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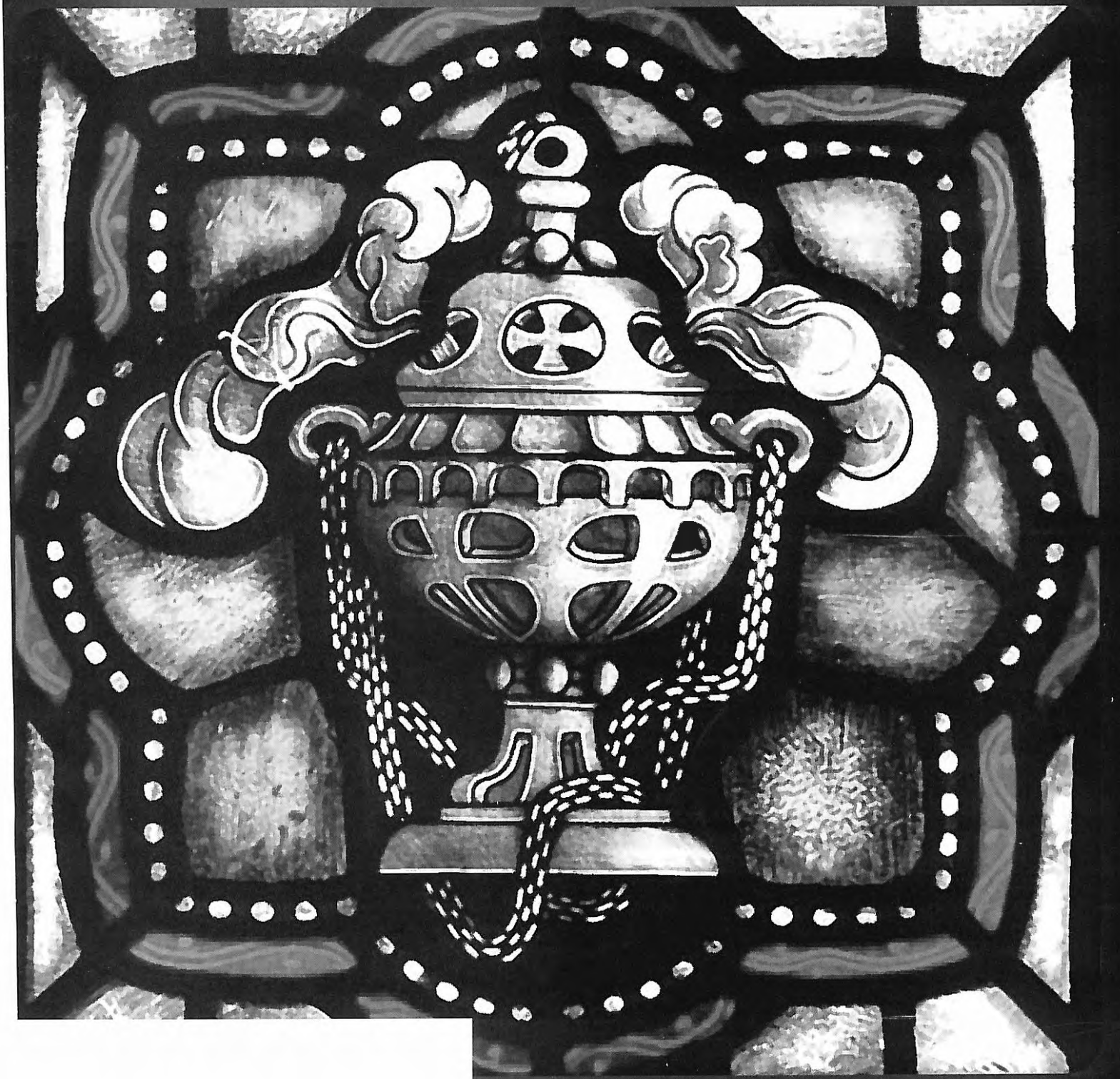

Senses in the Liturgy

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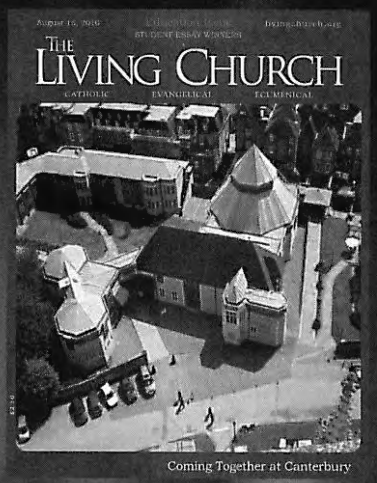

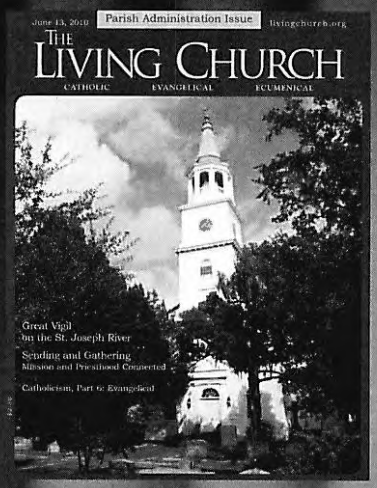

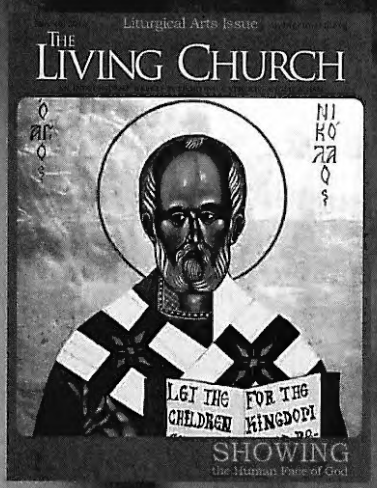

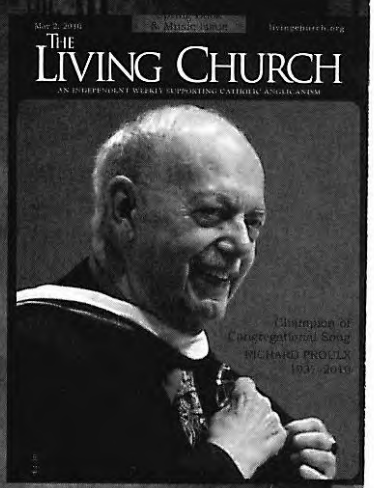

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Stained-glass depiction of a thurible at St. Ignatius' Roman Catholic Church, Chestnut Hill, Mass.

THE LIVING CHURCH

this week | October 3, 2010

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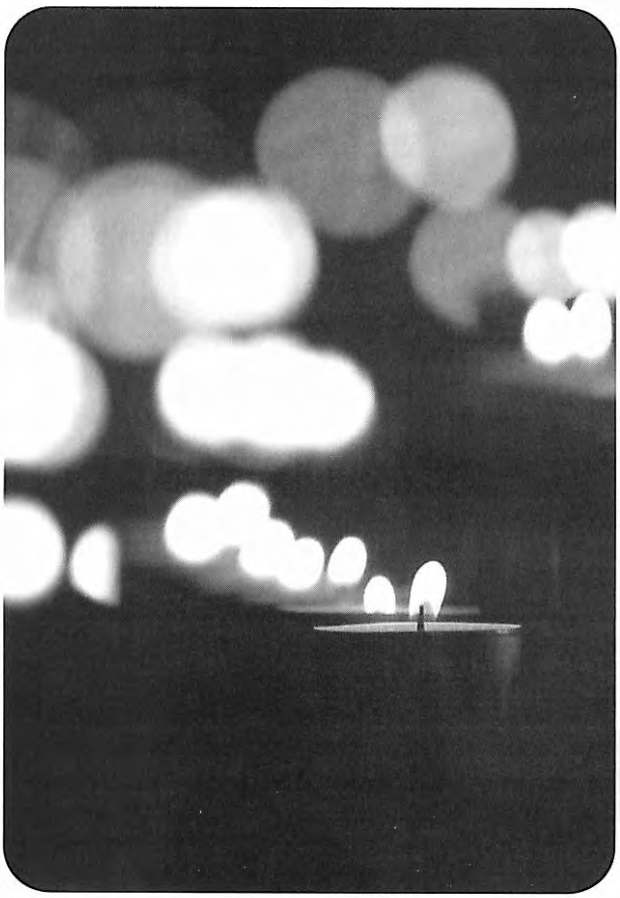

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The Living Church is published by the Living Church Foundation. Our historic mission in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion is to support and promote the Catholic and evangelical faith of the one Church, to the end of visible Christian unity throughout the world.

Bishop Chane:
'We Are an Angry Country'

Opposition to building an Islamic cultural center near the site of the former World Trade Center springs from those "who feel threatened by what they do not understand and by what they have not had time to process," according to the Rt. Rev. John B. Chane, Bishop of Washington.

"In many ways, our psyche as a nation was attacked," Chane said during "Park51 Islamic Center Near Ground Zero: Issues in Conflict," a panel discussion held Sept. 7 at Georgetown University.

The Bush administration's response of "anger and aggression" toward Osama Bin Laden after the 9/11 terrorist strikes left "no time for the nation to grieve at all," Chane said. "We are an angry country."

The 90-minute discussion sometimes revealed substantially differing opinions among the four panelists.

Dr. John Esposito, a Georgetown University professor and founder of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, said that "the voices of demagogues and hate speech often drown out" more moderate opponents. He called for Americans to denounce members of their political parties who engage in such speech.

Dr. Intisar Rabb, assistant professor of law at Boston College, spoke of a misunderstanding of Islamic law by many Americans: "Rather than equating Shariah with harshness and violence ... it behooves us to find out what Shariah actually is." She said American Muslims, particularly those "most active in the public square," see Shariah as "an ideal moral code that invites its adherents to champion the best values."

"When we get into the uncomfortable issues, fear arises," Bishop Chane said about interfaith dialogue.

Some American Muslims define Shariah more harshly, Rabb said, but "they really are marginal." She described as "scary" the "strained interpretations of a minority that happen to agree with [former House Speaker] Newt Gingrich and [former vice-presidential candidate] Sarah Palin."

Dr. Thomas Farr, visiting associate professor of religion and international affairs at Georgetown, dissented from arguments made by Rabb and Chane. "Other interpretations [of Shariah and jihad] are dominant" among some Muslim groups, he said. "We shouldn't

run from discussions of religion and violence." He disagreed with Chane that "there is a climate of fear in the United States."

Farr repeatedly expressed concern that mosque opponents are too often inaccurately characterized as radicals or bigots. "We do need a civil discourse on both sides," he said.

The four panelists also disagreed on whether Park51 should be built. Farr supported the constitutional right of Muslims to build the center and argued that Christian conservatives were "making a huge mistake in failing to credit" religious-freedom arguments in favor of its construction.

But Farr also said there were wise reasons not to build the center and urged its supporters to "take more seriously the predominant argument against it": that it is a painful issue for families and friends of those who were lost in the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The bishop cited a question by *Newsweek*'s religion editor, Lisa Miller: "Does being American mean holding the personal pain of some above the constitutional rights of others?" If Americans give greater weight to personal pain than to constitutional rights, "we put democracy at risk," Chane said.

Esposito called religious discrimination "a threat to our very democratic way of life."

Rabb said she was "offended by the sensitivity argument" offered by Farr, adding that it reminded her of arguments against civil rights for African Americans. The Park51 controversy "raises fundamental questions about how we want to" define ourselves and engage with others from different backgrounds, she said.

Both Farr and Chane expressed disappointment with the Obama administration's handling of the controversy. Farr charged the administration with having "utterly abandoned" the cause of "religious freedom [for] Muslims around the world," even as it has defended the rights of American Muslims.

Chane and Esposito recommended educating Americans on Islam. Esposito said "a significant number of Americans have continued, year after year, to show both no admiration for, and no knowledge of, Islam."

To reverse the trend, Esposito advocated putting "more pressure on the media." Chane was skeptical about that idea, given how many religion reporters have lost their jobs in recent years.

Rabb found hope in personal friendships and religious education. "The public profile of Islam, even though it is a negative one now, is an opportunity" to motivate people to meet their Muslim neighbors, Rabb told THE LIVING CHURCH. "Christian leaders have a responsibility to educate their own cohorts."

Chane expressed doubt about the effectiveness of more dialogue on Islam. "There has not been a good deal of progress because when we get into the uncomfortable issues," fear arises, he said. "So we get to a point and then nothing happens."

Still, he told THE LIVING CHURCH that he sees value for dialogue "where it has not occurred." Such dialogue needs to be marked by a serious engagement with Muslims — not only "about our religious similarities and differences, but also about the pain."

Ralph Webb, in Washington, D.C.

S.C. Diocese Considers Canonical Changes

A reconvened convention of the Diocese of South Carolina will vote Oct. 15 on five resolutions that distance the diocese from some decisions of the 76th General Convention.

Most of the proposed changes in the five resolutions reject a vastly revised version of Title IV that General Convention approved in 2009.

"These Canons deal directly with issues of clergy discipline, both for

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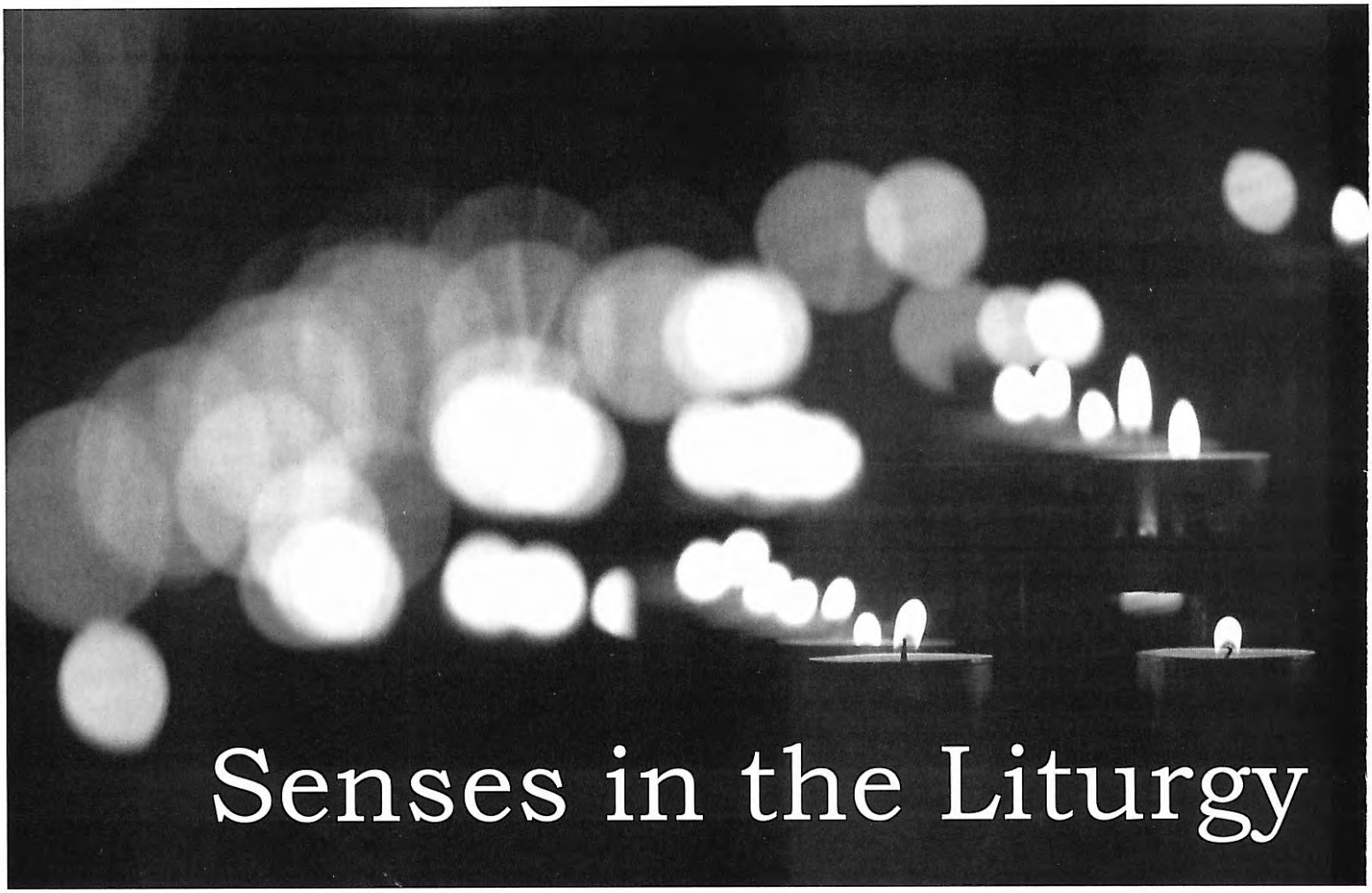


Senses in the Liturgy

By Richard R. Losch

The term *liturgy* comes from the Greek for "work of the people," and it refers directly to the worship of the Church. Liturgy is much more than just the formal words that we find in prayer books and service guides. It embraces everything that is involved in worship, including not only our words but also all that we experience in a worship service. While the liturgy of the Church is rich in spiritual and theological traditions, it is also rich in its appeal to the five senses of human nature: seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting. A liturgical event that fails to involve all the senses is incomplete, because it leaves out a part of what makes us human.

Seeing. Art and architecture and traditional liturgy appeal richly to sight. In church buildings we are surrounded by a plethora of visual stimuli — stained glass, carvings, statuary, paintings, vestments, and richly decorated hangings in the color of the season. Some have argued that there is no justification for the expense of monuments and decorations in churches, that the money would be better spent ministering to the poor. On the other hand, it has been calculated that if all the money spent on Notre Dame Cathedral over its 800 years of building were distributed equally among the poor of Paris, each person would receive a cup of flour. Yet the poor can freely enter that magnificent house of God, stretch out their arms and savor the glory of the place, saying, "This is mine!" It is one of the few places where they can escape the squalor of their daily lives.

Another very important visual part of the liturgy is the physical movement of the priest and other servants at the altar. The liturgy is a sacred dance, choreographed by centuries of tradition. When properly executed with grace and dignity, it is beautiful and spiritually stimulating.

Hearing. The role of sound in the liturgy is basic to all worship, from the strictest Reformed customs to the most opulent ceremonial of Catholic traditions. Hearing involves not only the preaching of the word but also music and liturgical prayers of both leaders and congregation.

Feeling. This sense enters into liturgical worship in the physical movements of the people. These include the rhythm of standing, kneeling and sitting, as well as other reverent motions such as bowing, genuflecting, and making the sign of the cross. Physical movement serves a dual purpose. It keeps the people involved in the service rather than simply sitting

through it as observers, and draws them back when their minds wander. It is natural for the mind to wander, and physical activity during the service significantly reduces this.

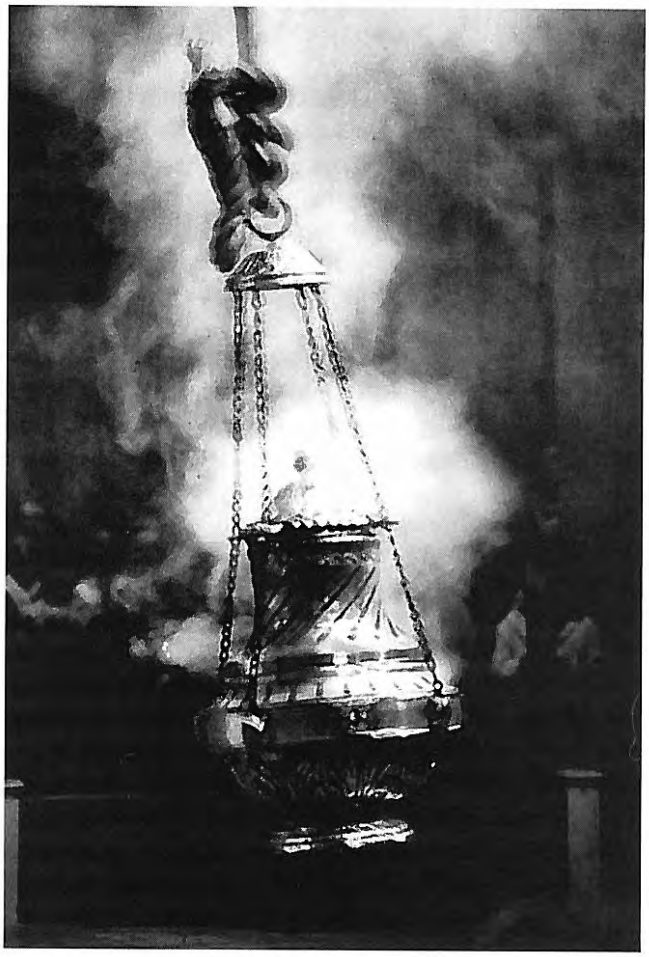
This happens to priests as well. When priests have celebrated the Mass thousands of times, the words begin to flow so easily that their minds can readily wander. The prayers are accompanied by a great many physical actions called "manual acts." Although these come automatically after years of doing them, each act tends to pull the priest back to a full awareness of the liturgical moment.

By tradition, we stand for praise, kneel for prayer and sit for instruction, which has inspired joking references to "aerobic Christians." Until the time of the Reformation, few churches had seats of any kind except for the clergy and some of the other important participants in the liturgy. All others stood, kneeling only to receive Communion and to make their confession. With the advent of the Reformation and lengthy sermons, congregations began sitting.

For at least 400 years, however, it has been the Anglican tradition to kneel for prayer. Recently the Roman Catholic Church has reverted to the practice of standing for most prayers. This practice is also common in the Orthodox churches, in many of which the congregations have never had seats. Some Anglicans have emulated this practice, and stand through the Eucharistic prayer.

Among other physical acts are genuflection (literally "bending the knee"), bowing, and making the sign of the cross. Genuflection is briefly kneeling on one knee as an act of reverence. This is most commonly done in the presence of the blessed sacrament. It is proper to "reverence" the altar whenever passing it. This is generally done by genuflecting (if the sacrament is present) or by bowing (if not). This is an acknowledgment that the altar is the place where the holy sacrifice takes place. There is also a very old Anglican tradition of bowing when the cross passes during processions. This comes from a custom of procession with the cross from the altar rather than with a separate processional cross. Bowing to the cross is symbolic of reverencing the altar.

A more personal physical act is making the sign of the cross by touching the forehead, breast, left shoulder and right shoulder. It is generally done with the first two fingers and the thumb together, denoting the Trinity. It is not customary to "go back to the middle," although many people do so. It is also common to see people kiss their thumb after making the sign of the cross, although this is also not considered correct. It comes from the practice of starting the rosary by making the sign of the cross with the crucifix, then kissing it. The sign of the cross denotes dedicating one's mind, body, heart, and soul to Christ. There is no simple rule for when the sign of the cross should be used, although it is customarily done at the beginning and end of a time of prayer, at any reference to a blessing upon oneself, and at any reference to the dead.



There are a number of times in the Eucharist when it is traditional.

A very ancient use of the sense of feeling disappeared from the Church centuries ago and then was restored in more modern times, namely, "passing the peace." It is based on several passages in the New Testament, particularly "Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ" (1 Pet. 5:14). In ancient times it was done with a kiss on the cheek.

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Those who are reserved about hugging and kissing simply greet one another with a handshake and words to the effect of "the peace of Christ be with you."

The peace is a simple greeting of brothers and sisters in Christ, and is not a time for conversation or socializing. It emphasizes that we are a corporate Church — we are all one in Christ — and not merely a gathering of individuals in one place, worshiping privately and individually. Many people consider worship, even public worship, a very private affair, but "just you and me, God" has no place in Christian worship.

Touching has also been essential in the transmission of Holy Orders throughout history. While the imparting of sacerdotal authority is spiritual, it is symbolized by the physical laying on of hands. Insistence on this physical contact has helped guard the continuity of the episcopate throughout history. This continuity is known as apostolic succession or the historic episcopate, and has symbolically been passed throughout the centuries by the laying on of hands.

Similarly, the bishop physically lays hands on priests and deacons at ordination, and on confirmands in confirmation. A man and woman join hands to symbolize their unity in holy matrimony. In the sacraments of holy baptism and holy unction, and often in pronouncing a personal blessing, the priest physically traces the sign of the cross on the person's forehead.

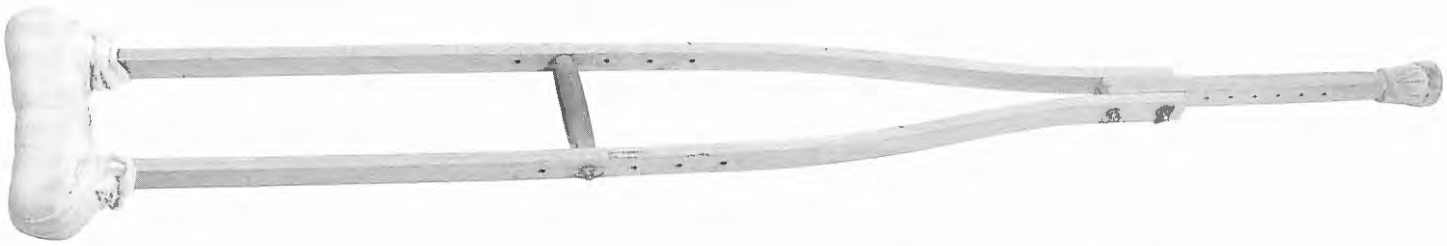
Smelling. The burning of fragrant resins goes back well into prehistory, and has been used in every known religion. The pagan concept was that prayers were carried to the gods on sweet-smelling smoke, but the Jews recognized the silliness of this thinking in their earliest stages of development. Incense was burned in the temple perpetually, simply as an offering of a "sweet-smelling savor" to God as an act of reverence. Flowers also sometimes stimulate the sense of smell, but their fragrance is incidental (and, in most hothouse flowers today, non-existent). It is not an intentional olfactory stimulus as the incense is.

Tasting. In Christian liturgy, taste is stimulated in the Holy Communion, when we receive the consecrated elements of bread and wine into our mouths. This is in fulfillment of Christ's commands to "Take, eat" and "Drink this, all of you." The sacred banquet pervades Christian symbolism, including the teachings of Jesus. "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Ps. 34:8).

In ancient tradition the sense of taste is also stimulated in our entry into the Church, in holy baptism, although the practice is fading from common use today. For centuries a few grains of salt were placed on the infant's tongue as part of the baptismal ceremony, accompanied by these words: "You are the salt of the earth: but if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? Receive the salt, which is the symbol of wisdom."

God speaks to us and deals with us in terms we can understand. The state of everlasting life in the presence of God, as glorious as the concept may be, is beyond our comprehension. It is communicated to us on a level we can grasp: our earthly senses. A beautiful sight, an uplifting sound, a gentle touch, a delightful odor, the sweet taste of the heavenly banquet — all these work together in the liturgy to bring us to a deeper experience of God's love.

The Rev. Richard R. Losch, rector emeritus of St. James' Church, Livingston, Ala., is author of All the People in the Bible: An A-Z Guide to the Saints, Scoundrels, and Other Characters in Scripture.



Limping Toward 2020

By Kevin Martin

In the year 2000, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted a domestic mission imperative called "20/20: A Clear Vision." This action endorsed the recommendation of the Standing Commission on Evangelism that the church develop a systematic effort to double membership in our denomination by the year 2020.

The roots of this resolution were formed at a series of five "Clear Vision Conferences" held in the Diocese of Texas from 1996 to 2001. At these conferences, a coalition of dioceses, large and small, liberal and conservative, shared insights into how to develop and grow, particularly through the actions of diocesan leadership.

It is fairly safe to say that, when this resolution reached the floor of General Convention, it was like the proverbial apple pie resolution. Who could really be against it, even if few were enthusiastic about it? It is also true that a growing number of church leaders realized that something needed to be done about the declining membership of our denomination and that places like the Diocese of Texas had made substantial headway in growth, leadership development, congregational development, new church planting, and substantially rethinking the function of a judicatory toward a more mission-focused future.

I was asked (because of my involvement as congregational development officer in the Diocese of Texas) to be part of a very diverse but small task force commissioned with creating a strategy to make the 20/20 vision happen. In two remarkable and creative years, we did just that. We put together a vision for "one church" working together in mission and strengthening our church's life. It had eight key components.

The 20/20 task force was a remarkable group of people. Though there were only eight of us initially, the people represented an amazing diversity of the Episcopal Church:

- The president of the Union of Black Episcopalians
- The daughter of an Episcopal priest
- Two prominent national lay leaders
- The son of one of the most famous Episcopal biblical scholars
- The first Hispanic elected a bishop of the Episcopal Church
- A bishop with deep ties to the Church in Wales
- A poet
- Three authors
- Two former members of Executive Council
- Two strong advocates for full inclusion of gay and lesbian people
- Two strong advocates for the Church's traditional teachings on marriage
- A national speaker and church consultant
- Eight diocesan leaders
- Self-identified progressives, conservatives, broad church, evangelical, and Anglo-Catholic members
- People from the West, East, North, South, and Latin America

We began to put together a strategy and possible legislative actions that would enable the resolution from

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the 2000 General Convention to double the size of the Episcopal Church by the year 2020. You might think that such a diverse group would have difficulty staying in the same room together, let alone taking on such a daunting task. Two dynamics held us together.

First, we all truly loved the Episcopal Church. We had been blessed by its life and ministry. We had a long connection to its history. We had served it for many years. Our love for the church was a strong bond. Second, we believed that the Episcopal Church could grow by attracting people from diverse segments of the U.S. population because we had all been part of growing congregations. We were essentially optimistic about the church's future.

At first we were not sure if the task before us was possible. We were well aware that the Episcopal Church had been in decline since the mid-1960s. We knew that all mainline denominations were in decline and that the dynamics driving this decline might make changing our direction impossible. We knew that the affirmation to double our size had been passed by the General Convention, but not embraced widely.

At first we were not sure if the task before us was possible.

We knew we had the support of Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold and House of Deputies President George Werner. Both these officers met with us early on, and Dean Werner gave us consistent encouragement. We also had the very able assistance of the Rev. Charles Fulton, president of the Church Building Fund and national church officer for congregational development.

We also developed a reasonable and logical path for our work. We realized early on that to grow the church, which meant a turnaround, we had to understand the trends and dynamics of our denomination. We started with study and information, realizing early on that growth and decline of a denomination is a complex issue. We knew that for 20/20 to work, we would need to develop a strategic plan that addressed a number of issues.

When the initial report was presented to Executive Council, it received a generally favorable response with only one negative vote. Some thought it was too broad and sweeping. Some thought it too definitive and practical. More important, the member of the council who voted against it and had called it "an evangelical Trojan horse" set out to derail the initial report. Because of his political clout, he was able within 24 hours to reverse the initial acceptance of the report and use a technicality to table any action.

Bishop Griswold and Dean Warner decided that this initiative should not be sabotaged by a parliamentarian maneuver. They overrode the council, and expanded the task force to 66, including younger voices and voices of gay and lesbian persons. Although the initial task force was racially and culturally diverse, our leaders believered it was not the right kind of diversity.

This wider task force was charged with extending the initial report and preparing legislation for the 2003 General Convention to empower the 20/20 report. I served on this second task force, as did Katharine Jefferts Schori, then Bishop of Nevada. The task force subdivided around the eight themes and found practical ways to keep the resolutions alive.

Of the numerous resolutions, only a very few made it through the 2003 General Convention because that year the church was caught up in the controversy over the consent to the election of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire and numerous issues concerning human sexuality. Part of the 20/20 vision had been the truth that mission united us and issues divided us. Since 2003, issues have divided us. While some leaders say we are still doing 20/20 mission, most people in the wider church know this initiative was dead on arrival.

As a consequence, we have returned to our long-standing decline. In only a few more years, the very viability of our church's structure will begin to be called into question — the signs are already there. In the years that followed 2003, I have come to the conclusion that the Episcopal Church is headed toward about 1 million members in 2020, an average Sunday attendance around 400,000 and around 6,000 mainly small congregations. The 20/20 initiative was, among all things, a concerted effort to bring revitalization and growth to a long declining mainline church. It failed and we are now faced with an institutional decline that, save a direct intervention and miracle by God, cannot be reversed. There is insufficient leadership, desire, or institutional will to change.

The failure of the 20/20 initiative, combined with the subsequent controversy around human sexuality, has placed our community in a very precarious position. I am not suggesting that we return to the 20/20 initiative, but I do believe that our community urgently needs to address our current realities and find leaders who can point us toward a more hopeful future.

The Very Rev. Kevin Martin is dean of St. Matthew's Cathedral, Dallas, Texas.

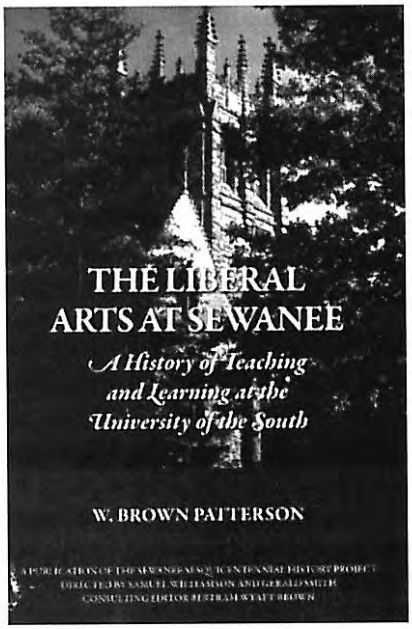
The Liberal Arts at Sewanee

A History of Teaching and Learning at the University of the South

By **W. Brown Patterson**. The Sesquicentennial History Project
Pp. 206. $18, softcover. ISBN 978-0918769589.

In this account of the University of the South's development during 150 years, W. Brown Patterson, dean emeritus of the College of Arts and Sciences, uses its history of teaching and learning as a way of reflecting on the nature and purpose of education, particularly at a Church-related institution. He does this by emphasizing continuity in the midst of change. In adapting creatively to a changing context, Patterson argues, Sewanee has shown a remarkable consistency of purpose and orientation.

As Patterson relates, the Episcopal bishops who founded Sewanee in the 1850s envisioned a regionally based institution that would serve national and even international purposes. Consistent with the ideal of a university emerging at the time, it would promote the collaborative search for truth of all kinds, including religious truth. Leaders determined early on that, far from being narrowly sectarian, the university would exhibit the breadth and freedom of inquiry that were hallmarks of Anglicanism. By fostering each person's development in mind, body, and spirit, it would enable each to serve both God and humankind.



This purpose, as Patterson tells it, has been reaffirmed time and again, even as circumstances required the university to concentrate on what have become its classic constituent parts: the Sewanee Academy (until 1981); the College of Arts and Sciences; and the School of Theology. The curriculum has been changed from time to time, but it has always emphasized educational breadth as well as depth, even at the graduate level. Faculty and students, as an academic community, are to collaborate in an open-ended search for truth.

The School of Theology, for example, would never be captive to any single viewpoint, "whether evangelical, liberal, or Anglo-Catholic" (p. 52). Over time, both the college and the School of Theology have expanded their range of subjects and the range of people involved in response to a rapidly changing world.

According to Patterson, the purpose of education, as Sewanee has seen and promoted it, is nothing less than the liberation of individuals and communities from the tyranny of the present: the tyranny of thinking that we have arrived at the pinnacle of knowledge and understanding. From this ideal perspective, education prepares one for life itself, which should involve an ongoing quest "not only for knowledge, but for truth" (p. 145).

With this in mind, the university has stimulated such inquiry not only among its current students but also in the larger Church and world — through, for example, the publication of *The Sewanee Review*, founded in 1892; the program of lay theological education now known as Education for Ministry, begun in 1975; and the Sewanee Writers' Conference, begun in 1990, supported by a generous bequest from the late Tennessee Williams.

Patterson is the first to admit that Sewanee is still striving to realize its high aims. Nevertheless, the evidence he presents shows that it has made significant progress in the last century and a half. Its history can teach us much about education, and about life.

(The Rev. Dr.) J. Russell Snapp
Trinity Cathedral
Little Rock, Ark.

Filled with Hope

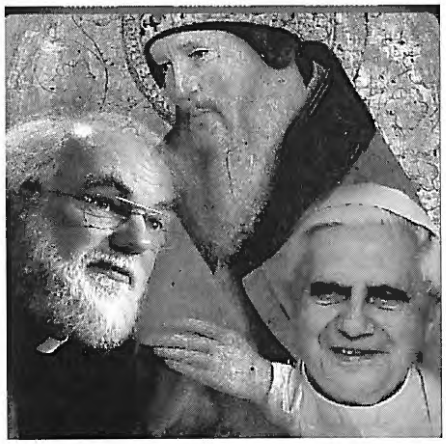
The cover art of the Sept. 5 issue grabbed my attention immediately. Without seeing the inscription, I guessed it was St. Augustine embracing those two holy men. Then the inscription shouted at me: "United by Postmodern Critical Augustinianism."

"Theology of Hope" by the Rev. Dr. Brian Crowe can indeed give us hope that one day, as we say in the Creed, we will be "one holy catholic and apostolic Church" under the leadership of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

In one sense, I was prepared for this article. Two weeks ago I had a Jacob dream of sorts. I dreamed I was wrestling — not with a human being, but wrestling nevertheless. As with Jacob, next morning I was limping from a pain in the sinew between the hip and the thigh. What did it mean? I had been wrestling with the dilemma of either joining an Anglican church or staying with Christ Episcopal Church, which I love for numerous reasons, not the least being our rector's sermons.

The answer arrived with TLC and Dr. Crowe's essay based on Anglican theologian John Milbank's belief that Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams share a "similar sort of theology ... rooted in the legacy of Augustine and the recovery of authentic patristic and high medieval tradition."

Dr. Crowe believes in a potential of renewal for Rome and Canterbury. I take it further. I see these two God-centered men, in devout



humility, taking a giant step, indeed a "leap for mankind," by announcing to the world the union of their respective church families, simply for love of God and their belief in what he can do if we ask him.

Ruth M. Gill
Bradenton, Fla.

(Continued from page 5)

priests and bishops," said an item in a *News Around the Diocese* email. "The impact of these changes is profound. It is our assessment that these changes contradict the Constitution of The Episcopal Church and make unacceptable changes in our polity, elevating the role of bishops, particularly the Presiding Bishop, and removing the duly elected Standing Committee of a Diocese from its current role in most of the disciplinary process. The changes also result in the removal of much of the due process and legal safeguards for accused clergy that are provided under the current Canons."

The brief item linked to a 13-page document explaining the changes. One noteworthy proposed change: Deleting the canon that the diocese holds all property in trust for the Episcopal Church.

Duquesne Honors Sewanee Professor

The Rev. Dr. Robert Davis Hughes III of the University of the South's School of Theology has received the first des Places-Libermann Award in Pneumatology from Duquesne University.

The award is named for Fr. Claude-François Poullart des Places and the Venerable François Marie Paul Libermann, two founders of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans). The Pittsburgh-based Roman Catholic university established the award "to honor the individual who has made the most significant scholarly contribution to the area of pneumatology in the preceding five year period."

Pneumatology refers to theological study of the Holy Spirit. Hughes delivered the sixth Holy Spirit Lecture and Colloquium Sept. 17. During that event, Duquesne honored his book *Beloved Dust: Tides of the Spirit in Christian Life* (2008). Continuum Books describes *Beloved Dust* as taking a "realistic and contemporary view of human being as entirely physical (dust) and then shows it immersed in three great tides of the Holy Spirit, the traditional threefold rhythm of conversion, transfiguration, and glory."

Hughes is a professor of systematic theology and holds an endowed chair as Norma and Olan Mills Professor of Divinity. He has taught at Sewanee since 1977. He also has written "The Holy Spirit in Christian Spirituality" for *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (2005).

A Glorious Hope

"The righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4)

BCP: Hab. 1:1-6 (7-11) 12-13; 2:1-4; Psalm 37:1-18 or 37:3-10; 2 Tim. 1:(1-5) 6-14; Luke 17:5-10
RCL: Lam. 1:1-6; Lam. 3:19-26 or Psalm 137; or Hab. 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Psalm 37:1-10; 2 Tim. 1:1-14; Luke 17:5-10

It wasn't the kind of answer he wanted. The faithful prophet Habakkuk cried out for God to judge his corrupt people, to end the violence, preserve the weak and restore justice. "How long shall I cry to you 'violence,'" he pleads, "and you will not save?"

Justice would be on its way, God promised, recompense against Judah's wicked rulers, but by the bluntest of instruments. "I am rousing the Chaldeans," he declared, "that fierce and impetuous nation." Swift as leopards they speed towards the prey. They slaughter nations like a fisherman nets his catch — "guilty men, whose own might is their god."

What kind of answer was that? If the Chaldeans conquered Jerusalem, what future could there be for God's people? Wouldn't this kind of devastation prove that God was too weak to save his people, that Marduk of Babylon was the true king of gods? Habakkuk folds his hands, and cries out again, "I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint."

Another answer soon comes, not an easy one, but a word of hope. The proud will not prevail, God promises. Ultimately they will meet their just end, "but the righteous will live by faith." God will sustain those who trust him. Through all the perils of conquest and exile, he will still hold them tightly. There will be a future for God's promises. The covenant will not perish. The psalmist repeats the same promise. "Fret not yourself because of evildoers ... commit your way to him ... Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

Paul urged Timothy to that same kind of faithful perseverance, holding fast to God's promises. Though in chains, he still lives by faith, and speaks with boldness, "I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me." Jesus commends just this kind of faith to his disciples, promising that it will lift up deep-rooted sycamores and cast them into the sea.

God does not promise his people worldly success, or easy answers to the quandaries of existence. He doesn't attend them like a snappy waiter or dole out special favors for obeying his will. But for those who cling fast to him in trials, there will be a future, a glorious hope which nothing of this world can destroy. The faith forged in adversity will not fail; indeed it is the only way to true, abiding life.

Look It Up

Does Habakkuk mean the same thing by "faith" in 2:4 as Paul when he quotes the passage in Rom. 1:17?

Think About It

How have difficult times strengthened your faith?

Next Sunday **The Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 23C), October 10, 2010**

BCP: Ruth 1:(1-7)8-19a; Psalm 113; 2 Tim. 2:(3-7)8-15; Luke 17:11-19
RCL: Jer. 29:1, 4-7; Psalm 66:1-11 or 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c; Psalm 111; 2 Tim. 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

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People & Places

Appointments

The Rev. **Joan Grant** is rector of Christ Church, 215 Third Ave. E., Kalispell, MT 59901.

The Rev. **Jon W. Hall** is rector of St. Martin's, 15764 Clayton Rd., Ellisville, MO 63011-2212.

The Rev. **Eric Miller** is rector of Ascension and Holy Trinity, 334 Burns Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45215-4320.

The Rev. **Eric Mills** is rector of St. Anne's, 347 S. Libal St., DePere, WI 54115.

The Rev. **Ben T.S. Phillips** is rector of St. George's, 5520 Far Hills Ave., Dayton, OH 45429-2232.

The Rev. **Alton Plummer** is rector of Grace Church, 36200 Ridge Rd., Willoughby, OH 44094.

Religious Communities

Brotherhood of St. Andrew — Bo Alexander Armstrong and **Francis J. Bullock**, first profession; **Joseph B. Gauss, Thomas L. Greer, Richard Matthias** and **Nathaniel D. Rahm**, life profession.

Retirements

Sr. Columba, of the Sisters of the Holy Nativity, as chaplain at St. Agnes' Hospital, Fond du Lac, WI.

Deaths

The Rev. **Donald W. Beers**, 84, of Belvidere, NJ, died May 18. He was the executive assistant to the Episcopal Church's Suffragan Bishop for the Armed Forces from 1981 to his retirement in 1993.

Born in Newark, NJ, he earned degrees in mechanical engineering from Cornell University and Newark College of Engineering. He received a master of divinity degree from General Theological Seminary and was ordained priest and deacon in 1954. Later he received a doctorate from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He served in the U.S. Navy and Marines and was captain in the Navy Reserve Chaplain Corps, 1959-84. He was rector of St. Mary's, Ridgefield, NJ, 1954-59; vicar of St. Alban's, Oakland, NJ, 1959-66; rector of St. Luke's, Hope, NJ, 1966-81 and vicar of St Joseph's, Byram, NJ, 1967-81. He served on numerous committees in the Diocese of Newark. After retirement in 1993, he was a member of St. Mary's, Belvidere. He is survived by his wife, Teresa; daughters Barbara, Peg and Jude, and son, Robert; a brother, Roy; and many grandchildren.

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Mass Sun 8:30, 10:30 (Sung), Wed 10; MP/EP as posted

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Sun Eu 9

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