

THE LIVING CHURCH

December 22, 2013

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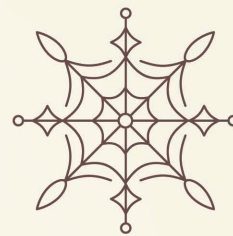
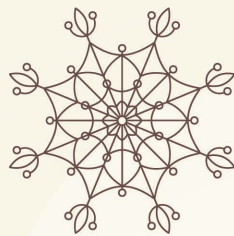
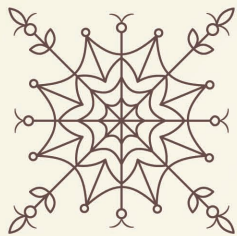
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ON THE COVER

We recognize the spiritual reality undergirding our physical existence. We are sincerely asking God to bless this place, and to keep it free from evil spirits (see “Our Blessed Place,” p. 22).



THE LIVING CHURCH

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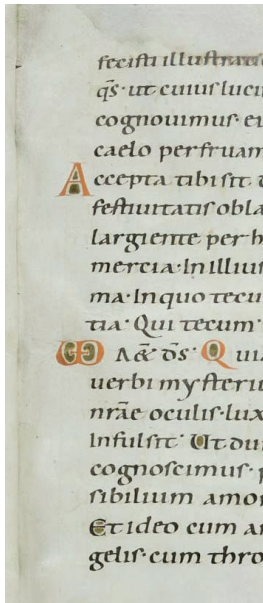
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Peace Breaks Out at Synod

By Gavin Drake

Almost exactly one year to the day that the Church of England's General Synod declined final approval for legislation that would have permitted women to be consecrated as bishops, the synod voted by an overwhelming majority to give first consideration to new legislation.

The anger, bitterness, and recriminations that followed last year's vote were absent in a debate that was marked instead by a willingness to understand the contrary position and a clear determination that the current draft legislation should be approved as soon as synodical processes will allow.

The previous attempt was dogged by arguments about the nature of the provision for those with theological objections to women bishops: Anglo-Catholics whose concerns centre largely on questions of sacramental assurance and conservative evangelicals whose primary concern is about headship.

The new proposed legislation is a package: the Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure simply provides that the C of E can legislate by canon to permit women to be bishops; the Draft Amending Canon Number 33 amends various existing canons to remove the prohibition on women being ordained as bishops and requires the House of Bishops to make regulations providing for a dispute resolution procedure if any party believes that the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests has been broken.

The proposals "look to the day when the Church of England as an ecclesial entity will have made a clear decision to open all orders of ministry to women and men without distinction, whereby all those so or-

daind are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy," said the Rt. Rev. James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester, as he moved the steering committee's report. "But they also look to us being the kind of church within which, that clear decision having been made, those who out of theological conviction take a different view on that matter may continue to flourish, playing a full part within the life and structures of our church."

He said that a vote for the motion before the synod was "a vote for this process to continue in a way that is purposeful, considered, consultative, transparent, hopefully reasonably swift but not over-hasty, and prayerful."

The package of proposals was welcomed by most campaigning groups, sometimes cautiously.

The proposals were "very significant improvements on the package that we had before us last year," said Canon Simon Killwick, chairman of the Catholic Group on General Synod. "Clearly, a great deal of trust is still required on all sides. ... And I do thank God that there is such a positive atmosphere of trust in the synod today."

"If anyone had told me that one year on from last November we would be where we are I would have said 'that's impossible,' but by the grace of God it has been possible and here we are," said Christina Rees, former chair of Women and the Church (WATCH).

"What we have in front of us works, and it works for all of us, no matter where we are coming from on this matter," said Prebendary David Houlding, a prominent Anglo-Catholic member of the synod. "Here we have a measure, plain and simple — a one-clause measure in effect — that will enable women to be consecrated without qualification or limit

to be admitted to the office of bishop. This must be good news. But there is equally good news in the declaration that will accompany it from the House of Bishops, which provides an ecclesial life and sacramental assurance that we have been arguing for over these past years."

He added: "We are all loyal Anglicans, and an honoured place is assured for all in these proposals. The battle, surely, is over. Let's now get on with the mission."

Others were more guarded. Susie Leafe, director of the conservative evangelical group Reform, said she could not say that "all was well" with the proposed measure and "cannot in good conscience" vote for the package of proposals.

"We claim that this package is designed to enable all to flourish, yet I and my church can only flourish once we have denied our theological convictions and accepted a woman as our chief pastor," she said. "You may say that we are offered the opportunity to accept pastoral and sacramental ministry from another bishop, but responsibility for this lies in the hands of a woman."

She said that the measure risked "alienating churches which are sending large numbers of men for ordination and whose churches are generally growing and whose congregations are generally youthful."

At the conclusion of the debate, 378 members of the synod voted in favour of the proposals. Just eight members voted against and there were 25 recorded abstentions. The synod voted to send the measure for "revision in the whole synod," effectively removing the revision committee stage. It is expected to return to the synod in February and could be sent to the dioceses for their approval then.

If a majority of dioceses give their

approval to the measure, it could receive final approval as early as July. It would then need the consent of both Houses of Parliament before it can receive royal assent and become law.

Gavin Drake is a freelance writer and broadcaster based in the English West Midlands.

A Cautious Step Leftward

“We warmly welcome and affirm the presence and ministry within the Church of gay and lesbian people, both lay and ordained,” declares the *Pilling Report*, a new Church of England document on same-sex relations published November 28.

The report is by the church’s Working Group on Sexuality chaired by Sir Joseph Pilling, a retired civil servant, whose resumé includes leading the challenging Northern Ireland Office. There was every indication that re-

lease of the report was accelerated because leaks had begun to appear in the media and on weblogs. One blogger posted a summary of the report’s main conclusions two weeks earlier, which turned out to be largely correct.

The *Pilling Report* takes a stance very similar to a policy recently approved in the Church of Scotland. It does not recommend centrally approved services to celebrate same-sex unions but it paves the way for clergy to arrange services in their parishes. It recommends, further, that in the next two years the church undertake comprehensive facilitated conversations.

The language of the report is careful and tentative. That is not how the media saw it, however, and immediately the headlines said the Church of England was poised to bless same-sex marriage. The report speaks of the need for “pastoral accommodation.” Nor indeed does it speak of “blessing” gay marriages,

even though this is the preferred term by the media.

The church, it says, needed to apologise for homophobic attitudes. It clarifies, however, that saying that the Bible prohibits active gay relations is not of itself homophobic. A statement issued on the same day by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York tried to emphasise the provisional nature of the report, saying it was “not a new policy statement from the Church of England.”

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement predictably said the report “did not go far enough to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or trans (LGB and T) people will feel included, welcomed and above all, safe within the church.”

Colin Coward of Changing Attitude sounded a similar theme: “Our Christian conviction is clear — ho-

(Continued on next page)



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A Cautious Step Leftward

(Continued from previous page)

homosexuality is not harmful. Christian homophobia and prejudice is deeply harmful and results in anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide, violence and murder, the result of social prejudice based on false Christian teaching."

The *Pilling Report* spells a huge challenge for Church of England evangelicals. Rod Thomas of Reform, a conservative network, said the report was "very divisive and distressing."

The Rt. Rev. Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead, is the lone dissenting member of the working group. "I conclude with great regret that the Report ... does not give an adequate account of biblical teaching," he wrote. "As a result, if adopted, it will cut the Church adrift from her Scriptural moorings and, by depriving her of a prophetic vision, allow her to be swept along by the currents of contemporary Western culture."

The day after the *Pilling Report* went public saw a less-hurried launch of a new website, Living Out. It is aimed at supporting people who own to same-sex attraction but refrain from same-sex relations. One person who features on the site is the Rev. Peter Ould, who expressed regret over the *Pilling* proposals. He said it was a blow to "people like myself, who despite not being heterosexual have fashioned their lives to surrender to God's will for human sexual functioning as outlined in Scripture."

Ould, a priest in the Diocese of Canterbury, is married and the father of four children.

Twice in the last three decades the Church of England commissioned major reports on homosexuality. In 1979 the Rt. Rev. John Yates, Bishop of Gloucester, chaired an enquiry. A decade later June Osborne, now Dean of Salisbury, chaired another.

The *Yates Report* said there were "circumstances in which individuals may justly choose to enter a homo-

sexual relationship involving a physical expression of sexual love." These words were pounced on in isolation. There was never a full, open debate and it was effectively shelved. The *Osborne Report* sketched a framework for how the church should deal with the key pastoral issues relating to homosexuality. Most bishops distanced themselves from it and it was never formally published following loud opposition.

After a long hiatus, in 1991 the House of Bishops published the document *Issues in Human Sexuality*, which became official church policy. It spelt out a two-tiered approach: clergy were not free to enter same-sex relations, but it placed no such bar on laypeople doing so. Later the Church of England had to reckon with the 1998 Lambeth Conference's Resolution 1.10, which rejected same-sex relations as not reflecting the mind of the Anglican Communion.

It was always clear that tension surrounded the subject. Moreover, with same-sex marriage now allowed under U.K. law, the official position of the Church of England was clearly at odds with the culture, with opinion polls consistently showing a majority of Britons approving of same-sex relations.

John Martin in London

Pittsburgh OKs Blessings

In a pastoral letter and accompanying documents, the Bishop of Pittsburgh has granted his permission for clergy to use the Episcopal Church's provisional rite for blessing same-sex couples.

While granting his permission, effective January 6, the Rt. Rev. Dorsey W.M. McConnell offered a detailed critique of the rite. The bishop grounded his decision in a "Mission, Vision & Values" covenant adopted by the diocese in 2008.

That covenant "speaks of our com-

mitment to each other, despite differences and disagreement, being united in greater measure by our faith expressed in the Creeds; by the authority of Scripture, tradition and reason in our common life; and by a commitment both to the order of the Episcopal Church and the fellowship of the Anglican Communion,” the bishop wrote in a pastoral letter dated November 25.

In introducing his critique of the rite, Bishop McConnell wrote that it “appears to follow the pattern of the celebration of matrimony as set forth in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer: an opening announcement, readings, an exchange of vows and rings, prayers and a final blessing over the couple.”

He then turned to the details of the rite’s theology:

“Beyond this general form, however, the similarities disappear. The rite does not give a coherent statement of the nature and purpose of the covenant being celebrated. It does not base its authority in Scriptural warrant. There is no reference to bodily union. Its understanding of the role of procreativity, while helpful in one regard, is ultimately compromised. And the ‘theology of blessing’ that pervades the liturgy is inadequate to establish the sacramental character of the rite.”

Warm Souls in Boston

Homeless people in Boston have a new way to keep the coming season’s wintry elements at bay: a water-resistant, wind-breaking thermal blanket made of Mylar. For that, they’re thanking a ministry by and for homeless people at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

The cathedral’s community of homeless and recently housed individuals rolled out its Cloak Project on November 18. That night, participants began handing out 8,000 of these donated, compact, lightweight blankets, just like the ones that are used to cover marathoners when they cross a finish line.

“Why not have homeless helping homeless?” asked a man named

David, who slept under a Cambridge bridge for years, as he prepared to hand out the blankets. “It might save someone’s life.”

Each blanket costs less than \$1. Episcopal churches, schools, and other institutions rallied their people to buy blankets on Amazon.com and ship them to the cathedral. Christ Episcopal Church in Needham donated 3,000.

Before the end of November, the cathedral had more than enough blankets to shield every homeless person in Boston, where 7,000 sleep outside on any given night, according to last year’s census. If the homeless remain involved in the project, the blankets could get where they’re needed most, said the Rev. Canon Steven Bonsey, the cathedral’s canon pastor.

In a brief sermon for Cloak Project leaders, Canon Bonsey said that homeless people had come up with the idea, raised donations for it, and would know where to find other people in need, whether they’re sleeping in entryways, parks or cars.

“Every one of those steps in that project could only have been done by homeless people,” Bonsey said. “You are the only people on the planet who could do this.”

The Cloak Project is an initiative of Many Angels Needed Now and Always (MANNA), a community within the St. Paul’s congregation. Its leadership team consists of 50 to 60 individuals who are either homeless or have recently moved into housing. They help lead worship at St. Paul’s, help serve a free community meal on Mondays, lead meditation exercises for churchgoers, and publish a homeless literary journal called *The Pilgrim*.

The idea for the Cloak Project came from a homeless man named Paul during MANNA’s 2012 pilgrimage, in which homeless and others walked 35 miles together. Within a few months, several homeless men and women had received communication training from the Diocese of Massachusetts’ Leadership Development Initiative. They used those

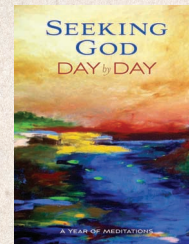
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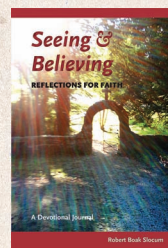
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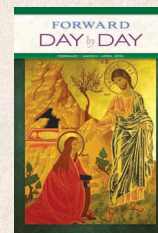
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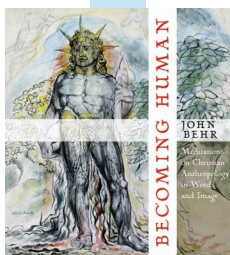
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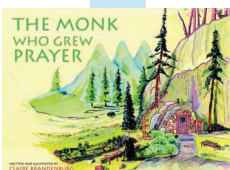


Jon Adamson

I can't recommend highly enough John Behr's *Becoming Human: Meditations on Christian Anthropology in Word and Image* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2013). It presents short meditations by the dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary. We become human, in Christ, by our obedience in saying "Let it be" to our own deaths.

And a second choice for young children: a richly illustrated story, *The Monk Who Grew Prayer* (Conciliar Press, 2003) by Claire Brandenburg, follows a hermit in the wilderness during his daily tasks. Along the way, children learn the Jesus Prayer and the significance of the Liturgy of the Hours. At once contemplative and engaging, it makes an ideal bedtime story followed by Compline.

Jon Adamson is the administrator of the Diocese of Northern Indiana.



A.K.M. Adam

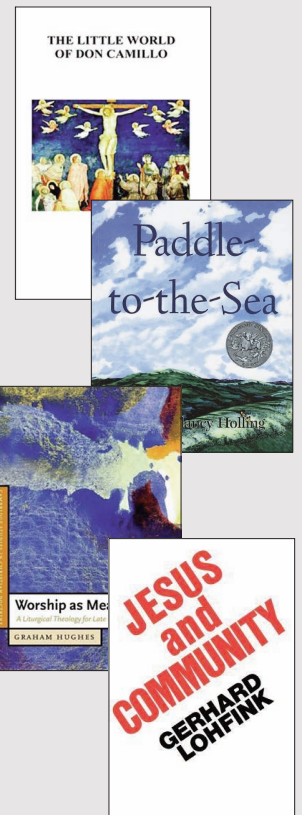
The Little World of Don Camillo (Benediction Books, 2009) is the first of the series of novels by Giovanni Guareschi. Don Camillo opened to me an early sense of the possibility of the presence of Christ; he upholds the Church's sense of moral authority and pastoral wisdom, while (reluctantly) accommodating the ethical challenge presented by his adversary Peppone, the communist mayor of his village.

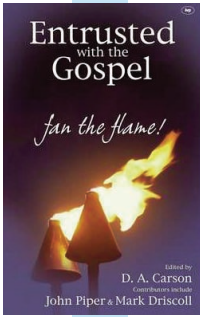
Paddle-to-the-Sea (Houghton Mifflin, 1941) by Holling Clancy Holling touches a deep part of my heart. I'd be cautious about its representation of the indigenous people of North America, but the story is of a carved canoe that — without anthropomorphizing its subject — undergoes adventures, danger, renewal, and ultimately attains its goal.

On a more academic note, Graham Hughes's *Worship as Meaning* (Cambridge, 2003) articulates a profound truth about the liturgy and hermeneutics. It's not easy reading but is exhilarating, and disclosed much that chimed with my intuitions on the subject.

I can't read Gerhard Lohfink's *Jesus and Community* (Fortress, 1984) without humbling admiration for his theological sense of the Bible and his vocation as priest and theologian, and wistful recognition of my own shortcomings in those regards.

The Rev. A.K.M. Adam is senior tutor and teaches New Testament and Greek at St. Stephen's House, Oxford University.

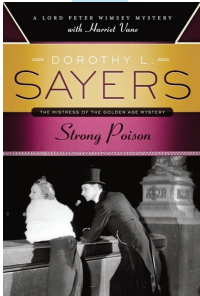




Georges Titre Ande

I suggest *Entrusted with the Gospel: Fan the Flame*, edited by D.A. Carson (IVP UK, 2010). God has given every Christian the glorious ministry of his life-giving gospel, but many are timid and lack confidence and wisdom to herald the gospel entrusted to them. Especially amid the difficulty of facing secularism and atheism, this book helps us to be faithful to the task: to have an unashamed courage in preaching and in finishing well.

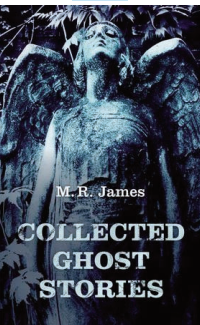
The Rt. Rev. Georges Titre Ande is Bishop of Aru, Congo.



Victor Austin

In *Strong Poison* by Dorothy L. Sayers (Coronet, 1930), Lord Peter Wimsey knows at once that Harriet Vane is innocent, but how does he know? The evidence against her seems overwhelming. Is it love? Or is it something else? One can read this novel for its marvelous writing, so rare these days. One can read it as a good detective story. And one can read it as showing us what the virtue of “good sense” (*prudentia*) looks like: Lord Peter is able to judge characters wisely and well, even when the evidence is slim.

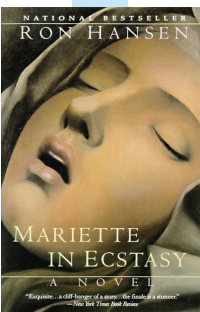
The Rev. Victor Austin is theologian in residence at St. Thomas Church, New York.



John Bauerschmidt

I am indebted to my local public library for including M.R. James’s *Collected Ghost Stories* (Oxford, 2011) among its recent staff picks. James, the son of a priest, was successively provost of King’s College, Cambridge, and Eton, and was also a noted linguist and paleographer whose translation and edition of *The New Testament Apocrypha* may still adorn the bookshelves of many clergy. As befits a learned biblical scholar and medievalist, his ghost stories often turn on weird events in which historic churches and rare books figure prominently. “The Uncommon Prayer-Book” turns on the theft of an unlikely Cromwellian edition of the Book of Common Prayer, while “An Episode of Cathedral History” gives us the mischief of choirboys, the pitfalls of the Gothic Revival, and a restless and evil spirit entombed within the cathedral church. My favorite for sheer menace may be “The Mezzotint,” in which a photograph reveals a murder from many years before. At the same time as producing goose bumps, the stories are an education in arcane knowledge that will delight anyone with an interest in architecture and texts of all sorts.

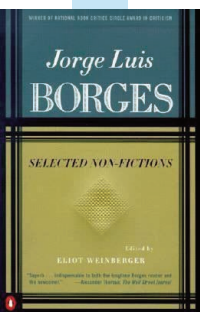
The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt is Bishop of Tennessee.



Katelyn Beaty

In *Mariette in Ecstasy* (HarperCollins, 1991), Ron Hansen (*The Assassination of Jesse James*) uses sparse yet richly detailed prose to take us into a world foreign to moderns: the cloisters of nuns in upstate New York, circa 1909. There, the new presence of Mariette, a young, passionate, and beautiful postulant, invokes awe, fear, and hatred in her fellow sisters. Hansen, a Roman Catholic deacon and professor of English and creative writing at Santa Clara University, offers a memorable and provocative story about sexual and spiritual desire, the competing claims and authority of science and religion, and the beauty of devotion to Christ amid opposition.

Katelyn Beaty is managing editor of Christianity Today and lives in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.



Anthony Burton

The blind Argentine Jorge Luis Borges was widely known as a poet and writer of magical realism but he was a brilliant essayist as well. *Selected Non-Fictions* (Penguin, 2000) shows the range of his genius. From a history of angels to a film review of the original *King Kong* (he hated it) to essays on the tango, the mystical works of Swedenborg, the Dionne quintuplets, and German literature in the age of Bach, his writing is trenchant, sparkling, and original.

The Rt. Rev. Anthony J. Burton is rector of Church of the Incarnation, Dallas.

(Continued on next page)

Gift Ideas from Friends of TLC

(Continued from previous page)

Betsy Childs

A Prayer Journal by Flannery O'Connor (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013) would make an excellent gift for any writer or lover of literature. Written from 1947 to 1948 and discovered among O'Connor's papers in 2002, this prayer diary gives a deeply personal glimpse into the heart of a young writer and earnest Christian, even as her wit shines through.

Betsy Childs is web and publications editor at Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham.

Mark Clavier

Theology, Rhetoric, Manuduction: Or Reading Scripture Together on the Path to God by Peter M. Candler, Jr. (Eerdmans, 2006), does not have the most gripping of titles, but it brilliantly and succinctly demonstrates how reading Scripture and the Fathers was once a communal act of participation over time. It helped me better to understand how, before we can even think about hermeneutics, we need to consider more deeply our shared modern assumptions about the purpose of texts.

The Rev. Mark F.M. Clavier is dean of residential training at St. Michael's College, Llandaff, and lecturer in theology at Cardiff University.

Prudence Dailey

Glynn Harrison, emeritus professor of psychiatry at the University of Bristol and a lay member of the General Synod of the Church of England, deftly blends psychology with Christian doctrine in *The Big Ego Trip* (IVP, 2013). The book traces the rise of the ideology of self-esteem. Harrison shows that the concept is ill defined, and that there is no evidence for the benefits claimed for boosting self-esteem. Instead of focusing inward on our supposed self-worth, Christians should recall that we are counted as worthy by God, and loved and redeemed by him.

Prudence Dailey is chairman of the Prayer Book Society in England and lives in Oxford.

Kurt Dunkle

This year, I decided to read some of the classics I *said* I read in college. *The Prince* (1532) is currently on my nightstand. Sadly, Machiavelli is as relevant (and as entertaining!) now as in 16th-century Florence.

The Very Rev. Kurt H. Dunkle is dean and president of General Theological Seminary.

R. William Franklin

I highly recommend the novel *Bring Up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel (Henry Holt, 2012). It is the second in her trilogy about Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation. This one focuses on the death of Ann Boleyn. Better than any other account I have read, this novel portrays the complexities of forces that make for ecclesial change: faith, theology, love, politics, ambition, money, and class. Reflecting and illumining forces still at work in the Church, the final volume in the series will be titled *The Mirror and the Light*.

The Rt. Rev. R. William Franklin is Bishop of Western New York.

Jack Leo Iker

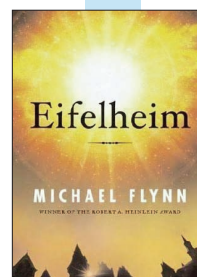
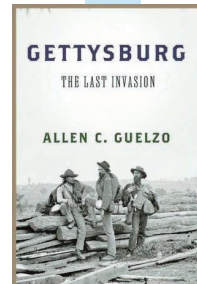
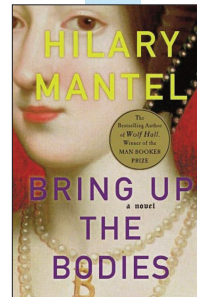
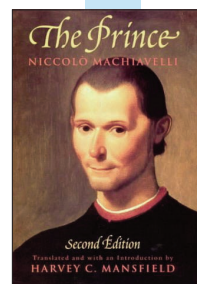
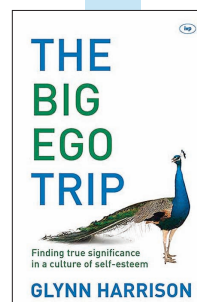
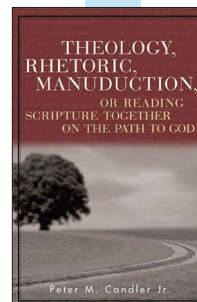
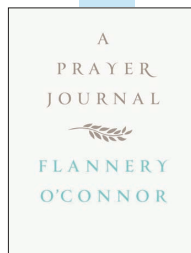
Gettysburg: The Last Invasion by Allen C. Guelzo (Alfred A. Knopf, 2013) is must reading for my fellow Civil War buffs. On the 150th anniversary of the epic three-day battle that determined the outcome of the war, Guelzo gives a fascinating and compelling account of the brave men who fought and died there.

The Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker is the Anglican Church in North America's Bishop of Fort Worth.

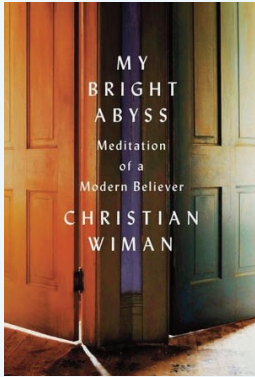
Jonathan Kanary

For the medievalist sci-fi lover in your life: *Eifelheim* by Michael Flynn (Tor Books, 2006). The end could be stronger, but I often recommend this book to friends and will read it again myself. Anyone who can write seriously about contemporary hard science and 14th-century scholastic philosophy is worth paying attention to, especially when he also tells a good story.

The Rev. Jonathan Kanary is curate at St. Columba Church, Fresno, California.



TOP PICK



Matthew Gunter

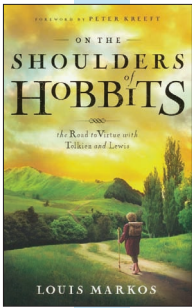
Christian Wiman is a poet with an incurable cancer who, in spite of his modern secular instincts, has found himself incurably drawn to God. In *My Bright Abyss* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013) he offers a collection of vignettes from the penumbra of faith and despair. While Wiman's faith is lived ever near the shadows of pain and doubt and the struggle to believe, the light of Christ shines throughout this book reminiscent of Frederick Buechner.

The Rev. Matthew Gunter, rector of St. Barnabas Church in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, is Bishop-elect of Fond du Lac.

Cynthia Kittredge

I discovered Christian Wiman through his essays and poems published in the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* and then discovered his conversations in *Poetry* magazine's podcast. Written in the shadow of cancer, *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer* is a protracted and intricate meditation on death, faith, imagination, and suffering. Wiman leads the reader into intense anguish, unknowing, and beauty. Itself a theological, poetical, and mystical text, it induces unhurried reading and invites prayer.

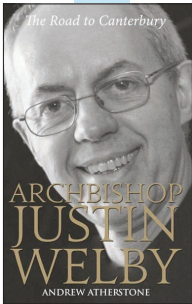
The Rev. Cynthia Kittredge is dean and president of Seminary of the Southwest, Austin.



Nicholas Knisely

On the Shoulders of Hobbits: The Road to Virtue with Tolkien and Lewis by Louis Markos (Moody, 2012) discusses the classic Christian virtues and uses characters and passages from the writings of two of the Inklings to illustrate them. These chapters, suitable for use as daily meditations, walk the reader through examples of what our lives might look like if we lived by the values we proclaim but often forget in practice. It's a sort of updated version of Plutarch's *Lives* and equally as instructive.

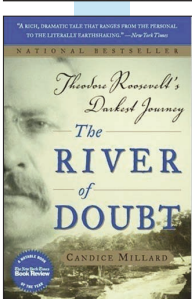
The Rt. Rev. Nicholas Knisely is Bishop of Rhode Island.



Douglas LeBlanc

Archbishop Justin Welby: The Road to Canterbury (Morehouse, 2013) is Andrew Atherstone's essential biography of the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury. Atherstone, who teaches history at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, wrote this tidy introduction at the request of British publisher Darton, Longman and Todd, and without benefit of interviewing the archbishop. The charming paradox of Archbishop Welby's life: the less ambition he has shown, the more he has ascended.

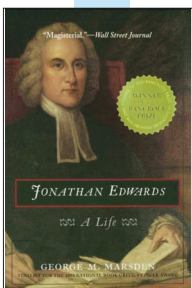
Douglas LeBlanc, associate editor of TLC, lives near Richmond, Virginia.



Gary Lillibridge

Candice Millard's *River of Doubt* (Anchor, 2006) tells the story of Teddy Roosevelt's journey down the Amazon after his loss in the presidential election of 1912. *Destiny of the Republic* (2011), also by Millard, is about the assassination of President Garfield, but more so about the state of medicine and medical care during that era. Millard's prose is very readable and she tells compelling stories with ease.

The Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge is Bishop of West Texas.



G. Jeffrey MacDonald

The life of America's greatest theologian proves the perfect fodder for a master historian's magnum opus in George M. Marsden's *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (Yale, 2003). A deft storyteller and incisive analyst, Marsden shows how a child of the Enlightenment engaged fully in philosophical debates of his day and became the towering Calvinist intellect behind the First Great Awakening. Readers come to know both Edwards the prolific genius and Edwards the man of deep, heart-changing faith.

G. Jeffrey MacDonald is a TLC correspondent based in Boston.

(Continued on next page)

Gift Ideas from Friends of TLC

(Continued from previous page)

I look forward to reading *Mission in Christ's Way: An Orthodox Understanding of Mission* by Archbishop Anastasios (Holy Cross Orthodox Press and WCC Publications, 2010). The archbishop's work on mission has been fruitful for me and our work in Indigenous ministry. His perspective will, I believe and hope, help me get over the disappointment at the speed with which *Mission* went from cutting edge to cliché. It promises to be a good gift item for anyone who shares my condition.

The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald is the Anglican Church of Canada's National Indigenous Anglican Bishop.

Mark MacDonald

Letters from Ruby (Abingdon, 2013) by Adam Thomas is a novel about a young Episcopal priest who has much to learn from his congregation as he starts the journey in ministry. As problems arise, the solution comes in the form of Ruby Redding, a lay parishioner packed full of wisdom. Christian fiction at its best, and a lovely way for any member of a congregation to reflect on the challenges of ministry and training. Fun, warm, moving.

The Very Rev. Ian Markham is dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary.

Ian Markham

In *The Lion's World* (Oxford, 2013), Rowan Williams reflects on *The Chronicles of Narnia*, probably the best known and most loved books by C.S. Lewis. Admirers of Lewis will welcome this warmly appreciative, but not uncritical, account of his achievement from such a distinguished theologian as Williams, who deals courteously but robustly with some of Lewis's cultured despisers. Williams draws particular attention to "the sheer psychological penetration of so much of his character drawing" and notes "the possibility Lewis still offers of coming across the Christian story as if for the first time."

The Rev. David Marshall is director of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke Divinity School and associate professor of the practice of Christian-Muslim relations.

David Marshall

For anyone whose Narnia books have collected dust, Rowan Williams's appreciation, *The Lion's World*, invites a new reading. Having cleared aside the critics, he reflects on Lewis's success in making the Christian worldview appear "fresh and strange." Williams highlights the silent gaze of Aslan, his "unplanned and uncontrolled incursion" into our world, and the wild joy of liberation — from a stable, winter, underground caves, giants, and so on — as imaginative experience of divine grace.

Grace Sears of Berea, Kentucky, serves on the board of the Living Church Foundation and is a leader of The Order of the Daughters of the King.

Grace Sears

Most intriguing of my recent purchases is *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford, 2011). It uses the NRSV, with exegetical notes from a Jewish perspective and essays on topics including Jesus, Paul, and aspects of first-century Jewish life. The volume is quick to identify even hints of anti-Semitism. A culture producing someone as remarkable as Jesus, the editors argue, could not have been as moribund as Christians often claim.

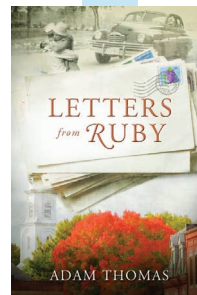
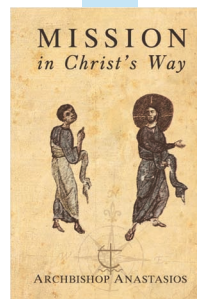
John Kingsley Martin is a TLC correspondent based in London.

John Kingsley Martin

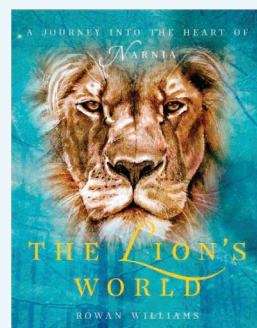
This is the book I've been looking for, I thought as I began reading *Cultivating Reality: How the Soil Might Save Us* by Ragan Sutterfield (Cascade, 2013). What struck me most was its emphasis on humanity as part of creation — specifically, that to understand and truly live as God intended we need to embrace the "humus." We are fashioned from the earth. I gave copies to all our clergy in the diocese.

The Rt. Rev. Steven Miller is Bishop of Milwaukee.

Steven Miller



TOP PICK



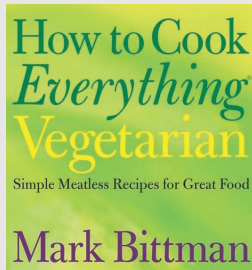
Mother Miriam

For my favorite niece just finishing college with all the idealistic dreams of a better, more sustainable community life, I would give her for Christmas Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything Vegetarian: Simple Meatless Recipes for Great Food* (Wiley & Sons, 2007). I use it all the time here at the convent. It has taught this city girl how to deal with local produce from turnip greens to high-protein grains like amaranth.

For an ecumenical friend, I would give him Sholem Asch's *Mary* (Macdonald, 1951). It is one of my favorite novels on the life of our Lady and her relationship to Jesus. Asch saw the gospel story with devout Jewish eyes, and he had the courage to suffer ostracism from his people because of his conviction that Christians and Jews should be one in faith in post-World War II Europe.

For a ripping good book and wonderful tale of the human spirit that will survive several readings, I would give Robin Buss's translation of Alexandre Dumas's *Count of Monte Cristo* (Penguin Classics, 2003). All the questions of life are touched upon: Where is God? What is love? What is justice? What are mercy and forgiveness? I always come away with a fresh thought.

Mother Miriam, CSM, is superior of St. Mary's Convent, Greenwich, New York.



David Moxon

I recommend *Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale* by Ian Morgan Cron (Zondervan, 2013). A pastor called Chase Falcon loses his faith and has a crisis of vocation amid a busy and successful church ministry. He ends up spending time with his uncle, a Franciscan priest in Italy. Traveling to Assisi, Chase enters into the life of St. Francis, his teaching, and his witness, and is restored to faith in a radically new and open way. The reader is invited to begin a pilgrimage as well. This comes highly recommended by Bishop Rowan Williams, who read it twice!

The Most Rev. David Moxon is the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and director of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

Derek Olsen

My copy of *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, edited and translated by Benedicta Ward (Cistercian Publications, 1984), is a wreck; dog-eared pages, copious underlines, and a host of marginal notes litter it, testimony to constant reference. If the Egyptian desert was the first great laboratory of Christian spirituality, these are the lab notes. Intense, thought-provoking, relentlessly practical, this collection of pithy sayings will enrich any life of prayer.

Derek Olsen of Baltimore, Maryland, is a blogger, programmer, and writer on liturgical spirituality.

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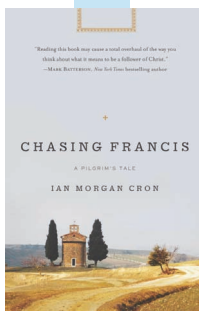


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Gift Ideas from Friends of TLC

(Continued from previous page)

Yejide Peters

Karen Thompson Walker's *The Age of Miracles* (Random House, 2012) is that rare book that will not fade. It haunts its readers, relentlessly pursuing them long after the last page has been devoured. As Julia, the book's young protagonist, grapples with the collapse of the orderly suburban universe, she (and the reader) are forced to consider the deepest questions of life and its meaning.

Part science fiction, part *Bildungsroman*, this small, stunning novel is a perfect gift for your favorite bookworm.

The Rev. Yejide Peters is rector of All Saints' Church, Briarcliff Manor, New York.

Stephen Platten

I commend *Disraeli: or The Two Lives* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2013) by Douglas Hurd, a distinguished former foreign secretary, and Edward Young. Benjamin Disraeli was arguably the most colorful prime minister of Britain in the 19th century and had significant impact internationally.

Born a Jew, he was baptised as a Christian and an Anglican at that. There are more quotations listed by him than by Winston Churchill. He appeared to have little moral purpose and yet achieved remarkable reform. This is a great biography.

The Rt. Rev. Stephen Platten is Bishop of Wakefield.

Chip Prehn

Anne Somerset's *Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion* (Knopf, 2013) appears to be well-researched, building on the good track record of her previous archival work in biography. Since Queen Anne, through her bounty and moral support, had so much to do with establishing a beachhead for Anglicanism on these shores, I'd like to know much more about her than I do.

The Rev. Chip Prehn is headmaster of Trinity School of Midland, Texas.

Ephraim Radner

I rediscovered Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919): intertwined short stories about the inhabitants of a rural Midwest town. Filled with yearning and quirkiness, this fastidiously observed set of character sketches sometimes verges on American Gothic, but then hits you with a kind of steady steely-eyed grasp of what it means to be human, bound by the small formalities of place, family, and internal spirit. Brilliant, and often heart-rending.

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

Margaret Rose

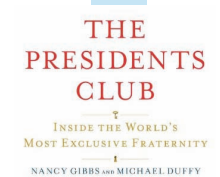
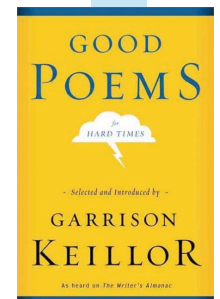
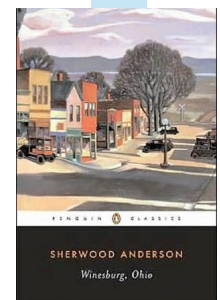
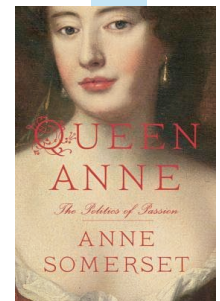
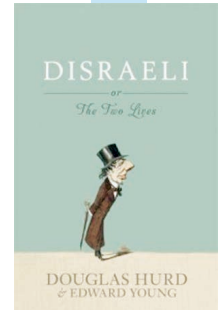
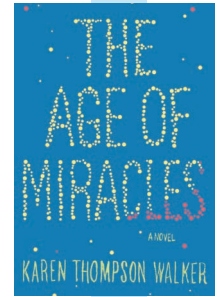
I return time and again to *Good Poems for Hard Times*, selected and introduced by Garrison Keillor (Penguin, 2005), when I need a laugh or a lift, or when prose is too mundane. A favorite is *Wedding Poem* by Bill Holm, which speaks of the "dark secret of the ones long married." Meredith Holmes's *In Praise of My Bed* serves after a hard day, while Mary Oliver wants to "step through the door" of eternity "full of curiosity" in *When Death Comes*.

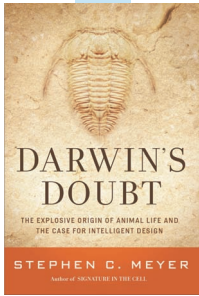
The Rev. Margaret R. Rose is the Episcopal Church's deputy for ecumenical and interfaith collaboration and lives in New York City.

Dabney T. Smith

I enjoy reading the biographies of American Presidents and so loved *The Presidents Club* by Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy (Simon & Schuster, 2013). Subtitled "Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity," it traces the history of this unique subset of American politics from George Washington and John Adams, concentrating on the modern era beginning with Harry Truman. The personalities behind the presidential office emerge in stories that are spellbinding, complex, revelatory, and powerfully real.

The Rt. Rev. Dabney T. Smith is Bishop of Southwest Florida.

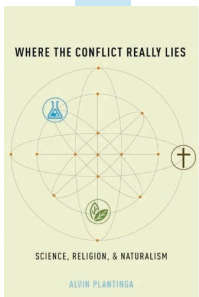




James Stanton

I highly recommend *Darwin's Doubt* (HarperOne, 2013) by Stephen C. Meyer, a Cambridge University Ph.D. This readable book, like its predecessor, *Signature in the Cell* (2009), not only sheds light on the Intelligent Design debate but also offers a veritable course in the history and methods of science. I have given copies of both books to many friends, who have found them rewarding and enlightening.

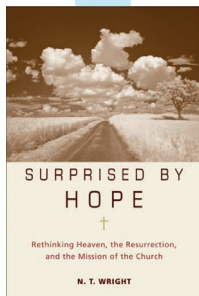
The Rt. Rev. James M. Stanton is Bishop of Dallas.



Justyn Terry

Alvin Plantinga's *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford, 2011) is a Christmas gift for skeptics. Plantinga, the renowned philosopher, considers evolutionary theory and divine action and shows that alleged conflicts with Christianity are merely superficial. The real conflict is between them and naturalism, which they are thought to support. The book masterfully burns through a great deal of fog and might allow the bright light of Christ to shine into the lives of loved ones this Christmas.

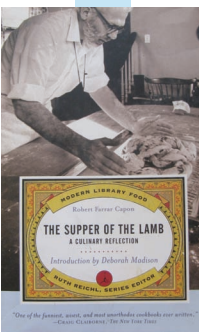
The Very Rev. Justyn Terry is dean and president of Trinity School for Ministry.



A.C. Thiselton

While I was writing *Life after Death* (Eerdmans, 2011), I had cause to re-read Tom Wright's book, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (SPCK, 2007). I found it sane, readable, and helpful, and recommend it confidently. On the same subject, I recommend Stephen Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God* (Paternoster, 2008), and Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (SCM, 1996).

The Rev. Canon A.C. Thiselton, former head of theology at Nottingham University, has served as principal of St. John's College, Nottingham, and St. John's College, Durham.



Patrick T. Twomey

Robert F. Capon's recent death reminded me of my first encounter with his "cookbook" *The Supper of the Lamb*, an exquisite and literary journey, by way of food, into the deep and endless mystery of God. He begins with an onion, and, in a sense, by never leaving it, thrusts the reader into the wonder of all creation and creation's God. A jewel. A perfect gift. A "real" theologian. A most excellent onion.

The Rev. Patrick T. Twomey is rector of All Saints Church in Appleton, Wisconsin.

(Continued on next page)

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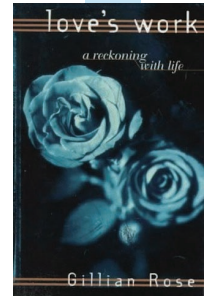
Gift Ideas from Friends of TLC

(Continued from previous page)

Christopher Wells

Facing her own imminent death at age 48, brilliant British philosopher and theologian Gillian Rose wrote the courageous and profound memoir *Love's Work: A Reckoning with Life* (Schocken Books, 1995), on the way to becoming a Christian and an Anglican at the very end. With formidable literary skill, humor, and insight Rose recounts vulnerable vignettes of friendship, family, and romantic loves to make an argument about loss and its “twin passion” of faith, consoled by reason. Difficult, and extraordinarily beautiful.

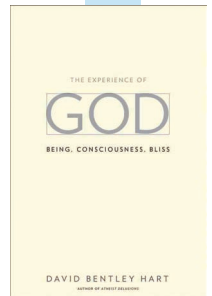
Christopher Wells, editor of TLC, lives in Milwaukee.



Jared Wicks

In *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss* (Yale, 2013), David Bentley Hart draws on notions of God held by faiths producing philosophical and contemplative schools. He addresses our belligerent but fading celebrity atheists and theorists of mind who try to explain consciousness on materialist bases. From amazed wonder that things *exist*, reflection leads to God as a self-subsistent source of actuality. The abiding self-presence of consciousness, giving rise to intentional action, is an immense mystery — wholly other from physiological processes. Nature's hospitality to our quest for moral living contrasts with its utter inability to explain the profligate charity of a saintly soul. Hart treats profound issues in prose both lucid and engaging.

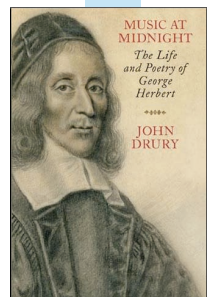
The Rev. Jared Wicks, S.J., is scholar in residence at Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus.



Rowan Williams

I recommend John Drury's book on George Herbert, *Music at Midnight* (Penguin/Allen Lane, 2013). Drury combines a clear and vivid account of the life of this greatest of Anglican poets with close, sympathetic reading of many of his finest poems. The book is scholarly and fresh, finely produced, and accessible to any reader with a little knowledge of English history. It's a reminder of the immense spiritual and imaginative treasury that exists in our Anglican past — and of how the strength of our tradition has always lain in the sort of fusion between doctrine, creativity, and prayer that Herbert represents.

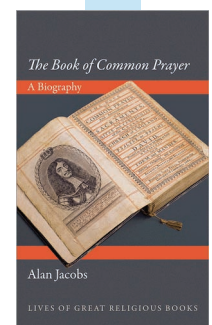
The Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth is master of Magdalene College, University of Cambridge.



Clinton Wilson

In *The Book of Common Prayer: A Biography* (Princeton, 2013) Alan Jacobs has given us an ideal primer — historically concise, rhetorically playful, refreshingly readable, and therefore immensely accessible and engaging. Here is a work that can enflame the imagination of the eager catechumen or buttress the knowledge of the rector towards a deeper understanding of the formative cultural, political, and theological currents and heritage of the Book of Common Prayer.

The Rev. Clinton Wilson is curate at St. David of Wales Church, Denton, Texas.



Warm Souls in Boston

(Continued from page 7)

skills to give talks on homelessness at area congregations and raise support for the Cloak Project.

"If you have a community with enough spaciousness in it," said the Rev. Cristina Rathbone, a cathedral missionary who serves as MANNA's priest, "then [everyone's] gifts can become visible."

*G. Jeffrey MacDonald
TLC Correspondent*

Canon Skelton Chosen in Canada



Skelton

The Anglican Church of Canada's Diocese of New Westminster has elected the Rev. Canon Melissa Skelton of Seattle as its ninth bishop. Canon Skelton

led the eight-member slate from the first ballot.

Four nominees — the Rev. Canon Dawn Davis, the Ven. Ellen Clark-King, the Rev. Richard Leggett, and the Ven. John Stephens — withdrew from the slate after the second ballot.

The Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel, Bishop of Olympia, congratulated Skelton on his weblog. Skelton is director of New Westminster's Diocesan School for Leadership and the Diocese of Olympia's College for Congregational Development. She is Olympia's canon for congregational development and leadership and rector of St. Paul's Church in Seattle.

"I believe the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, did a very good thing today," Rickel wrote.

"As I said in my notice of this election this past week, we will win either way, but it is certainly a decision with mixed emotions here in Olympia. Melissa has blessed us with her many skills in so many tremendous ways. We are much richer for her presence with us over these years. I cannot envision my Episcopate without her. I hope you will join me in congratulating her, while also holding in our prayers our diocese, the Diocese of New Westminster, the people of St. Paul's, Queen Anne, and of course, Melissa in this time of transition."



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The Rev'd. Dr. Keith Ward: British cleric, philosopher, theologian, scholar, and author of over 20 books. Dr. Ward is a Fellow of the British Academy, former Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Oxford and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford.

Canon Trevor Dennis: Former Vice Dean and Canon Chancellor at Chester Cathedral. Canon Dennis was tutor in Old Testament Studies at Salisbury and Wells Theological College and has authored several books examining the relevance of Biblical stories to our own lives.

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— Twenty Minutes with Derek Olsen —

THE BODY OF CHRIST Grows into the Mind of Christ

By Richard J. Mammana, Jr.

I remember reading writings from Haligweorc on the internet well before I connected that with your name. How did you choose it?

When I first started blogging, I was hip-deep in my dissertation, which, in part, looked at the preaching of a particular 10th-century English abbot (Ælfric of Eynsham) within his liturgical context. I had Old English on the brain since that was the language he was communicating in. It's one of the words for *sanctuary* used in the Old English translation of the Psalms, and described what I saw as the purpose of the blog — a place for my own random thoughts about church

Derek Olsen, secretary of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, has a PhD in New Testament and homiletics from Emory University. He serves on the vestry at the Church of the Advent, Baltimore, where he lives with his two young daughters and his wife, a priest of the diocese. Olsen created an online site for the Daily Office called St. Bede's Breviary (haligweorc.org/breviary), and he publishes reflections on liturgical and personal matters at Haligweorc (haligweorc.wordpress.com). He served as liturgical editor of the new revision of St. Augustine's Prayer Book, and is completing a book for Forward Movement on the spirituality of the prayer book.

There's still some ... unclarity in many places around the fundamentals of the faith and why and how they matter.

happenings, theology, the things that I was researching, and the connections I was seeing between Old English church life and the modern Episcopal Church. The blog gave me a break from my “serious” writing, and gave me an opportunity to write in a more conversational style.

I must say, as far as branding goes, it was just about one of the worst picks ever! It's odd, it's not in a language anyone has spoken in several hundred years, it looks fairly unpronounceable, and it's really easy to misspell! (Actually, it's not that hard to say; phonetically, it's just “hallywerk.”) I suppose its chief virtue is that it's conspicuous for its oddity.

What is your sense of the time when Anglicans would have been using Old English?

We normally date the use of Old English from about A.D. 500 or so until a bit after the Conquest — call it A.D. 1100 — when the language moves into Middle English. It turns out that the very first printing of a text in Old English happened in 1567 when Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury under Elizabeth I, printed one of Ælfric's Easter sermons as an attempt to demonstrate that the teaching of the newly reformed Church of England on the Eucharist was consistent with his. (Of course, there are some issues of context and historical development that Archbishop Parker ignored, and that's a longer conversation for another day.)

What strikes me the most about Ælfric's writings is this: he wrote upwards of 200 pieces — sermons, biblical paraphrases, letters, notes — in Old English specifically because he says he had seen and heard of so many heresies in English books. His concern was that basic Christian orthodoxy wasn't making the leap from Latin to English. As a result, his writings communicate the basics of the faith with heavy and clear reliance on the Church Fathers, filtered through a Benedictine common-sense approach that was focused on how ordinary people lived their lives and how their faith mattered. He wasn't terribly interested in dogmatic theology and doctrinal intricacies; I think he was much more of an ascetical theologian, meaning that he was most interested in the basic habits of faith and the cultivation of virtue.

How is his situation like what we see today?

On one hand, we're clearly in a better place in the modern Anglican world because we have the Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Church Fathers in our own language. And yet, there's still some ... unclarity in many places around the fundamentals of the faith and why and how they matter. Whenever I see on Face-

book or other places that an Episcopal Adult Ed forum is studying something by Bart Ehrman or Elaine Pagels or one of those folks, I get concerned. Part of their cachet is that they question some of our basic teachings and doctrines, and — frankly — I think we run after what appears to be new and exciting without a good firm grounding in the basics of the faith — the Creeds, the sacraments, sin, grace, and all that — and why these things matter to us. We need the historic teaching of the Church, filtered through good sense (our famous Anglican “full homely divinity”) that focuses on how we live our lives in light of what God has done for us in the person of Jesus.



Olsen

Much of your work on liturgical matters involves the internet. What is your sense of the positive and negative aspects of the substantial shift from the print medium to digital media?

It's a mixed bag, but I think far more good is coming out of it than bad. One of the chief differences is that print publication has gatekeepers. There's always a small group of people with the power to disseminate certain ideas and to suppress others. It's a control factor. Often it's a quality control, but there is an inevitable ideological piece to it as well. The digital space doesn't have this control, at least not to the same degree. Anybody can start writing something on the web and put it

(Continued on next page)

THE BODY OF CHRIST

Grows into the Mind of Christ

(Continued from previous page)

out for the world to see; more ideas are getting out there and are read by more people. In the digital world, there's a de-emphasis on traditional credentials. Ideas can be judged more on whether they appeal to people and make sense. When we're talking about religion in general or liturgical stuff in particular, it goes back to what we were just talking about: a basic foundation and grounding in the fundamentals is necessary to help you develop a good nose and determine if something passes the sniff test.

What about books in relation to this shift?

I'm for them [laughs]. No, seriously, I like books as physical objects. Just ask my wife and kids; we've got tons of bookshelves all over our house. But my wife and I have Kindles and the girls use one of my old ones. I can't see myself ever not using books as physical objects. At the same time, electronic media are great because they give authors a new flexibility; we're not tied to certain lengths that are necessary to make a printed volume viable. I can write something fairly short and publish it digitally, and it can stand on its own and be a viable piece of writing without needing enough other stuff around it to form a collection.

Christianity's incarnational reality — God in man made manifest — seems to stand in contrast to the disembodied setting of online discourse about the life of the Body of Christ in the last decade.

There are two ways to think about this, I think. On the one hand, online discussions of religion are like an iceberg in that the visible part is only a bit of what's going on. That is, the internet shows us the loudest voices who are the most interested in hearing themselves talk. (And, yes, I'm certainly among the guilty here.) There's a lot more going on in the Church that doesn't get discussed or get nearly enough play because it's not the interesting newsworthy stuff — it's the day-to-day work of the kingdom. Furthermore, even for those of us on the internet, most of our faith lives are lived out in geographical communities and real-world parishes. There is an inherent embodied and incarnate dimension to it.

On the other hand, one of the real dangers of online discourse is for it to become a congress of the like-minded. Because we can choose our internet conversations and conversation partners in such a particular way, it's easy to build up echo chambers where the only voices we hear are those we agree with and who share our same basic approach. This leads to a misguided sense of who and what we are and what "normal" churchgoing folk believe. If you only hear your

own voice and those who agree with you, you can get a skewed sense of where the mind of the Church is. Once you get that skewed sense, it's that much easier to fall into Paul's metaphor of the dysfunctional body and to say to other parts of the Church, "I have no need of you."

One of the real dangers of online discourse is for it to become a congress of the like-minded.

Apple or PC?

Oh, definitely PC! No question about it! See, I got into the personal computer game on the ground floor; my dad and I built our first computer in the basement when I was 5, back in the early '80s. I remember the day that we got CPM [the operating system before MS-DOS that would eventually become Windows]. So, I began my life in computers with a hobbyist mentality. I want to be able to open it up and play with the guts, whether that's hardware or software. Apple was against that from the beginning. I always thought they had an elitist view: "We've made the best product possible; tinker with it and you'll only tarnish its perfection." When it comes to technical matters, I'm all about the tinkering. I'm committed to open-source and crowd-source models because they foster so much more innovation.

Does that include tinkering with the liturgy?

Ha! No, not so much. The liturgy and the faith are matters of a different order than technology; innovation is not an inherent good in these realms in the same way that it is in technology.

The trick with any open-source or crowd-sourced project is quality control. There's a certain amount of technical and conceptual knowledge that allows you to make a quality contribution. To be honest, I tinker with the liturgy myself when I go back and add in antiphons and hymns and devotions and other things that have been stripped away by earlier Books of Common Prayer. But I also have a grounding in the history, theology, and spirituality of the liturgy that gives me the technical and conceptual framework to prefer adding in material already worked over for a thousand years rather than trying to stick in something I wrote off the top of my head.

What are your hopes or thoughts about the things Anglicanism has to offer to the wider community of Christians?

Martin Thornton, the Anglican theologian of the last generation, was right on when he said that disputes

about orthodoxy and catholicity are best resolved by looking at practice. The historic spiritual practices of the Church, in both East and West, are the Daily Office, the Eucharist, and private prayer in between. As Anglicans, we have retained all three. In most Roman and Orthodox settings, the office is either something restricted to professionals or else is only seen once a week. The prayer book provides a template for a robust liturgical spirituality that is open, accessible, and possible for the whole Christian community, lay and ordained alike. This is one of the treasures of the Christian tradition that we hold in trust for the whole body of Christ. I'm seeing signs of a resurgence of the Office within the Episcopal Church, particularly in private lay use, and I think that's great!

This is my hope for the Episcopal Church in particular, Anglicanism in general, and the wider Christian community: I want us really to engage the practices of faith that help build up the body of Christ and that further our personal and corporate relationships with the triune God. We have great spiritual riches. The history of the Church is a treasure trove of this stuff — of teachings, and practices, and disciplines. But it's up to us to bring out the treasures old and new, and to apply them to and within the challenges and struggles of 21st-century life. To bring up Thornton again, he reminds us that the true test of any spiritual practice is whether it builds our capacity to love. If it's not transforming us according to the mind of Christ and leading us to love God and neighbor, you're doing it wrong! My prayer for the Church is a simple one, but not an easy one: I pray that the body of Christ grows into the mind of Christ.

Richard J. Mammanna, Jr., TLC's archivist, is founder and director of Project Canterbury (anglicanhistory.org).

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Our Blessed PLACE



By Amy Lepine Peterson

Growing up non-denominational, I entered adulthood with a healthy skepticism of rituals. After all, the Old Testament prophets call them “meaningless rites.” In the churches of my childhood, which tended to meet in elementary school auditoriums, we preferred “popcorn” prayer to liturgy and impromptu river dunkings to the sprinkling of holy water. Looking back, I realize that perhaps we had simply created our own set of rituals.

It wasn’t becoming an Episcopalian that changed my mind about the value of ritual; it was moving to Vietnam. As I studied the theory of cross-cultural disciple-making, especially in *Symbol and Ceremony* by A.H. Mathias Zahniser (MARC, 1997), I realized that the Holy Spirit has always used symbols and ceremonies to nurture the relationship between human beings and God, working through everyday materials such as wine, bread, wind, or fire.

As Clark Pinnock said, believers remain malnourished when “we have no place for festivals, dramas, processions, banners, dance, color, movement, instruments, percussion, and incense. There are many notes on God’s keyboard which we often neglect to sound, with the result that God’s presence can be hard to access.”

Ten years later, as my husband and I find ourselves buying our first home outside a small town in Indiana, we want to mark the occasion.

We spend all day cleaning, and after dinner they come — our friends and colleagues, the ones who by their welcome have made the prairie into holy ground for us. Leaving their shoes at the door, they enter the stove-warmed kitchen, where cider and cocoa simmer, and praise the view. “If my kitchen window looked out on that, I might never stop doing dishes,” one says.

We take coats, ladle hot drinks into heavy mugs for those fingers stiff with autumn chill, and pass around photocopied liturgies. One friend holds the holy water while Father Jim begins the prayers.

Grasping a heavy Bible, my husband reads from Genesis 18, the story of Abraham’s hospitality to the Lord when he appeared in the home of Abraham and Sarah under the oaks of Mamre.

He stops at Genesis 18:8, as the liturgy indicates, as if to say, *This is just the first part of the story. This is the part where you open your heart to the LORD as he appears, suddenly, within your tents, and you*

invite him to stay for supper. The part with the blessing, the surprise, the laughter, the disbelief; the warning, the pleading, the bargaining — all that is still to come. Tonight is for the welcoming and the feasting.

Our socked feet pad from room to room, we herd of worshipers and friends sidling next to each other in the office, the bedroom, the playroom, the kitchen, for prayers. Our preschoolers run headlong from one side of the house to the other, and back again, cutting through the ranks of pray-ers, pretending to be rescue bots and superheroes. They’re playing, we’re praying, and I don’t mind; after all, we are all in need of a rescuer.

I know some of the people I grew up with might wonder why we do this; why we chant our way through an old prayer service, sprinkling holy water all over our new home. Is there any meaning to this ritual?

It isn’t superstition; we’re not here because we think ghosts haunt our home and a pagan incantation can ward them off. This isn’t about good luck charms, a horseshoe hanging over the door, or a double happiness symbol bringing us luck. Rather, we recognize the spiritual reality undergirding our physical existence. We are sincerely asking God to bless this place, and to keep it free from evil spirits.

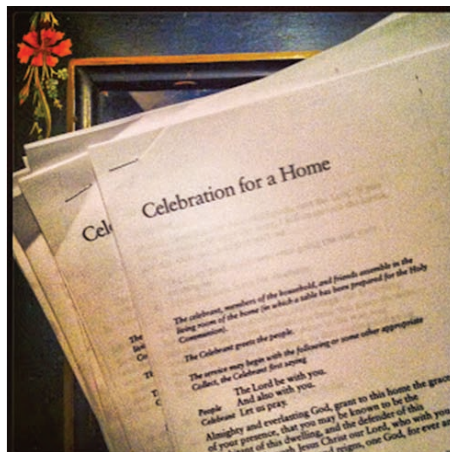
These prayers are a way of reminding ourselves of the truth, of remembering:

- in the office, that God is the source of wisdom
- in the bedroom, that we can sleep in peace because God alone makes us dwell in safety
- in the children’s rooms, that Jesus called the little ones to himself
- in the kitchen, that God supplies all of our needs
- in the guest room, that by showing hospitality, some have entertained angels unawares

These prayers, and the physical movement from room to room, are a way of acknowledging that every part of our home is a gift from God, and something to be used for the good of others.

When the prayers finish, we cut the cheesecake and gather in knots around the table or the bookshelves. I put on a record and photocopy a poem for a friend. Eventually the children go to bed, and the stragglers head to the back of the property to talk around the bonfire. The moon is full tonight. I wash

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Our Blessed PLACE

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dishes and warm up my cider as I reflect on the ceremony we've just finished.

This isn't the house I would have chosen, nor the town, nor the job. I would have gone with an older house, a more ethnically diverse city, and a job where I feel like I am saving the world every day rather than simply saving college students from poor grammar.

But last week I told this house that I would be happy to grow old with it. Every day I thank the chickens for giving me their eggs, and I've mowed the grass enough that I'm learning where the ground is level and where it slants, where the milkweed pods grow, and what the names of the trees are. "Plant sequoias," Wendell Berry says in "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front," and I agree.

Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.

To know my place, my God, myself; and in that to flourish in the obscurity of middle America. That would be enough.

Lisa Schirch compares rituals to the grease that makes machines work. "Ritual acts as a lubricator for people to create, affirm, or reinvent their identities," she says. The Celebration for a Home has affirmed my new place here. This is our house, our home; this is our field — or we are its. We celebrate a home through liturgy not because the prayers cast a spell, or in order to jump through a hoop of righteousness. We celebrate with these prayers as a reminder:

The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

Amy Lepine Peterson teaches ESL writing and American pop culture at Taylor University.





Composing TLC in the Morehouse era

Cæli enarrant The heavens declare the glory of God

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Consider, for a moment, the paradox of time, which marks the basis of all of history — the “life cycle.” New life is made possible by and depends on aging and old life. By definition the two cannot stand alongside one another, since their relation depends upon precedence and succession. The young do not *catch up* to their elders, but remain ever after. I will never be a middle-aged peer of my father; my children, should I be blessed with them, will not have known me in my 30s. All pass time together concurrently but at different stages, according to a common, unrelenting schedule.

This, it turns out, is the pattern of both nature and grace. The end of one year yields the dawning of another; “everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The grammar of our season proposes a rich theological understanding of this passing of time: *Advent*, that is, *coming* or *happening*. The French *avènement* and *avenir* neatly illustrate the small semantic distance between *arrival* and *future*, bound up with the “Advent” of their common source. Here is the start of the Church year, marked by God’s own historical arriving: “when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4); and marked, simultaneously, by our anticipation of the Lord’s terrible and triumphal return as foretold in Scripture. In between come patient markings of the outworking of providence, as in St. Luke’s early prophecy after the finding in the temple: “His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor” (Luke 2:51-52). Here, as in all things, our Lord and his mother prove exemplary.

We follow behind, in our various ways, by God’s grace. We gratefully place our fragile lives and ministries within a larger pattern of obedience and promised fulfillment. We pray for healing and generosity,

for clarity and wisdom, and for blessing. We acknowledge the faithfulness of those who have gone before, and strive with trepidation (doubtlessly not enough) to reap that for which we did not labor — “entering into” their work, “gathering fruit for eternal life” (John 4:36-38).

Here at home, I often think of the history of THE LIVING CHURCH and its old mission, articulated with commendable clarity 135 years ago and by subsequent keepers of the flame. The Morehouse family perpetuated TLC by folding it into their publishing house in Milwaukee, pouring two generations of editorial love and keen intelligence into the pages of the magazine from 1900 to 1952. May they rest in peace and rise in glory, and pray for us. Likewise the Rev. Dr. Carroll Simcox and the Rev. Canon Dr. H. Boone Porter: sturdy stalwarts whose contributions to TLC spanned six decades, from the 1940s into the 1990s. And there were others, like Peter Day, a layman who left his editorial post at TLC in 1964 to become ecumenical officer of the Episcopal Church.

May all who long for a living Church be given the grace and courage to advance the cause, especially in the *new* days ahead. Seeking the will of God, on earth as it is in heaven, let us ask only for daily bread, in the steps of our earliest forbears — who “day by day spent much time together in the temple, broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46-47).

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all the staff of THE LIVING CHURCH, with every wish for the Lord’s blessing on you and yours! We are grateful for your support and partnership, which makes our common ministry possible. Onward to 2014, in the name of Christ.

Christopher Wells

The Virgin

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It is first a human story. In the long saga of wars and rumors of wars, Syria has entered into an alliance with the northern kingdom of Israel against the southern kingdom of Judah. Ahaz, king of Judah, hears the Lord telling him to ask for a sign: "Let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven" (Isa. 7:11). The king, however, trembles at the prospect of testing the Lord. The prophet Isaiah speaks: "The Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). Is the woman the king's wife? Is the child Hezekiah? Is the Bible telling us again that the story goes on? Ruin will not be total as long as parents dare, in hope, to bring their beautiful babies into this broken world. A child will be born. Let this human story move us. A new life has arrived, a new face, a new image of God, an irreplaceable gift.

Just below the surface of this human story, there is a divine story. There is a young woman named Mary who is found to be with child of the Holy Spirit. There is a man named Joseph who dreams the dream of an addressing angel: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20). The angel, quoting Isaiah, says: "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel." "Emmanuel," the angel says, means "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). The young woman and the man are said to have had no marital relations until she had borne a son. Their marriage is more than human love, steeped in the enfolding presence of Spirit, addressed by an angelic voice. Their human love is deeper and richer because God is the mysterious center of their lives. God has come to each of them separately. God brings them together. In a sense it is not wrong to

say that God consummates their marriage. God makes them one in the providential miracle of their calling. Together, they will lean over the crèche and behold the Messiah. God has made them parents.

Mary and Joseph are, as we are too, God bearers. They bring this child to the world, and they announce by the witness of this strange birth that every person summoned to faith comes by a divine act. Human agency must say, "Let it be to me according to your word," but even this is a gift of prevenient grace. Our story follows a similar narrative. "Through the Spirit itself, through whom Christ was conceived and born, we are born again by a spiritual birth" (Gregory the Great, Epist. 31). In a sense, faith is always a virgin birth. "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). Even as these words fall from our confessing tongue, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," Jesus is quick to teach us: "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). The Spirit awakens faith and makes us newborn people united to the one all-redeeming Christ.

Advent is a time for all times. Every day we wait for the Lord's visitation. And as the Lord comes to us anew, we ourselves are renewed, awakened in the Spirit, born from the Spirit.

Look It Up

Read Rom. 1:1-7. What is your new life? The obedience of faith.

Think About It

Ever ancient, ever new (St. Augustine).

The Law's Fulfillment

“Your decrees are my inheritance for ever; truly they are the joy of my heart” (Ps. 119:111). The law is a gift, instruction for God’s people, treasured guidance for daily life. The law is a light upon one’s path. The law is the love of learning. Law, being instruction, is similar to what the Bible calls wisdom. “For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activities of the elements; the beginning and end and middle of times, the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons, the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars, the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals, the powers of spirits and the thoughts of human beings, the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots” (Wisdom of Solomon 7:17-20). “Great is our LORD and mighty in power; there is no limit to his wisdom” (Ps. 147:5). Lift high the law and let life prosper by law’s leading. When, in the fullness of time, Jerusalem’s vindication shines forth, “God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations” (Isa. 61:11). The nations will see the law and say, “Behold, a crown of beauty.”

The law was indeed given through Moses, but descending the holy mountain, Moses found a rebellious and idolatrous people. “As soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’s anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets from his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain” (Ex. 32:19). “They have not known my ways, and so I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest” (Ps. 95:11). Still, the law is praised, and again and again the people try to walk by the law’s instruction. In truth they simply cannot do it, not because the law is flawed but because they themselves are flawed. The law is leading sinners and showing sinners, mo-

ment by moment, that the perfect application of law proves impossible.

“In the beginning was the Word.” Like the Ten Words (Decalogue), this Word is from God, but the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word, Jesus Christ our Lord, is the fulfillment of the Law. He is the new human being. In Jesus Christ “faith has come” (Gal. 3:25). Law, having functioned as a disciplinarian, is usurped by a change of status granted in union with Christ. “God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children” (Gal. 4:4-5). To be sure, children need instruction, but the grounding and saving truth is the fact of being this new child who cries out, “Abba! Father!”

In Christ the obedience of faith is a mysterious and inner working of the Spirit. “From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace” (John 1:16). We are no longer under the law as slaves, but in the law and the law in us (*Ex Enarrationibus sancti Augustini in psalmos*, 2). “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13).

Again, theological emphasis belongs to a transformed status. Once we were slaves, consigned to law and law’s accusing eye. Now we are children of God. “To all who received him, who called on his name, he gave power to become children of God” (John 1:12). An astounding miracle — to be born a free child of God.

Look It Up

Read Ps. 119. Speak well of the law.

Think About It

In a sense we remain servants. We bear the yoke of Christ. But the yoke is easy and burden light. Perfect freedom in perfect service.

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Deaths

The Rev. Canon **Harroldean Ashton**, an advocate of lifelong education, died Sept. 10. She was 77.

Born in Atlantic City, she was a graduate of Trenton State Teachers College, Howard University, and General Theological Seminary. She was ordained deacon in 1987 and priest in 1989. She completed an STM degree at General in 1991. She served as vicar of St. Alban's Church, New Brunswick, NJ, 2005-08. The diocese designated her a canon in 2009. She is survived by a sister, Myra Ashton Gaynor of Atlantic City, New Jersey; and cousins Virginia Mercer and Lorraine Mercer White of Washington, DC.

The Rev. **Max Berry, Jr.**, a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard, died Sept. 26 in Oklahoma City. He was 76.

Born in Muskogee, he was a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, and Phillips Theological Seminary. His dissertation at Phillips was on "The Determination and Validation of Religious Experience in Two Modern Renewal Movements." He was ordained deacon and priest in 1969. Fr. Berry served several parishes in Oklahoma and was rector of Grace Church, Muskogee, 1990-2004.

He is survived by his wife, Carole; a daughter, Holly Berry; sons Charles Berry,

Nicholas Berry, and Philip Berry; and three grandchildren.

The Rev. **John Hannahs**, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died Nov. 8 in Salt Lake City. He was 88.

Born in Smithfield, Ohio, he joined the Navy after finishing high school in 1943. He was assigned to field medical training with the Marine Corps. He served with the 5th Amphibious Corps attached to the 4th Marine Division during the Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima campaigns.

After the war he completed studies at Ohio University and Episcopal Divinity School. He was ordained deacon in 1952 and priest in 1953. He served as priest at parishes in Florida, Montana, and Wyoming and retired in 1987 after serving 16 years as chaplain at Wyoming State Hospital in Evanston.

He is survived by his wife, Alice Hannahs; a son, David Ross Hannahs; daughters Leah Hannahs White and Karen Elizabeth Hannahs; three grandchildren; and three nephews.

The Rev. **Johnson Hagood Pace, Jr.**, a U.S. Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 15. He was 95.

Born in Brunswick, GA, he was a graduate of the University of Florida and the University of the South's School of Theology. He was ordained deacon in 1948 and priest in 1949. He served parishes in Florida and Geor-

gia for 65 years. Fr. Pace is survived by daughters Nancy Ford and Margaret Chancey; sons Jon Pace and Jim Pace; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **Miguel A. Restrepo**, who began his ministry as a Roman Catholic priest and became an Episcopal priest in 1971, died Nov. 9. He was 87.

Born in Fredonia, Antioquia, Colombia, he was a graduate the University of Colombia and St. Bonaventure University. He served multiple parishes in metropolitan Miami during his ministry. He wrote a curriculum for a youth retreat, an essay on "The Mentally Retarded and Society," and a reflection on how clergy encounter God.

The Rev. **William Hamilton Russell**, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, died Nov. 18. He was 85.

Born in New York City, he was a graduate of the University of Virginia and Mercer School of Theology. He was president of Bellinger-Davis Travel and Inverness Travel in New York when he began theological studies.

He was ordained deacon in 1981 and priest in 1988. He served parishes in the dioceses of Long Island and Southwest Florida. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Truslow Russell; a son, James Truslow Russell; a grandson, Tyler H.M. Russell; and a sister, Aimee R. Corsini.

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—The Rev. Jess Reeves, Interim priest,
Otey Parish, Sewanee, TN



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