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September 20, 2015

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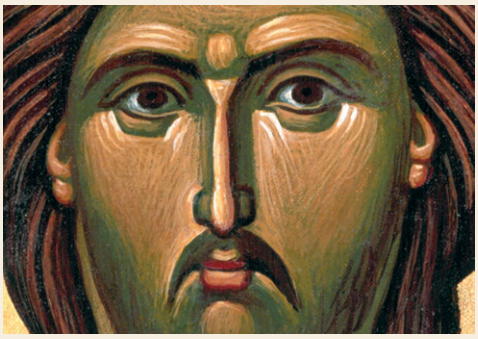

## ON THE COVER

"Since the death of Greek artist Photios Kontoglou in 1965, the Eastern Orthodox world has undergone a veritable renaissance in icon painting" —Dennis Raverty (see "The Resurgence of Traditional Icon Painting," p. 15).

*Holy Napkin* by Photios Kontoglou



# The Living Church

## THIS ISSUE | September 20, 2015




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# Storytellers Aim for Transformation

In an era of instant electronic communication, inspired biblical storytelling still draws spiritual seekers, just as it did 2,000 years ago. About 240 people gathered at the 2015 Festival Gathering of Biblical Storytelling in Chevy Chase, Md., Aug. 5-8 to hone their narrative skills.

The conference, sponsored by the Network of Biblical Storytellers International, based at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, featured dramatic presentations of scriptural passages, talks on how to bring a Bible story alive for modern audiences, and in-depth workshops.

Theme stories included "Bricks without Straw" (Ex. 5:1-6:1); "A Crippled Woman" (Luke 13:10-17), and "The Syrophoenician Woman's Daughter" (Mark 7:24-30). The conference included an evening of epic storytelling from Acts.

"We started the network in order to support people who were doing biblical storytelling in their ministries," said the Rev. Tom Boomershine, who founded NBS in 1977.

"Storytelling was not something that was thought about" before the early 1970s, Boomershine said in an interview with TLC. "It was not taught in seminaries.

"There was a common misunderstanding, and storytellers heard, *Oh, you tell Bible stories to children*." But "storytelling was *the* primary means of communication in the ancient world," in which 85 to 95 percent of people could not read. "Biblical storytelling is a recovery of the original character of the Bible."

Biblical storytelling is a new paradigm of the Bible in a post-literate world, said Boomershine, a former professor at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, and author of *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* (Abingdon, 1988), and *Messiah of Peace: A Performance-Criticism Commentary on Mark's Passion-Resurrection Narrative* (Cascade, published in June). "My own conclusion is that the renaissance of storytelling has been a response to digital electronic communication."

"One of the roles of the network has been to demonstrate that storytelling is a viable form of biblical communication," Boomershine said. "Doing it has proven its viability 2,000 years ago and now."

During a workshop at the conference, he added: "The assumption by literate people is that pre-literate people were ignorant. That is a lie." Instead, pre-literate people learned well from oral histories and had strong communal/social memories from the stories they heard.

The network strives to be a global community of storytellers who will be a force for world peace. "I think there is a growing fear that is manifesting itself," Boomershine said. "It is a steady reinforcement of the myth of redemptive violence."

The theme of that myth plays out constantly in movies in which heroes use the latest high-tech weapons to wipe out enemies at great personal risk. "That's our foreign policy," he said. "People believe that myth."

But the gospel is not about meeting violence with violence, but about the power of love, reconciliation, and forgiveness, which biblical storytellers can bring to audiences worldwide.

"Storytelling is part learned discipline and part artistic," said the Rev. Marvin A. McMickle, president of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in New York. "You need to understand it so well yourself that I could wake you up at 4 o'clock in the morning and you could tell me in one sentence what it's about."

The biblical storyteller needs to assure that every story makes "one clear, compelling, biblically centered

Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast photo

More than 1,500 people attended the consecration and ordination of the Rt. Rev. J. Russell Kendrick as the fourth Bishop of the Central Gulf Coast on July 25. Kendrick, previously rector of St. Stephen's Church in Birmingham, was elected in February. Kendrick and his wife, Robin, have a son, Aaron, and a daughter, Hannah. He is a native of Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

and contextually relevant claim that sets some aspect of God's will and God's word" before a specific audience, McMickle said.

People's knowledge of the Bible is declining, their likelihood of hearing a biblical story is declining, and they are bombarded by electronic communication. "You have to make me believe that what you're saying makes a difference in my life," McMickle said.

He added that the goal is not just to tell a compelling story but to suggest a course of action: "Pathos is what is required to get people to treat as urgent the course of action you have just suggested. Imagine a house on fire."

McMickle urged storytellers to imbue their craft with passion, urgency, and conviction through their delivery. "The danger for storytellers and preachers is predictability," he said. "You ought to at least own a lectionary. … Somewhere in there is something that you can use. The lectionary moves you around so that you don't get stuck in the familiar."

"Pick some stories that correspond to national holidays," he advised, such as a scriptural passage illustrating gratitude to correspond with the Thanksgiving holiday.

He emphasized the importance of preparing to present a biblical story, as one would prepare for a sermon. "God is not just entrusting the story to us. God is entrusting the congregation's time to us," he said, noting that Harry Emerson Fosdick said he spent one hour of preparation for every minute of his sermon.

"Stories require more than your mouth to be true; they require your body," said Richard Swanson, professor of religion, philosophy, and classics at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

"You owe people the service of taking off the blinders on these stories," added Swanson, director of the Provoking the Gospel Storytelling Project and a collaborator with composers on performances of the St. Mark Passion and the Book of Job.

For those who want to take biblical storytelling to a higher level, the network's Academy for Biblical Storytelling offers training in both the performance and teaching of biblical stories, said the academy's dean, storyteller Tracy Radosevic, an adjunct professor at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., and the Institute of Theology in Baltimore.

Radosevic told TLC that the academy offers two levels of certification. "It's intense; we call it an academy on purpose. It is rigorous."

She said some academy students are pastors, some Christian educators, some teachers, and some make their living as full-time biblical storytellers. Still others attend the academy to deepen their devotional life and have no interest in performing. But some of those students find that once they have completed the academy curriculum "they have to go out

(Continued on next page)

**Storytellers**

(Continued from previous page)

and share it. The power of the biblical stories is meant to be shared."

Radosevic said the academy encourages students to rely on a formula of 95 percent content accuracy and a minimum of 75 percent word accuracy.

She used the analogy of jazz musicians who riff on a melody. "They can't riff on the melody until they know the core melody," said Radosevic, who has led storytelling pilgrimages to Israel and Palestine and presented at conferences in Australia, Gambia, and England. The academy advises students to read several different translations of a Bible story in order to make it their own.

Radosevic, a former director of Christian education at the First United Methodist Church in Cherryville, North Carolina, is committed to bringing the Bible to those with low scriptural literacy. "The rate of biblical illiteracy is rising," she said. "Many people either don't know it at all or find it boring. Reverent doesn't mean you have to be boring."

*Peggy Eastman*

Dominican Development Group photo

The Diocese of the Dominican Republic has elected the Rev. Moisés Quezada Mota as bishop coadjutor. Quezada, 58, rector of Jesus Nazareno and Good Samaritan mission churches in San Francisco de Macoris, was elected on the second ballot from a field of four nominees. The diocese held an electing convention July 25 at the Cathedral Church of the Epiphany in Santo Domingo. His ordination and consecration is set for February.

# Giving Voices to Women

Like many a dutiful spouse, Pilate's wife moved for the sake of her husband, but not happily: "I wasn't thrilled about uprooting the entire household and moving to some place I'd never heard of. After all, Judea isn't exactly a household word in Rome. But Pontius was elated. It was his first important posting, and he saw it as the first step to bigger and better things."

How Mrs. Pilate really felt we don't know, since she is little more than a one-liner of biblical history. But to Katie Sherrod, the author who brought her to life in *Women of the Passion: A Journey to the Cross*, her concerns are all too real. In the book, women become the narrators of the 14 Stations of the Cross.

As Sherrod thought about them, she felt their presence as if "they were standing behind me at my shoulder urging me to write." When she would consider a station, she could almost hear a voice saying, "Here I am. It's me." She says it was the most powerful writing experience in a 30-year career.

"I'm really reluctant to say I wrote it," she said. "The women wrote it."

Sherrod, an independent writer, producer, and commentator, intended the stories in her book to be read aloud, but lately they have found their way into the Stations of the Cross with women, and occasionally men, donning veils to tell the stories of the women behind Jesus' Passion. This past Lent, composer Ana Hernandez created music for the performance at Sherrod's church, St. Luke's in the Meadow, in Fort Worth.

Sherrod said men who have put themselves in the women's places have been touched.

"I've had men say it was the most meaningful thing they've ever done, that it opened the Passion for them in a way that they had never experienced."

In a telephone interview from her

home, Sherrod said the idea of letting the women speak came to her in 1996 while she was preparing Lenten retreats for Episcopal congregations in her city and Dallas.

Sherrod wanted to empower women in the Diocese of Fort Worth and feed "that hunger women had here to hear women's voices in the church."

"Of course we all have ministries, whether ordained or not," she said. "The church is not in control of this, not really. God is."

Growing up Roman Catholic in west Texas, Sherrod found the Stations could become rote, so she discerned a way to bring them to life and offer healing for those women of the diocese who felt ignored. Writing in the first person, she would present the stories from the perspective of the women whose lives had been changed all those centuries ago.

"They wouldn't have been cured by Jesus and then say, *Thanks, see you later*. They probably would have been hanging out with him and become followers."

She imagined what they would have thought. Having been to Israel several times, she envisioned the city going on around them with people stopping to stare as a criminal was paraded through the streets with his followers behind him.

"They wouldn't have left his mother, and we know she was there."

While she wrote the stories in 1996, she did not publish them as a 43-page book until 2006, in response to requests from the many people who had heard them across the years. To ensure performance accessibility, she grants free one-time copying privileges. The book is available through Amazon.

While little is known about Pilate's wife, other women in the book are more familiar, such as the Marys. But Sherrod presents one of these, Jesus' mother, with an anger we do not read about in the gospels. This Mary shocks some people, especially when, after touching the face of her son, she licks the blood from her hand.

"This station often makes men uncomfortable," Sherrod said. "Of course that is what a mother would do. Women are more accustomed to blood than men are."

She thinks such vivid portrayals might have been behind the rejections she received from the few publishers she approached. But Sherrod believed she could neither ignore nor sugarcoat what she heard from Mary. After writing about Jesus being placed into Mary's arms, Sherrod was in tears. Her husband, the Rev. Gayland Pool, a retired Episcopal priest, asked her if she was all right.

"I said, 'I am, but Mary's not.' I was

(Continued on page 22)

Jeff Boldt

# One Basso Profundo's Sotto Voce Confessions

By Don Keller

Have you ever joined a new choir late in life? It's a peril. I had sung in Episcopal choirs all my life. We had just moved to California, and I asked if I could join All Saints' choir. When the choristers heard I was a deep bass, they seemed enchanted, for they were short on basses.

All Saints' is high church and we have scads of music to perform. In our choir we sing a new Anglican chant each Sunday. An old tune will not do. And the bulletin clearly states that no congregant can sing this harmonious chant with the choir. No sir! It's the *choir only*!

And only one anthem each week will not do. No sir! An anthem at the offertory is not enough. Usually the choirmaster leaves the organ bench during Communion, so some of the communicants are forced to step aside, and he swings his arms while conducting us.

Then we also have the propers. Have you ever heard of the propers? There's a whole book of them. They consist of short bits of chants from the Psalms, sung to clever long-run chant tunes. And for some reason, in our parish, only men chant them. Just before Communion, the choirmaster at the organ bench raises his hand profusely and the men stand.

The proper is also sung a capella, so the organist does not have much say in how we chant it. First the organ plays several notes to be sure that the soloist starts on key. And that's *it* for the organ. The soloist starts the first sentence of the chant and often even begins on the correct note. Then all the rest of us chant the second sentence. Sometimes we hold long sections of the chant on the same note, other times not so much.

We wear long black cassocks and white cottas. If these cottas are long enough, they are called surplices. One day a Presbyterian minister had arrived to join in our service.

"Will you have a surplice?" I asked, while handing him a cotta.

"Oh, no," he said. "In our church, all we have is deficits."

At All Saints' the robed choirs begin the processional at the rear of the church and march, singing, to the front of the church, where we climb three steps to the chancel and choir area. Since I'm a basso profundo, my bass choir partner and I process just ahead of the priest. The priest wears his chasuble and sometimes also his maniple.

One Sunday I was marching in, singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" loudly, in an effort to drown out the congregants who could not carry the tune.

Everything worked out fine until I tried mounting the three steps between the nave and the chancel. Then everything broke loose. I was trying to sing and climb steps while carrying a hymnal and a pack of music essential to the full service. Just as I mounted the top step, I grew dizzy. I lost balance and fell backward down the steps, into the arms of our robed priest.

I still sing with the choir, but at the insistence of my fellow choristers I have refrained from processing since then.

*Don Keller makes his resonant and joyful noise at All Saints' Church, San Diego.*


*The Apostles at Confirmation* and *The Baptism of Christ* by Leopold Bruckner at St. Nicholas Basilica, Trnava, Slovakia / Thinkstock Photos

# BAPTISM: Reliving Death and Resurrection

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death … so we too might walk in newness of life. —Rom. 6:3-4*

By Julia Gatta

Baptism is how the death and resurrection of Jesus gets inside us. According to the Acts of the Apostles, baptism followed swiftly upon the first proclamation of the gospel. On Pentecost day, St. Peter announced to those assembled in Jerusalem that the one they had seen crucified weeks before was now alive: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:32). The death of Jesus was publicly observable; eyewitnesses now attested to his resurrection.

All children are born into a world, society, and family warped by sin; and all children are born with a death warrant hanging over them.

Since the crucifixion of Jesus did not happen by mere accident, the residents of Jerusalem (like the apostles themselves) felt "cut to the heart." Yet they are not paralyzed by guilt. They immediately ask the apostles a very practical question: "What shall we do?" Were the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus meant to remain only stupendous events of the past? Or was there some response they could make, something they could do? "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," Peter replies (Acts 2:38). Jesus' death and resurrection took hold of them, got right inside them, when they were baptized in water.

Here is something to notice about Christian spirituality: right from the start, it connects us with things of the earth. The sacramental basis of Christian spirituality, that it invariably involves "stuff," gradually trains our vision to see the world sacramentally. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God" wrote poet Gerald Manley Hopkins. From the wonder of creation we move to see the enfleshed glory of God fully manifest in Jesus — and back again. Jesus begins the sacramental path by his own baptism in the River Jordan, and the earliest baptisms also took place in "living water." Baptism by immersion forcefully dramatizes our spiritual "burial" with Christ in his death, but even when baptisms are enacted by pouring water at a font, material things are required: water and chrism, which is olive oil blessed by the bishop. There are "set pieces" for this dramatic action: the paschal candle, signifying the risen life of Christ, stands near the font; and a small candle lit from it carries this flame to the newly baptized. We are led "through fire and water."

Christian life begins from a profound spiritual union with Christ when we are immersed by baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection. After the water bath the priest imprints the cross on our foreheads with chrism as we are "marked as Christ's own forever." It is a terrible and glorious moment. What the mystics yearn for, union with God, is already ours: the sheer gift of baptismal grace. Christ's death and resurrection are stamped into our souls, and this "paschal mystery" shapes every dimension of Christian life from the font to the grave. It is the lens through which we interpret the world and the events of our lives.

We who have been "buried with Christ by baptism into death" experience this death every day in innumerable ways — some small and some momentous. Many of these "death" experiences are common to everyone. They include both physical and mental suffering: disappointment, illness, pain, loss, bereavement, failure, dislocation, shame. Suffering serves as a kind of connective tissue for the whole human race; and in his humanity, Jesus embraced every bit of it. As Rowan Williams writes:

> If we ask the question, "Where might you expect to find the baptized?" one answer is, "In the neighborhood of chaos." It means you might expect to find Christian people near to those places where humanity is most at risk, where humanity is most disordered, disfigured and needy. Christians will be found in the neighborhood of Jesus — but Jesus is found in the neighborhood of human suffering, defenselessly alongside those in need. ("Baptism" in *Being Christian* [Eerdmans, 2014], pp. 4-5)

Union with Christ in his death, first forged in baptism, inevitably joins us in sympathy with other human beings, even as it joins us spiritually with Christ. As we grow into baptismal grace, we find this other dimension lurking just under the surface of ordinary human suffering: we begin to notice the presence of Christ crucified in our afflicted neighbor, and Christ's quiet companionship in our own trials. We experience resurrection, as St. Paul did, paradoxically embedded in travail itself: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies" (2 Cor. 4:8-10).

St. Paul also makes it clear that to "walk in newness of life" means we "must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11). For the life of the risen Lord to thrive in us, the old life of sin must wither. The three classic renunciations of evil in the baptismal rite enact our conversion liturgically. In daily life, we repeat them experientially as we undergo a constant struggle

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CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

## BAPTISM: Reliving Death and Resurrection

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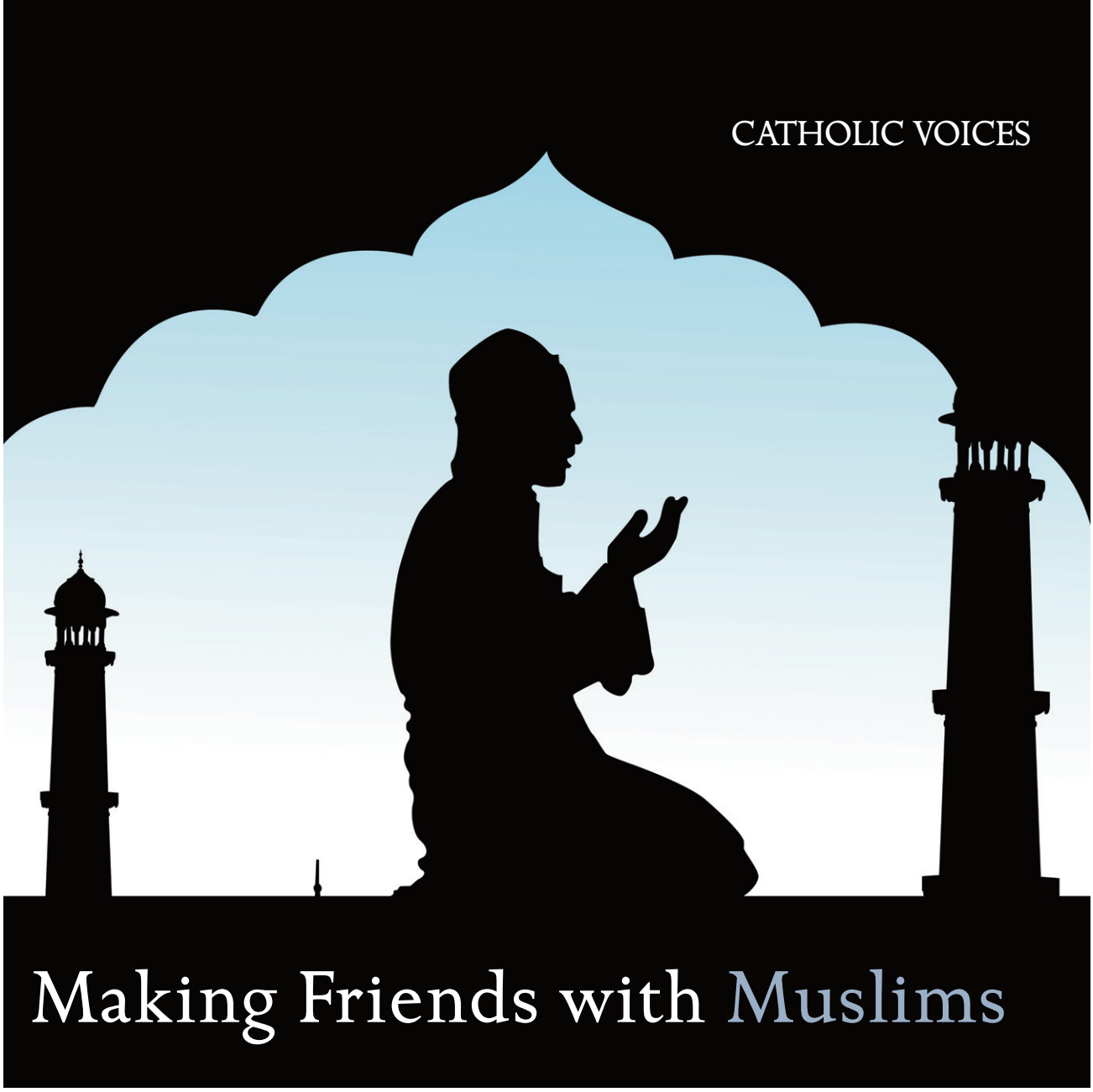
with temptation and deeply rooted, sinful patterns of behavior and attitude. Old habits die hard. Sanctification is a lifelong process, with many humbling falls. With consummate pastoral realism, we ask candidates for holy baptism: "Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?" We will need to repent, often.

We may wonder how any of this can apply to the baptism of babies and children, who cannot understand the significance of what is taking place. Yet in the natural order of things, children inherit all sorts of conditions that they will only understand later, if at all: their DNA, for instance, or a windfall bequest. God graciously gives all the baptized the fullness of life in Christ: sharing his death and resurrection; becoming members of his body, the Church; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; even the forgiveness of sins. Babies do not need forgiveness now for personal sins, but they will later. For all children are born into a world, society, and family warped by sin; and all children are born with a death warrant hanging over them. Baptism pushes our boundaries beyond these limitations into the freedom of forgiveness and the joy of resurrection.

The grace of God creates and elicits a response from us. If the baptismal grace given a child is fostered in home and parish, perhaps even at school or camp, we may prayerfully expect a "mature affirmation" of baptism in confirmation when the time is ripe for it. As we sink into Christ's death and resurrection, we begin to live eucharistically: offering ourselves, and whatever each day brings, in union with Christ to God.

*The Rev. Julia Gatta is professor of pastoral theology at the University of the South's School of Theology in Sewanee. This is the second in a series of meditations*



# Making Friends with Muslims

By David Carlson

Thirty years ago, an Egyptian scholar stunned me with two sentences: "I thought that the United States was a Christian nation. I expected to find more people living like Jesus." As a Christian who has entered spiritual friendships with Muslims in the past decade, I have often thought about that comment. What do Muslims expect of American Christians?

Muslims who have immigrated to the United States likely have done so for the reasons that my grandparents emigrated from Sweden: they want to live in a country that values human dignity and offers their children a future with greater safety and opportunity.

Yet I have sensed a spiritual loneliness in my American Muslim friends. This feeling is not so much the result of Muslims being a misunderstood minority in this country as it is their disappointment that American Christians are not more God-conscious.

In my experience, it is no exaggeration to say that devout American Muslims are *hungry* to meet Christians who pray, who love their neighbor, and who seek to do the will of God each day. Especially since 9/11, however, Muslims have more often heard Christians on radio talk shows and television denounce Islam as a false religion or call for Muslims to be barred from entering the nation.

To enter a spiritual friendship with Muslims is not to ignore the significant theological differences that exist between Muslims and Christians, but only once in my experience has a Muslim ever challenged my Christian beliefs.

In contrast, numerous Christians attending one of my talks about ISIS/ISIL have asked me how best to counter Islamic beliefs. I explain that my approach to Muslims is the same approach that St. Francis is credited with advocating: preach the kingdom of God every day, but use words only when absolutely necessary. Put another way, I am to share the love of Christ with all whom I meet. But I know that St. Paul was right when he wrote that the

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CATHOLIC VOICES

# Making Friends with Muslims

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cleverest conversion tactic can be just a "resounding gong or clanging cymbal," far inferior to the power of love.

And therein is the surprise awaiting Christians who enter spiritual friendships with Muslims. As we share the love of God with them, we experience the love of God returning to us — yes, from our devout Muslim friends. That divine love is palpable and unmistakable. Both partners feel it, and tears often accompany the awareness.

American Muslims are under intense pressure. When ISIS/ISIL commits an atrocity, American Muslims know that their lives will become more strained and difficult. This is one of the main reasons ISIS/ISIL kidnaps, rapes, and beheads Americans. ISIS/ISIL commits these atrocities so that Muslims in the West will be harassed. ISIS/ISIL wants Muslims in Western countries to find them unwelcoming and unsafe places to live.

The deeper tragedy is this: ISIS/ISIL could not be happier than when American Christian voices denounce Islam and sponsor events that humiliate Muslims.

So how should American Christians react to the current ISIS/ISIL crisis? A standard demand ISIS/ISIL makes of young people recruited through the Web is that they completely cut off contact with local mosques. The reason for this is clear: ISIS/ISIL knows that Western mosques almost unanimously stand against terrorism and radicalism. Strong American mosques are, then, the first line of defense against the lure of ISIS/ISIL on American Muslim youth.

Given this fact, Christians have something very important to contribute. This summer, in response to the many Christians who have asked what they can do, we began a new initiative: Prayer Partners for Peace. We invite Christians, both individually and as faith communities, to pray for American Muslims and to let Muslims know of that prayer support. Similarly, we ask American Muslims to pray for Christians, that we will not be led into the temptation and the evil of hatred.

Both Muslims and Christians know that prayer is powerful, and the response from both communities to this new prayer initiative has been encouraging. Our prayer for one another at this time of crisis is a very simple and familiar one, asking that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

*David Carlson, a professor of philosophy and religion at Franklin College in Indiana, is author of* Peace Be with You: Monastic Wisdom for a Terror-Filled World *(Thomas Nelson, 2011) and* Countering ISIL: The Power of Spiritual Friendships *(forthcoming).*



*Mother of God, More Spacious than the Heavens* and *Holy Napkin* by Photios Kontoglou

# The Resurgence of Traditional Icon Painting

## Part 1

By Dennis Raverty

Since the death of Greek artist Photios Kontoglou in 1965, the Eastern Orthodox world has undergone a veritable renaissance in icon painting, with the widespread return to the traditional Byzantine style that his work first heralded and that so many iconographers and muralists have followed. Hundreds of Orthodox churches across the world have ordered icons painted in the "new" old style. This resurgence of tradition has spread to other churches in the Orthodox ambit, from Russian to Coptic. The revival has even extended to Western artists of the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions (which I will discuss in a subsequent piece).

For the last 20 years of his life, Kontoglou devoted himself exclusively to painting religious and secular subjects in the traditional Byzantine manner, but as a young man he spent the years of the First World War and its immediate aftermath in Paris, at that time the center of Europe's avant-garde art world.

The decade before the war was one of unprecedented innovation by the international community of artists then residing in Paris, and many of them were exploring their ethnic heritage: Picasso was inspired by prehistoric sculpture from his homeland, Spain; Modigliani was investigating the "primitives" of late Medieval Italy; Marc Chagall, a Russian Jew, painted life in the Shtetl; slightly later Diego Rivera, the Mexican muralist, began incorporating Pre-Columbian motifs into his work; and artists of the Harlem Renaissance looked to the ancestral arts of West Africa for inspiration. It was natural, therefore, that in search of a style Kontoglou would find inspiration in Greek art.

Of course, classical art of the ancient, pre-Christian Greeks had an enormous and continuing influence in the West. The idealism of ancient Greco-Roman art appealed to Renaissance artists like Raphael, whose graceful Madonnas clearly reflect the influence, and to Michelangelo, whose heroic sculptures testify to the enduring vitality of the classical canon of ideal proportion.

But Kontoglou, sensitized perhaps to the expressive possibilities in modern art, was attracted rather to another, later Greek style, Christian Byzantine, which uses expressive distortion, abstraction of form,

(Continued on next page)

# CULTURES

## Resurgence of Traditional Icon Painting

(fig. 1)

(fig. 2)

*Transfiguration*, oil on canvas, courtesy of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, New York City; *Transfiguration* by Kontoglou

(Continued from previous page)

and a severe and flat conception of pictorial space like Post Impressionist, Fauvist, and Cubist work of the prewar Parisian avant-garde.

Ever since the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, Greek Orthodox icon painting tended to take its stylistic cues from the art of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods in the West, with its realism and deep perspective rendered in transparent glazes of oil. In reaction to these pernicious Italian influences in icon painting, Kontoglou turned to the more severe and even older Byzantine style. A comparison of a Kontoglou painting with an earlier, anonymous painting will illustrate the radically conservative new style.

*Transfiguration*, by an unknown artist in the collection of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in New York City (fig. 1), typifies the icon tradition before Kontoglou, indebted to Italian art and painted in oils, as were many icons made during the early 20th century. The same subject by Kontoglou (fig. 2) shows his radical departure from the more Italianate style, abjuring oil paint on canvas and reverting to the traditional medium of egg tempera on wood.

The story of the Transfiguration is recorded in all three of the synoptic gospels. Jesus walks to the top of Mount Tabor with three disciples and is transfigured before them, his clothing becoming dazzling white. Then Moses and Elijah appear and the disciples see Jesus talking with them.

In the earlier oil painting by the anonymous iconographer, light shines from a consistent single source in the upper left, which shapes the figures in three-dimensional space, lending them substantial weight. Their clothing, flowing loosely about them in soft, irregular folds, convincingly reveals their bodily forms underneath.

In the Kontoglou painting the figures occupy a shallower, more two-dimensional space; the light comes from a variety of different, contradictory sources; no one casts

shadows and the highly stylized clothing falls in geometric patterns that seem almost independent of the forms within. The figures appear weightless and disembodied, spiritual and abstract, in contrast to the earthbound, heavy figures of the older icon.

Christ is surrounded by a stylized nimbus of light in the Kontoglou, which is derived from carefully observed Byzantine prototypes, as are the rocks. Kontoglou achieves this without the icon being in any sense a slavish copy; he knew that to be vital, a living tradition must allow for a certain degree of innovation. Kontoglou makes the Byzantine manner that he revives his own. He also uses the same style for secular subjects, such as the cycle of frescoes of mythological narratives he painted in Athens' Town Hall in the 1930s.

The relative abstraction of form in Byzantine art is of vital theological importance. Christ, fully God and fully human, cannot be depicted adequately in a realistic manner, the tradition asserts, because this would only capture the human nature of Jesus and not his divine nature. Abstraction of form suggests the transmutation of the material world through Christ's incarnation and the resultant transformation of human nature through the power of the Holy Spirit, yielding a transcendent rather than merely realistic view of the luminous body of Christ. The materials also serve to spiritualize the figures. Wood, egg yolks, natural pigments, gold — earthy, chaste materials — are elevated sacramentally and, by the power of the Holy Spirit working within the imagination of the viewer, transfigured into representations of the Unrepresentable.

The icon thus becomes a sort of doorway or window into the Eternal, and a means of mystical access to God for the prayerful viewer. A contemporary of Kontoglou, Russian Orthodox writer and icon painter Leonid Ouspensky (with whom Kontoglou corresponded for a time), describes this process of *theosis* for the viewer in icon veneration:

> The grace of the Holy Spirit penetrates into his nature, combines with it, fills and transfigures it. Man grows, as it were, into the Eternal life, already here on earth acquiring the beginning of this life, the beginning of deification, which will be made fully manifest in the life to come. ... In other words, uniting with the Deity, he [i.e., the viewer] becomes illuminated with His uncreated light, thus assuming the likeness of the radiant body of Christ.

*Dennis Raverty is an associate professor of art history at New Jersey City University, specializing in art of the 19th and 20th centuries. His feature articles and criticism have appeared in* Art in America, The International Review of African American Art, The New Art Examiner, *and* Art Papers, *where he was a contributing editor.*

# Books of Less Common Prayer

Review by Mark Michael

Within Christ's sadly fractured body, it has been some consolation for the past few generations that at least the liturgists could sing from the same hymnal. The convictions and priorities of the Liturgical Movement have reshaped the Sunday gatherings of most Christians across the Western world, drawing us together through the use of shared texts, calendars, and lectionaries, as well as a common emphasis on active lay participation.

The Second Vatican Council's liturgical reforms reclaimed the centrality of baptism, simplified ceremonial and symbolism, and exalted early Christian liturgies as a model for contemporary use. The Roman Catholic Church's revised liturgies, which debuted 50 years ago, decisively shaped a wave of new liturgical resources throughout mainline Protestantism, including the Episcopal Church's Book of Common Prayer (1979). With perhaps the sole exception of biblical studies among the other theological disciplines, liturgical scholars have been educated together and continued in dialogue across confessional borders, working together to institute change within their respective church bodies.

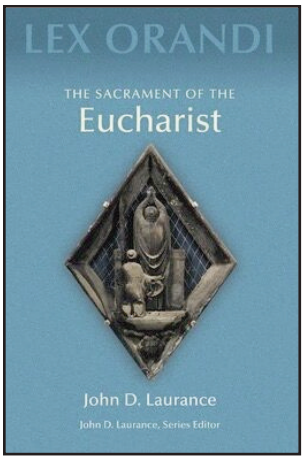
But that longstanding consensus is clearly beginning to fray. The grand promises about reformed liturgy's capacity to reenergize Christian mission and catechesis have worn thin in the advancing days of secularism. Historical scholarship has undermined earlier confidence about unified patterns of liturgy within the early Church. Texts, music, and aesthetic idioms that were exciting and innovative 50 years ago now largely seem banal and gauche. Roman Catholicism's most recent liturgical developments have been oriented toward reclaiming Latinity, while mainline Protestants have consistently pushed the envelope in the direction of inclusivity, stressing pastoral concerns. Evangelicalism's relative growth has popularized casual and emotive forms of worship untouched by the Liturgical Movement's influence.

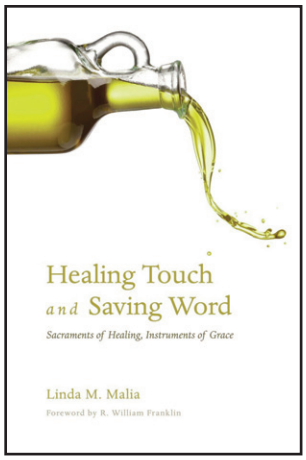
Liturgical scholarship finds itself at a crossroads, as an aging cadre seeks to uphold the inherited consensus while new voices move in different directions. Four recent publications in liturgical studies reflect different points along the spectrum of voices in these important debates, which will reshape the way Christian liturgy is studied and practiced in the coming generation.

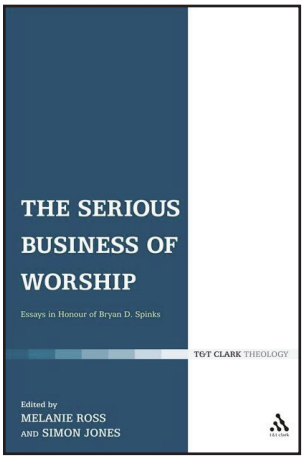
Marquette University's John Laurance is an important voice affirming the Liturgical Movement standard. His *Sacrament of the Eucharist* is the flagship volume in the Lex Orandi series of Liturgical Press, which explicates the theology and practice of the Roman Rite's seven sacraments in the light of normal parish practice. The Roman Church has been gradually issuing retranslations of its liturgical texts for several years (the new English-language missal arrived in 2011), and the series purports to interact with these new texts. There's scant evidence of this in Laurance's book, aside from a half-hearted defense of the translation's use of *consubstantial* in the Creed. But there is a consistent desire to justify the Liturgical Movement's original vision in the light of more recent criticisms.

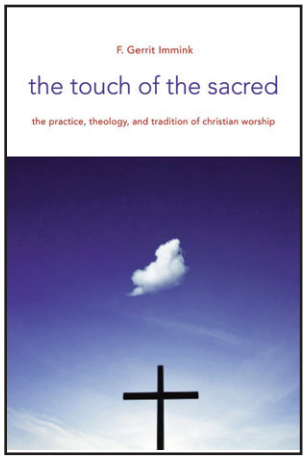
The first half of Laurance's book is a dense but rewarding summary of the deeply christological theology undergirding the Second Vatican Council's liturgical reforms. Drawing heavily from the work of Karl Rahner, Edward Kilmartin, and Louis-Marie Chauvet, Laurance sets sacramental participation in the widest possible scope, tracing a liturgically focused Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. Christ is present and active in the Church's liturgy as "God's self-gift to the world," received by his people in the shared life of grace. The liturgy is the Church's symbolic language and its public testimony, and is uniquely privileged among other sources of theology in its ability to express the apostolic faith. In passing, Laurance treats a number of complex issues skillfully, including the background of the maxim *lex orandi, lex credendi* and the appropriate balance between universal and local elements in liturgical celebration.

The work's second half is a mystagogical commentary on a celebration of the Sunday Eucharist in Ordinary time. There is a great deal of helpful material here, though Laurance ex-




## The Sacrament of the Eucharist
By **John D. Laurance, SJ**. Liturgical Press. Pp. 208. $24.95

## Healing Touch and Saving Word
Sacraments of Healing, Instruments of Grace
By **Linda M. Malia**. Wipf & Stock. Pp. 276. $30

## The Serious Business of Worship
Essays in Honour of Bryan D. Spinks
Edited by **Melanie Ross** and **Simon Jones**. Bloomsbury. Pp. 256. $46.95

## The Touch of the Sacred
The Practice, Theology, and Tradition of Christian Worship
By **F. Gerrit Immink**. Eerdmans. Pp. 280. $30

hibits the occasionally humorous tendency of such works to allegorize every possible element of the liturgy — thus, church pews represent the way believers are gathered together in Christ, while congregational chairs are alternatively signs of the equal dignity of all persons in Christ.

*Healing Touch and Saving Word* by Episcopal priest Linda Malia attempts a similar project, analyzing the Episcopal Church's rites for healing in light of the Liturgical Movement's vision. Her work also begins with a rather simpler overview of what she calls Old School and New School models of sacramental theology, and a review of successive Anglican rites for the visitation of the sick. The different sections are rather poorly integrated, and the author displays a bit too much of the polemicist's adversion to strawmen in summarily dismissing medieval sacramental theology as magical and hierarchical and the early prayer books as guilt-ridden and negative.

Malia's work, like that of many mainline Protestant liturgical scholars, is more valuable in its attentiveness to pastoral issues surrounding healing ministry. Like many contemporary Episcopalians, she is a robust advocate for the ministry of all the baptized, and ponders how the healing rites might be revised to make them more intentionally corporate, even giving the sick person a more active role, as a way of challenging "the alienation and disempowerment that accompany sickness and debility." She also notes the role that families and other caregivers play in supporting the sick, and urges that rites pay more attention to their ministry as agents of God's comfort and healing.

She challenges the newer Episcopal healing rites' seeming lack of confidence in God's healing power, urging the use of more declarative language appropriate to a sacramental encounter. Sickness, she notes, is a time for serious "soul work," and she worries about the unrealistically sunny tone of some contemporary rites. She muses that perhaps the pendulum has swung too far from the dire warnings of the traditional rites, and believes that more extensive catechesis about healing and the liturgical rites would equip the sick and those who minister to them to make better use of the opportunities for conversion and deeper growth in faith that sickness often brings.

*The Serious Business of Worship* is a festschrift for Berkeley at Yale's Bryan Spinks, and includes essays from many of the most significant liturgical historians in the English-speaking world. Spinks is a highly versatile scholar who has made important contributions in the study of patristic, Reformation, and modern liturgy, and many of the essays react directly to different parts of a powerful sermon about Christian worship he delivered at Yale in 1997. Like many liturgical historians in recent decades,

(Continued on next page)

# Books of Less Common Prayer

(Continued from previous page)

Spinks has been a contrarian of sorts, questioning some of the historical and theological foundations upon which the Liturgical Movement built its case.

An essay by Gregory Woolfenden on the development of the Daily Office's lesser hours (Terce, Sext, and None) emphasizes the great diversity in rites and theological justification in the early Church, noting that any recovery of the practice in our times will do best to build its foundation on contemporary needs instead of an appeal to an imagined past. Similar diversity in early Christian patterns of baptismal anointing is the theme of an essay by Paul Bradshaw, who provides support for Spinks's claim that consistent lines of development in the practice are almost impossible to trace, even within particular regions.

Spinks's work has also vindicated the theological integrity of Reformation liturgy, and has expressed concern about the tendency of some contemporary liturgy to shy away from a serious engagement with sin and grace. He fears that mainline Protestant liturgy has lost its christological center by a preoccupation with pastoral concerns, and has grown dangerously optimistic. Philip Tovey expresses apprehension, along these lines, about the almost complete absence of atonement theology from several Anglican eucharistic prayers for children. Simon Jones, in an essay about Anglican baptismal liturgies, is very uneasy about the tendency of many modern rites to include baptismal promises, like the 1979 prayer book's Baptismal Covenant, before the ritual act of washing. "The desire to present baptism as complete sacramental initiation," Jones notes of such rites, "seems to outweigh any other theological consideration and has produced a quasi-Pelagian rite in which 'the Christ who reaches out to us' does so with contractual obligations which require assent rather than the gift of grace which invites the response of faith" (p. 156).

All of this deconstruction of old models and development of new directions makes constructive work in liturgical theology very difficult. F. Gerrit Immink's *Touch of the Sacred* is probably most valuable as a demonstration of just how confusing this has all become. The rector of the Dutch Reformed Church's leading seminary, Immink tries to chart a course for Protestant liturgical theology in this age of uncertainty. He deals consistently with three different models of theory and practice: classical Reformed, Protestant ecumenical ("liturgy influenced by the Liturgical Movement"), and evangelical "blended worship." The three different models operate simultaneously in the church for which Immink trains ministers, using different liturgical books (or none at all), and exhibiting a wide range of practice and theological orientation.

Immink notes that most books on liturgical theology tend to be written from the celebrant's perspective and that he desires, instead, to write from the participant's angle, describing wor-

At its General Convention this summer, the Episcopal Church voted to begin preparatory work toward a *new* prayer book, even as in some quarters the wounds of 40 years ago seem barely healed.

ship as a communal act. He intends, like Laurance, to anchor his book in the experience of ordinary Sunday worship in a parish church. But he quickly gets himself into a bind when trying to say anything normative about such a diverse panoply of liturgical experience. The work includes helpful insights from sociological study of worship experience and philosophical reflection on the nature of practice.

Immink advocates constructively for the central place of the Holy Spirit in Protestant worship. His distinction between analogical and dialectical styles of contemporary preaching with accompanying theological justifications of both is very insightful. But on the whole this is an agonized work, pulled in different directions by desires to affirm community life and anti-institutionalism, spiritual experience and canonical texts, spontaneity and comprehensiveness, christological orthodoxy and openness to radical innovations. There's nothing new about these tensions in Protestant liturgical theology — indeed, they explain why so little of it is actually written. But if Immink's work is any indication, the tensions are mounting and the agony deepening as the Liturgical Movement's temporary truce fades away.

At its General Convention this summer, the Episcopal Church voted to begin preparatory work toward a *new* prayer book, even as in some quarters the wounds of 40 years ago seem barely healed. It's important to remember that, for all the theological and practical furor raised by the last revision, at least it rested on a striking degree of ecumenical consensus about the ritual and theology of Christian worship. That consensus has suffered greatly since then. This almost certainly means that liturgical revision will be a much more difficult task now than ever before.

*The Rev. Mark Michael is interim rector of St. Timothy's Church in Herndon, Virginia.*

**Sherrod**

(Continued from page 7)

totally unprepared for Mary's rage, but when you think about it, of course she was enraged."

*Women of the Passion* is used mostly in Episcopal churches, Sherrod says, although it has also been read in Methodist, Lutheran, Unitarian, and United Church of Christ congregations. Her two most powerful experiences of its interpretation were with a group of women in their 70s, 80s, and beyond who presented it as if they were reminiscing about their lives and with a group of teenagers, since many of the women in Scripture would not have been far beyond their teen years.

This summer the Rev. Mary Janda, rector of St. Stephen's Church in West Valley City, Utah, presented two workshops on *Women of the Passion* at the triennial meeting of Episcopal Church Women in Salt Lake City.

Sherrod compares her storytelling method to midrash, the Jewish tradition of interpreting Scripture.

As she was preparing the stories, she read some to her husband but did not seek any biblical scholars for direction. Instead she relied on her impressions from visits to Israel and the deep grounding in the Bible that the Sisters of the Incarnate Word instilled in her at a boarding school she attended in San Antonio. She also did research into the political and cultural ways of the era. She hopes one day to see professional actresses perform the stories.

*Retta Blaney*

# ACNA's Moscow Pilgrimage

An Anglican Church in North America delegation met with Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion, Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, in Moscow on Aug. 25.

The ACNA delegation included Archbishop Foley Beach, Bishop Ray Sutton (dean of ecumenical affairs), Bishop Kevin Allen (chairman of the North American Anglican–Orthodox dialogue), Bishop Keith Ackerman, Moheb Ghali (of the Western Christian Faculty Forum), and the Rev. Canon Andrew Gross.

The Very Rev. Chad Hatfield, Chancellor of St. Vladimir's Seminary in New York and a member of the North American Anglican–Orthodox dialogue, accompanied the ACNA leaders.

Patriarch Kirill gave thanks for the Anglican Church in North America's witness.

"Your church went through a very difficult period of its history, and the faithful took courage and had the ability to respond to a great temptation," he said. "There are two models of the behavior of the Church and of Christians. One involves obedience to the secular power and the powerful forces that have an impact on social development. The other model involves the ability to speak the truth and to remain faithful to the Christian message."

The Russian Orthodox Church suffered decades of severe persecution during communist rule. The Anglican delegation saw a transformed religious landscape in which Christian symbols now dominate Red Square and Moscow, and new churches are being planted across the country — on average 1,000 per year for the last 27 years.

Both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church in North America expressed a desire to see the growth and deepening of relationships. Archbishop Foley Beach of the ACNA delivered a letter of greeting from Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, the Archbishop and Primate of Kenya, and Chairman of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans.

Archbishop Beach gave thanks for the common ground that the faithful of both churches are finding on the practical moral issues that confront our societies: "Globalization has increased the effect that we have on one another, and at a time when the family is being threatened by forces that would seek to redefine marriage,

normalize sexual compromise, and fund the slaughter of unborn children, it is an encouragement to have a strong and unwavering partner in the Russian Orthodox Church on these issues."

The delegation also visited the Monastery of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius, Donskoy Monastery, the Church of St. Catherine, and St. Basil's Cathedral, and worshiped at the Church of the Joy of All Who Sorrow.

## Bishop Bowman Served Western New York for 11 Years

The Rt. Rev. David C. Bowman, Bishop of Western New York for 11 years and a U.S. Army veteran, died peacefully at home July 10. He was 82.

Born in Oil City, Pennsylvania, Bowman was an alumnus of Ohio University and Virginia Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1960.

He served in the Army from 1955 to 1957 and was stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Bowman served several congregations in Ohio before his election as bishop coadjutor in 1986. He was the diocese's bishop from 1987 to 1998.

After retiring from Western New York and serving as interim dean of Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland from January 1999 to February 2000, he later served as an assistant bishop in the Diocese of Ohio.

While Bishop of Western New York, Bishop Bowman served on the board of the Episcopal Church Home, a retirement community, and Compass House, a home for runaway youth. He was an active leader of the Buffalo Area Metropolitan Ministries and helped lead it into a merger with the Buffalo Area Council of Churches.

The bishop is survived by his wife, Nancy Lou Betts Bowman, whom he married in 1962; daughters Ann Bowman and Sarah Bowman Workman, both of Cleveland; son William Bowman of Cincinnati; two granddaughters; and a brother, Richard Bowman of Boulder, Colorado.

## Bishop Soto Dead at 82

The Rt. Rev. Onell A. Soto, 82, Bishop of Venezuela from 1987 to 1995, died Aug. 5. He was a native of Omaja, Cuba.

He was ordained to the priesthood in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1965, and became a missionary for the Episcopal Church.

After his tenure in Venezuela he was an assistant bishop in Atlanta and Alabama.

Soto is survived by his wife of 55 years, Nina Soto; daughters Ana María Soto, Lidia Soto-Harmon, and Elena Soto-Chapa; a son, Onell Soto; and six grandchildren.

## Global Briefs

**Rise in Glory**: The Rt. Rev. Samir Hanna Kafity, who was the second Palestinian to be Bishop of Jerusalem and served two five-year terms as Provincial President of Jerusalem and the Middle East, has died at 82. Ordained in 1958, he was priest of the Palestinian congregation at St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, and afterward held incumbencies in Ramallah, Birzeit, and Beirut. He became Bishop Coadjutor of Jerusalem in 1982, succeeding the Rt. Rev. Faik Haddad as diocesan bishop two years later. He lived in retirement in San Diego and died on Aug. 21.

**Bradford Mourns its "Jesus Man"**: For more than 50 years Geoffrey Brindley walked the streets of Bradford in the north of England dressed in a brown robe and sandals, spreading good cheer with a wave and a smile. Most people knew him simply as the "Jesus Man" of Bradford.

News of his death from a stroke at 88 on Aug. 24 has met with collective sadness. People paid tribute to a "gentle spiritual man" who brightened the day by smiling and waving at strangers wherever he went.

The Rt. Rev. Toby Howarth, Bishop

(Continued on next page)

**Bradford Mourns**

(Continued from previous page)

of Bradford, said the community would "greatly mourn his loss." As word spread of Brindley's death, his admirers donated £2,000 to ensure a fitting funeral at Bradford Cathedral.

Brindley's transformation into the Jesus Man started in 1960 when the factory machinist, then 33, left his job to live in a cave in the Yorkshire Dales, where he claimed to receive a message from God. But he did not settle on a hermit's life. Instead he set out for Bradford wearing his habit and, for the next 50 years, walked its streets come wind, snow, rain, or shine.

In the early days he found himself in trouble with police for his puritanical Christian beliefs. He was once arrested for causing a breach of the peace for preaching against the evils of gambling outside a bingo club. In the early 1960s he was arrested for protesting outside a Beatles gig at Bradford's Alhambra Theatre.

As years went on the Jesus Man mellowed. Such was the local affection for him that 23,000 people signed a petition in 2012 asking that he become an Olympic torchbearer. He modestly declined.

He made friends all over the city and made regular stops where his hosts would serve him a cooked dinner. People recalled stories of his cradling them as babies and singing to them. Later, inspired by the Jesus Man, they did the same for their children.

When an interviewer asked two years ago why he adopted this life, Brindley replied: "I just like walking." And whenever it rained, he said, "I get wet."

**Prayer for Creation Care**: The Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Metropolitan of Southern Africa, has asked Anglicans everywhere to mark Sept. 1 as an annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. Makgoba is chairman of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network. Many Orthodox churches have observed this day of prayer since 1989, and Pope Francis gave it his backing in August.

**Rome Honors Martin Luther**: The Vatican is reported to have given its backing to naming a square in Rome after the reformer Martin Luther. City leaders plan to designate a site overlooking the Colosseum as Piazza Martin Lutero, witnessing to the thaw in relations between the Vatican and churches that emerged from the Reformation. Luther visited Rome in 1510 and was appalled by its opulence, fueling his criticism of corruption within the Church.

**Princess Diana's Grave**: Eighteen years after the death of Princess Diana of Wales (August 31), U.K. media have reported that her grave on the Althorpe estate in Northamptonshire is neglected. The site is overgrown with scrubs and foliage, but a spokesman for the estate said the natural growth of greenery "intentionally lends privacy to the Princess's final resting place." Despite its less than pristine condition, hundreds of visitors pay £18.50 (about $US28) to see the site.

**More Visit U.K. Cathedrals**: Attendance at English churches may be on the slide, but not so at cathedrals. New figures from the Church of England say that 10 million people visited cathedrals in 2014, and almost 37,000 attended Sunday or midweek services. That's up by almost a quarter compared to 10 years ago, though slightly down in 2013. Cathedral clergy attribute the gain to traditional music, contemplative liturgy, and different service times.

**Taizé Turns 75**: The Taizé Community in France's Burgundy region is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Founded at the height of World War II by Brother Roger Schütz, a Reformed Protestant, Taizé became a place of welcome for refugees and thousands of pilgrims who visit every year. Its trademark chants have become a global phenomenon, particularly in ecumenical worship. Pope Francis has hailed Brother Roger as "a tireless witness of the gospel of peace and reconciliation."

*John Martin*

## Appointments

The Rev. **Betsy S. Ivey** is rector of St. Simon the Cyrenian, 1401 S. 22nd St., Philadelphia, PA 19146.

The Rev. **Hunter Jordan** is deacon-in-charge of St. Matthew's, 210 S. Main St, Darlington, SC 29532.

The Rev. **Verneda Kelly** and the Rev. Deacon **Pam Williams** are co-pastors of St. Andrew's, 1014 N. 6th St., Seward, NE 68434.

The Rev. **Ledlie I. Laughlin** is rector of St. Columba's, 4201 Albemarle St. N.W., Washington, DC 20016.

The Rev. **Linda McCloud** is priest-in-Charge of Holy Trinity, 209 S. Broadway St., Georgetown, KY 40324.

The Rev. **Mia McDowell** is assistant minister at St. Matthew's, 101 St. Matthews Ln., Spartanburg, SC 29301, and Epiphany, 121 Ernest L. Collins Ave., Spartanburg, SC 29306.

The Rev. **Joyce McGirr** is priest-in-residence at House of Prayer, 407 Broad St., Newark, NJ 07104.

The Rev. **Natividad Menjivar** is vicar of Santa Maria Virgen, 5500 S. Western Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73109.

The Rev. **Amy Molina-Moore** is curate at Christ Church Christiana Hundred, 505 E. Buck Rd., Wilmington, DE 19807.

The Rev. **Michele Morgan** is interim rector of St. Mark's, Capitol Hill, 301 A St. SE, Washington, DC 20003.

The Rev. **Gregg Morris** is rector of St. Andrew's, 1125 Franklin St., Downers Grove, IL 60515.

The Rev. **Kelly Moughty** is associate rector at Falls Church, 115 E. Fairfax St., Falls Church, VA 22046.

The Rev. **Thomas P. Murray** is rector of St Mark's, 4129 Oxford Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32210.

The Rev. **Rebecca Myers** is rector of Nativity and St. Stephen, 159 S. Second St., Newport, PA 17074.

The Rev. **Claire Nevin-Field** is rector of St. Peter's, 313 Pine St., Philadelphia, PA 19106.

The Rev. **Jan Oller** is rector of St. John's, 212 S Green St, Crawfordsville, IN 47933.

The Rev. **James Richardson** is priest-in-charge of Incarnation, 550 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

The Rev. **Ken Ritter** is priest-in-charge of St. Stephen's, 9795 Highway 418, Innis, LA 70747.

The Rev. **Suzi Robertson** is priest-in-charge at Good Shepherd, 2016 Acton Hwy., Granbury, TX 76049.

The Rev. **Dennis Ryan** is priest-in-charge of St. Michael's, 4499 Sharp Rd., Mandeville, LA 70471.

The Rev. **John Satula** is rector of St. James, 120 Main St., Amesbury, MA 01913.

The Rev. **Iane Sastre** is rector of St. Athanasius', 1321 Albany St., Brunswick, GA 31521.

The Rev. **Stephen Setzer** is associate rector at Christ Church Christiana Hundred, 505 E. Buck Rd., Wilmington, DE 19807.

The Rev. **Andria Skornik** is rector of Emmanuel, 412 N. Church St., Rockford, IL 61103.

The Rev. **Susan Slaughter** is assisting priest at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, 223 S. Pearson Ln., Keller, TX 76248.

The Rev. **Natalie Van Kirk** is rector of St. Barnabas, 22W415 Butterfield Rd., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.

The Rev. **Emily Wachner** is director of integrative programs at General Theological Seminary, 440 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10011.

The Rev. **David Ware** is rector of Redeemer, 5603 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21210.

## Deaths

The Rev. Canon **John Lawrence Bogart**, who had served as historian of the Diocese of Northern California and an assistant to Bishop Clarence Hayden, died peacefully on April 9 after a long illness. He was 85.

Born in Torrance, CA, Canon Bogart was a graduate of the University of Southern California, Yale Divinity School, and Graduate Theological Union. He was ordained deacon in 1954 and priest in 1955. He served at All Saints Episcopal Church, San Diego; St. Andrew's, Encinitas; Grace, St. Helena; Holy Trinity, Ukiah; and St. Patrick's, Kenwood, from which he retired in 1991.

The focus of his doctoral work was the writing of the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation.

Canon Bogart is survived by Mary Lou Rapoza, his wife of 60 years; a daughter, Anne Bogart Webb of London; a son, Christopher John of Vallejo; and a brother, Wayne Bogart of Ukiah.

The Rev. **Lane Davenport**, rector of Ascension and St. Agnes Church in Washington, D.C., since 1997, died July 30. He was 49.

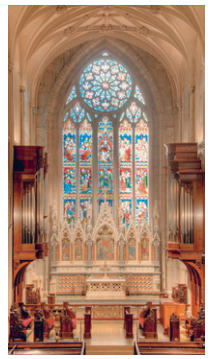
Born in Greenbrae, CA, he became interested in Christianity while completing a degree a history at the University of California, Berkeley. He was baptized in 1988 and began studies at St. Stephen's House, Oxford, in 1990. He was called as curate of Ascension and St. Agnes in 1993. Fr. Davenport is survived by his wife, Amy Wilkins, and their son, Tyler.

**The Church of the Messiah**
296 Glen St., Glens Falls, NY 12801
518.795.1560 | messiahgf.org

The Church of the Messiah is a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Albany. We are called by God to be "Partners in the Transforming Power of Jesus Christ." Through our worship, work, and witness we strive to be obedient to the Word of God, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, and being transformed by His holy power so that those we minister to will know the great love that God has for them. The Rev. Karl Griswold-Kuhn became the rector of Church of the Messiah in August 2014.



**Grace Church Broadway**
802 Broadway, New York, NY 10003
212.254.2000 | gracechurchnyc.org



Grace Church Broadway is a parish in the Diocese of New York. Since 1846 we have been worshiping in a gothic revival masterpiece designed by the noted architect, James Renwick, Jr. Today you will find here a diverse group of Christians who are committed to being together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, studying God's Word in Holy Scripture, and proclaiming the Christian faith at the bustling intersection of Broadway and 10th St. We offer a wide range of ministries for the spiritual growth of adults, families, and children. We reach out to the poor and needy of our community, and we seek to glorify God through music, art, and a variety of worship services during the week. To learn more about Grace Church, visit us on Sundays, or visit our website (listed above).

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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 17 Pentecost, September 20

**First reading and psalm**: Prov. 31:10-31 • Ps. 1

**Alternate**: Wis. 1:16-2:1,12-22 or Jer. 11:18-20 • Ps. 54 • James 3:13-4:3,7-8a • Mark 9:30-37

# Two Sides of Obedience

Today's readings from the Old Testament and their alternates testify to the diversity of wisdom in Scripture. Proverbs 31 and Psalm 1 describe the peace of soul that can result from a combination of obeying God and not eating any "bread of idleness." However many Old Testament passages may cause 21st-century readers to worry about ancient cultures' understanding of women, only a very determined hermeneutic of suspicion could perceive Proverbs 31 as anything other than a paean to a righteous wife.

Psalm 1 offers a recurring theme throughout wisdom literature: those who take counsel from God and his servants will find truth, while those who seek their wisdom from the ungodly will suffer folly.

But the alternate Old Testament readings show the other side of obedience: it often attracts the wrath of the ungodly. Those who reject God, or consider any thoughts of God simply delusional, can easily allow their hostile thoughts to become cruel actions. The prophets of old and the saints of today pose a threat to others. Ponder the basic facts of life in a fallen world: people make idols for themselves, whether of beauty, ideology, lust, power, wealth, or more unusual fixations. The mere presence of a godly person threatens those idols, because here is a fellow human being whose life contradicts all that the idolater has declared as central to a fulfilled life.

The result is an effort to destroy the threat. A guilt-ridden parishioner spreads a vile rumor about his rector; a gadfly journalist depicts Mother Teresa as a fraud; a bitter sociopath assassinates Martin Luther King; a mob of sinners (all of us, across time) call for Jesus to be nailed to the cross.

This week's New Testament readings point Christians toward the goal: wisdom and righteousness emerge if we resist our tendencies toward envy and ungodly ambition. Both the letter of James and the Gospel of Mark express astonishment that Christians would treat each other as competitors in a zero-sum game, as if any of us could gain the kingdom of God by dying with the most conquered territory or purloined objects of wealth.

There is no zero-sum economy in the kingdom of God. There are God's good gifts, given through common grace and through the mysteries of God's will, and there is our stewardship of the gifts that are all around us.

Without a childlike trust in God we have little hope of escaping the corrupting influence of this world's shiny treasures. With that childlike trust, we can hold everything with an open hand, just as we are held in God's hand, his wonders to perform.

## Look It Up

Read Job 1 for a picture of a righteous man who suffers mightily but remains faithful.

## Think About It

How many blessings do we take for granted amid the daily grind of life? Freedom, health, peace, wisdom. Do we convince ourselves that they are our birthrights or rewards for good behavior?

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 18 Pentecost, September 27

**First reading and psalm**: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22 • Ps. 124

**Alternate**: Num. 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 • Ps. 19:7-14 • James 5:13-20 • Mark 9:38-50

# Confession and Conversion

For Christians living in the prosperous West, today's readings from Numbers and Mark may sometimes seem as distant as life on Mars. How often do people in the 21st century prophesy within our closest circle of worship, or cast out demons in the name of Jesus without appearing to be his followers?

One way to apply these readings is to suppose that, whatever a person's religion, sincere belief is what matters most. As the contemporary English poet Steve Turner wrote in his satirical "Creed": "We believe that all religions are basically the same, / at least the one that we read was. / They all believe in love and goodness. / They only differ on matters of / creation, sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation."

Affirming that everyone is redeemed simply by virtue of existing is an understandable impulse, but it fails to make sense of the Scriptures as a whole, or the tangible evil that confronts us day after day in news reports. From small town to megacity, this much is true: if everyone is serving God, some appear to do so with far less destructive results than others.

A very different temptation is one that few modern Christians may feel, since it is considered so rude in today's Western culture: believing that one's individual experience of God is the *sine qua non* of right doctrine and upright morality, or that the bulk of other people constitute, in Bob Dylan's memorable lyric, "Nightclubs of the broken-hearted / stadiums of the damned" ("Trouble," 1981).

Basic humility, and the Lord's own words in the Gospel of Mark, lead Christians to see that we are not God, and that we need not take upon ourselves his work of separating chaff from wheat. We cannot know exhaustively what God is doing in any person's life, or how close a person may be to a redemptive encounter with the risen Christ.

There is nothing impolite about asking after a person's spiritual convictions, or sharing the good news of Christ. Nor is it uncharitable to warn loved ones and friends when a consistent sin places them on a path that could destroy them or others.

Let us not forget, though, that our job is merely to tell of what we know. The Holy Spirit does the converting.

## Look It Up

Read Matthew 23:1-36 to gain a sense of Jesus' righteous indignation toward Scribes and Pharisees.

## Think About It

What do my assumptions about other people's spiritual lives say about my understanding of God?





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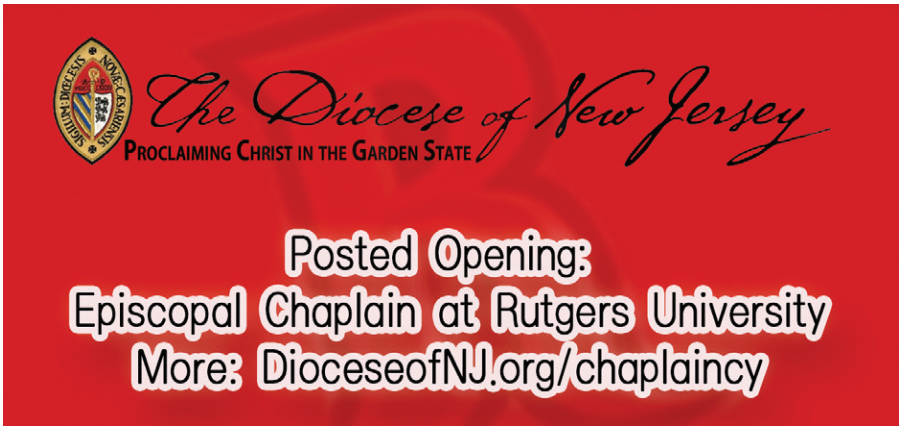

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(Continued on next page)

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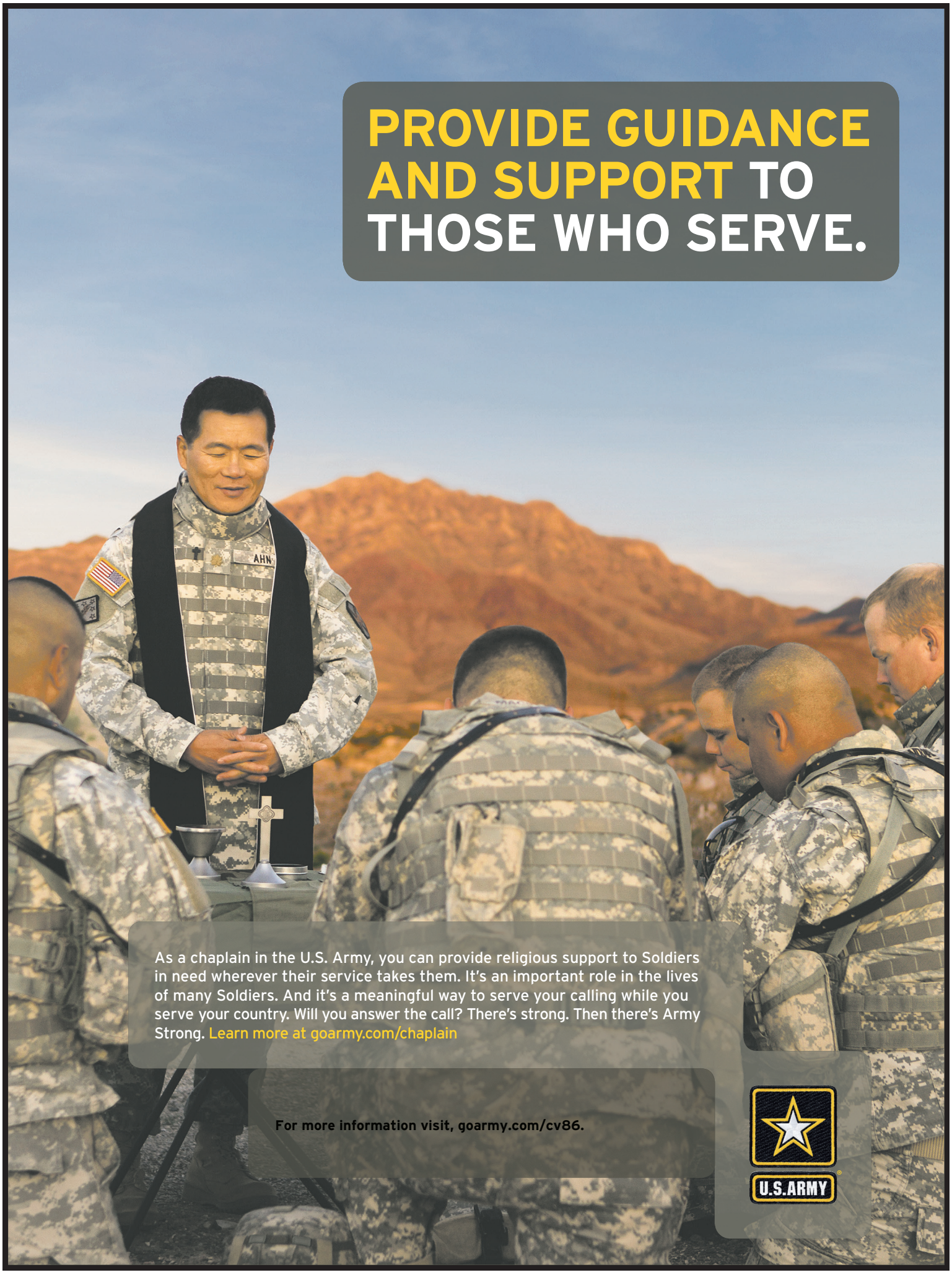
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