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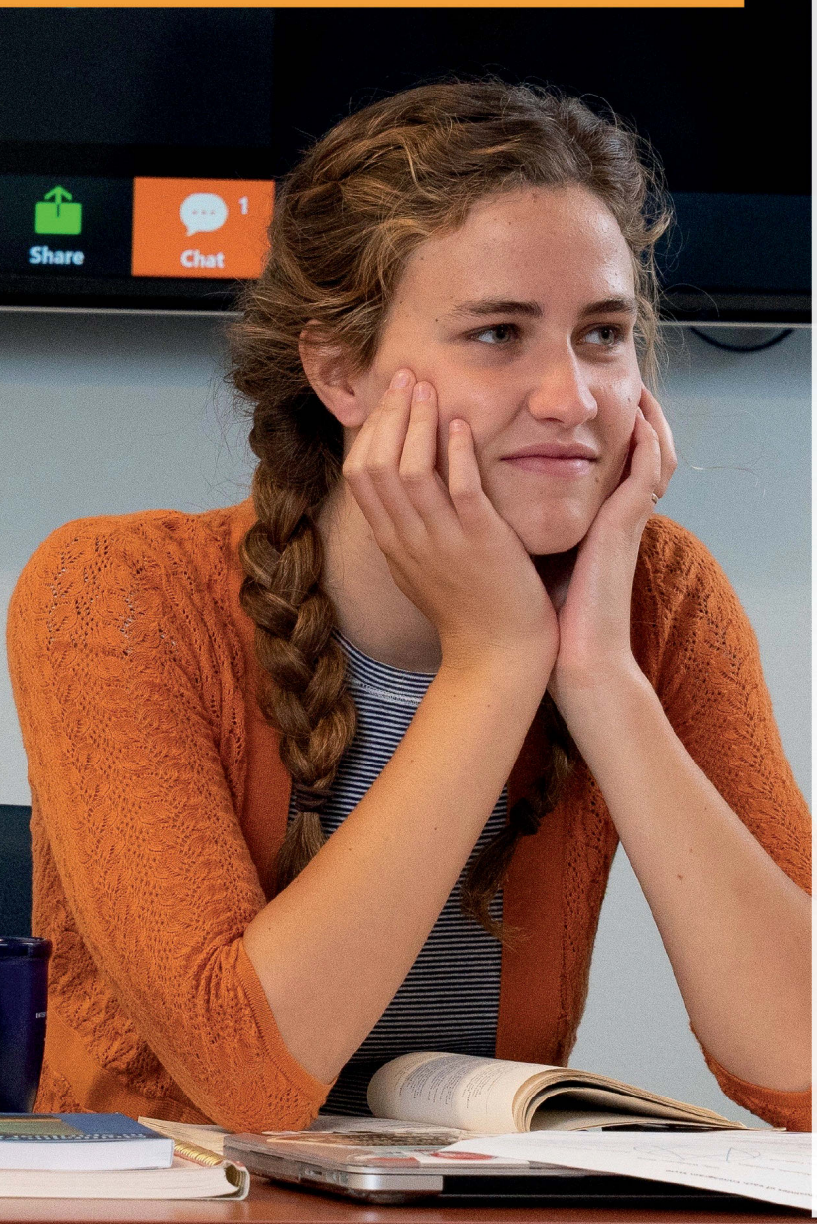

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ON THE COVER

Sidewalk artist Dennis Boylet works on a painting at *common art* (see "They Made Me an Artist," p. 10)

Photo by G. Jeffrey MacDonald

The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | March 8, 2020

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

¡Cuba Sí! TEC Officially Welcomes Its Newest Diocese

By Kirk Petersen

La Iglesia Episcopal de Cuba on February 15 officially became the Diocese of Cuba, rejoining the Episcopal Church after more than half a century of separation.

The Executive Council, gathered in Salt Lake City for its regular thrice-yearly meeting, unanimously and joyfully voted to welcome the new diocese after hearing that the Cuban church had met all the requirements of Resolution A238, through which the 2018 General Convention voted to reinstate Cuba.

"It's my happy responsibility to inform you everything that is required by that resolution has been met," said the Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, Secretary of the General Convention, said in a committee hearing.

Barlowe said the 2018 resolution required, among other things, a rewriting of the canons of the Cuban church to ensure that they are compatible with the canons of the Episcopal Church (TEC); a commitment by the Cuban church to financially contribute to TEC; and that all of the Cuban clergy take an "oath of conformity" with the canons of TEC.

Former Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori helped lead a successful effort to raise $800,000 to cover the pension requirements of Cuban clergy.

"It gives us a sense of strength, of joy, to know that we are part of something that is global," Cuban Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio told *TLC*, speaking through an interpreter. "One of the things that we have been experiencing for a long time is that loneliness."

"We're not one of the biggest churches in Cuba," she said, explaining that the Roman Catholic, Methodist and Pentecostal churches all are much larger. Delgado oversees 46 churches and five mission stations, served by 28 priests and deacons. Total membership is about 6,000, she said.

Cuba's readmission has occurred despite the absence of a canonical process for the action. Barlowe said the officials working on the project had agreed that "this is a one-off, anomalous situation not anticipated by the canons, that there is absolutely no intention of creating a precedent."

This echoed the spirit of the General Convention, where it appeared initially that Cuba could not be readmitted until at least 2021, as a canonical process would have to be approved by two successive General Conventions.

The House of Bishops and House of Deputies resolved the issue essentially by ignoring it, bulldozing over all objections to exuberantly pass A238 by unanimous votes.

In the wake of the Cuban revolution of 1958, the House of Bishops unilaterally voted in 1966 to expel Cuba from the Episcopal Church. The fact that the expulsion was never ratified by the House of Deputies was one of the rationales offered at General Convention for voting to welcome Cuba back despite the canonical roadblocks.

Bishop Griselda Delgado listens as the final vote is taken. At right is Fr. Gilberto Junco, vice chair of Cuba's diocesan council. | Kirk Petersen photo

In the words of Bishop Delgado after the 2018 vote: "*¡Cuba nunca se fue!* Cuba never left. It has always been part of the Episcopal Church."

Diocese of Texas to Fund $13 Million in Slavery Reparations

By Mark Michael

The Diocese of Texas announced during its recent council that it will devote a record-breaking $13 million to a reparations initiative "that aims to repair and commence racial healing for individuals and communities who directly injured by slavery in the diocese."

The program announced by Bishop C. Andrew Doyle includes six designated funds that support African American seminarians at Austin's Seminary of the Southwest, students at historic black colleges and universities in the diocese, building repairs for African-American churches, and local church-based racial reconciliation initiatives.

Doyle said that the project, formally called the Missionary Vision for Racial Justice, had been developed in consultation with a panel of 38 representatives of the diocese's African American congregations. It is, he said, an attempt to atone for a legacy of complicity with slavery deeply entwined with the diocese's foundation.

Doyle noted that the first bishop of Texas, Alexander Gregg, was a slaveholder; and that the diocese's first church, Christ Church, Matagorda, was built with slave labor.

The designated funds are all named for particular African-American Episcopalians, most of whom have a direct connection with the Diocese of Texas.

These include Joseph and John Talbot, enslaved men who were the first African Americans to be baptized in the diocese; the Rev. Thomas Cain, the first person of color to serve as a priest in the diocese; and Bertha Sadler Means, a prominent Austin civil rights advocate.

Doyle said, "I have sought to undergird this work with the best theological and practical ideas in this present moment and from across the church to reinforce and amplify remedies and imagine a different trajectory for our future."

The initiative garnered the acclaim of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who said that the initiative took his breath away. In a letter shared with council delegates, Bishop Curry wrote, "What you, the good people of the Diocese of Texas have done together with God is something truly God-breathed, inspired! Both in what this will do for so many people and what it may inspire in others, you are reminding us that that for those of us who follow the way of Jesus and his love, all things can change for the good."

Similar Announcements

The action in Texas is the largest among similar slavery reparations programs recently announced by the Dioceses of New York, Long Island, and Georgia, and by Doyle's alma mater, Virginia Theological Seminary. Prior to the Diocese of Texas' announcement, the largest amount set aside for this purpose by an Episcopal institution had been Virginia Theological Seminary's $1.7 million commitment. The largest project of this kind by a church institution to date has been Princeton Theological Seminary's pledge of $27 million, roughly 2.25% of its $1.2 billion endowment.

According to its recent financial reports, the Diocese of Texas has a $11.6 million budget in 2020. The diocese's assets include several large foundations, which distributed more than $16 million in grants to local parishes and to the diocesan budget in 2019. The largest of these, the Episcopal Health Foundation, was created with assets from the $1 billion sale of St. Luke Episcopal Health System in 2013. (*The Diocese of Texas is a sponsor of* THE LIVING CHURCH).

Louisville Chosen for GC 2024

By Kirk Petersen

The Executive Council voted February 15 to hold the 2024 General Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, after hearing a presentation from the Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, executive officer of the General Convention.

The decision was one of several matters considered by the council at its thrice-yearly meeting. The 43-member council, which serves as the legislature of the Episcopal Church between the triennial meetings of the General Convention, met in Salt Lake City from February 13-15.

Barlowe said Louisville was selected over two other finalists, Detroit and San Juan, Puerto Rico. He told the

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council that the financial considerations among the three cities were not critical to the decision, which was reached after site visits to each prospective venue by staff and by the top officers of the church.

The General Convention is a hugely expensive, nearly-two-week gathering held every three years, attended by nearly 1,000 voting deputies and bishops, and hundreds of staff, journalists, exhibitors and guests.

How expensive is it? God only knows. The budget line for the meeting in the triennial budget is $2.183 million, offset by $1.353 million in registration and exhibit fees. But that captures only a fraction of the total expense, much of which is distributed elsewhere, both in the central budget and in the budgets of the more than 100 dioceses that send deputies.

Factors in favor of the Louisville location included the fact that the city is within a day's drive of 60% of the nation's population, Barlowe said. The Diocese of Kentucky is in Province IV, the largest province by membership, but the General Convention has not been held within the province since the 1982 meeting in New Orleans.

The 2021 General Convention in Baltimore will officially begin June 30, 2021, although committees will already have been meeting for days before the opening Eucharist.

Episcopal Migration Ministries

The Church's agency for resettling refugees has been living from extension to extension since the beginning of the Trump Administration, when the government began drastically reducing the number of refugees allowed to enter the country. Episcopal Migration Ministries is one of nine organizations responsible for resettling refugees in the United States, in a public-private partnership with the U.S. Government.

EMM Director Demetrio Alvero told a council committee that "the refugee program is in disarray," adding that the Trump Administration's goal is to dismantle the program entirely. He believes the government plans to reduce from nine agencies to four or five, and EMM has no assurance of being part of the program after its current extension expires May 31. The agency has reduced its field offices from 31 partner agencies to 12, and staffing has been slashed.

EMM is a successor to an agency formed in 1940 as the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. Since early in the Trump Administration, it has been developing strategies for continuing its mission even if the resettlement partnership with the government ends completely. "As the refugee program grows smaller, we're looking at how else we can assist with migration issues," Alvero said.

Last year, EMM launched Partners in Welcome, a network of organizations and individuals devoted to advocacy and to sharing information and best practices. The network currently has 377 members from 82 dioceses in 43 states. The agency also offers a toolkit for congregations wishing to support asylum seekers.

Diocesan Assessments

The Rev. Mally Lloyd, chair of the Finance Committee, told the council that 104 out of 109 dioceses are now in compliance with the policy on providing financial support to the Church, either through paying the mandated 15% or through obtaining a waiver.

Reading from the enabling resolution, Lloyd said "failure to make full payment, or to receive a waiver in one year shall render the diocese unable to get loans, grants or scholarships in the following year" from the Church center. "So those five dioceses that have not received a waiver for 2019 are ineligible for grants in 2020," she said, adding that dioceses have until August 31 to apply for waivers that would enable them to receive grants in 2021.

The five dioceses are Albany, Dallas, Florida, Rio Grande and Springfield. Waiver applications for Albany and Rio Grande were incomplete; Florida and Springfield did not apply for waivers; and Dallas's application was denied. Last July, *TLC* published a comprehensive survey of the 12

domestic dioceses that were not yet in compliance at that time.

Lloyd noted that the committee had done an enormous amount of work with the various dioceses to try to bring all of them into compliance. "It's been a success," she said. "We have moved from 44 dioceses being compliant two years ago to 105 dioceses" currently compliant.

Creation Care

The council heard an update from the General Convention's Task Force on the Care of Creation and Environmental Racism. "For today's youth and young adults, environment is the number one issue," said task force member Delia Heck from the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. The task force is developing tools and a support system to help congregations incorporate creation care into their ministries.

Task force vice chair David Rice, Bishop of San Joaquin, said every clergy member in his diocese, and "an extraordinary number of lay people," took a creation care pledge last year, and the diocese is devoting resources to integrate creation care into its formation efforts. By the end of next year, every church in the diocese will have solar panels, he said.

Racial Reconciliation

The council heard a sobering presentation about the lingering effects of the Church's historic complicity in the oppression of Native Americans. Among other things, the Episcopal Church helped maintain a system of boarding schools intended to "Christianize" indigenous children, who were separated from their parents and often subject to physical and sexual abuse.

Racial reconciliation is one of three primary ministries the church is pursuing under Presiding Bishop Michael Curry (the others being creation care and evangelism). Council members discussed a need to integrate reconciliation efforts into every meeting of the council, as was done at the October meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, which included a day-long pilgrimage to the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

The next council meeting, in June, will be in San Juan, Puerto Rico, which will give the council an opportunity to examine the effects of colonialism. The council last met in San Juan in June 2017, just three months before Hurricane Maria devastated the island and killed nearly 3,000 Puerto Ricans.

Bishop-Elect Logue

It was the final Executive Council meeting for the Rev. Frank Logue, a committee chair and leadership sparkplug, who will be consecrated Bishop of Georgia in May.

"I am grateful for the ways in which the Holy Spirit has been in our midst these days, and I thank you for the pleasure of serving with you," he said, touching off an extended standing ovation.

"Frank has been a holy disturber in our midst," Curry said, adding that Logue "brought a spirit and life that is just infectious." The Finance Committee, which typically ends its reports with a song parody written the evening before, serenaded the bishop-elect with a knockoff from *The Sound of Music*, "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Frank Logue?"

Bishop Gutierrez Named Compass Rose Society President

Bishop Daniel Gutierrez of Pennsylvania was recently elected president of the Compass Rose Society, according to the society. The international charitable organization, composed mostly of leaders in the US, Canada and Hong Kong, supports the Archbishop of Canterbury's ministry and the life of the Anglican Communion. Gutierrez succeeds the Rt. Rev. Andy Doyle, Bishop of Texas, who has served as the society's president for the last six years.

Gutierrez has served as bishop of the Philadelphia-based diocese since 2016. He had a career in public service in his native New Mexico prior to his ordination, serving as chief of staff to Albuquerque's mayor and as a director of economic development. He holds several significant leadership roles in the wider church, including serving as the vice-chair of the Social Justice and International Policy Committee at the 2018 General Convention. He also recently completed a term of service on The Living Church Foundation.

The Compass Rose Society, which takes its name from the Anglican Communion's symbol, was founded in 1997. It raised a total of $1 million for communion-wide initiatives in 2018, and has played a key role in supporting the Anglican Consultative Council and several hospitals in the Diocese of Jerusalem. The Society is currently raising support for bishops who cannot afford to travel to next summer's Lambeth Conference.

Chung Chosen Bishop of Singapore Diocese

By Mark Michael

The Rev. Canon Titus Chung, a systematic theologian who serves at Saint Andrew's Cathedral, was appointed on February 9 as the 10th Bishop of Singapore. The current bishop, Rennis Ponniah, will step down when Chung is consecrated on October 18. Through sustained growth and a vigorous program of missionary activity, Singapore has likely become Asian Anglicanism's most influential diocese, and has played a significant role in Anglican realignment in recent decades.

Chung, 55, was ordained to the priesthood in the Diocese of Singapore in 1997. Like three of his four predecessors, his family background is Chinese. Chung earned a doctorate in theology from Edinburgh University, writing a dissertation on the Scottish theologian T. F. Torrance's theory of divine revelation. After serving for a time as a lecturer at Edinburgh, he returned to Singapore to teach at Trinity Theological Seminary, which trains Anglican priests for service throughout Asia. He currently serves as convener of continuing ministerial education for clergy and deaconesses within the diocese.

He has served at St. Andrew's Cathedral since 2009, currently as priest-in-charge of the Mandarin congregation. The large neo-Gothic building in the

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modern city's historic core was the first Anglican church to be built in the region, in 1835. It is now a bustling congregation, with 16 services offered each weekend. Most are conducted in either English or Mandarin, but the Cathedral also hosts congregations that worship in Tamil, Burmese, Cantonese, Tagalog, Hokkien, and Bahasa Indonesian. Under the leadership of a British missionary, Canon Frank Lomax, it became a center of charismatic renewal in the mid-1970's.

The Diocese of Singapore has about 21,000 communicants, but only 28 parish churches, all located within the densely populated independent city state, which has a landmass of 280 square miles, about half the size of Nashville. Singapore has planted congregations in other countries across Southern and Southeastern Asia, and currently has deaneries in Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Nepal. Bishop Rennis Ponniah reported at the New Wineskins Conference in 2017 that the Nepal deanery had grown to 83 churches, and 10-15,000 members, especially after Anglicans provided valuable pastoral support in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in 2015.

According to church statistician David Goodhew, the number of Anglicans in Singapore increased fivefold from 1970 to 2000, as charismatic renewal and a conservative evangelical theological vision swept a church that had been initially shaped by the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a British high-church mission society. Singapore maintains active links with the Anglican Church of Australia's conservative evangelical Diocese of Sydney.

Alongside its active evangelistic work, the Diocese of Singapore operates 10 Anglican schools, the Saint Andrew's Missionary Hospital and Singapore Anglican Community Services. This agency, which incorporates 10 local centers around the city, is significantly focused on mental illness and the care of children with autism.

Singapore's bishops, sometimes working in consultation with the Diocese of Sydney, have been influential in the Anglican realignment process. In 2000, former Singapore bishop Moses Tay joined with Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda to consecrate Chuck Murphy and John Rogers at St. Andrew's Cathedral to serve as the first bishops in what became the Anglican Mission in the Americas. The Province of Southeast Asia, of which Singapore is a member, declared itself to be in impaired communion with the Episcopal Church following the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson in 2003. In 2019, the province recognized the Anglican Church in North America as a fellow Anglican province (a step the official Anglican instruments of communion have repeatedly refused to take) and declared itself in full communion with the clergy of that church.

Current Singapore bishop Rennis Ponniah has been an important leader in the Global South Anglicans group. He chaired the committee that prepared the Covenantal Structure document, known by some as the Cairo Covenant. The covenantal structure, whose drafters also included Singaporean theologian Michael Poon, was approved by the Global South primates' council last November, and sent to the member churches of the body for study and potential adoption.

Ponniah commented on the covenantal structure in Singapore's most recent Diocesan Digest, noting, "The Global South Fellowship of Anglicans is an orthodox grouping within the communion that seeks to limit diversity in faith and practice among its member churches according to the plain teaching of Holy Scripture. In this way it is poised to be a faithful servant-community for God to use in his church and in his world (Isa. 49:1-6). We rejoice in this breakthrough to establish a covenantal structure among orthodox Anglican churches and now we must follow-through with prayer and zeal that it may become an effective instrument of witness and mission for such a time as this."

Bishop Ponniah has also been active in the GAFCON Moment, and was one of the principal speakers at the movement's 2018 conference in Jerusalem. He stayed away from the 2008 Lambeth Conference in protest, but has not yet announced if he will participate in this summer's Communion-wide gathering. The new archbishop of the Anglican Province of Southeast Asia, Datuk Melter Thais, is serving on the Lambeth Design Group, which has been charged with preparing the program for the meeting.

Congolese Archdeacon Murdered by Islamic Militants

By Mark Michael

The Ven. Ngulongo Year Batsemire, archdeacon of the Anglican Diocese of Kivu-Nord, was killed on January 29 after refusing his attackers' demand that he convert to Islam, according to a press release from the Barnabas Fund, an anti-persecution advocacy group. The 60-year-old priest was walking outdoors with his wife near his home in Eringeti, on the Democratic Republic of the

(Continued on page 26)

De terra veritas

A Light Infused into the Heart

In the general run of things, Lent books are a relatively new devotional aid. When the early Christians instituted a time of preparation for the joys of Easter, they took stock of the fact that some could give alms, most could fast, and all could pray. Relatively few could read.

But for many decades now, books on a variety of catechetical, meditative, and ethical topics have been commissioned for the season, perhaps especially among Anglicans. For all their variety, the best Lent books are accessible and have a practical bent, shedding light on the ordinary struggles and delights of the Christian life. Most are also short, presenting insights directly and prompting the reader to sustained reflection and prayer.

In one sense, it's a categorial stretch. But on these scores, one of the most famous Lent books in Christian history is the subject of a special exhibition at Baltimore's Walters Art Gallery this spring. The *St. Francis Missal* is a 13th-century volume that once belonged to the parish church of San Nicolo in Assisi, where one Giovanni "Francesco" Bernardone was wont to assist at the daily Mass.

The enthusiastic young man, who had recently left his life of youthful privilege by stripping himself of his silks in the village square, approached the parish priest in April 1208. He and two close friends asked for guidance in determining God's call. They wanted to share a common life but weren't sure which direction would be best. The priest, whose name is sadly lost to history, took out the missal and performed the *sortes Biblicae*: flipping its pages with his eyes closed, and then resting his finger on a random verse.

The practice, which has parallels with the way the ancient Greeks sought prophecies from Homer and the Romans from Virgil's *Aeneid*, was common at the time. It was sometimes justified by appeal to Proverbs 16:33: "The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly from the Lord." The *sortes Biblicae* had been used to choose Frankish bishops and the Byzantine emperor Heraclius credited it for strategic advice in his great victory over the Persians. John Wesley was a famous later enthusiast. Nineteenth-century evangelicals sometimes used it to name their children, which gave one unfortunate frontier youngster the existentially depressing moniker Elilamasabachthani.

The most famous example of the *sortes* is from the life of St. Augustine, recounted in his *Confessions* (8.12). Pacing anxiously in his garden, struggling over whether he should turn to God or carry on in his life of bourgeois decadence, Augustine heeded a child's playful chant in a neighboring garden, and "took up and read" from the Bible laying close at hand.

The text unveiled was Romans 13:13-14: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." The saint remembered years later: "No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended — by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart — all the gloom of doubt vanished away."

Something remarkably similar happened to St. Francis. The priest of San Nicolo repeated his action three times, revealing three Gospel texts, from widely scattered pericopes. He translated each for the three young laymen, whose Latin was rather poor.

The texts were these: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me" (Mark 10:21); "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, and do not have two tunics" (Luke 9:3); "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16:24).

In his engaging recent biography of the saint, Augustine Thompson notes that the young man deeply internalized all three texts. One can trace their repeated influence in his writings and his addresses to his followers decades later. Thompson writes, "These texts would become the core of what Francis would call 'his form of life.' God had revealed them to Francis to show him what to do. Although not a single person present realized it, they had taken the first step in founding the Franciscan Order."

I'm not exactly advocating a revival of the *sortes Biblicae*. Even in Francis' time, the practice had a rather shadowed reputation, and was condemned as superstitious by several local synods in sixth century France. But as a method for sacred reading, the *sortes Biblicae* does have a pretty remarkable track record.

The method presumes that we approach our spiritual reading expecting to hear God speaking directly to us. Francis, Augustine, and even battle-weary Heraclius approached God with deep receptivity, having looked seriously into their own lives, noting the quandary or challenge that needed divine direction. They received the word expectantly, "as a light of security infused into my heart." Then they committed it carefully to memory.

Next came meditation, prolonged imaginative review, and prayerful digestion. Meditation itself, as devotional writers sometimes remind us, was a barnyard term before it entered the cloister. It's what the Latinate cow did with her cud, chewing it over four times, as it circulated through each of the stomachs of her complex digestive system. Every ounce of nutritive value was broken open to be fully incorporated, nourishing the creature's ongoing life.

In our age of digital distraction, reading in this way is increasingly difficult. We absorb less and less of the "content" to which we expose ourselves. Despite the plethora of tools for taking better notes and setting ourselves timely reminders, we seem ever more scattered, our hearts clouded over with competing concerns. We need, as always, to know the will of God. But, perhaps, we are less certain of where to ask for it.

Francis and Augustine would tell us first that less is more, and that God's transforming oracles lie closer to hand than we might first expect. I'll make a pilgrimage of sorts this month with my family to see the St. Francis missal. The curators have promised to open it carefully to one of the pages revealed to Francis eight centuries ago.

But the best Lent book for me is probably the Bible in the stall where I read the Daily Office, or the tattered copy by my reading chair in the living room, and the work of this holy season will be preparing my heart to fully receive its gifts. *Take up and read* this Lent, by all means, trusting that God is ready to shed his light into hearts that are turned to him.

—Mark Michael

They Made Me An Artist

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald
Correspondent

Danita Clark with her work at *common art*. | Photos by G. Jeffrey MacDonald

BOSTON – Street artist Dennis Boylet hasn't had an easy winter. Since mid-December, he's slept every night at a Boston shelter and spent days walking the streets, often with nowhere to hunker down and ply his craft as a painter.

Even so, "Sidewalk Dennis" has had a place to paint, pray and enjoy two meals in a group every Wednesday at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in the upscale Back Bay neighborhood. That means he also has somewhere to share personal successes, as he did at 9:00 on a brisk February morning.

"Yesterday was a good day for me," Boylet says in a prayer circle comprised of unhoused artists, pastors, and friends seated around a cloth-draped piano bench with a lit candle in the center. A massive blue tarp covers the floor beneath them in preparation for all the paints and pallets that he and others would be slinging in the hours to come.

"My painting got sold," Boylet explains. The buyer had said "she'll say a prayer for me every time she looks at it. How much sweeter can it get than that?"

This weekly ritual of faith, food, fellowship, and creativity is known as *common art*. For 21 years, the gathering has drawn homeless and housed artists of varying skills levels, as well as volunteers who help everything go smoothly. Most of the 80 who fill the room at peak times either have no home or have been homeless in the past. They are part of a ministry built on the premise that art-making helps restore a sense of dignity, and everyone can do it.

"Sometimes people just need to come in, charge their cell phones or get a cup of coffee and just sit at the edges of the room," says Mary Jane Eaton, associate pastor at *common cathedral*, an outdoor church that worships on Boston Common every Sunday and runs *common art* among other programs for homeless and housed congregants during the week.

"But I've seen this happen over and over again," she adds. "That person just coming in for coffee — just for coffee, just for coffee — will get up and start to paint. It might take two months or it might take two years. But that person will get up to paint and believe that they are worthy of beauty."

By 9:45, the prayer space is dismantled and something more akin to a studio or salon is going up. Soon 15 round tables beckon with materials laid out. One offers paints and brushes; others have beads, yarn, or wire available for all to use. As all the weaving, coloring, and writing goes on, soft music plays almost unnoticeably in the background.

Pragmatic concerns get addressed along the way. Those carrying their torn clothes drop them off at a sewing table where a team of three uses needles and a sewing machine to mend as many as they can before the space is closed at 2 pm. Art projects that don't get finished that day are stored in the basement for retrieval the following week.

Though the scene feels like a free-wheeling art-making party, *common art* is carefully choreographed by staffers who give participants room to create — and to find reprieve from any number of personal traumas that landed them on the streets. Two *common cathedral* clergy, a director, and volunteers quietly provide predictable structure that keeps the atmosphere calm, using practices like reading Scripture and ringing a bell every hour to create a room-wide pause.

Life skills get developed as a byproduct. As homeless participants gain confidence, they take responsibility for helping run elements of the program — setting up, breaking down, and keeping activities on track. That too is by design, to help build up leadership and responsibility among all who seem ready and willing to try.

All this attention to structure allows artists to relax and create, setting aide, for a moment, the many troubles afflicting Boston's homeless community. In 2014, a bridge closure meant the city abruptly shuttered its largest homeless shelter and detox center, which together had housed more than 500 people.

"It was like a flood of bodies — there were people sleeping in doorways everywhere," says the Rev. Pamela Werntz, rector of Emmanuel Church. "The city has technically replaced the beds by now, which took a couple of years. But it did not replace the places where people can go to socialize and be together … So where do they go? It was a crisis. I can't emphasize that enough."

Emmanuel Church contributes to the solution in part by allowing *common art* to use the fellowship hall free of charge. Some who come simply play around with wire or beads. Others find much-needed outlets for their artistic talents and ideas.

"If you're an artist, you know, a

painter's gotta paint," says Tim Hickey between strokes on a canvas. He paints as rapidly as he speaks, constantly dipping his brush into a watery pallet of blacks, grays, and whites. The image, which he calls "The Profit Mongers," reveals how he sees decision-makers in corporate America. He pauses for a moment to explain the dancing figures and horrified faces on an industrial landscape.

"These are profit mongers doing their little song and dance while they poison us," Hickey says. "They say, 'The water's safe.' Yeah. They don't care about us. They care about their profits. They fill us with poisons, with lead. 'Echinacea? No. The lead will make you feel better!' It's horrible."

For some, *common art* has awakened talents — and income streams — that participants didn't know they had. Danita Clark has been moving around, staying on friends' couches since September, she says. She discovered her artistic ability at *common art*, where Artist-in-Residence Allie Mattison tries to help all participants be creative. She gave it a try after people she'd met at worship on Boston Common encouraged her.

"The church brought it out of me," says Clark, who sold a painting in January for $260. "I have a bachelor's of architecture, but I was the worst architecture student. I couldn't draw. They told me to come here. They made me an artist."

What happens on Wednesdays reflects behind-the-scenes commitments of a network extending far beyond Emmanuel and *common cathedral*. Area congregations, individual donors and grant makers provide funding for materials, *common cathedral* staff salaries and for the outdoor church's rented office space in the basement at Emmanuel. Operating *common art* cost $64,000 in 2018.

The ministry also builds on shoulders of other Episcopal communities. The program's roots stretch to 1999 and the church of St. John the Evangelist, which has since closed. At the time, St. John's congregants and brothers from the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge teamed up to begin offering space for art-making by a cohort whom others regarded as a nuisance.

From top left: Tim Hickey paints the Profit Mongers; the Rev. Pam Werntz; artists and volunteers

The initiative marked a leading edge of a movement among churches to host homeless art-making projects. Now such programs happen at dozens of congregations around the country, according to Lawan Glasscock, executive director of Christians in the Visual Arts and a collector of works by homeless artists.

"There's been a robust birth of art therapy and churches understanding that art offers a path to healing where cognitive speaking and dialogue does not," Glasscock says. For people who've experienced language largely as yelling or demeaning, she said, visual expression offers a positive alternative.

Works created at *common art* don't make it into the high-end galleries that line Newbury Street just a few blocks from Emmanuel Church, but area churches make sure these artists nevertheless get a chance to sell what they've made. Once a month, a congregation opens its doors for a *common art* show during coffee hour after Sunday worship. Episcopal parishes in Boston and its suburbs rank among the most frequent hosts including St. John's in Beverly Farms, Christ Church in Needham, All Saints in Brookline, St. Peter's in Weston, and Church of the Redeemer in Chestnut Hill. Artists keep 100 percent of sale proceeds. Frequently they donate those sums to *common cathedral,* according to its staffers.

Selling a piece of art might enable a homeless person to make a payment on a storage unit, Eaton says, or to spend a cold night in a hotel. And while the money helps, the payoff from art-making goes beyond dollars and cents.

"What you find a lot is donors wanting to give and saying: 'Well, let's feed them, clothe them, house them,'" Glasscock says. "But if you just talk to [homeless people], those things are not always the most important things for them. That's not the life source. It's something deeper and less tangible… Setting the space [for that to emerge] is opening your doors, giving them a space, giving them encouragement and giving them permission to just create." ❏

Holy Saturday
A Brief and Humble Service

By Charles Hoffacker

The Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church includes a section entitled "Proper Liturgies for Special Days." Six such liturgies are featured, each for a different day and each with its own unique features and tone. Each service is appropriate only on the day to which it is assigned. The first is for Ash Wednesday, the opening day of Lent. The last is the Great Vigil of Easter, which starts at a time between sunset on Holy Saturday and sunrise on Easter Morning.

The remaining proper liturgies are for four of the days of Holy Week:the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Among all six proper liturgies, the one most likely to be omitted is Holy Saturday, the briefest of them all. Why is this so?

Worship planners may assume that few people would attend this service, placed as it is between Good Friday and the Easter Vigil/Easter Day celebration. However, if the Holy Saturday liturgy is offered, people will attend. Some of them will be there already.

In most cases, a significant number of people appear in the church on Holy Saturday to make arrangements for the Easter celebration. They include altar guild members, musicians, choristers, flower guild members, sextons, and liturgical ministers. A Holy Saturday service can be arranged for these workers and others at a convenient time in the morning or at midday. Many of these workers will have contributed to services earlier in the week. The Holy Saturday liturgy can be for them in a particular way what it is for anyone who travels from the Sunday of the Passion through the Sunday of the Resurrection, namely, a quiet, prayerful pause, an empty moment, a graveside service for Jesus who has died.

The altar stripped at St. Andrew's Church, Whissendin, Rutland, England

Wikimedia Commons photo

The title "Holy Saturday" prevents confusing this liturgy with the Great Vigil of Easter, which often begins on Saturday night. The Holy Saturday liturgy is a service of the Word. With a few exceptions, the ancient Western liturgical books have no general provisions for Holy Saturday other than the Daily Office. Within Anglicanism, according to Marion Hatchett, "the Saturday before Easter retained the nature of a period of preparation for the celebration of Easter" and "the almost uniquely Anglican provision for a liturgy of the word" on this Saturday finds

a place in the 1979 prayer book.

The Holy Saturday liturgy in the prayer book begins with a rubric noting that there is no celebration of the Eucharist on this day. In the Episcopal Church Good Friday and Holy Saturday are the only aliturgical days, occasions when the Eucharist is not celebrated. While the BCP permits the administration of Holy Communion from the reserved Sacrament during the Good Friday liturgy, no such provision exists for Holy Saturday. One must simply wait for the Easter liturgy. This recalls a theme in the Holy Saturday collect of the day: we pray that "we may await with [Jesus] the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life."

The Church has come to what Leonel L. Mitchell calls "an empty day, the day when Christ rested in the tomb and all creation awaited the resurrection."

The church is stripped as part of the Maundy Thursday liturgy. It remains in this stark condition on Holy Saturday, although in some places the altar is covered with a funeral pall. The wooden cross from the Good Friday liturgy is still in place. The color for vestments is Passiontide red, which connects this liturgy with the rest of Holy Week. Incense, the processional cross, and torches are not used.

The deacon (or server) and the celebrant enter the church in silence, reverence the altar, and kneel at their accustomed places for silent prayer. The celebrant says the salutation or simply "let us pray," followed by the collect of the day.

The readings and psalms listed in the prayer book have been succeeded by those in the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). Thus the Old Testament reading is now Job 14:2-14 or Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24. It is appropriately followed by Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16. The epistle is invariably 1 Peter 4:1-8. It can be followed by Psalm 130, which appears in the BCP lectionary, although not in the RCL. An anthem from the BCP Good Friday liturgy may precede the Gospel.

The gospel is Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42. The gospel may be announced as "The Conclusion of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (John)." The customary responses before and after the gospel are omitted.

Although a homily is optional, one should be included under most circumstances. A principal theme can be that the Church has come to what Leonel L. Mitchell calls "an empty day, the day when Christ rested in the tomb and all creation awaited the resurrection."

Next comes a distinctive feature of the Holy Saturday liturgy. In place of the prayers of the people, the anthem "In the midst of life" (BCP 484 or 492) from the Burial of the Dead is sung or said. The Rite I and Rite II versions of this anthem differ in their arrangement. Only the Rite II version features a form of the Trisagion used as a refrain. Thus on Holy Saturday we are reminded not only of the mortality that we share with Jesus, but that our deliverance from eternal death depends on his life given for us and our acceptance of that gift.

The Lord's Prayer and the grace conclude the service. The ministers leave in silence, then the people leave in silence.

In *The Priest's Handbook,* Dennis Michno proposes that with some additions, the Holy Saturday liturgy can be offered on Good Friday evening if the Good Friday liturgy has already taken place. He entitles this alternative "The Commemoration of the Burial of Our Lord Jesus Christ." But the more usual location for this rite is in the morning or at noon on Saturday with the emphasis not on the act of burying Jesus, but on the resting of his body on the Sabbath day. That resting leads to resurrection, for Jesus and for us.

The Holy Saturday liturgy is a brief and humble service that belongs to the worship of the Episcopal Church. It can enrich the experience of any congregation that decides to offer it.

The Rev. Charles Hoffacker is an Episcopal priest who lives in Greenbelt, Maryland. He is the author of A Matter of Life and Death: Preaching at Funerals.

The Melancholy of Gethsemane

Honest Reflections on Priestly Ministry

By Mark Clavier

This essay first appeared on Covenant*, the weblog of* The Living Church*, on February 28, 2020.*

This wasn't how you imagined it is it? When you sat up late into the night (probably over a bottle of gin or whiskey) with your fellow ordinands, dreaming about your future ministries, you didn't for a second think it would be like this.

Perhaps you're newly ordained, facing for the first time the jaded cynicism of veteran clergy and feeling your first flush of idealism wither under the chill wind of their ministerial malaise.

Perhaps you're nearing retirement, hardly able to summon the energy to chair another vestry meeting, attend another dreary diocesan conference, or even speak words of comfort about what you now know to be entirely ordinary, everyday problems. When did you really give up? You can't remember now; it has been so long since you did much more than go through the motions.

Perhaps you're a once-idealistic conservative, who thought (in your youthful humility) that God would use you and your devotion (and even your impressive grasp of Athanasius, Aquinas or Barth) to save the Church from the world and from itself. You now know (even if you can't quite admit it) that you can't even convince your congregation … not really … except for a few overeager supporters who embarrass you at parties.

No? Then maybe you're a fiery progressive who was once convinced that you were part of a wave that would fundamentally change the Church, ridding it finally of racism, elitism, and sexism. Now, you feel old. The changes haven't come as quickly or as easily as you'd hoped. The grand new Church may yet be achieved but you won't live to see it. And, oh, how the Church seems always catching up, always finding some new way to appall you, always choosing the wrong people to lead, the wrong words to say. And, oh, how exhausting the fights have been. Must it be such a struggle?

> "Why are you cast down, O my soul,
> and why are you disquieted within me?"

This is the melancholy of Gethsemane: the realization that the road ahead to God lies through moments of despondency, "accompanied" by people too tired

Gethsemane, by Henry Siddons Mowbray (1858–1928). Smithsonian American Art Museum

themselves even to stay awake while you cry out in frustration. The tears may flow but what of them? And so, you keep going not out of some sense of holy purpose but because there's no other choice.

Gethsemane is for the solitary. You know the frustration, even the despair of ministry, and you bear it alone. "Oh God, not another funeral!" How can you voice that aloud? "Can she really be complaining about her anxiety again?" No, can't say that. "How friggin' hard can it be to pray?!" Well, you haven't really figured it out yourself. Does it show? "Will they never shut up about lace and tasteful chasubles?" I mean, how many times can a person talk about cottas versus surplices?

But you don't say a word. Smile, nod, join in the banter, take the funeral like the deceased was the most important person in the world, help the woman yet again with her anxiety, speak once more about praying (not that you're very attentive to your own). You con-

ceal the melancholy behind the pastoral mask of sympathy and concern.

Your reward? Choosing hymns again from a list you've now sung more times than you can count; examining another financial spreadsheet; preparing yet another sermon that will be soon forgotten; getting your head around yet another set of diocesan regulations; listening to your bishop try again to sound sagacious. Does he really think he's Rowan Williams (not that I really understand as much of his writings as I claim)?

At least Jesus was left alone in the melancholy of Gethsemane. You? Total ministry … collaborative ministry … collaborative leadership … servant leadership … discipleship … the [censored] *Jesus Movement*! ... the chorus of a ministry, charting the years of your service as they're first suggested, then inspiring the leadership, breeding new training and initiatives that fall on deaf ears or are proven impractical, then are discarded like unfashionable clothing. Meanwhile, there's another sermon to prepare and Linda and Frank want to complain about the flower arrangements last Sunday.

And then there are the prognostications: less money, fewer clergy, smaller congregations, church closures. Ecclesiastical doom and gloom in a world that really couldn't care less. What are these but reminders that for decades clergy have failed to realize their ideals? The melancholy has been settling in for a long time, like wet rot in wood that was once green with new life.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?"

This isn't how it was supposed to be. This is hard. This is soul destroying. This is not the melancholy of Gethsemane but the road to Golgotha. Yet, you know no other road. And so, you walk, walk as you always have walked, no longer really believing there's another way or that the road might go on from Golgotha to that happier garden in which the Rabbi's melancholy once turned into the glad hailing of a festival day.

Instead, the melancholy of Gethsemane takes hold in the sleep-stealing hours of the night, in the long silence of prayers in your empty church, in the failure again to be *that* comforting presence, to offer *those* words of wisdom or solace, to stand above the petty squabbles in your church or the Church. "Please, Lord, take this cup from me," you cry in your darker moments. And God responds as God always does: with silence.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?"

At times the only comfort, the only certainty, of the solitary walker is the walk itself. You may be lost. You may have little hope of reaching your destination. And yet you walk.

You listen to the despondent. You comfort the grieving. You wrestle with that text again, searching for that Voice that you've somehow failed to hear or convey in every other sermon you've preached on it. You endure the meetings, smile through the hurtful complaints, grit your teeth in the face of an imperfect Church, listen hard through the echoing silence of your prayers. Above all else, you go once again "unto the altar of God, even the God of your joy and gladness" … maybe (if you're being honest) without the joy and gladness but perhaps with a glimmer of hope of that joy and gladness.

And so, you walk from Gethsemane, bearing your melancholic heart, keenly aware of the cross before you, and in the midst of it all knowing that you are in fact a priest. *You* are a priest. In that melancholy, you know somehow that this, *this*, is what the sacrifice of the priesthood really is. And as you walk that desolate road, perhaps you also become dimly aware, perhaps only occasionally aware, that you're not the first to have walked it. It is the road of many a solitary priest, the road of many a person who has held the Divine Presence in his or her hands, has physically offered Love for the nourishment of aching souls.

And if God's grace is with you, then perhaps also you discern that none of you is or has ever been alone. Christ is there with you … *is you* walking that road, bearing that melancholy, gazing at that cross. In the midst of it all, in the highs and the lows, in the despair, the frustration, and, yes, even the joy of your ministry, he is there working with you, in you, through you, despite you. He is there sending out his light and his truth to bring you through it all to his holy hill and to his dwelling.

And yet the road remains the same. The melancholy doesn't fade, isn't dispelled like some evil curse in a fairy tale. Christ offers to do that no more than Father offered to take the cup from him in the melancholy of Gethsemane. And yet, perhaps there is something about his faithful company, in the presence of his Love in and through your own half-hearted, too-despondent service, that brings an unexpected flicker of a smile to your face as you suddenly remember that it was never your priesthood in the first place. Then, resuming your journey, you'll laugh at your own self-importance, and ask:

"Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God."

The Rev. Canon Dr. Mark Clavier is the residentiary canon, or priest in residence, of Brecon Cathedral in mid-Wales.

Lent in the Movies

By Paul F.M. Zahl

Christians who love movies can spend a lot of time looking for "crumbs from the Master's table" within works that really *aren't* particularly Christian. We'll spot a moment of pure grace in a PIXAR film or a flash of redemption in a contemporary drama and be interested, and maybe happy.

There is nothing wrong with locating "anonymous" seeds of hope within popular art that emerges from our surrounding and often alien culture. But I seem to have come upon a treasure trove lately, within an earlier period of Hollywood production — not the Silent Era by any means! — of movies that are more directly, hence less obliquely, Christian. Each of the four highlighted below has a definite Lenten theme, and each comes from what is now referred to as Hollywood's Golden Era, with famous stars and A-plus production. Two of them were completely new to me when I caught them recently. The other two were familiar, a little, but more for their stars than for their subject.

The Devil at 4 O'Clock (1961)

Starring Spencer Tracy, this movie portrays a grizzled and somewhat embittered, alcoholic Roman Catholic priest who has just been replaced by a younger man in his cure on a Polynesian island. What he doesn't know is that a volcano is about to erupt and it will fall to him, together with four hardened *convicts*, one of them played by Frank Sinatra, to try and rescue a group of schoolchildren who live up the mountain. *The Devil at 4 O'clock* is a spectacular drama concerning sacrifice, redemption, and reality. It is also easy to see, whether you stream it at home or buy the DVD.

The Left Hand of God (1955)

This one is also spectacular and ambitious — Christianly ambitious. *The Left Hand of God* stars Humphrey Bogart and Gene Tierney, and concerns an American flier downed

in China during the Second World War who must masquerade as a mission priest for reasons the movie spells out. *The Left Hand of God* is not a perfect movie but it uncovers the "apostolate" that may be latent in us all. "Bogey's" performance is touching and brings things together movingly at the end. Once again, the movie can be streamed or purchased on DVD.

Journey into Light (1951)

This one should surprise you. It stars Sterling Hayden as an Episcopal rector whose life falls apart, and his faith with it. He leaves his parish and begins a journey of embittered self-discovery that takes him to the Los Angeles bowery, where he becomes "one" with a class of hopeless men who, like him, have fallen very low. The story of his re-discovery of himself and of God is both touching, realistic, and surprising. This one stunned me in the best way. It is not available yet on DVD but can be found in its complete version if you look on the internet. Here is a Lenten movie which is Five Stars!

And finally, *The First Legion* (1951)

Who'd have thought these last two were even made — so direct are they in their transformative yet true-to-life portrayals of men and women in the midst of pain and regret? *The First Legion* stars Charles Boyer and takes place in a Jesuit house in which a supposed miracle takes place. Questions are raised about this public and stunning event; and the Jesuit priests, who are rife with church politics and jockeying for their own preferment, must discover the truth. The ending of this movie is a surprise, and extremely affecting. It is not available yet on DVD nor streaming; but, just like *Journey into Light*, a complete version is easy to find on the internet if you look.

Each of these four is a Hollywood wonder, with *Journey into Light*, because it concerns an Episcopal priest (and also a kindly and pastoral Episcopal bishop) and digs deep for the seeds of hope, being my first choice. Enjoy!

The Rev. Paul F. M. Zahl is a retired priest, and was formerly rector of All Saints' Church, Chevy Chase, Md. and dean of Trinity School for Ministry. He is the author of many books.

Maria Oswalt photo/unsplash

ETHICS

Aid in Dying

By Victor Lee Austin

The term "aid in dying" refers to assisted suicide, and legally often refers to a physician being able to prescribe upon request, without prosecution, lethal drugs for dying persons to self-administer. Generally the person must be terminally ill and capable of making the decision and consuming the medicine autonomously. The death remains self-administered (thus, literally, "suicide," killing oneself); the physician's "aid" does not directly bring about the death, although that is of course its aim.

Euthanasia (literally, "good death") can be understood as a logical extension of "aid in dying." Terminally ill persons might fear reaching a state of debilitation where they would no longer be able to self-administer the lethal drugs; euthanasia would allow their autonomous choice still to be carried out. Furthermore, such autonomous choice to die under specified conditions seems hindered if it is limited to the ongoing presence of communicative capacities.

"Aid in dying," both in its strict sense as assisted suicide and in the broader sense of euthanasia, commends itself to our innate human desire to mitigate one another's pain, and to honor human dignity.

We may distinguish euthanasia from many other forms of killing. A judicial execution, a deadly military assault, a police officer using lethal force to stop a terrorist in a public school: none of these actions is euthanasia. Advocates also wish to distinguish euthanasia from murder, understood as the wrongful killing of an innocent human being. This, however, is a difficult line to draw. In the film "The Giver," a very loving man euthanizes a baby who is not up to standards. He is cradling and talking to the baby as he does it. He does not know what he is doing, although we who watch the film do.

"Aid in dying" involves active procedures that aim at the death of a person. They are different from withdrawing medical assistance (or refusing medical assistance) that is of minimal benefit at best, or whose possible benefit is far outweighed by its side effects. Gail Godwin's novel *The Good Husband* begins with a brilliant and lovely professor who

has just learned she has advanced ovarian cancer. When her doctor "told her what her chances were . . . or, rather, weren't," she told him: "In that case, I'd prefer to spend the time I have left studying for my Final Exam, rather than studying my disease." Hers is not a decision for suicide.

Similarly, the administration of morphine, carefully increased only as needed to control a dying patient's pain and fear of being unable to breathe, is not euthanasia, because it does not aim at the patient's death.

In my judgment, Christian faith entails that both euthanasia and assisted suicide are morally wrong. Christians should oppose the normalization of such aids in dying as social practices or legal options.

The root theological problem is that "aid in dying" misconceives our life as something we own. That's a widespread cultural error, pervasive all through life and not just at the end. But in fact my life is not my possession. My life is a gift; I am a steward of that gift, not an owner; and I am responsible for my stewardship. This is true for every human person. The fact that life is gift, not possession, is a truth that opens into a sense of awe over the depths in which we are connected one to another.

Hence everyone's first moral task is to give thanks. We may want more than what we have; we may want something different; but we cannot ask for more or different apart from thanksgiving. Rejoice always, says the apostle Paul, "and again I say, Rejoice. . . . In every thing by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:4,6; emphasis added). No matter how severe the need that draws forth our pleading, there is a container of thanksgiving that needs to surround it. As Anglican clergy have said at the Eucharist for centuries, "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee."

Now one might think that in extreme conditions one could still give thanks to God while deliberately bringing a life to an end. One might think that in a particular case the pain is so great, the alternatives so limited, that administering aid in dying is the best choice. Yet even if that were the case, we should not deliberately bring a life to an end, because of our connections one with another. If I end my life, I have harmed others. My deliberately chosen death makes it easier for others to feel that maybe they too should choose death. In the end, in this as in so much else, pressures "to end it all" would be felt particularly by the poor.

The Oxford ethicist Nigel Biggar draws out, in his book *Aiming to Kill*, the deleterious social consequences of acceptance of these practices. For the good of humanity, we need to keep the prohibition, social and legal, of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Nonetheless, Christians should become enthusiastic practitioners of the art of dying. There is much Christian wisdom about dying and we should aim to articulate it and help one another in it.

Being thankful for our lives, we have a duty to be courageous in the face of illness, aging, and death. We should study, exercise, practice good hygiene, and not shun such surgery as can prolong or promote our health. But we do not have a duty to extend our lives at any cost. In fact, we have a duty to develop such virtues as will help us to die well.

The Christian motto should be: Even though you are dying, we will not abandon you.

"I was sick, and ye visited me," says the Lord at the last day (Matt. 25:36). We need to be with people who are approaching death, to include them in our communities. We need to learn how to walk beside, helpfully, a frail person. We should remind each other that, for instance, there is nothing undignified in wetting one's pants. Dementia, too, is no indignity. We can acquire wisdom to be present with people in loving ways.

The Christian motto should be: Even though you are dying, we will not abandon you.

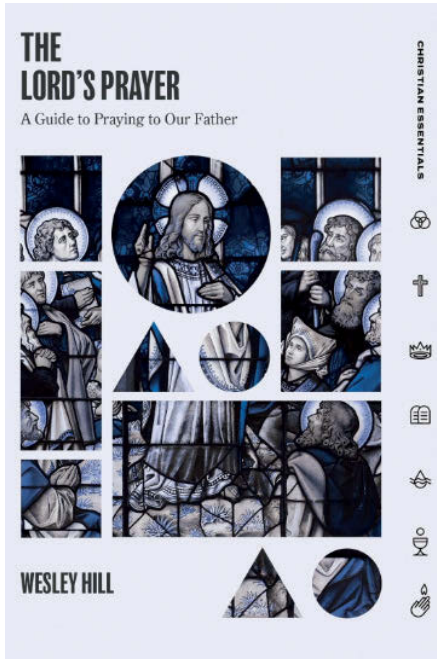
And let us not be bashful about the substance of Christian hope. After death, it seems we sleep with Jesus. Whatever that is, it's not forever. Then comes "a yet more glorious day" (Hymn 287, st. 7) when bodies rise from the dead and joyful, fulfilled human beings join in praise of God. Good theology is sung when "For all the saints" is a hymn at a burial.

Let us encourage one another with the loose ends of life. There are people to thank, apologies to make sincerely, goods to let go of. And when we visit persons near the end, perhaps we should read Scripture to them (even if they seem asleep). I would like the Psalms read to me, from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, if you can. And the prayers — some of the most powerful collects are at the end of the burial office (BCP pp. 487–9, 503–5) and these could be repeated aloud. We need not be silent at the approach of death. We can recognize its inevitability, and learn why we pray that God deliver us, not from death itself, but "from dying suddenly and unprepared" (Great Litany, BCP p. 149).

Such would be a truly Christian practice of aid in dying.

The Rev. Victor Lee Austin is theologian-in-residence for the Diocese of Dallas and Church of the Incarnation, Dallas.

The Prayer for Our Journey



The Lord's Prayer
A Guide to Praying to Our Father
By **Wesley Hill**
Lexham Press, pp. 144, $15.99

Review by Christopher Yoder

It is the prayer for all seasons — the Lord's Prayer, the prayer Jesus gave his disciples. The prayer for every day, feast days and fasts, as long as the earth endures, "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night" (Gen. 8:22). The prayer for births and baptism. The prayer "for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness, and in health." The prayer for hospital beds and hospice. The prayer you pray when you do not know how to pray, when words fail you, when you are standing at the grave of the one you loved. The prayer for every day of the pilgrimage of your life.

To pray the Lord's Prayer is to embark on a journey, a journey with Jesus into the depths of the divine life. Wesley Hill has written a sturdy little guidebook to light the way. He does so by showing how "the Lord's Prayer is first and foremost about Jesus Himself," how the prayer invites you into communion with the Lord. Here's how Hill expresses it:

> We are tagalongs, you might say, taking advantage of the closeness Jesus enjoys with His Father. As the prophet Zechariah long ago predicted, people "from nations of every language shall take hold of a Jew, grasping his garment and saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'" Indeed, God is with Jesus, and we do grasp our older brother's garment, begging Him to take us with Him to the Father. And He does.

The Lord Jesus gives his disciples this prayer that they might follow him, and he leads them where he has already been. Thus, for example, "Jesus has already gone into the furnace's fiery depths and, by His redemptive alchemy, transformed its hellish flames into burnishing purifiers." And this is a recurring theme of Hill's book: that the Lord's Prayer finds its fulfillment in Christ.

The passage quoted above ("We are tagalongs, etc.") is characteristic in a couple of ways. First, it's a good example of how Holy Scripture has shaped Hill's imagination. One of the great strengths of this book is that it is written by a man who knows and loves the Word of God. Second, the passage also displays Hill's sensitivity to feminist critiques of patriarchal language for God. Throughout, Hill deliberately capitalizes divine pronouns in order to flag the inadequacy of our categories to God. He offers a nuanced defense of calling God "Father" at the end of chapter 1. And there are other ways in which Hill is alert to the concerns of our age (see especially his discussion of what it means to pray, "Lead us not into temptation").

Hill ends his book with a brief meditation on how Rembrandt's *Return of the Prodigal Son* (and Henri Nouwen's meditation on it) has changed the way he prays the Lord's Prayer. This "coda" adapts a piece originally published on The Living Church's *Covenant* blog. (Hill is a regular contributor to *Covenant*.) It's a fitting conclusion to this lovely book. It makes you want "to find yourself praying [the Lord's Prayer] in a way you hope never to stop."

Such should be the end of all teaching on the Lord's Prayer, teaching that forms a central part of Christian catechesis. Hill's reliable guide to the Lord's Prayer is a solid addition to the long tradition of commentaries on the prayer stretching back to Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen. It's a tradition to which Anglicans have made many worthy contributions (as can be seen in an anthology like *Love's Redeeming Work: The Anglican Quest for Holiness*), in part because the prayer book names learning the Lord's Prayer (along with the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments) as necessary for Christian formation, as one of the "things which a Christian ought to know and believe, to his soul's health."

Hill's guide would work well as part of a parochial course of preparation for baptism and/or confirmation for adults, or as the curriculum for, say, a 10-week small group discussion series. The length of the book makes it accessible even to those with little margin to read: with less than 100 pages of actual text, the whole book could easily be read in an evening, or a discussion group could just as easily read a chapter (each is roughly 10 pages) together and then discuss it in one sitting. And this is a reliable guide: thoroughly rooted and grounded in Scripture, consonant with tradition and practices of the Church, attuned to the questions of the day, and centered on the Lord Jesus. A guide that might even change the way you pray this Prayer of Prayers, this prayer for the whole of your life.

The Rev. Christopher Yoder is rector of All Souls', Oklahoma City, Okla.

Living Against the Myth of Our Times

By Justin Lewis-Anthony

I often wonder if goldfish understand the concept of water: can anything so omnipresent and ubiquitous be comprehended by fish? How can goldfish separate themselves enough from their necessary and surrounding environment to ask questions about it? The French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss noted the same phenomenon with humanity: "myths operate in men's minds without their being aware of the fact." Our water, the myths we inhabit, is almost impossible to interrogate.

One of the great myths of our time is Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, first posited by Smith and Denton almost 15 years ago. According to MTD, a powerful and unacknowledged American religion, God exists, but he exists in order to allow us to grow into happiness and to feel good about ourselves. The tenets of MTD aren't alien to Christianity as lived and practiced: indeed, I have heard people responsible for ministerial formation who spoke of their role as allowing students to complete a self-actualisation process: ordination as a personal growth programme.

Against MTD, St Vladimir's Press is to be praised for producing these two slim, but rich, volumes.

I am unaware of how well-known Metropolitan Anthony Bloom might be in the United States. I am fortunate that, as a student in London in the 1980s, I was able to hear him speak at my chaplaincy on numerous occasions. Here was a man, who was involved in the turmoil of the Russian Revolution, and who became a Christian in exile from Russia, and yet who, patently and palpably, stood before God. *Churchianity vs. Christianity* is the transcribed record of a series of talks Bloom gave in London in 2000; like Rowan Williams, Bloom was able to speak in whole, eloquent, paragraphs, without notes.

Bloom's stand against MTD, what he calls, following C.S. Lewis, "churchianity," begins immediately. He condemns himself, and his long (successful?) ministry in the words of St Andrew of Crete:

> "The Prophets have spoken in vain. The Gospel lies idle in your hands. The writings of those who were inspired by the Spirit are bearing no fruit. Here am I — barren and empty."

He finds himself to be "below zero," and after more than 75 years of life "aware of not having begun to be a Christian." Too often, those who remain in the Church ignore the challenge "to cross from the land of death into the land of life." We delight in the ceremonies and company of the Church, and still refuse to become Christians, to abide *in* God: "We do not live our lives on Christ's own terms. We want God to live on ours." We are content to live with a society which is less than the Church, and in order to overcome that, we need to acknowledge the ideal and how far short of it we have fallen. We protect ourselves from being known by others in the community, smoothing out relationships, avoiding anything that threatens our frailty.

But St. Hermas said that the angels of God built the new Jerusalem from square stones with sharp angles: there is nothing safe there. But by opening ourselves to each other, as we really are, allowing others to see us as God sees us, then we can find a way of treating each other as if we were in the presence of the Messiah. We will learn that we are not self-sufficient, and we find our abode in God when we seek it together with our brothers and sisters.

Peter Bouteneff teaches at St Vladimir's Seminary, where he incorporates his expertise and interest in music, and especially the work of Arvo Pärt, into his teaching of systematic theology. He begins his exploration of human sinfulness in *How to Be a Sinner* with a clear statement against MTD: "Everybody sins. We all fall short of the glory of genuine human life." The book is an exploration of how a *genuine* human life might be the answer to such falling short.

This is more, and perhaps harder, than a "maudlin or masochistic" focus on a "sinner identity," of which Bouteneff gives us three examples: "John" who is MTD personified; Joanne, who has been so badly damaged by her family and upbringing

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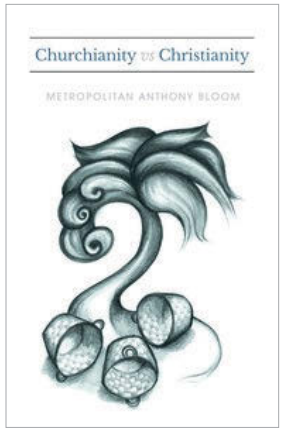
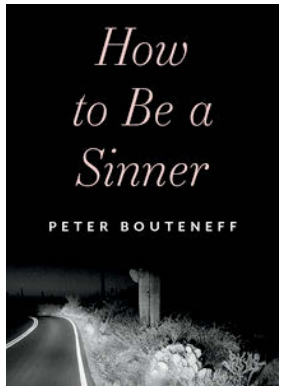


Churchianity vs. Christianity
By **Metropolitan Anthony Bloom**
St Vladimir's Seminary Press, pp. 138, $16



How to Be a Sinner
Finding Yourself in the Language of Repentance
By **Peter Bouteneff**
St Vladimir's Seminary Press, pp. 215, $20

(Continued from previous page)

that she can't honestly assess her efforts and failings; and "Paisios" who has adopted a baptismal name and persona that revels in being "The Wretch," dresses in black, and who travels 250 miles to make his confession to a noted monk-confessor. Self-affirmation is not self-acceptance, but neither is self-hatred proper self-humility. As long as we maintain the measure of who we are and what we deserve, rather than allowing God to set the terms, we will be trapped in one of these self-deceptive personae. This is where the teaching and practices of the Church, understood properly, and practiced with compassion, can help.

Bouteneff gives us a rich company of guides into truth.

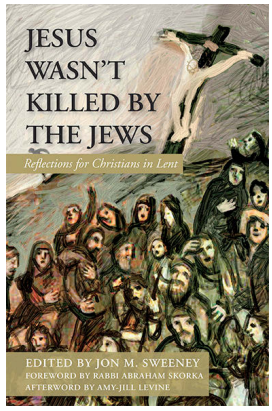
Interestingly, Bouteneff moves a discussion of the nature of "sin" to an appendix. This is a clearly stated, even eloquent, description of sins as disposition, action, and condition, all combining to make us miss "the mark," which is the blameless one, Jesus Christ. The first step to retargeting the mark is an acceptance of the reality of our falling short: we can approach the reality accompanied by the assurance and compassion of Christ. This brings us a freedom from fear, and to live without fear is a great, rare and precious gift.

Bouteneff gives us a rich company of guides into truth: Rowan Williams, W.H. Auden, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Pope Francis, the ascetic Fathers and Mothers of the Church, and, pleasingly, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh. Despite the heft of these witnesses, Bouteneff presents his ideas and their teachings with a mild gentleness that is very attractive, compassionate, and humane. The book would make a good pattern for Lenten study, especially if undertaken in the company of a wise fellow reader.

Justin Lewis-Anthony is the former deputy director of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

Rooting Out Anti-Semitism

Review by Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski



Jesus Wasn't Killed by the Jews
Reflections for Christians in Lent
Edited by **John Sweeney**
Orbis Books, pp. 128, $19

This book has become tragically necessary, says Jon Sweeney in the volume's introduction. It was written in the wake of the murder of Jews in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, California, during the past two years. Violence against Jews has grown rapidly abroad and at home and too often it is accompanied by a distorted Christian logic. Jews are targeted as killers of Christ, enemies of the gospel, and a present danger. As a result, once again, Christians must find their voice to denounce lies about the Jewish people.

This slim book is an ecumenical effort. Sweeney writes as a lay Roman Catholic inspired by the efforts of his church in this area since the Second Vatican Council. He has gathered a cadre of Jewish, Protestant, and Roman Catholic contributors. The book is divided into two sections, "Foundations" and "Progress" that offer an explanation of how Christian anti-Judaism emerged and the ways in which the church has worked to root it out.

In the first section, several contributions stand out. Mary Boys lays out a condensed explanation of how a movement of Jewish followers of Jesus developed over three centuries into an institutional church that identified Jews as the enemies of the gospel. From there, Boys utilizes Roman Catholic teaching documents to recover a reading of the New Testament that does not necessitate an anti-Jewish narration. Nicholas King offers a provocative chapter on the New Testament as an entirely Jewish-authored canon. While admitting to the possibility that not all texts can be definitely assigned Jewish authorship, King is correct that to read the New Testament as emerging from a Jewish matrix is a needed reframing. In the final chapter of this section, Richard Lux deftly lays out Christian supersessionist theology aimed towards Judaism and then explains why it ought to be rejected.

The recognition of the problem of Christian supersessionism undergirds the second section. Sweeney writes three brief reflections on how anti-Judaism colors the experience of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. Picking up on the shocking repetition of "the Jews" in the passion narrative from the Gospel of John, Wes Howard-Brook offers a persuasive argument for translating the underlying Greek as "the Judeans" and thus defusing the misuse of this passage by anti-Semites. Sandy Sasso ends this section with a sobering reminder that many Christian education materials are filled with latent and unintended supersessionist themes. How can anti-Judaism end when it is perpetuated in Sunday school to our children?

This book is meant as a reminder to Christians that they must reexamine how they talk about Jews. Not every argument will prove persuasive and some claims will need more nuance, as Amy-Jill Levine shows in her afterword. But this is a time for Christians to become vigilant and root out anti-Judaism from the sermons, hymns, liturgy, and teaching materials. "Never again" also means "Not here." This work will take courage and resilience. But it is the work of reconciliation that the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to undertake.

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski is the Duncalf-Villavoso Professor of Church History at Seminary of the Southwest and assisting priest at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas.

Cosmic Christology's Pastoral Confusion

Review by John Mason Lock

The story is told that as Martin Luther lay on his deathbed, he told his wife Katy, "I am a ripe stool, and the world is a gigantic anus, and I am about to pass out of it." The fact that this invariably elicits a laugh tells me that Luther was not speaking from a place of self-loathing but rather of healthy self-skepticism rooted in both in a playful sense of humor and a profound trust in Christ. From this standpoint of a well-defined sense of self, Luther could both wholly trust the Lord and laugh at himself or the pathetic wiles of the devil.

Such a modest evaluation of human experience is the glaring defect of the Rev. Dr. Vincent Pizzuto's new book *Contemplating Christ: The Gospels and the Interior Life*. The book is an introduction to the contemplative life crafted with the lay person in mind. Pizzuto, who is a former Roman Catholic priest, serves as the vicar of St. Columba's Episcopal Church and Retreat House and as a professor at Jesuit University in San Francisco. He is a staunch advocate of Cosmic Christology and the so-called "continuing incarnation," the idea that when God took manhood into himself in the incarnation, he took all of humanity and the material universe as well. The idea of the cosmic incarnation is a development of such texts as Romans 8 and Colossians 1, which speak of the reconciliation of all creation in the end.

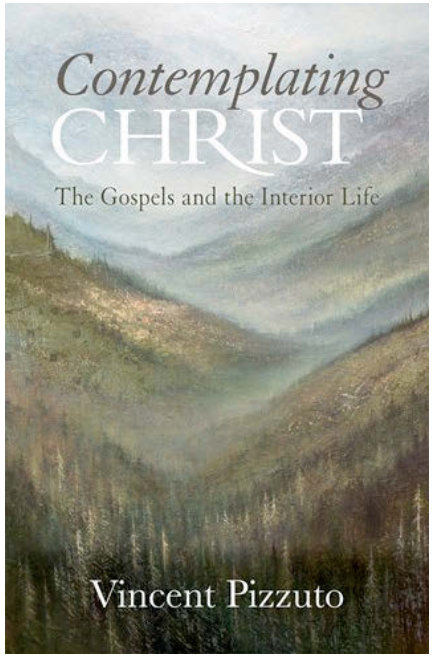
The trouble with developing this line of thought from scant biblical evidence is that Pizzuto ends up saying things that are theologically problematic and pastorally insensitive. In his initial chapter, "An Overview of Deification," he says that "we do not merely encounter Christ as a historical figure or an outsider, but we discover ourselves to be participants in his incarnation" and "the vocation of a Christian is not to become 'good' but to become God."

One of the issues of cosmic Christology is that it collapses the distinctions between the three advents of Christ: *in carne*, *in mente* and *ad judicium*, in flesh as the Christ child, in the soul of the Christian, and in glory to judge the living and the dead. Christ's coming into our souls is not the same thing as his historic incarnation in the flesh.

Such statements as "the [physical] body is … the very expansion of Christ's own incarnation in the world" do not make this clear. As a pastor, I would be concerned at not only the questions that such statements would engender but even more so by the "pastorally cruel" idea that we can become incarnations of Christ. The sheep we're called to serve need to hear about how they are forgiven and redeemed, not to be confounded by the idea that they are actually God. Pizzuto has eviscerated the distinction between the head and the body in the Pauline concept of the body of Christ with devastating pastoral implications.

This employment of cosmic Christology is particularly regrettable because Pizzuto does have some useful things to say about biblical exegesis and practical advice on contemplative prayer. The introductory chapter on deification is followed by a mapping of Christian discipleship as a crucifying of the false ego to discover the true self. In the third chapter he uses the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke and the prologue of John's Gospel to reflect theologically on the practice of contemplation. Christians are among other things to be receptive as Mary was receptive to the word of the Lord.

In the fourth chapter, Pizzuto outlines what he says as our ongoing battle with demons which he classifies as either renegades — demons who manifest as addictions and self-harming behaviors — or parasites — those who operate primarily in making the Christian complacent in the face of injustice and evil. In the final chapter Pizzuto offers suggestions on what a contemporary contemplative life might look like by engaging in quiet prayer, embodying the love of Christ to others, and transgressing unjust social norms in imitation of and union with Christ. While little of what Pizzuto writes is original or profound, there are some helpful applications on how to read the Bible in a spiritual manner and what contemporary lay practice of contemplation might look like.



Contemplating Christ
The Gospels and the Interior Life
By **Vincent Pizzuto**
Liturgical Press, pp. 228, $14.95

This book is at least outwardly rooted in the wider Christian tradition of theology and exegesis. Pizzuto includes a glossary to assist readers who may not be familiar with the words or ideas like "perichoresis" or "historical criticism." In addition, the book is peppered with a healthy dose of ancient and modern theologians such as the Desert Fathers, John of the Cross, Symeon the New Theologian, Meister Eckhart, and Von Balthasar, among many. Occasionally his use of these authors feels forced and lacking a consideration of wider teaching of these figures. For example, Pizzuto

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cites St. Augustine's *On the Trinity* as evidence for the idea that one cannot speak dogmatically about the Trinity. In another passage he says that St. Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus* is "very near" cosmic Christology. Both claims are highly disputable.

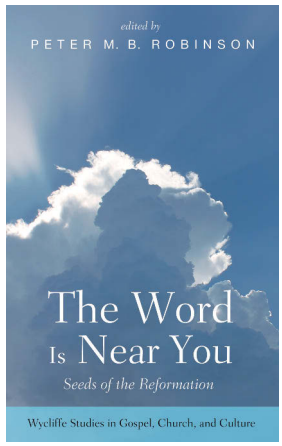
The second issue with Pizzuto's use of sources is that there are virtually no citations from any Protestant theologians, except a dismissive quotation from Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Even Pizzuto admits that Edward's theology is "much broader" than the straw man theological position he attributes to him. The absence of quotes from Protestant spiritual writers is particularly regrettable in that some of these figures might have been helpful to Pizzuto's argument. For example, when Pizzuto argues in his final chapter that we should not merely say prayers but embody Christ in prayer, I immediately thought of Calvin who says that when God hears our prayers, he hears the voice of Christ our high priest. Such inclusions might have also made the argument more representative of the Anglican tradition in which Pizzuto now exercises his ministry.

In the opening pages, Pizzuto rightly bemoans our "intellectually and spiritually impoverished" faith communities. Discipleship and Christian formation have become the clarion call of much of the leadership of the Episcopal Church, and for good reason. Too long has Sunday school been thought of as a thing for children only and confirmation treated as graduation from the church. Pizzuto's book is an attempt to address this impoverishment by accessing some of the riches of our spiritual heritage and charting a path by which they might be applied in a contemporary context. Unfortunately, the book is hampered by its own theological propositions which make it theologically suspect and of limited value.

The Rev. John Mason Lock is rector of Trinity, Red Bank, N.J.

A Reformation of Desire

Review by Calvin Lane



The Word Is Near You
Seeds of the Reformation
Edited by
Peter M.B. Robinson
Wipf & Stock,
pp. 92, $35

Seminaries are not merely graduate schools, but resource centers for the wider church and its living mission. Peter Robinson and his colleagues at Wycliffe College, Toronto, then, are to be commended for producing a short devotional book in 2018 meeting that vocation. *The Word Is Near You: Seeds of the Reformation* emerged from Wycliffe's celebration of the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation during the preceding year. A collection of 11 short sermons given in Wycliffe's Founder's Chapel by the faculty, the book not only delves into the long-term fruits of the Reformation, some of which are celebrated even by Roman Catholics today, but it also exhibits the right way to "resource" from the church's tradition. Each sermon concludes with Scripture passages for further study and discussion questions. The book is the fifth entry in the "Wycliffe Studies in Gospel, Church, and Culture" series, short accessible works which are gifts to the wider church.

The topics are all the classic Reformation *loci* we might expect: the authority of the Word, the tension between Law and Gospel, the priesthood of all believers, and the "solas" (grace, scripture, faith, Christ, God's glory). And what better place to celebrate the Reformation than Wycliffe with its robust evangelical heritage.

However, these are sermons delivered in the context of worship, not simply archival journeys for historians. The faculty preachers show a sober awareness that much has changed since the 16th century and that mission has to extend beyond our denominational niches. Alan Hayes, quoting Stanley Hauerwas, observes in his piece on that Reformation trope of the pope as antichrist, that the Roman Catholic Church recognizes clearly the authority of Scripture, the centrality of Christ, and the importance of vernacular worship. This short book is no paean to the reformers, but rather a practical engagement with their living legacy.

One of the more eye-catching threads here, and one that can bear much fruit in ministry, is the language of heart and desire. There is likely no better place to intersect with our culture now than with the reformers' vision of new hearts for God. The Wycliffe faculty, along with many other Christian apologists, most notably James K.A. Smith, have drawn wisely from this well. Human beings, Joseph Mangina preaches, are lovers down to their core. We are not in need of better ideas or better intentions, but new hearts from God and for God. The Law, many of the preachers here show us, helps us to see our poverty, driving us to a loving savior. But, as Ephraim Radner describes, the Law also depicts a reordering of desires accomplished by grace in which we do love God and neighbor. Catherine Sider-Hamilton and Robert Dean offer the diagnosis of the human heart bent in on itself (Luther's *incurvatus in se*) and the need for a reformation of desire, to love what God loves. *The Word is Near You* would be an accessible resource not only for personal devotions but also for small group studies. Wycliffe faculty, then, have laid up their good service.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Lane is associate rector of St. George's Episcopal Church, Dayton, Ohio, affiliate professor of church history at Nashotah House Theological Seminary, and adjunct professor of history at Wright State University.

Spiritual, Yet Still Religious

By Joshua Caler

At this point, the reading public is all too familiar with the well-documented changes in America's religious landscape. We know, through experience in our own communities, a new series of contours: declining church attendance, the rise of the 'nones,' and the enduring appeal (and even resurgence) of "spirituality" as an organizing concept in the quest to find meaning in a secular world.

In *The Spiritual Way: Classic Traditions and Contemporary Practice*, Philip Sheldrake reminds Christians of what it is we mean (or have meant historically) by "spirituality" amid this religious shift. He catalogues five enduring types of spirituality that have formed and sustained Christians across time.

The core contribution of *The Spiritual Way* is to present five types of Christian spirituality with cogency and concision. These typologies cohere around a shared "sense of *where* spiritual transformation is thought to take place (the context), *how* it takes place (through which practices or disciplines), and *what* is the ultimate purpose or end point of the spiritual journey." Sheldrake presents each in successive chapters: The Way of Discipline, The Contemplative-Mystical Way, The Way of Practical Action, The Way of Beauty, and The Prophetic Way. This catalogue, while not exhaustive or perfect, is fairly comprehensive. Each chapter presents central figures and contexts across time (more or less chronologically) in which Sheldrake sees the hallmarks of a given type of spirituality. He concludes each chapter with a look at an exemplary figure that best characterizes the type. These include St. Benedict and his *Rule*, Julian of Norwich, St. Ignatius Loyola and the *Spiritual Exercises*, the poetry of George Herbert, and the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez, respectively.

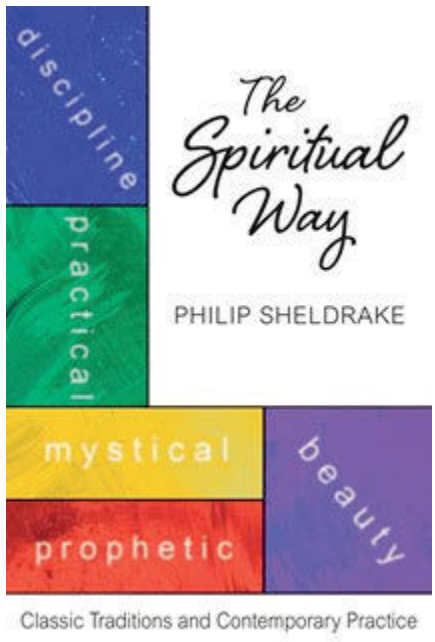
Though written by a Roman Catholic who is mostly indebted to spiritual writers of his own tradition, this work is generously ecumenical in its scope. Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant contributions are fairly considered throughout, with special attention paid to Anglican contributions to Western Christian spirituality. Some figures such as Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day straddle several of Sheldrake's categories. Likewise, there are some surprising omissions, but none fatal to the book's aim. In his chapter on "The Way of Beauty," for instance, Sheldrake devotes a good deal of attention to the spiritual significance and legacy of Gothic architecture within Britain and France, while bypassing Southern Europe's Renaissance architecture entirely.

For engaged laity eager to learn more about classic Christian spirituality or to find new resources for spiritual growth, this book is a welcome. if imperfect, addition to previously available guides. For parish clergy, the core chapters could ably serve as a congregational teaching resource or group reading text, especially as a way to broaden the variety of spiritual practices and figures embraced by a congregation. It could also be a good starting place for refocusing a congregation that has mistaken profound-sounding, syncretic nonsense for real spiritual wisdom, by reintroducing the rich variety of characteristically *Christian* spiritualities.

This well-conceived overview, however, is sandwiched between chapters that are less successfully executed. The book's first chapter, What Is Christian Spirituality? attempts to cover more ground than can be done well in such a small space, examining contemporary context, biblical roots, historical background, and spirituality's interface with theology. The chapter's aim is broadly constructive rather than descriptive and relies on strong, interesting sources. Yet it gives only the most cursory and ultimately unsatisfying treatment to the themes raised. The larger shortcoming, however, in both the first and last chapters, is the reticence to evaluate the current fascination with spirituality within the wider culture or suggest how historic Christian spirituality might serve as an alternative and corrective to it. Especially in his conclusion, Sheldrake is eager to show how classical Christian spirituality might engage those "who seek a more aspirational approach to life outside the boundaries of conventional religion." He suggests that Christian wisdom can be employed to address contemporary concern in the quest for meaning, even by those outside the Church.

While there may be growing interest in spirituality, Christian and otherwise, within wider culture, it is far from clear that the types of spirituality presented here can be sustained and preserved through mere interest. Ultimately, the nurture and development of the rich variety of approaches to spirituality Sheldrake so ably catalogues will depend, as it has for centuries, on those who are religious *and* spiritual; that is, it will need the Church.

The Rev. Joshua M. Caler is rector of Christ Church, Pottstown, Pa.



The Spiritual Way
Classic Traditions and Contemporary Practice
By Philip Sheldrake.
Liturgical Press Academic, pp. 192, $24.95

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(Continued from page 8)

Congo's border with Uganda, when they were surrounded by members of the Allied Democratic Force, an Islamic militant group active in the region.

The militants demanded that Batsemire tell them where other pastors could be found, and then demanded that he convert to Islam. After he refused, the father of ten was killed, but his wife was spared. She reported that the attackers used a local phrase that indicated they were intending to kill Christians but to spare Muslims. Earlier in the same day, ADF forces killed more than thirty people in overnight raids on nearby villages.

The ADF has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks on Christians in the region in recent month, including a raid on an Anglican mission hospital in Boga, a city further south in Kivu-Nord state, last August. That raid resulted in the abduction of 200 women, children, and youth. In late October, the DRC's army launched a major offensive against the group, and President Felix Tshisekedi announced in December that the 22,000 troops sent to the region had succeeded in dismantling nearly all ADF bases. However, the Kivu Security Tracker, a research initiative focusing on the region, reports that at least 265 people have been killed by the ADF in the region since November.

One of several rebel groups operating in eastern Congo, the ADF was founded in the 1990s in western Uganda to defend the rights of local members of the neo-fundamentalist Tablighi Jamaat sect. Though largely devoted to banditry, it espouses an Islamist ideology, and claimed that a similar attack last April was the work of "The Central African Province of the Islamic State."

New York University's Congo Research Group and the Bridgeway Foundation report that the ADF has received funds from Waleed Ahmed Zein, a major financier of the Islamic State. In December, the US Treasury Department imposed sanctions on the leaders of the ADF "for perpetrating serious human rights abuses including mass rape, torture, and killings."

Christians are fleeing the area, the Barnabas Fund reports, and many churches have been forced to suspend public worship.

West Africa Archbishop Suffers Stroke

By Kirk Petersen

The Most Rev. Jonathan Hart, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of West Africa, suffered a serious stroke on February 13, it was announced the following morning at the regular meeting of the Executive Council.

The Rev. Chuck Robertson, canon to the presiding bishop for ministry beyond the Episcopal Church, told the council that Hart cannot walk, but his speech is not impaired, and he is alert. Robertson's role makes him responsible for the Church's international relations.

Robertson said the 67-year-old primate's daughter Victoria "would be grateful for our prayers," and the council prayed for Hart's recovery and the well-being of those around him.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 2 Lent, March 8

Gen. 12:1-4a; Ps. 121; Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

Stillness and Growth

Nothing is more important than holding fast to the unchangeable truth of Jesus Christ. In a sense, one must stand still and put down roots in the faith, the stories of Scripture and the treasures of Christian tradition. Something like a vow of stability is required of every Christian as a safeguard against the temptation to flit from one spiritual interest to another, one provisional commitment to the next, until all energy is exhausted and nothing is gained or learned or even sacrificed for a higher good. One must sit with the truth, stay where Christ is, and pray in the land of silence. This requires time and patience under the watchful eye of providential grace and guidance. It requires also a few dear and honest friends in the faith.

The longer one stays with Christ, the more the world of Christ opens up as a grand and incredible landscape: beautiful, inviting, strange, frightful, wondrous, infinite. This gift, this talent, once given, must be used and invested. Thus, even if one remains in contemplative stillness, one must move, go out, and explore. The more one sits, the more one must grow and develop and move.

The Lord spoke to Abram as he speaks now to the disciples of his Son, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:1-2). Jesus called his first disciples from their established lives and their homes, "As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea — for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people" (Mark 1:16-17). The calling of James and John seems even more dramatic, "They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him" (Mark 1:20).

Discipleship is felt in the tension between two legitimate and apparently contradictory ways of responding to the call of God. One is to remain stationary and rooted; the other is to move and grow. True discipleship, however, is the deep integration of Christian teaching, which is itself both unchanging and ever growing. Thus, a disciple must remain rooted while growing into the new humanity, a lifelong project of both ascetic effort and divine grace.

St. Vincent of Lerins is of great help in elucidating legitimate growth in dogma and discipleship: "Is there no progress in Christ's Church? Certainly, all possible progress. For who is there, so envious of humanity, so full of hatred toward God, that he would try to forbid it? Yet on condition that it be real progress, and not an alteration of the faith. For progress require that the subject be enlarged into itself, alteration, that it be transformed into something else" (*Communitorium* 23; my translation). Growth is necessary and inevitable if one is to be faithful to the deposit of faith and faithful no less to one's vocation as a disciple.

Why bother with this new life? Why not ignore Jesus as he issues his call? Why not leave well-enough alone? When Jesus calls, his words are water and Spirit and rushing wind. He opens the heavens to descend and opens them to ascend again, and he calls his beloved to be reborn as sons and daughters of God. His call is his grace; his grace is the irresistible summons of love, "My beloved speaks . . . 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away'" (Song 2:10).

Look It Up

Read Song of Solomon 3:3..

Think About It

You stay with and grow with the one you love.

Ex. 17:1-7; Ps. 95; Rom. 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

Thirst and Satisfaction

Freedom is always mixed with a measure of anguish, for freedom looks to a future that is open and unknown, holding both promise and portent. In the freedom given the children of Israel after their exodus from Egypt, there is the guiding presence of God in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Their future is directed, their path illumined. Their present state and immediate future are, nonetheless, touched by the austerities of the landscape they inhabit and the wrenching need it will not satisfy short of miraculous intervention. In a word, they are dying of thirst.

They complain against Moses in an act called by the psalmist, "hardening your hearts," and thus, we are called, by the psalmist again, not "to harden your hearts, as your forebears did in the wilderness" (Ps. 95). We are called, indeed, to an utter and total trust in God. Reciting the *Venite* before dawn in the comfort of a chapel or prayer cell or easy-chair may, by grace and good work, excite just such trust. The pain of dehydration and impending death is another matter altogether.

In the end, of course, God intercedes, telling Moses to stand in front of the Rock of Horeb. The Lord says, "Strike the rock, and the water will come out of it, so that the people may drink" (Ex. 17:6). This Old Testament story is, we must remember, also a story about Jesus. Having nothing else to call sacred Scripture, the earliest Christians used what providence placed in their hands. Thus, from the mind of St. Paul we have this interpretations: "I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:1-4). Their passage through the sea was a baptism; their food and drink a spiritual gift. The rock is said, rather strangely, to have followed them, but with the clarifying interpretation, "the rock was Christ."

In a sense, the whole story is suffused with Christ. Christ liberates and guides, gives food and drink, moves with and among his people. Meeting a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, Jesus said to her, "Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Is this a final and happy ending?

Again and again, Israel is tested. Again and again, Christians bear the wounds of Christ. Hunger and thirst become signs of one's deepest need, the need for God from moment to moment. "As the deer longs for the water-brooks, so longs my soul for you, O God" (Ps. 42:1). This is not merely a longing for refreshment; it is an anguished cry for life. When Jesus says, "I thirst," he speaks, no doubt of longing-love for the Father, but he feels as well his body gasping for breath and water. *In extremis*, he cries; and, in some sense, this cry, this longing, this thirsting, is a permanent part of Christian existence. Jesus is to us the satisfaction of this thirst and the cause of it. Receiving him who is the fullness of deity, we will never thirst again; receiving him who transcends all that we may feel and know, we desire yet more. We know Christ by seeking, desiring, and loving. We thirst.

Look It Up

Read Romans 5:5.

Think About It

The love of God poured into your heart is the water you need.

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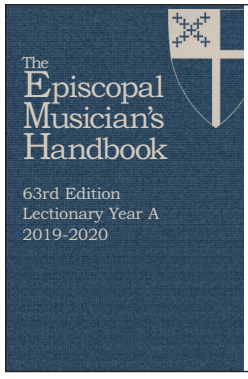

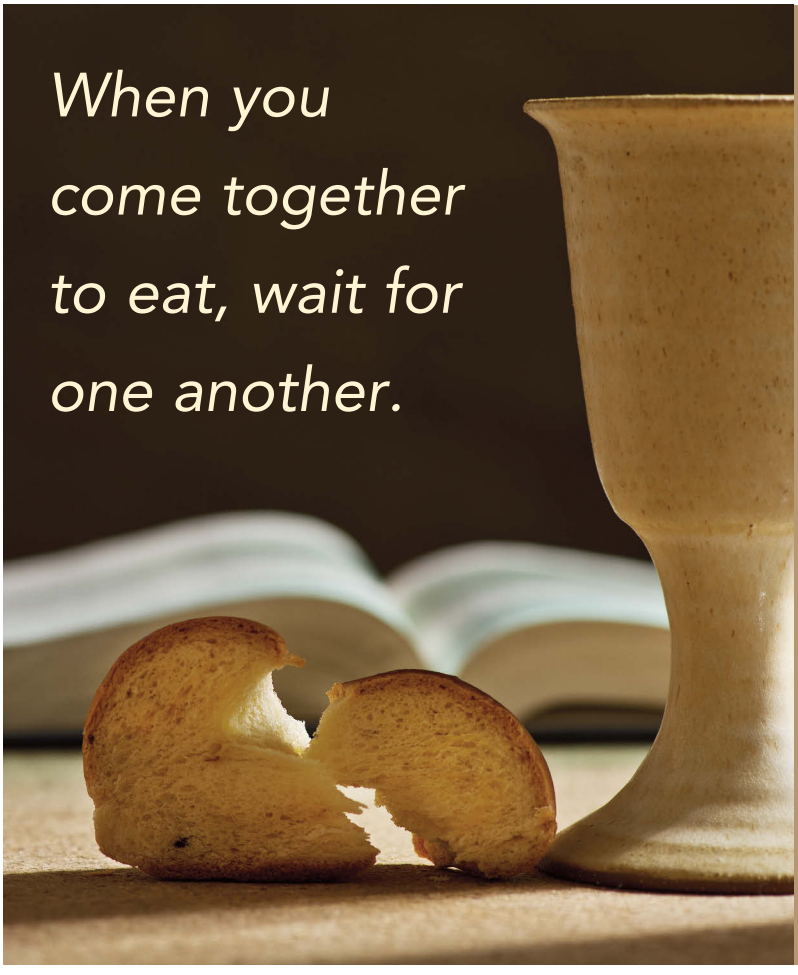

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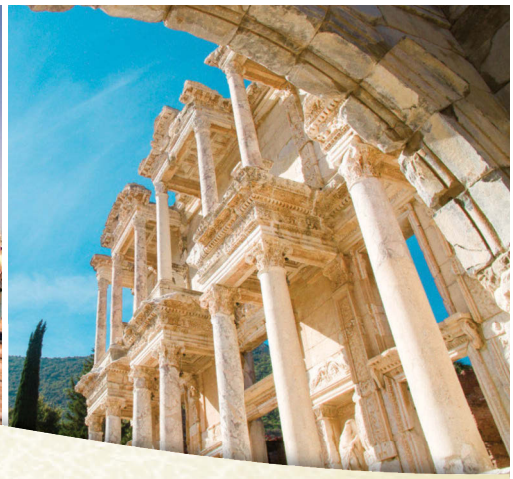

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