jesus and the Sabbath, Meier finds that while Jesus the observant Jew most likely kept the Sabbath, he did engage in legal debate with other Jewish sects on how one ought to keep the Sabbath. The common-sense position stated in Matt. 12:11 and Luke 14:5, that one should pull both cattle and humans out of a well on the Sabbath, may reflect the historical Jesus' position in a debate with the more stringent Essenes (*MJ* 4:295).

In his analysis of the historical Jesus and the purity laws, Meier

traverses the most difficult terrain of the volume (see the initial endnote on the subject, which spans 11 single-spaced pages). The bulk of the chapter is devoted to a redaction-critical discussion of Mark 7:1-23, which contains Jesus' teaching on food impurity. In the end of his detailed investigation, Meier concludes that the historical Jesus did not annul Jewish purity laws. His position was enigmatically one of "studied indifference" (*MJ* 4:415).

The fireworks really begin in Meier's final major chapter, "Widening the Focus: The Love Commandments." In a meticulous argument from discontinuity, Meier concludes that Jesus' double command to love both God and neighbor in Mark 12:29-31 uses the rabbinic interpretative technique known as *g z rā š wā* (comparison of equal commands "thou shalt love") and comes from the historical Jewish genius and "rabbi' before the rabbis," Yeshua' of Nazareth (*MJ* 4:527). The command to "love your enemies" is also judged historical by Meier, whereas the Greco-Roman "Golden Rule," enshrined by many moderns as the hallmark of Jesus' moral religion, emerges as uncertain at best and perhaps an early Christian addition to the tradition.

In a book of this magnitude and scope, one is certain to find points of disagreement with Meier's proce-

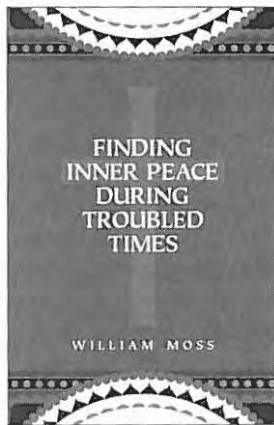
dures or conclusions. From the methodological standpoint, Meier continues to carry out his quest by the five criteria of authenticity set out in the first volume: (1) embarrassment, (2) discontinuity, (3) multiple attestation, (4) coherence, and (5) rejection and execution. Some critics, however, would undoubtedly want to see Meier engage with other paradigms, such as Gerd Theissen's criterion of plausibility (*The Quest for the Plausible Jesus*) or the theory of oral performance in the Gospels championed by James Dunn (*Jesus Remembered*).

Several critiques or particular points were also made by panelists during the review of *Law and Love* at the 2009 Society of Biblical Literature meeting in New Orleans. On the subject of the prohibition of oaths, the Jewish scholar Lawrence Schiffmann took issue with Meier's argument from discontinuity, saying that Jesus' prohibition may have precedent in OT and intertestamental literature if one distinguishes between juridical and non-juridical oaths. Lutz Doering contested Meier's conclusion that healing would not have constituted a breach of Sabbath rest in pre-70 Palestine, critiquing Meier's argumentation from the silence of earlier Jewish sources. In my own estimation, Meier's verdict of "inauthentic" to the purity saying of Jesus in Mark 7:19-20, while convincing on many scores, rests in large part on an unconvincing analysis of Jesus' quotation of Isaiah 29:13 in Mark 7:13-14. These and other criticisms arise not from the accuracy of the evidence so masterfully presented by Meier, but from Meier's evaluation of it. How one weighs certain arguments from probability and silence, and how one applies the criteria of authenticity to the evidence, remain tasks for each reader.

Criticisms aside, Meier's *Law and*  
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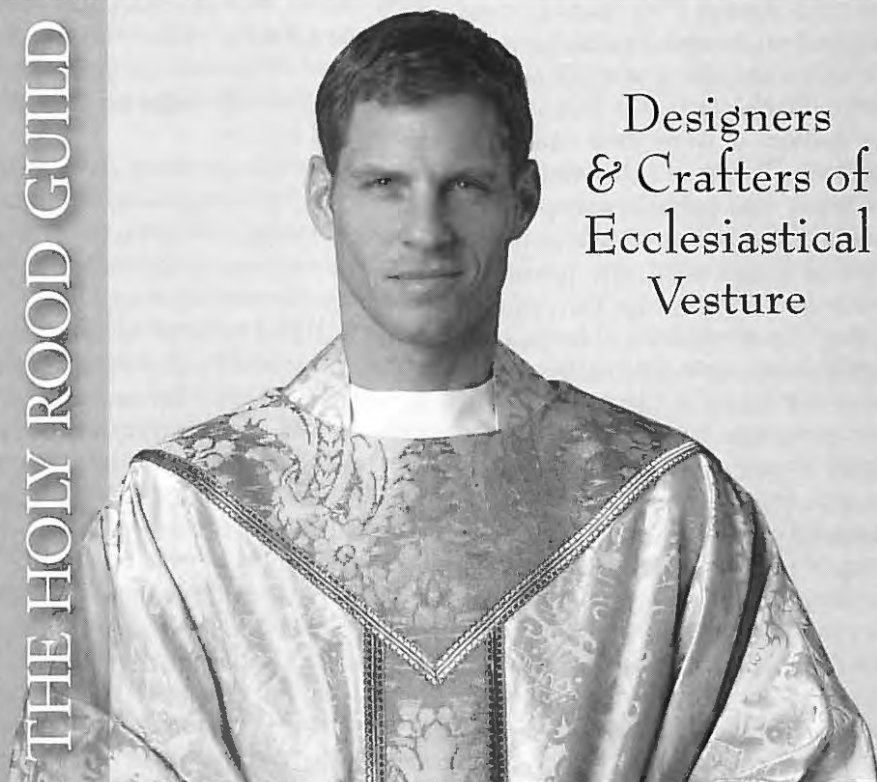
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*Love* represents a major contribution and a stunning achievement. In addition to setting the standard for future studies of the historical Jesus and the Law, *Law and Love* is a milestone in Jewish/Christian dialogue, by showing the incalculable theological debt that Christianity owes to Judaism. Moreover, the historical Jesus who emerges from these pages is scarcely a Jesus with whom any modern Christian, Catholic or Protestant, would feel entirely comfortable. As Meier writes: "In offending most moral people now as then, Jesus (whether one believes in him or not) remains relevant simply by saying no — no to values and actions that most moderns take for granted and would defend as moral and necessary" (*MJ* 4:650).

*Law and Love* also has relevance for the ongoing Protestant/Roman dialogue on the relationship between Christian law and gospel. However, Meier only hints at this, leaving it to his readers to draw their own conclusions: "Far from a Paul-disguised-as Jesus who preaches gospel versus law (which is a caricature of Paul to begin with), the historical Jesus turns out to be the halakic Jesus." For the historical Jesus, Law and love are not in themselves opposites, nor is Law subjected to a general principle of love. Rather, as Meier notes, Law and love are a merism, representing the totality of a disciple's responsibility. "All you need is love? Hardly. For Jesus, you need the Torah as a whole. Nothing could be more foreign to this Palestinian Jew than a facile antithesis between Law and love. But love, as commanded by the Law, comes first — and second" (*MJ* 4:575).

*Michael Cover is a deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas and a doctoral student in theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

## A Tissue of 'Maybe'

By Ephraim Radner

### Reasonable and Holy

Engaging Same-Sexuality

By **Tobias Stanislas Haller**. Church Publishing. Pp. 192. \$18. ISBN 978-1-59627-110-4.

Tobias Haller has gained a reputation over the past few years of a temperate and thoughtful apologist for progressive Episcopalians, especially on matters relating to sexuality. Through his blogging and engagement in various church discussions, Haller has provided a consistent witness of gentle but persistent argument in usually winning prose. *Reasonable and Holy: Engaging Same-Sexuality* is, in fact, drawn from several articles he originally posted on his blog. It is now laid out in expanded form in 12 brief chapters, dotted with sidebars and "call-out" paragraphs, often with a summary, and followed by discussion questions (of only vague relevance to the actual topic).

Taken on its own terms, the book is useful for understanding the arguments some gay-inclusion advocates deploy to address traditional prohibitions of same-sex relations within the Church. Haller writes in his generally lucid way, spices his discussions with some wit (and just a bit too much sarcasm at times), and covers a good bit of ground, from biblical hermeneutics, key scriptural texts, the character of the Law, Hooker on the use of "reason," "natural" vs. "unnatural," common claims regarding the place of procreation and sexual difference in marriage, and so on.

It's a bit of a mishmash in terms of sequence, but the arguments themselves are clear enough (if sometimes over-intricate on linguistic matters). They are not particularly novel to those familiar with the debate: Haller points out inconsistencies of practice in the tradition, fastens on the logical

conundra over the use of categories like "nature," limits the meaning of biblical texts to realities that purportedly have nothing to do with modern homosexual partnerships and understandings (e.g. to cultic prostitution and idolatry), points out how Christian understandings and practice with respect to the law have changed in various ways (eating blood, slavery, etc.), and argues for a central gospel message that should control all Christian scriptural interpretation (the Golden Rule).

The book is a disappointment, however, on the level of a studied consideration of the topic in terms of Scripture and tradition. There are a number of reasons for this, some simply related to the genre of blogging from which these essays derive, others related to the form of argument Haller uses, and others related to the presuppositions applied to the arguments themselves. I will address each of these in turn.

In the first place, the book is thin on the logical side of things (it is thin in terms of size too). Haller has no interest in presenting a scholarly grappling with the issues he discusses: the bibliography is limited and spotty, there are no footnotes, and hence no means to track whose arguments are actually being addressed and where to find them (this is not uniform, to be sure; but just why one argument *is* located with a specific scholar and most are not is unclear), and there is no attempt to engage alternate and conflicting viewpoints in any thorough way.

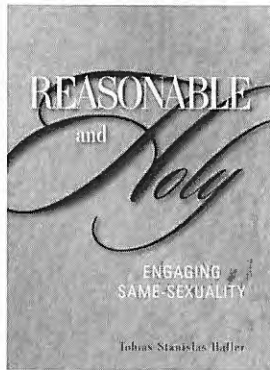
This is standard blog essay writing, and in itself is not objectionable. And Haller makes his intentions clear in his introduction. But admitting to something in advance doesn't necessarily resolve the problem in play. For the stakes are high in this discussion, as we all know, and the claims that Haller pursues are ones that are often

quite intricate and detailed (often numbingly so), involving linguistic arguments in the Greek and Hebrew, Talmudic commentary, classical philosophy, and more.

Most readers who are not specialists will skim these long passages, perhaps assuming that the arguments must make sense because they *are* detailed and intricate. But they are not actually *responsible* arguments on these terms. And, unfortunately, the careful reader will have little help in placing Haller's claims within any sort of scholarly context, will be offered no aid in pursuing alternative viewpoints or in making use of provided tools to evaluate his claims, and will simply read a series of assertions about technical matters without historical or literary touchstones. The less careful reader, furthermore, may believe that the argument has scholarly foundation, when in fact it does not.

There are many examples one might point to, from the loose citation of Rabbinic writings whose useful application to biblical texts and their meaning demands sophisticated (and highly contested) hermeneutical and historical methods, to discussions of Hellenistic texts in a scholarly vacuum. Let me take a couple of simple instances. Haller refers to Robert Gagnon's relatively exhaustive *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* only now and again. In one place, on the issue of whether Jesus actually says anything about homosexuality, he attacks Gagnon on his reading of *porneia* in Mark 7:21ff. as *possibly* implying homosexual practice.

Haller provides some straightforward initial questions, ones that are worth noting, and then pursues his general theme of same-sex references in the Bible as being primarily aimed



at cultic prostitution. One might think that Gagnon is a rather silly man on this basis. But the reader is never told that Gagnon himself doesn't put much weight on the very argument Haller attacks (half a paragraph, on a verse

he questions as "authentically" Jesus' in any case), while Haller, on the other hand, deals with the question at length (four pages).

More relevantly, Haller references no other detailed discussions of the meaning of *porneia*, like Bruce Malina's 1972 article, that would actually provide significant counter-evidence to Haller's thesis. And such counter-evidence in fact exists in spades, and not only on this topic, though one would not know it from Haller's curt dismissals. In contrast, when Haller treats the story of David and Jonathan as a *prima facie* depiction of a homosexual relationship, he does *not* mention Gagnon's own lengthy treatment of the text, which provides significant arguments that might directly refute Haller's position.

I mention Gagnon here because he is among the more prominent objects of negative reflection by Haller, even though he makes only a few appearances; many scholars of note on the topic, from Richard Hays on, are absent altogether. In short, this is not a book designed to argue, let alone be capable of arguing, a position seriously; it is instead a series of scatter-shot opinions, some of them sophisticated and often interestingly presented, but in generally quite unsubstantiated ways. *Caveat lector*.

But one must not criticize an author for not fulfilling a scheme he never set out to pursue in the first place. So it is important to grasp what Haller's purpose is, and to evaluate the work on these terms at least. On this score, I think it fair to say that the book is generally aimed at

providing apologetic responses to common traditional Christian objections to homosexual behavior and partnerships (including "marriage"). The final chapter is in fact a summary review of the book in just these terms, laid out as a list of "objections" and "responses."

In this sense, the volume acts as a kind of handbook for pro-gay advocates in the church, ready to have an answer for every discrete argument traditionalists might make in the course of a conversation or debate, as, say, on your typical blog or parish forum. Sex (and marriage) is "for" procreation? Haller provides arguments why this is not so. Isn't sexuality founded on male-female difference? Here's something you can respond with. What about Sodom? What about Leviticus? etc.

In light of such a purpose, the book does its job well. Haller, as I said, writes engagingly and fluidly. He provides smatterings of facts and references — a Patristic writer here, a rabbi there, an anthropological observation somewhere else — that give some vital profile to a point, and then moves on. Because the arguments are not actually founded on comparative research, however, they will never convince those who are not already persuaded.

Based mainly on a string of vague possibilities (the Bible doesn't say that David and Jonathan were *not* homosexual lovers, does it?), the final argument taken as a whole is a tissue of "maybe" rather than carefully constructed logic. The value of Haller's individual points, however individually uncertain, lies in their status as ammunition in the ongoing sex debates of the church. Let me be clear: I believe most of Haller's arguments can in fact be refuted (and have been); but that would require the kind of point-by-point scholarly tenacity, like a dog with a bone, that

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## books

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only someone like Gagnon has thus far exhibited (much to people's discomfort). This approach to the topic, as we all know, is exhausting.

But that is, in part, due to the genre of this kind of apologetic. For what the book does *not* provide, precisely because of its debate-manual format,

is an overarching vision of Christian marriage and sexuality itself. The book is premised on undercutting objections, not constructing a synthetic perspective. Having excluded procreation as an end, or the engagements of physical difference, Haller sees marriage as a matter of "love and fidelity" between two persons, period

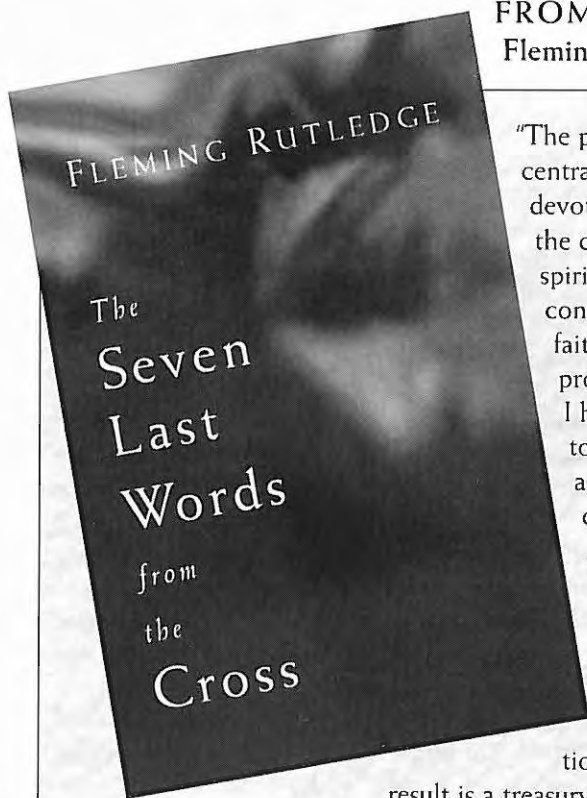
(pp. 55-56). This is not, in itself, a problematic claim as far as it goes (though it does not, in fact, go very far). But Haller reaches this point mainly through subtraction — subtracting this and that text from the Bible as historically or linguistically or morally irrelevant, this and that thematic inter-textual network as confused, this and that interwoven set of strands in the tradition as misled, figurally and practically — all to the end of dismissing the list of traditional "objections."

The result is a "remainder theology" where the Scriptures have little to say comprehensively, and where the traditions of the Church exist as interesting but generally superfluous distractions from the main point of love and fidelity. No doubt, if Haller were to set about writing a more positive sexual theology, he *would* have something positive to say about husbands and wives, about children, about the agony of barrenness, about the character of suffering difference — even though he believes that none of this is essential to marriage itself (and the book, as a whole, is about "same-sexuality," not about "mixed-sex" marriage). But there is nothing in this volume to point to such positive interests or even theological trajectories. Marriage ends up as a rather vague container, not terribly interesting frankly, for homosexuals *or* heterosexuals.

Even though the purpose of Haller's volume, then, is limited, it nonetheless makes use of more fundamental theological presuppositions that are worth noting. Most centrally is his understanding of Scripture. By and large, and despite the scattered nature of his treatments on the nature of scriptural interpretation throughout the book, Haller's approach is squarely in line with the paradigm of liberal Protestantism: the Bible records the historically evolving interplay of God and human response, and this record has authority for the present only to the degree that a consis-

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tent moral “principle” (discerned somehow as divine) can be extracted from it.

For Haller, this principle is Jesus’ Summary of the Law, which subsists as authoritative through varying cultural changes embodied in the scriptural text. Thus, in his penultimate chapter, he explicitly argues that Paul’s words in the New Testament do *not* have the same authority as Jesus’, and indeed, have no authority unless shown to be “congruent” with explicit words of Jesus (p. 125), interpreted according to the Golden Rule (p. 138; cf. p. 94). And given the ideal Gospel of love that transcends the historical contingencies of the biblical record, Haller can therefore approach that record selectively according to the kinds of historicist arguments he marshals in his apologetic handbook: this and that text is “really” about cult prostitution and idolatry, not homosexual sex; this or that text is “really” about male-female anal intercourse,

not lesbianism; this or that text is “really” about the primitive biological views of an ignorant ancient society, not about a divinely wrought anthropology.

Although he claims that he wants to take the text “as the Church has received it,” he does not mean this in terms of the *coherent meaning* and authority of the text; only that he is not interested in “source” criticism. Haller is sensitive to “contradictions” in the Scripture and uses this fact as a fundamental justification for seeking a central interpretive cue that can relativize texts according to its application, through the analytical use of “reason” that can thereby cull and trim, determine cultural “desuetude,” judge relevance to the moment and need. The Laws of Scripture are useful insofar as they “save”; once they cease saving, according to some cultural calculus reason performs, they lose their usefulness, and have only a historical value.

I admit to finding the liberal Protestant paradigm of biblical interpretation inadequate, for many reasons but especially for its ultimate loss of Scriptural joy and life: what historical reason has left behind must inevitably wither. Reading Haller on Leviticus, for instance, a book for which I have had a special concern, is like reading a chemistry problem. Ironically, given his frequent (if anachronistic and decontextualized) citation of rabbinic material, Jewish tradition has always seen Leviticus as a cohesive and living word, bound to the fullness of both Torah and the prophets and writings.

It is just here that, to my mind, Haller misses so much in trying to minimize the book’s broad theological reach that itself acts as an authoritative interpreter of Genesis 1-3, and not merely as an outlying problematic. And it is just this cohesion of scriptural word that goes utterly miss-

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ing in Haller's approach. In Berkeley's phrase, Haller reads Scripture like a "minute philosopher," picking it apart to throw away the useless bits and to get at its "essence," but in the process losing the form and the shape that has in fact ordered the Christian tradition most especially in its development of a relatively stable understanding of marriage.

Ultimately, the kinds of "objections" to same-sex marriage that Haller is trying to refute emerge from such a larger scriptural vision, and not from their status as discrete arguments. The central element of procreation in marriage, for instance, is bound up with the character of Israel's calling in fallen (and the Fall has no place in Haller's scheme) human history — genealogy — and ought not simply to be examined in terms of this or that individual person or couple (a rather modern obsession). But this cannot be grasped outside of a coherently engaged Scriptural text. It certainly makes no sense through the lenses of a truncated and dissected Scriptural witness, translated into abstracted principles of individual relations. The same is true of the traditional understanding of sexual differentiation and so on.

One sorry side effect that has come from the migration of theological argument to the debates of the blogosphere — swift and rhetorically pointed, but also inevitably constricted in time and length — is just the loss of context for the extended kinds of scriptural reflection that Pope John Paul II in fact offered in the addresses collected in his *Theology of the Body*. The arguments over same-sexuality and marriage deserve such continued reflection. Haller's book will have its uses, but not in that context.

*The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner is professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto.*



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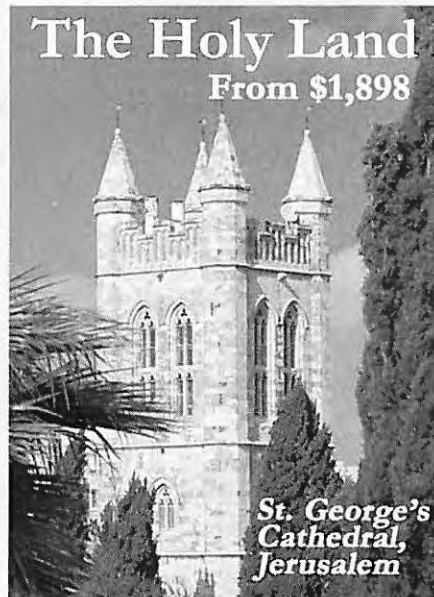


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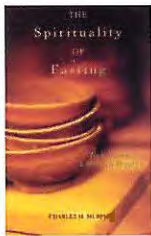
## short & sharp

**OPEN OUR HEARTS: A Small-Group Guide for an Active Lent.** By **Donna L. Ciangio, O.P.**, and **Thomas B. Iwanowski.** Ave Maria. Pp. 81. \$5.95. ISBN 978-1-59471-242-5.



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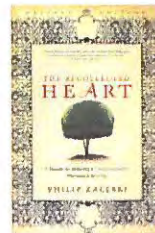
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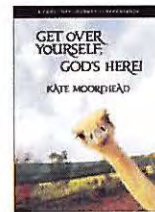
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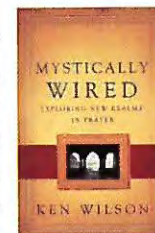
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The author, a senior evangelical pastor, suggests that “we pray because we need to, as though our brains are itching to pray.” He explores why prayer feels good, calming, satisfying, and more, and why scientists are finding that “ancient wisdom is neurologically savvy.” Stop worrying, he concludes. There’s no “wrong way” to pray.

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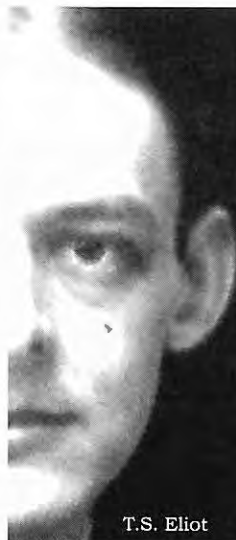
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Catholicism, Part 2:

# FACTS

For everything else that must be said about Catholicism — to do with its necessary and proper multiplicity and even diversity in expression, as well as its contested character — it is vitally important not to lose sight of the fact that there are some basic, longstanding, largely non-controversial *facts* about the faith. And these are *Catholic* facts, since they pertain to the Church's universality — her continuity, consistency, and comprehensiveness. Recall here the so-called Vincentian canon, associated with St. Vincent of Lerins (though the same idea may be found in other ancient writers): that the Catholic faith is that which has been held "everywhere, always, by all" (*ubique semper ab omnibus*). In this vein, it has been traditional to speak interchangeably of Christianity and Catholicism; this is typical, certainly, in both patristic and medieval writings, and perhaps only became less common in the West following the 16th-century Reformation divisions (though even then, and thereafter, the identity was not wholly forgotten, so much as complicated and obscured). So, to take an example, Hooker could still speak in the *Laws* of "the Catholic Fathers" and "the Catholic Church" as his own (see, for instance, II.23 and III.24).

What, then, is the Catholic faith of the Catholic Church? Classically, and still, it is most basically the "Rule of Faith" which is the Church's creed: her trinitarian confession which explains all that there is in creation, and how that same creation is redeemed through the Incarnation of God's Son and the giving of their Spirit, in whom is formed the community of Christ's



T.S. Eliot

The authors began by noting that the word *Catholic* may be used "to describe, not a type of thought or outlook, but certain facts whose existence and authority Christians acknowledge."

Body. The most basic of dogmatic and catechetical exercises in every age is accordingly exposition of the creed; and it's significant that the Apostles' Creed is also the *baptismal* symbol: because one is made a Christian if and only if one confesses this faith before the assembled body of believers.

Despite the vicissitudes of time, and the perennial appearance of philosophies that would seek to displace — or otherwise relativize, mythologize (say as "models"), and so forth — the facts of the faith, it is necessary for Catholic Christians to confess them together, over and over, and in this way be formed in Christ; not least as a testament to another fact: that the gates of hell will never prevail against the Church, according to Jesus' promise to Peter (Matt. 16:18).

Perhaps no better Anglican instance of such a confession in the 20th century may be found in the lucid and elegant 1947 report presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury, at his request, by "a group of Anglicans of the 'Catholic'

school of thought" (among whom were Dom Gregory Dix, T.S. Eliot, Austin Farrer, future archbishop Michael Ramsey, and L.S. Thornton, CR) entitled *Catholicity: A Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West*. The authors began by noting that the word *Catholic* may be used "to describe the opinions and the religious attitude of those who adhere to certain positions within a divided Christendom." It also, however, may be used "to describe, not a type of thought or outlook, but certain facts whose existence and authority Christians acknowledge: the Catholic Church, the Catholic creeds, the Catholic faith, the Catholic sacraments." And this latter, more "classical" usage was, they said, the one with which they were principally concerned.

Accordingly, reminiscent of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral's "principles of unity exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first ages of its existence," the authors



of *Catholicity* began with a discussion of “the primitive unity” of the apostolic Tradition — that is, the fact that our faith is built upon a “wholeness” (the word at the root of *catholic*) that comprehends (i) an already whole Old Testament, incorporating “creation and redemption, learned by Israel under the old Covenant;” (ii) a visible Church, *in* the Gospel and (iii) an outward order that is importantly, though not exclusively, episcopal; (iv) the sacrament(s) of initiation, baptism and confirmation, and (v) “the central act of primitive Christian worship, the Eucharist;” and finally, (vi) “out of this complex of Christian life, *lived* and embodied in dogma, worship, and institutions, ... the scriptures of the New Testament, which presuppose and interpret the faith and ‘the way’ from within which they are written.”

Only after identifying these facts, the authors go on to summarize, in a series of short chapters, some historical developments of the Catholic Church in the West — through “schisms”; the appearance of “orthodox Protestantism,” Renaissance Liberalism, and “the post-Tridentine Papal Communion”; to finally “the Anglican Communion,” in the context of a perceived, incipient “synthesis,” in the 20th century, of the fragmentation of Christian truth.

In the third installment of this series I will do something similar: because it remains, in 2010 as in 1947, “the immediate duty of Christians ... to become aware of the loss of ‘wholeness’ which characterizes the present state of Christendom.”

*Christopher Wells*



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news



Clark Patterson photo  
The Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J., editor of  
*America*, with Archbishop Williams.

(Archbishop, from page 4)

ica House, the magazine's headquar-  
ters in Manhattan.

"The intimacy added to people's  
action to his very moving address,"  
Fr. Martin told THE LIVING CHURCH. "It  
was as if we were hearing a private  
reflection from a deep and holy man,  
rather than a public address. He  
seems to be everything church lead-  
ers should be: Prayerful, well edu-  
cated, faithful, empathetic and rooted  
in the gospel."

*Douglas LeBlanc*

## Warm Reception at Orthodox Seminary

The Archbishop of Canterbury con-  
cluded a week of meetings in greater  
New York City by offering theological  
reflections to an overflow audience at  
St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological  
Seminary in Yonkers.

In delivering the seminary's annual  
Alexander Schmemmann Memorial  
Lecture on Jan. 30, Archbishop  
Rowan Williams spoke on the topic  
of "Theology and the Contemplative  
Calling: The Image of Humanity in  
the *Philokalia*." The *Philokalia* is a  
collection of monastic writings by  
great saints of the Eastern Church,  
dating from the 4th to the 14th cen-  
tury, and generally centered on the  
topics of asceticism, prayer and

renewing oneself in God.

Archbishop Williams focused his  
remarks on the "natural state," that  
is, the wholly good state in and for  
which God created human beings.  
The *Philokalia* teaches that our nat-  
ural state is of living in full commu-  
nion and mutual love with God the  
Creator, Archbishop Williams said,  
but our fallen or "unnatural" state  
can interfere. He said the watchful-  
ness that the *Philokalia* requires is to  
"be aware of the moment this basic  
human consciousness can become  
diabolical."

Quoting from the *Philokalia*, the  
archbishop repeated a vivid metaphor  
by the fifth-century ascetic Diadochos  
of Photiki: "We are like a man facing  
east at dawn, in winter. The sun rises,  
and warms him at his front, while he  
is still aware of the chill at his back.  
But the sun is rising."

"I was tempted to call this lecture  
'Looking East in Winter,'" the arch-  
bishop quipped.

Archbishop Williams spent most of  
the day on the St. Vladimir's campus,  
attending a Hierarchical Divine  
Liturgy in the chapel and enjoying a  
private brunch with the faculty. He  
was welcomed to the seminary by the  
Rev. John Behr, dean; the Rev. Chad  
Hatfield, chancellor; and His Beati-  
tude, Metropolitan Jonah, Primate of  
the Orthodox Church in America.

Metropolitan Jonah expressed his  
gratitude that the archbishop "deeply  
understands what is at the very core  
of Orthodox Christianity."

Metropolitan Jonah emphasized  
the longstanding relationship of  
mutual respect and support that the  
Church of England and the Orthodox  
Church have enjoyed. The Metropol-  
itan expressed his desire for this rela-  
tionship to continue, and spoke hope-  
fully of unity in Communion between  
the two churches.

"May God multiply your efforts,"  
Metropolitan Jonah told Archbishop  
Williams, "and strengthen you in all  
that you do."

*Stephen Mathewes*

# Heart Language

“If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9)

BCP: Deut. 26:(1-4) 5-11; Psalm 91 or 91:9-15; Rom. 10:(5-8a) 8b-13; Luke 4:1-13  
 RCL: Deut. 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Rom. 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

Our Sunday readings in Lent recall the season's ancient focus as a time for preparing candidates for baptism. Many of the readings illuminate different aspects of the paschal mystery that we celebrate in Holy Week and that stands at the center of the baptismal liturgy.

Today's texts focus on the confession of faith, the statement of belief in God and his purposes that the grace of baptism seals and brings to life. Both our Old Testament and epistle texts contain creeds, perhaps the earliest and most fundamental statements of faith in the two parts of the Bible.

Moses' directions in Deuteronomy are part of a liturgy for the harvest thanksgiving. As the worshiper presents the first fruits, he tells an ancient

story. “A wandering Aramean was my father,” he begins, tracing the story of his people back to Jacob. The growth of the nation is recalled, the slavery in Egypt, God's great miracle of deliverance and the gift of the land. Every worshiper, at every harvest points back to the great story of salvation that is continuing in the grace shown by God in this new gift of fruitfulness in the promised land.

In the same way, Paul points back to the core of the Christian gospel: Christ as the Lord of all, risen from the dead. Perhaps it was the first baptismal creed, a simple statement of loyalty by a new believer. “Jesus will be my Lord as well,” the new convert was saying, “I place my trust in that love of the Father that brought him back from the dead.”

Creeds are not bare statements of abstract religious truths. As Diana Eck has pointed out, the language of faith is “heart language.” *Credo* literally means, “I give my heart” and *believe* comes from the Old English, *belove*. The confessions in today's lessons (like the Catholic Creeds) are stories — stories of God who has given his heart to us, who has reached out in love to save and deliver us. They are the stories that give meaning to our own stories, the convictions that give us joy and purpose. We confess the creeds because we love the God they describe, and we want to be loyal to him. We need our creeds. We need to confess our faith every Sunday, every day, even, to turn our focus back to the truth, to discover again that God loves us and saves us.

Look It Up: Can Jesus' responses to Satan in our gospel lesson be understood as a kind of creed?

Think About It: Is the phrase “non-credal Christian” an oxymoron?

## Next Sunday **Second Sunday in Lent (Year C), February 28, 2010**

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

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The Rev. **Ross McGowan Wright** is rector of Good Shepherd, 4206 Springhill Ave., Richmond, VA 23225.

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### Retirements

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The Rev. **Hartshorn Murphy**, as rector of St. Augustine's, Santa Monica, CA.

The Rev. **James Ransom**, as rector of Trinity, Towson, MD.

The Rev. **Elizabeth Stingley**, as vicar of St. Hilary's, Hesperia, CA.

### Deaths

The Rev. Canon **Richard W. Wilson**, a priest of the Diocese of Louisiana, died Jan. 25 after a brief illness. He was 81.

Born in New Orleans, he studied at Tulane University and General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon in 1954 and priest in 1955. Fr. Wilson was vicar of three missions in Louisiana before he became rector of St. Thomas', Monroe, LA, in 1961, where he also was chaplain at Northeast Louisiana University. He served nine years as archdeacon of the Diocese of Northwest Texas. He was vicar of Holy Cross, Lubbock, TX, 1981-85; and rector of St. Matthew's, Covington, TN, from 1986 until his retirement in 1994. Canon Wilson was a priest associate of the Order of the Holy Cross for Men and the Order of St. Helena for Women. He is survived by his brother, Donald, and several nephews.

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**Correction:** The Rev. S. Thomas Kincaid III, who wrote "On the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ" [TLC, Jan. 31], was identified as a deacon. He was ordained recently as a priest.



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**CHURCH DIRECTORY KEY** Light face type denotes AM, bold face PM; add, address; anno, announced; A-C, Ante-Communion; appt., appointment; B, Benediction; C, Confessions; Cho, Choral; Ch S, Church School; c, curate; d, deacon, d.r.e., director of religious education; EP, Evening Prayer; Eu, Eucharist; Ev, Evensong; ex, except; 1S, 1st Sunday; hol, holiday; HC, Holy Communion; HD, Holy Days; HS, Healing Service; HU, Holy Unction; Instr, Instructions; Int, Intercessions; LOH, Laying On of Hands; Lit, Litany; Mat, Matins; MP, Morning Prayer; P, Penance; r, rector; r-em, rector emeritus; Ser, Sermon; Sol, Solemn; Sta, Stations; V, Vespers; v, vicar; YPF, Young People's Fellowship. A/C, air-conditioned; H/A, handicapped accessible.

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