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July 12, 2020

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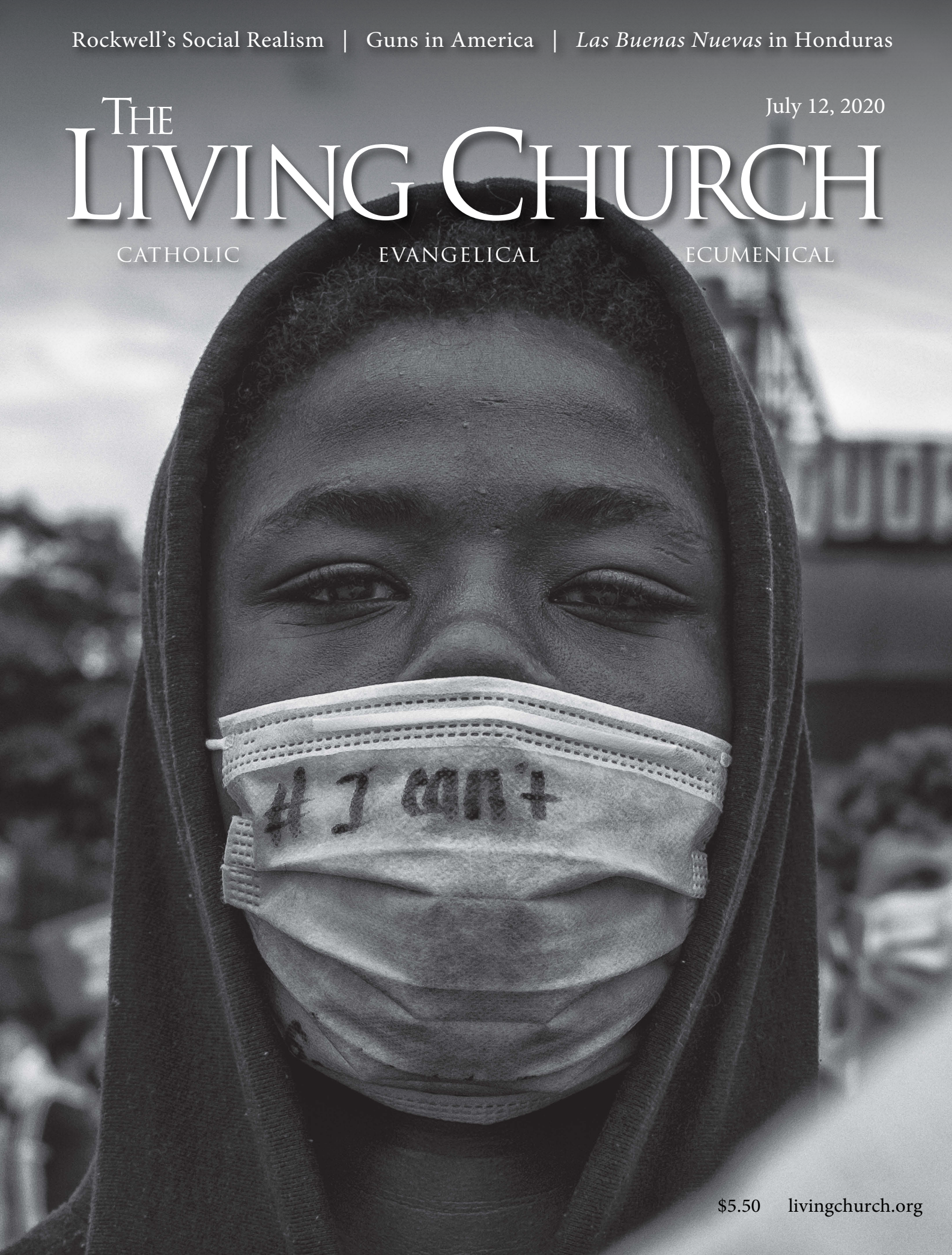

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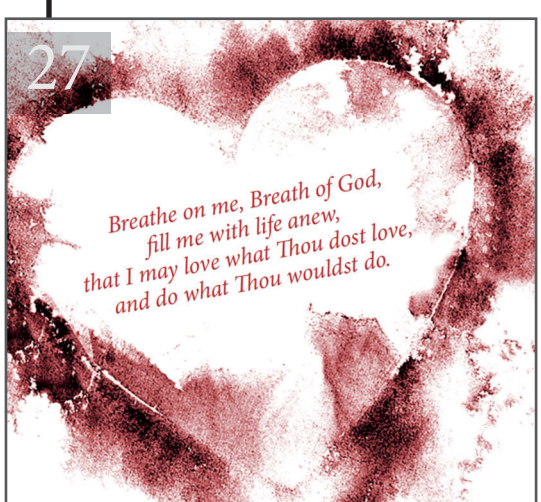
ON THE COVER

"I Can't Breathe," taken on the streets of Minneapolis on May 27 in front of Minneapolis' 3rd Police Precinct (see "Cry of the Wounded," p. 20).

Photo by Asher Imtiaz



The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | July 12, 2020

NEWS

FEATURES

ETHICS

CULTURES

EDITORIAL

BOOKS

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

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.

Photo courtesy of St. John's Church

A crowd of 1,000 gathered on June 3 for a racial-justice vigil on the grounds of St. John the Evangelist Church in Hingham, Massachusetts.

Space and Support for Protest Gatherings

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

News of George Floyd's death under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer had barely reached North Minneapolis when the community began to brace for what could happen next: vandalism, looting and shortages of essential goods in the neighborhood.

Unrest did erupt, but effects were mitigated with help from churches, including the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, which is headquartered in the neighborhood. By offering to put their infrastructure to use, faith communities helped residents of this largely African-American part of the city keep neighbors fed and properties protected as unrest and chaos churned.

What North Minneapolis urgently needed was a hub where community leaders could safely gather with social distancing, store heaps of donated food, operate a makeshift pantry and coordinate groups of armed volunteers to protect neighborhood businesses. With permission of then-Bishop of Minnesota Brian Prior, they created one at ECMN offices. The diocese's building occupies a former bank space where the lobby can accommodate up to 100 people.

"We were actually using the gathering space as kind of like a headquarters," said Shyvonne Johnson, an active member of the NAACP's Minneapolis chapter. "We had been threatened by white supremacists that they were going to come and shoot up the businesses, and we were just making our presence known."

As protest events engulfed big cities and small towns across America in the wake of Floyd's death, local conditions cried out for infrastructural support. With public spaces closed, large indoor gatherings prohibited and community resources damaged or destroyed, crowds demanding justice and worrying about safety had to navigate a host of unfamiliar restrictions. Just finding water, public restrooms, or first aid supplies could be difficult due to all the logistical hurdles.

Spotting needs for pragmatic help, faith communities have marshaled infrastructure that had been hibernating during the pandemic. From indoor sanctuaries to outdoor tents and sprawling grounds, church infrastructure came to play a key role in fueling public responses to Floyd's death, starting in late May and continuing throughout June.

"When this began, I met with the head of the Black churches and said: 'What would you like us to do? We'll follow you,'" said then-Bishop of Minnesota Brian Prior, who is now transitioning to Assisting Bishop in the Diocese of Olympia. "This is what they asked us to do: if you can be a part of a distribution place where people can bring things in and help us to take it out."

The role of faith-based infrastructure in the new push for racial justice has varied with local needs. In Minneapolis, it's been a lifeline to recovery from destructive unrest. In Washington, D.C., it's provided a springboard for sustaining thousands of protesters as they converge on the White House. And in Boston's suburban small towns, where demonstrations on this scale haven't been seen in decades, it's offering a relatively high-profile stage for a fresh call to action.

Nowhere has church infrastructure

been more urgently needed than in South Minneapolis where Floyd was killed on May 25. As stores burned and police in riot gear fired rubber bullets and tear gas into crowds, a makeshift first aid clinic sprang up at Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light. After encroaching fire threatened the MIPL site, the clinic moved to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

"It was quite a remarkable shift because we had been taking the COVID-19 restrictions seriously," said Holy Trinity Senior Pastor Ingrid Rasmussen. "We went from having no one in the building, apart from our regular custodians and maintenance staff, to flinging open the doors to whoever needed to come in."

Immediately the church sanctuary became a refuge for meeting all types of physical needs. Medics treated protesters for burns, rubber bullet wounds, and other injuries. Volunteers gave out clothing, food and water — none of which could be found elsewhere as the Lake Street neighborhood was going up in flames.

After 48 hours of providing first aid, Holy Trinity's infrastructure was needed for a new purpose: distribution of food and essential supplies. The neighborhood had become a food desert overnight, Rasmussen said. Indoor spaces that once accommodated groups were suddenly storing everything from diapers and menstrual pads to plywood. Trucks now arrive with donated food for three distributions per week. As many as 2,000 people line up to receive each time.

"There are no stores currently open around us," Rasmussen said. "The public library was severely damaged in the wake of George Floyd's murder. In my conversations with the city and the county about — 'are we the best place for all of this to happen?' — our conversation revolves around the fact that we are the only option for the community."

The church's infrastructure is all that's left because those who destroyed adjacent and nearby properties left the church untouched. That's likely not by accident, according to Johnson.

"People know that the churches are good to them," Johnson said. Churches "walk with people. They journey with people. A lot of people have a different relationship with churches than they have with shop owners that treat them like crap 365 days a year, and if they get an opportunity to burn your building down, they might."

In Washington, D.C., the infrastructure challenge had less to do with recovering from violent upheaval and more to do with handling all the demonstrators flooding into the capitol area. In response, the U.S. Secret Service closed Lafayette Park, where protesters routinely gather. That left many needing somewhere to meet, organize, rally, and pray. St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, was glad to assist with a portion of its infrastructure, even while keeping the building locked, with plywood over the windows.

"Opening the building was not an option for us" because of coronavirus, said St. John's Rector Robert W. Fisher. "But we have some steps and these old columns, and right in front of that is this place that's perfect just for people to gather. We decided it would be important to be present and to claim that space as a place for healing, witness, love, and solidarity."

On the patio, the Diocese of Washington organized a daily "ministry of presence" by joining fellow protesters for prayer and encouragement during the week of June 1. The effort didn't end after the controversial clearing of the square that allowed President Trump to pose for photos with a Bible in front of the church. St. John's went on to host a rally with the Rev. William Barber on June 14. It also served as terminus for a June 19 march in honor of Juneteenth, the day in 1865 when slaves in Texas learned they were free.

Five blocks away in Logan Square, Luther Place Memorial Church struck a chord days after Floyd's death when it experimentally set up a hospitality tent for protesters. Beneath a yard tent that the church keeps for street festivals, volunteers handed out water, snacks and basic first aid supplies.

"Frontline organizers communicated their appreciation for this support stationed a few blocks from the White House, especially as law

Photo courtesy of St. John's Church

Protesters outside St. John's, Lafayette Square

enforcement escalated violence," said Luther Place senior pastor Karen Brau in an email. "Based on these conversations, the church provided 16 consecutive nights of support (mostly outdoors), with over 50 volunteers signing up for shifts."

As word of the ministry spread, Luther Place became a nightly destination where anyone could get a mask and sanitizer, charge a cellphone or use a port-a-potty. The church's call on Twitter for more supplies got a retweet from Black Lives Matter, which led to what Brau calls "a massive outpouring of donations." Among the donated items were 12 wagons that now allow volunteers to fan out and equip protests blocks away with essential supplies.

Calls for police reform and dismantling of racism have rippled from big cities to small towns, including many unused to hosting large public demonstrations. To keep these events safe and enhance their visibility, churches in town centers have been offering to host.

Across the suburbs of Boston, for instance, thousands have turned out at small town vigils wearing masks on church grounds. The silent vigil has become a staple of small-town weekends in the region as church infrastructure, which had been underutilized in the pandemic, got redeployed

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for the racial justice cause.

On June 7 in Winchester, Massachusetts, about 400 converged on the Winchester Unitarian Society grounds on a hill near the town center. Participants holding signs in support of Black Lives Matter spread out across four street corners and a traffic island. For 90 minutes, they talked quietly and chanted occasionally. Near dusk, they fell silent for 8 minutes and 46 seconds to mark how long George Floyd bore the officer's knee on his neck until he died. During the silence, the majority took a knee and virtually no one moved. Area churches joined in ringing their bells. Familiar hymns — e.g., "The Old Rugged Cross" and "We Shall Overcome" — could be heard in chimes.

Winchester police chief Peter MacDonnell joined the vigil in plain clothes. Born in 1959 and having lived his whole life in Winchester, MacDonnell said the event was the largest demonstration he's ever seen in town. That it happened on church grounds, he said, meant it would have maximum visibility. He said he was heartened to see the large turnout in a prominent spot.

The officer who pinned Floyd "was sworn to protect the public — that's what his oath was — and he kneeled on that man's neck for eight minutes and killed him," MacDonnell said. "It's disgusting. That's why people are here."

In Hingham, Massachusetts, the Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist drew 1,000 to its grounds for a similar vigil on June 3, according to rector Tim Schenk. Police closed an adjacent street to accommodate the spillover crowd. After eight minutes and 46 seconds of silence for George Floyd, church infrastructure went to work in the form of bell-ringing.

"The vast majority of participants took a knee" during the silence, Fr. Schenk said in an email. "I've never heard so many people be so quiet for so long a period of time. The sense of prayer and reflection was palpable."

Twin Challenges for Minnesota's New Bishop

The Rt. Rev. Craig Loya has had an eventful transition from Dean of Trinity Cathedral in Omaha to Bishop of Minnesota. TLC*'s Kirk Petersen spoke with him in mid-June. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.*

Lauren Smythe photo

Newly consecrated Bishop of Minnesota Craig Loya

KP: Just to set the stage, when you were elected bishop on January 25, nobody in the United States had died yet from the coronavirus. Then on June 6, in a cathedral that was almost empty, you knelt down as a priest and stood up as a bishop. And that was 12 days after George Floyd was killed.

So, two times, you've had to come to terms with the fact that your new job is going to be very different from what you imagined. What has that been like for you, emotionally and spiritually?

CL: Moving and starting a new vocation always involves disruption, and that's been particularly true in these last six months. It has certainly been a challenging time to make a transition.

At the same time, we learn over and over in the Scriptures that the people of God often meet God's love and power most fully during periods of disruption, during periods in the wilderness, during periods of exile. As challenging as the transition has been, I have also been reassured of God's love and God's presence, and God's faithfulness to the Church. Even with all the grief and loss we're experiencing, we're being reminded that God is faithful to God's people, from one generation to the next.

None of us would choose the suffering that is being caused by COVID-19. Certainly, none of would choose the suffering that has been caused for many centuries by the Church's complicity in systemic racism. But given that this is where we are, I do think there's an invitation from the Holy Spirit in this moment for a deeper transformation, so that we become a more just, more faithful, and more vibrant witness to Jesus Christ on the other side of all of this.

Could you say more about the Church's complicity in systemic racism? What form has that taken?

I think early in the Church's history in this country, we oftentimes were complicit in the decimation of Indigenous cultures, with sort of a thin veneer of Gospel witness and evangelism layered over the top of that. Our own structures, our own leadership, our own makeup at different times has privileged people who are white over Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.

Last week, the Executive Council voted to give $150,000 each to your diocese and the Diocese of Kentucky, where Breonna Taylor was killed. Do you have a sense yet how you want to spend that money?

Not specifically, but we want to do a couple of things. The first is to continue to work with our community partners to provide relief and assistance where it's immediately needed.

Second, this has been a reminder to the Episcopal Church and to disciples of Jesus everywhere, that this is long work. We are called to repenting, accounting, and reconciling with our own history of being complicit in systemic racism. We hope to set up that work of racial justice and reconciliation for the long term.

One of the videos on your diocesan website said your predecessor, Bishop

[Brian] Prior, made strong efforts to be a bridge between the police and the Black community. Clearly you would want to continue that. Do you have any thoughts on what form that might take?
One of the things that excites me is that a few years ago, the diocesan offices were moved to North Minneapolis, which is a predominantly African-American neighborhood. I hope we can continue to join the Holy Spirit in bringing new life, and reconciliation, and justice in North Minneapolis. We have community groups that use our spaces. During the protests after the killing of George Floyd, our offices were used as a community center to provide food and other critical supplies to people in the neighborhood. I hope we can continue to follow the lead of our community partners in North Minneapolis, engaging in that work of reconciliation.

Are you working out of the diocesan offices now?
No, our offices are still closed because of COVID. Our staff members are working from home. I'm not able, other than by phone and virtually, to begin to connect with our community partners. Now that I'm the bishop, those are relationships I'm going to have to continue to build and cultivate and establish on my own. This is a challenging time to try to do that.

It also must be a problem connecting with the Episcopalians in the diocese.
I think that's true, although I've been able to establish much deeper connections in this virtual way than I would have imagined. That's one of the invitations from the Holy Spirit in this moment, that all of us in the Church are finding new ways of connecting, and we're finding both limitations and new opportunities.

For example, there was a day a couple of weeks ago where I was with a youth group in Rochester in the evening, and I was with another group in Duluth in the morning. It would be almost impossible to be with both of those groups in the same day. *[Duluth is 150 miles north of Minneapolis, while Rochester is 100 miles south.]* So, I've been able to connect with more people than I would have otherwise in my first couple of months.

You're in the same building with Sammy's Avenue Eatery, right?
Correct. That's an important gathering place for the community. Sammy is an important leader in North Minneapolis, and is connected to a lot of other leaders. He has been instrumental in helping us build friendships and partnerships in the neighborhood. He's an incredible person, an extraordinary leader, and we're *really* grateful for his friendship and partnership. The Episcopal Church in Minnesota is committed to that neighborhood for the long term. Sammy has helped communicate that to the neighborhood.

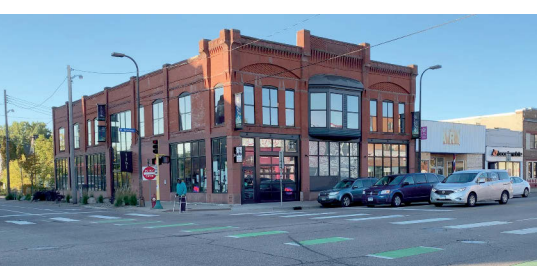
And you've got an easy way to get lunch every day.
[laughs] I can't wait until circumstances allow me to eat there, because I've heard such great things about his restaurant. I've been in the space and met some of the people, but I haven't sampled the food yet.

In one of the videos you said Revelation 22 is one of your favorite passages in Scripture, about the restoration of Eden. You're involved in a restoration project right now. Does that linkage evoke anything for you?
Absolutely it does. That vision of the restoration of Eden in Revelation 22 is an image we are called to bear witness to. It's God's initiative to restore the world to what God envisions. In every generation, in every context, in every season, God is always trying to restore God's vision of a beloved community of justice, and peace, and love, and life. It's our job as disciples to discern where God is doing that and to join up with that.

We've talked about the need to build bridges between police and the Black community. The day after George Floyd was killed, you posted something on your personal Facebook page about being "heartbroken and angry." That really came through when you wrote: "America in 2020 is the place where Black men are regularly murdered by police while they are handcuffed and begging for their lives."

Since building bridges between the Black community and the police is going to involve working with both sides, and recognizing that people on both sides are children of God, I'm wondering if that's still the way you would frame that thought, now that the initial passion has passed.
I would say the facts would suggest that we *do* regularly have Black men being killed by police when they are handcuffed and begging for their lives. At the same time, racism in the form of police brutality is a systemic problem more than a people problem. The vast majority of police that I know are really good people, trying to do good and critical work for our communities. The systemic challenge comes from the fact that this continues to happen over and over, that there doesn't tend to be a lot of accountability for when these things happen. The problem is in the system, and it's up to all of us to work to transform the system.

What makes you hopeful?
The thing that makes me most hopeful is the fact that God is faithful. The Scriptures, Church history, my own personal experience, communicates over and over that despite our limitations, despite our shortcomings, despite our failures, despite the constant uncertainty in the world, in every generation, God is faithful to God's promise. I'm so grateful to be called into this ministry in this moment when both the call of the Gospel is so clear, and the need of our witness to the Gospel is so urgent. It all comes back to the world's deep hunger for the good news of Jesus, and for our ability to follow the Holy Spirit's call in bearing witness to that.



Episcopal Church in Minnesota photo

Sammy's is on the first floor, the diocesan offices in Minneapolis are upstairs.

Soup, Service, and God's Love

Honduran Episcopalians Respond to the Pandemic

By Ignacio Gama and Kristen Gunn

Photo of Tegucigalpa by Nan Palmero, Flikr/Creative Commons

In a lockdown that has kept Hondurans at home since March, the clergy and pastoral leaders of the Episcopal Church of Honduras are finding new and creative ways to reach people with *las buenas nuevas*, the good news of God's saving love in Christ Jesus, which necessitates the care of bodies as well as souls. In some ways it has never been so difficult to practice incarnational, embodied religion. But in Honduras, where, according to World Bank statistics, just under half the population lives in poverty and many do not have internet access in their homes, the present crisis has created singular ministry challenges. The Episcopal Church of Honduras, which serves people in all sectors of Honduran society, is nevertheless doing everything it can to face these challenges with faith and hope. In a sense this pandemic is revealing what is best and unique about this particular diocese of Province IX.

Allen

"Once the lockdown is over we will have a huge amount of work to do," The Rt. Rev. Lloyd Allen, Bishop of Honduras, wrote to us some weeks ago via email. "We are holding Bible studies online, celebrating the Eucharist online — it is sort of awkward-feeling. … However, I'm already planning and have organized the clergy to be ready to begin food drives. There are a lot of people dying from the lack of food and proper healthcare."

In the weeks since he wrote us, at least one such feeding operation has already sprung up on the island of Roatán off Honduras's northern coast. The Revs. Nelson and Kara Mejía, a married pair of priests serving on the island, have worked together with one of their congregations to start a safe, socially-distanced soup kitchen that offers meals for pickup by the most vulnerable in their neighborhood. When we spoke with them via Zoom, the soup operation had just fed over a hundred people and they were hoping to raise enough money to grow it by 30 percent the next week. "We need to be able to keep doing this," Reverenda Kara told us, adding that a donation link would be made available via the website for Teach Them to Fish Micro-Industries, a partnership between their church in Roatán and Trinity Episcopal Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

The spirit of collaboration, solidarity and enthusiasm for the work of the Church has been growing nearer the center of the Honduran outbreak in San Pedro Sula as well, inspiring clergy such as the Rev. José Batiz to obtain safe-conduct permits to periodically check in on his parishioners, and to celebrate the Eucharist outdoors. "Father, when, when? When can we meet?" the people of his church, *San Lucas Evangelista*, have been asking. "We're a young church, but one with great spirit," Batiz said of the diocese in general, adding that these times had made more evident the great worth of "small, tightly-knit congregations, like those of the early Christians, where each member is valued and embraced."

Even as the diocese's many churches and its several bilingual schools have been forced to offer their ministries online, the turn to virtual means of communication and connection has brought hidden blessings. For some the experience of church has become more intimate and family-oriented, as relatives and friends gather privately to follow pre-recorded services via messaging platforms. The Rev. Jackie Ruíz of San Pedro Sula told us that the new format had helped her to rediscover the joy of praying the offices purely "for enjoyment" with her family. "We do it because we long to be in the presence of God," she said. Another priest in Tegucigalpa, the Rev. Gerardo Alonzo, shared that more people than ever had been watching Morning and Evening Prayer on WhatsApp, thanks to his parishioners' forwarding the services to others. "It's not a normal time, but it's God's time," he told us.

The Rev. Connie Sánchez, who oversees a diocesan NGO empowering rural women, said that smartphone technology had enabled the organization to keep offering instruction on finance and business planning, but that hunger was becoming a serious challenge for the women she serves, many of whom are single mothers fighting to keep families alive. Though the lockdown has prevented her from leaving Tegucigalpa to physically assist the hungry in rural areas, she has been able to refer callers to other clergy and churches nearer to them. "There is nothing more painful that to hear the words, 'Reverend, I am hungry,' but knowing that God is with us, we can face this epidemic," Sanchez said.

While much remains uncertain, the Honduran church looks positively towards the future, perhaps precisely because it has for many years wrestled with adversity on many fronts. The clergy have a vast array of responsibilities, especially in education and development. Though they may be more hard-pressed than ever, we consistently heard from them a message of hope. In the last decade, the diocese has been working hard to achieve financial self-sufficiency. Despite the present economic setbacks, it is remarkable that so many members of the clergy demonstrate a deep faith that God will provide, and that lay people are ready to take a more decisive role in a movement less concerned with the future of the Church, and more with being "the Church of the future."

Ignacio Gama and Kristen Gunn are students at Nashotah House Theological Seminary.

Hearing Ends With No Verdict Yet for Bishop Love

By Kirk Petersen

In the ecclesiastical trial of the Rt. Rev. William Love, the prosecution and defense agree about much more than they disagree.

Love, the Bishop of Albany, is the only domestic bishop who forbids clergy in his diocese to perform marriages of same-sex couples. He acknowledges that the intention of Resolution B012 of the 2018 General Convention was to allow such marriages in every diocese. He acknowledges that after the convention, he issued a "pastoral directive" to his clergy prohibiting such marriages in the Diocese of Albany.

That's the short version of the material facts that have been stipulated by both sides. (The long version runs to dozens of pages of legal briefs.) So instead of seeking to determine who did what and when, a Hearing Panel of three bishops, a priest and a lay person spent three and a half hours on June 12 listening to online arguments about whether Love's actions violate the "doctrine, discipline, and worship" of the Episcopal Church.

Love's career is at stake. The Hearing Panel has the power (subject to conditions and appeals) to "depose" Love – to take away not just his miter and crozier, but his clerical collar as well. The panel also has broad authority to impose lesser sanctions on Love, or to acquit him.

The June 12 hearing was part of "a Title IV proceeding," referring to Title IV of the Canons of the Episcopal Church, on "Ecclesiastical Discipline." It resembled a secular court trial, except it was conducted online and began with a series of prayers for guidance.

The purpose of the hearing was to determine whether to accept either party's "motion for summary judgment" – a term that does not appear in Title IV. The Hearing Panel has broad authority to determine its own procedures, and all parties agreed that a set of facts would be stipulated, and no witnesses would be called.

Despite the agreement to forego witnesses, Love did end up essentially testifying briefly on his own behalf.

Love's counsel, the Rev. Chip Strickland, who also serves as chancellor of the diocese, was asked if Love had taken "any pastoral action to address the pain" of same-sex couples in his diocese who could not be married in their own church. Strickland noted that the issue was not included in the stipulation, and asked if Love could answer on his own behalf. After a brief discussion, Love was invited to turn on his microphone.

He spoke for about four minutes, saying that he loves and respects everyone in the diocese, even those who disagree with him. "I have consistently, throughout this long ordeal, met with same-sex couples, same-sex individuals, and spoken to them personally," he said, and has tried to make it clear "that the issue at hand was not their sexual orientation, the issue at hand was a particular behavior. In particular, where is it appropriate for sexual intimacy to be exercised?" He added, "that has been reserved by God to be carried out within the confines of marriage between a man and a woman."

The hearing ended without any announcement about a verdict. Bishop W. Nicholas Knisley, the president of the panel, said "we will begin our deliberations this afternoon, and we may be in further communications with you all." The Hearing Panel itself determines how long the deliberations last.

Trinity Wall Street Grants Millions for Racial Justice

Trinity Church Wall Street is on a philanthropy spree.

On June 23 the church announced nearly $7 million in grants to 57 organizations dedicated to ending systemic racism in New York City. Of the grants, $500,000 are specifically designated for re-entry support programs for the Rikers Island jail complex.

The church normally announces two grant cycles each year, and the

(Continued on next page)

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$6.86 million in total grants represents the largest grant cycle ever. It comes on top of nearly $5 million in off-cycle and in-cycle grants and loans this year:

- $2 million in loans to sustain New York-area non-profits, and $425,000 in emergency grants to 17 organizations, announced earlier this spring;
- $1.5 million in grants to international organizations, including $500,000 announced earlier in June and a $1 million grant, not previously announced, to Episcopal Relief & Development.
- $956,000 in grants, also not previously announced, "to support financial capacity building in churches in Africa and South America."

Neill Coleman, the chief philanthropy officer at Trinity, told *TLC* the nearly $12 million announced this year already exceeds the church's previous annual record for giving of just under $10 million, which occurred in 2019. "It reflects both the urgency and the need of responding to COVID, and also the reality that money has been freed up from other areas because of things that we're not doing due to COVID," he said.

"The fall cycle will be smaller," he said, although the church does intend to make additional grants in the fall of 2020.

The church earmarked $1 million for Episcopal Relief & Development's COVID relief efforts because "we were looking to give a significant amount of funding to a partner that had global reach and expertise in disaster response," Coleman said, adding that the grant will be formally announced soon. Episcopal Relief & Development spokespersons could not be reached for comment.

Kirk Petersen

Retired English Bishop Steps Down in Racism Inquiry

The Rt. Rev. Mike Hill, the former Bishop of Bristol, has withdrawn from public ministry while a charge of racism is being investigated by the Church of England's Disciplinary Measures tribunal, according to a recent report in *The Church Times*. The charge centers on Hill's 2016 handling of the employment of the Rev. Alwyn Pereira, a priest of South Asian ethnicity he ordained in 2011.

After serving his initial curacy after ordination, Pereira, who was born in Kenya of Indo-Portuguese parents but educated in Britain, struggled to find a second church leadership position. Despite applying for multiple posts, Pereira remained unemployed for three years. Bishop Hill, who retired in 2017, attempted to intervene with other diocesan clergy on Pereira's behalf. But comments by Hill preserved in personnel files include racial stereotyping and disparaging remarks about cultural differences.

On July 5, 2016, Bishop Hill wrote to a senior priest in the Diocese of Bristol asking him to supervise Rev. Pereira "to give him one last chance of being rehabilitated into the Church of England." While admitting that he liked Pereira, Hill also wrote, "I think the only other thing I need to say, having worked very closely with people from the Indian sub-continent in my past, is that I think there are cultural differences in the way people like Alwyn communicate, and actually handle issues of truth and clarity."

Two years earlier, when Pereira had been unable to secure a permanent position in the diocese, Hill had also written an email to the diocesan staff team expressing concern. He wrote that the Rt. Rev. Lee Rayfield, Bishop of Swindon (a suffragan in Bristol diocese) had told him that Pereira's "application was culturally eccentric, but this is slightly dangerous as of course Alwyn is a minority ethnic Anglican (whose cause, according to the National Church, we should be promoting). Cultural from our point of view might well be interpreted as racist by others. . . I judge this to be a difficult and potentially harmful situation for us."

In November 2015, Hill attempted to broker an placement for Pereira in a different parish. Minutes of the meeting read, "the congregation said they did not want an African priest as they would be lazy. [Bishop Mike Hill] and staff spoke to them about racism. [Bishop Hill] does not think that people who meet [Alwyn Pereira] would know that he has a minority ethnic background."

Pereira obtained copies of the communications written by Hill when he asked to see his file, and then complained of racial discrimination to the Diocese of Bristol's HR department in October 2017. As instructed, he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in March 2018. No formal action was taken on his report until November 2019, when Pereira attempted legal action.

A tribunal ruled in May that the allowable time for Pereira to make his racial discrimination complaint had expired. Pereira says he plans to appeal the tribunal's ruling.

Hill himself issued a statement in response to the tribunal's ruling, acknowledging that he used "racial stereotypes which were unacceptable and offensive. . . I deeply regret the incident and I wholeheartedly apologize."

Mark Michael

Council: Funds for MN, KY; Budget Trauma

Despite financial storm clouds on the horizon, the Executive Council has made grants of $150,000 each — large grants by council standards — to the Dioceses of Minnesota and Kentucky, "in response to the recent racist killings by officers of the law in their dioceses."

The two dioceses "are doing the work of racial justice as we speak," said council member Julia Ayala Harris of Oklahoma, who introduced the proposal. She said the idea was born out of the insistence of several council members that the council needs "to go beyond making statements and into bold action."

The action came at the conclusion of the council's four-day meeting, which had been scheduled for San Juan, Puerto Rico, but was held online. The 40-member Executive Council is the governing body of the Episcopal Church between the triennial General Conventions, and normally meets three times annually.

The council also passed a variety of resolutions related to racial justice,

including calling for federal review of all deaths in police custody, to help identify patterns and practices of discrimination by state or local law enforcement.

Memories of budget trauma

The other major focus of the meeting was the budget. The Church is financially strong and has not yet seen a substantial drop-off in income, but nobody doubts that harder times are coming.

The institutional memory of the last major downturn loomed over the financial deliberations. The 2009 General Convention passed a drastically reduced budget that eliminated between 30 and 40 positions from what was then a 180-member staff.

Entire departments and programs were eliminated, and the trauma was compounded by a perception by some that the cuts had been made without due consideration of the livelihoods involved. The House of Deputies approved the budget by voice vote after three hours of debate. The bishops then ratified the budget without debate.

"I remember what went on the last time," said council member Diane Pollard of New York. "I was there. I saw it. I sat with people who cried all night."

The church is determined this time to make any necessary cuts only after methodical, transparent deliberations. Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry said in his opening remarks June 8 that "depending on the length and duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic upheaval, there may be reductions required in staffing. That is not our hope, but we must prepare and be honest that it's a possibility."

Kirk Petersen

TEC Loses in Latest South Carolina Property Decision

The confusing saga of church property litigation in South Carolina grew even more confusing on June 19, as a state circuit court appears to have reversed what was thought to be the decision of the South Carolina Supreme Court, to which the circuit court is subservient.

Circuit Court Judge Edgar Dickson ruled almost entirely in favor of the parishes now affiliated with the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), declaring that the parishes that voted to leave the Episcopal Church (TEC) in 2012 are the lawful owners of the buildings in which they worship.

In August 2017, the South Carolina Supreme Court issued five conflicting and overlapping decisions that collectively appeared to award ownership to the TEC-affiliated Diocese of South Carolina. That's the way the decision was reported in *TLC*, as well as in the secular press. For example, the August 2 headline in *The Post and Courier* read: "State Supreme Court rules The Episcopal Church can reclaim 29 properties from breakaway parishes."

The South Carolina Supreme Court decision was sent back to the circuit court for enforcement, and the parties have spent the past three years arguing motions to reverse or enforce that ruling. The United States Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal from the ACNA parishes.

Dickson's 47-page ruling says the law "requires this Court to confront and determine the intent of the Supreme Court in the Collective Opinions. Any ambiguity must be resolved by this Court." There was no shortage

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of ambiguity, as different parts of the case were decided — or appeared to have been decided — by different 3-2 majorities on the five-member Supreme Court.

He ruled that he was required to apply "neutral principles of law" (rather than deference to ecclesiastical authority) in assigning ownership, and said the ACNA parishes had never accepted the so-called Dennis Canon, which in 1979 established that Episcopal church buildings are held in trust by the diocese of which the church is a part.

"The Dennis Canon can have no effect until acceded to in writing by the individual parishes under South Carolina law," Dickson wrote. "This Court finds that the Plaintiffs [the parishes] merely promised allegiance to TEC and without more, this promise cannot deprive them of their ownership rights in their property."

A post on the website of the TEC Diocese of South Carolina says that Dickson, whose mandate was "to enforce the final judgment of the SCSC which ruled in August 2017 that the diocesan property and 29 parishes should be returned to the parties affiliated with The Episcopal Church, issued an Order earlier today that seems to be contrary to that decision."

"This is not a final decision; it is yet another step on a long journey to full reconciliation within our Diocese," said Diocesan Chancellor Thomas S. Tisdale, Jr.

"We give thanks for this ruling," said the Rt. Rev. Mark J. Lawrence, bishop of the ACNA-affiliated Anglican Diocese of South Carolina, in a website posting. "It is a day to rejoice. It is a day to move forward in Christ's mission to the world. Thanks be to God."

In one bit of solace for the Episcopalians, Dickson agreed that the federal courts have jurisdiction over the question of which entity is allowed to call itself the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina. In September 2019, a federal judge ruled that the trademark name belongs to TEC.

Kirk Petersen

Bishop Roundup

Four new bishops were consecrated at small socially-distanced services in late May and early June, and there was news of other bishops and bishop transitions.

Georgia

The Rev. Canon Frank Logue, who had been the Diocese of Georgia's longstanding canon to the ordinary, was consecrated as the XI Bishop of Georgia at Christ Church in Savannah on Saturday, May 30. The Rt. Rev. Scott Benhase, Logue's longtime boss, served as chief consecrator. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry previously announced a plan to delegate his normal role as chief consecrator in a series of services that had been previously scheduled during the COVID-19 crisis.

The next day, May 31, Logue responded to the invitation of Savannah's mayor, Van Johnson, and joined with dozens of clergy from across the city in a peaceful protest for racial justice, six days after the death of George Floyd. "Our faith in Jesus compels us to stand against evil, even as we seek to root out this evil implanted within us," Logue said at the protest. "Until everyone has justice, none of us can truly be free."

Oklahoma

The Diocese of Oklahoma's new bishop coadjutor, the Rt. Rev. Poulson Reed, was also consecrated on May 30 at a small live-streamed service broadcast from St. Paul's Cathedral in Oklahoma City. The Rt. Rev. Larry Benfield of Arkansas served as chief consecrator for the service. The service had been postponed from April 18, when a ceremony accommodating up to 4,000 congregants had been planned for a venue at Oklahoma City University.

Reed, who turned 50 a few days after the service, had served as the rector of All Saints Church, a large parish in Phoenix, since 2009. The Virginia native had served at Saint John's Cathedral in Denver previously.

He recently told *The Oklahoman* that he was especially looking forward to working alongside the Rt. Rev. Ed Konieczny, the V Bishop of Oklahoma, in the coming months. "My first most important mission at the moment is to listen and to learn," he said, "leaving room for the Holy Spirit to inspire us," Konieczny previously announced his intention to retire at the end of this year, when Reed will succeed him, becoming the VI Bishop of Oklahoma.

Minnesota

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota's new bishop, the Rt. Rev. Craig Loya (see p. 6), was consecrated on June 6 at Minneapolis' Saint Mark's Cathedral, against the backdrop of 12 days of intense protests in response to George Floyd's violent death at the hands of a city policeman.

The Rt. Rev. Brian Pryor, the IX Bishop of Minnesota, served as chief consecrator for the small but reverent service, which included the passing of the ornate, hand-carved crozier made for the diocese's first bishop, the Rt. Rev. Benjamin Whipple, who served from 1859-1901.

Loya had previously served as dean of Trinity Cathedral in Omaha, Nebraska, for seven years, and the canon to the ordinary in the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas from 2009-2013.

Missouri

Deon Johnson was consecrated the XI Bishop of Missouri on June 13, becoming the first Black and openly gay bishop in the 179-year history of the Diocese of Missouri.

The Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith, the X Bishop of Missouri, served as the chief consecrator. Attendance was limited to the bishop's immediate family and to people with a role in the service.

Johnson was born in Barbados, came to the United States at the age of 14, and was ordained as a priest in 2003. Since 2006 he had been rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brighton, Michigan.

Wyoming

The Rev. Mary Erickson, associate rector of St. John's Church in Jackson, Wyoming has been nominated as a petition candidate in the election for the X Bishop of Wyoming, according to a June 9 announcement. A priest for 10 years, Erickson has also served as the executive director of two community non-profits in Jackson.

Erickson joins two previously announced candidates on the Wyoming slate, the Rev. David Duprey and the Rev. Canon Paul-Gordon Chandler. The convention to elect a new bishop is scheduled for September 19.

Upper South Carolina

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Waldo, the VIII Bishop of Upper South Carolina, announced on June 6 that he will retire at the end of 2021, and called for the election of a successor. Waldo was consecrated in 2010. The diocese of 60 parishes will soon begin the discernment process that will eventually lead to the election of a new bishop, currently scheduled for September 25, 2020.

Springfield

The Diocese of Springfield's Standing Committee is in mediation with Bishop Daniel Martins to settle a disagreement over the bishop's retirement, with Martins planning to retire in June 2021 and the Standing Committee insisting he step down sooner, the Episcopal News Service reported.

In documents obtained by ENS, the Standing Committee has informed Martins it is unhappy with its previously approved arrangement allowing the bishop to reside in Chicago and commute to the diocese, which encompasses the largely rural southern half of Illinois. Chicago is nearly 100 miles outside the diocese.

In a May video message to the diocese, Martins explained that his wife of 48 years, Brenda, has Alzheimer's disease. By living in a Chicago apartment building where two of his adult children also live, Brenda can have the comfort of family members nearby, even as the bishop spends long weekends in the diocese, sleeping at the diocesan offices.

(Martins is secretary of the board of directors of The Living Church Foundation, Inc., which publishes TLC.*)*

Eastern & Western Michigan

The bishop of the combined dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan has been suspended from his duties for at least a year after admitting to an extramarital affair.

The Rt. Rev. Whayne M. Hougland, Jr., agreed to the suspension in an accord with Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry. In a letter to the dioceses, the joint standing committees of the dioceses announced that Hougland had "disclosed that he had made 'serious mistakes' and admitted his participation in an extramarital affair. The other person involved is not Episcopalian and is not a member of the staff of either diocese. No state or federal laws have been broken."

Hougland was consecrated as the IX Bishop of Western Michigan in September 2013. In October 2019 he was elected to the additional role of provisional bishop in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. The two dioceses are in a period of discernment regarding their future structure.

In his own letter to the dioceses, Hougland wrote: "I have not honored my ordination vows or my wedding vows, nor have I honored the faith and trust you set in me. I have much personal work to do to be healthier and rebuild my relationships."

Quick Takes

The 2021 General Convention in Baltimore is in jeopardy because of the pandemic. "We have concluded with regret that we must plan as if our traditional 10-day gathering of 10,000 people or more will not be possible in 2021," said Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry and President of the House of Deputies Gay Clark Jennings.

General Convention is the governing body of the Episcopal Church,

(Continued on page 34)

Cash-Strapped Camps & Conference Centers Get Creative

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Honey Creek has always been an easy sell. As the coastal retreat center for the Diocese of Georgia, "The Creek" normally has steady bookings for summer camps, parish retreats and family reunions on its 100 acres of maritime forest.

But 2020 has been anything but normal. With no group visits since March 15 and summer camp programs canceled for the first time in more than 90 years, Honey Creek has been unable to find uses for its 40 lodge rooms and 100 dormitory beds. Even plans to supply emergency lodging through a state government partnership haven't panned out. No one who's tested positive for COVID has needed to quarantine at Honey Creek, which means no compensation beyond a $1,000 deposit from the State of Georgia to keep space open for that purpose.

Now funds are running low. A $35,000 cash reserve on hand in March is almost depleted, said Executive Director Dade Brantley. He has only enough left to sustain operations through the first week of July, he said. He's hopeful new donations will come in, but meanwhile he's had to let contractors go and is doing plumbing repairs himself.

"We could just have to lock up the doors" temporarily, Brantley said. "The diocese is able to help some, and they are helping to whatever level they can. We have hopeful plans for hosting groups starting August 1, honestly. So if we can keep our heads above water until August 1, we will slowly recover."

Honey Creek's struggle — to pursue a hospitality mission and manage costs without revenue in a pandemic — rings all too familiar among the approximately 90 members of Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers. Many are hard-pressed not only to find funds to pay bills but also to tell their support bases how they're making a difference during the COVID-19 crisis.

"One of the significant challenges of being a camp or conference center right now … is that they are not folks' top priorities," said ECCC spokesperson Ashley Graham-Wilcox in an email. "This brings programmatic and fundraising challenges, in addition to the health and economic challenges underlying everything right now."

ECCC is now gearing up for a new fundraising push on behalf of cash-strapped members. July 6 marks the start of "Camp Week," a time when donors will be urged to help build up emergency operation funds at camps and conference centers that are burning through reserves.

Some have already scaled back future plans. Starting July 5, Camp Mitchell in Morrilton, Arkansas is suspending operations indefinitely, according to a camp statement. A "Save Camp Mitchell" Facebook group formed in May had drawn 888 members by mid-June. In Newbury, Massachusetts, Adelynrood Retreat and Conference Center will not open this year.

Roslyn Retreat and Conference Center in Henrico, Virginia, has canceled all remaining bookings and paused operations until 2021. With no revenue, Roslyn plans to draw on its endowment to keep staffers financially whole, including benefits, and maintain facilities. Staffers are also receiving income through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program.

"Roslyn is also in a position to be able to plan for the future, the shape and contours of which are unknown but which may look different from the past," the center's memorial trustees said in an April 27 letter.

Surveys suggest most people who use camps and conference centers have put their plans on hold. A May survey of 794 retreat users at 15 Episcopal ministry centers found that only 29 percent of "committed regulars" were likely or very likely to attend a retreat or conference this summer. That contrasts with 48 percent who said they'd likely attend one next fall, according to Sacred Playgrounds, the Christian camp consulting firm that conducted the survey.

Meanwhile camps are taking steps to modify this year's programs substantially. For example, as of June 9, at least 81 of the 119 sites affiliated with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries had decided not to open for traditional camp.

Some camps, however, are trying to stay connected with kids even though they can't gather them on site. The Episcopal Church in Minnesota will run a new virtual Camp Agape that brings campers together with their cabinmates from last year twice a week via Zoom videoconference. On other days, they're encouraged to do fun faith-themed activities with family and friends, wear their camp t-shirts while doing good deeds in their neighborhoods, and record a short video testimony to share. In the works are plans for occasional, socially distanced meetups, such as cleaning up a park together or a day paddling canoes.

"We don't want to recreate camp in a box, but we do want to provide something that's spiritually formative for these kids this summer," said Sarah Barnett, ECMN missioner for children, youth, camp, and young adults. "Our first move was to have every young person texted or called by an adult and by a youth peer minister [to foster] individual, caring connections. We're also leaning into helping them develop their sense of personal spirituality and practices."

Other facilities are exploring where a COVID-related ministry might lead. The Diocese of Central Florida's Canterbury Retreat & Conference Center in Oviedo has a history of sheltering evacuees when hurricanes pound the Florida coast. Building on that tradition, Canterbury this spring provided emergency lodging for a handful of individuals displaced by COVID-19, including a local family that couldn't make rent after a job loss.

Canterbury provided quarantine quarters for an Episcopal priest and an emergency medical technician who'd tested positive for COVID-19 but couldn't return home lest they jeopardize the health of family members, according to Canterbury's executive director Chalmers Morse. That ministry now seems to be winding down. Housing the COVID-infected is doable only when Canterbury is otherwise vacant, Morse said. The center was scheduled to begin hosting small groups again in the week of June 22.

"It will be very small as we're practicing social distancing," Morse said. "Instead of taking 200 people, we'll probably take 40 people."

Those that haven't had any takers for their emergency lodging offers are nonetheless forging new partnerships that they hope will bear fruit from this pandemic period. The Claggett Center in Adamstown, Maryland, contracted with Frederick County to provide systems at the ready, from meals to housekeeping, if individuals need a place to quarantine. Guests could potentially include health care workers, first responders or inmates, should county jails be deemed overcrowded at any point and pose a risk for coronavirus spread.

On a month-to-month basis, Frederick County pays Claggett a day fee to keep the property available for exclusive use. That means the property is closed to the general public for now; even neighbors can't walk the trails as they're accustomed to doing. The contract covers about 20 percent of Claggett's operating costs, according to co-executive director Lisa Marie Ryder.

As of mid-June, Claggett had had no takers for its quarantine services, but the contract nonetheless is helping pay bills until the center re-opens for hosting groups. What's more, the new partnership means Claggett might have a major new client when the county has training events or lodging needs in the future.

"It's building a completely new relationship," Ryder said. "It wasn't founded on an existing trust with one another. That's been a really beautiful part of this process."

At the Claggett Center, a housekeeper (left) cleans a booth used for safe interaction with patients recovering from COVID-19, and a worker (right) prepare lunches using a process designed for an on-site quarantine shelter. Claggett Center photos

Guns and the American Story

By Deonna D. Neal

At the scene of Jesus' betrayal, Judas arrived with a large crowd of men, armed with swords and clubs. When the men stepped forward to arrest Jesus, one of Jesus' companions pulled out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Instead of being grateful, Jesus rebuked him and said, "Put your sword back in place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

Transpose that scene into 21st century America. Imagine yourself as Jesus' companion and you are armed with a 9mm pistol instead of a sword. (The armed men ready to arrest Jesus all have handguns, too, of course.) Do you shoot the high priest's servant? How does this scene play out?

The theologian Stanley Hauerwas has worked to help us understand that as Christians we are a "story-formed community." He says that "the primary social task of the church is to be itself — that is, a people who have been formed by a story that provides them with the skills for negotiating the danger of this existence, trusting in God's promise of redemption" (*Community of Character*). The narrative of the cross and resurrection tells us who we are, who God is, and how we should live. The story gives us our identity. It is the foundation of discipleship.

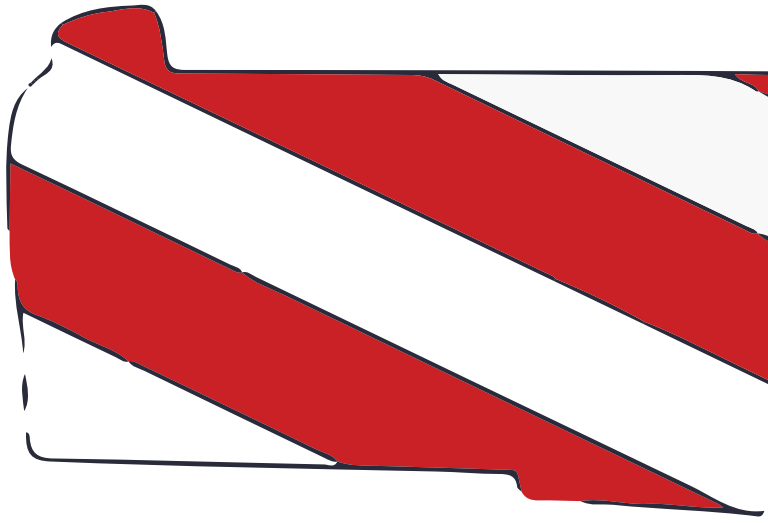
But as Christians who live in the United States, we are not only formed by the story of the gospel, but we are also formed by the story of our country. Unfortunately, the American narrative seems to be playing an outsized role in shaping our personal attitudes about guns. Loving our enemies, turning the other cheek, meeting violence with non-violence, accepting suffering, putting our lives at risk for the sake of our faith – such principles often appear naïve and idealistic in the face of the world's harsh realities. People unwilling to own or use a gun for defense of are often judged as not only being irresponsible, but also even cowardly.

So, what is that American narrative that we tell ourselves about guns?

As a young boys and girls we learned about the courage of the militiamen in the American Revolution, who supplied their own arms and ammunition. The courage and tenacity of those brave, first citizen-soldiers lead to the drafting of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights soon afterwards. If a political revolution had just been fought by men and women fleeing from an oppressive government, who brought their own weapons to the fight, it makes sense to grant citizens the right to bear arms.

The "Western Frontier lifestyle" is also an indelible part of the American narrative. Families moving West needed guns not only to hunt, but also for self-protection against "outlaws" and "Indians." Indeed, the "Western" even became its own movie genre that had lasting effects. Dirty Harry's "Make my day!" quote was claimed for self-defense laws that allow for *preemptive* use of deadly force against home invaders (aka "castle laws"). Gangster movies depicting organized crime of the 1920s and 1930s were perfected in the iconic Godfather trilogy.

What did we learn from our movies? With gangsters on the loose, who would fault business owners for wanting weapons within reach? The police can't be everywhere, or they'll be too late getting there. Folks had better arm themselves just



in case. Concealed-carry can give you a valuable surprise advantage. But, then, open carry might be a good deterrent. If the "good guys" aren't armed, then the "bad guys" will win.

Our narrative also tells us that most gun violence is *gang* violence (that's a whole narrative in itself), so it really isn't so big a problem for those of us not affected by gangs. Also, some argue, people who commit suicide with a gun would have used another method if they didn't have one. Domestic violence would happen with other weapons, too.. Our narrative tells us that mass public shootings are really issues of mental illness and not guns. And, yes, sometimes children will get killed while going to school. It's a tragic price we'll just have to pay for our liberties.

In very broad-brush strokes, those are some of the key chapters in the long American narrative about guns. This is why we should not be surprised that a 2018 Small Arms Survey (smallarmssurvey.org) reports that US civilians alone account for 393 million (about 46%) of the *worldwide* total of firearms. This amounts to 120.5 firearms for every 100 residents. That is 10x more than the small arms controlled by the Russian Army, which controls the most (30.3 million) of any military. Should anyone then be surprised when gun stores are declared essential businesses during a shut down? Or that people open carry firearms at public protests, espe-

cially when they are protesting what they believe are oppressive government rules?

Guns have captured the American imagination and have been part of our DNA since the founding of our country. But if, as Hauerwas tells us, "the primary social task of the church is to be itself — that is, a people who have been formed by a story that provides them with the skills for negotiating the danger of this existence, trusting in God's promise of redemption" then how, as a church, can we be ourselves better?

Adobe Stock photo

How does the Christian story provide us with the tools we need to stem the tide of gun violence in America?

The first century Christians faced ridicule, persecution, and torture in the Roman arena simply for professing their faith in Christ. The Christian story formed them in ways that are hard for us to imagine. What percentage of the 393 million small arms are owned by the 240 million Christians in the U.S? What if just all the Christians who owned *small arms* gave them up as an act of faithful witness? Gun violence would decrease. It would require no change in any laws. So, what are we afraid of? Dying? Or are we afraid of appearing too naïve and idealistic? Which story will continue to shape us? The American story, which tells us if we give up our guns the bad guys will win? Or the story of the gospel, which tells us that the bad guys won't win, and the "Good Guy" has already won?

The Rev. Dr. Deonna D. Neal is priest associate at St. John's Episcopal Church in Montgomery, Alabama, and works full-time as a professor of leadership and ethics at Air University (USAF), at Maxwell Air Force Base.

Murder in Mississippi
Norman Rockwell's Social Realism

By Dennis Raverty

Norman Rockwell is easily the most beloved and well-known American illustrator of the 20th century. Celebrated for his charming anecdotal covers for *Saturday Evening Post* and other periodicals from the 1920s through the 1970s, it is no exaggeration to say that he defined key socially-shared, popular "icons" of each of these decades. His technique and wit are well known. But he had a darker, more serious mode that emerged late in his career.

By the early 1960s, Rockwell was tired of the conservative outlook of the *Saturday Evening Post*, which had endorsed Republican Richard Nixon over John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential election. As a recent biography by Deborah Solomon puts it:

> He [Rockwell] was well aware that no magazine was eager to commission paintings of Santa Claus or solicitous policemen at a time when a new generation was turning on the radio and hearing Bob Dylan admonish in a vaguely pissed-off voice that the times they are a-changing.

And so Rockwell became a sort of latter-day social realist (a popular style for the socially-engaged artists of the 1930s and 1940s). This consciously politicized attitude and mindset was the one he embraced near the end of his long career. Social realism was his passionate and brilliant swansong.

Rockwell's most impressive work in this social realist vein was painted for *Look* magazine in 1965, to accompany an article entitled "Southern Justice," which dealt with the brutal murder of three young civil rights workers the year before in the small town of Philadelphia, Mississippi.

The victims had been college students volunteering during a summer campaign in Mississippi to encourage Black residents to register to vote. At that time, less than 10 percent of eligible Blacks in Mississippi were registered, and now with the signing into law of the Civil Rights Act, striking down long-standing state "Jim Crow" laws prohibiting African Americans from voting, Black voters for the first time had federal laws protecting these rights, which superseded and nullified previous state voting laws.

No longer having any legal means to prevent Blacks from voting, local white racists now turned to an organized program of terror and intimidation to discourage African Americans exercising their new voting rights. To achieve these ends, the local sheriff's office was clandestinely working closely with the Ku Klux Klan, who burnt the church hosting the summer voting rights campaign to the ground, an act intended to terrorize the liberal student activists that had descended on the town (a local newspaper described it as an "invasion" of unwelcome outsiders).

Rockwell turned for inspiration to Francisco Goya's famous masterpiece, *The Third of May, 1808*. This large, darkly romantic painting commemorates Spanish resistance to Napoleon's occupying armies. Unable to identify the sniper who had killed an officer, the French commandant ordered the execution of all adult males in the small Spanish town by firing squad. Lit by a large lantern just to the right of center, the mass murder takes place at the edge of town under cover of night. It is widely considered to be one of the greatest and most powerful political protest paintings in art history.

Franciso Goya, *Third of May, 1808*

Rockwell's early sketches for the piece for *Look* resembled Goya's composition, where the pot-bellied sheriff's deputy takes the lead in the murders, surrounded by the vigilante Klan members, the scene eerily illuminated by the glaring headlights of the sheriff's squad car.

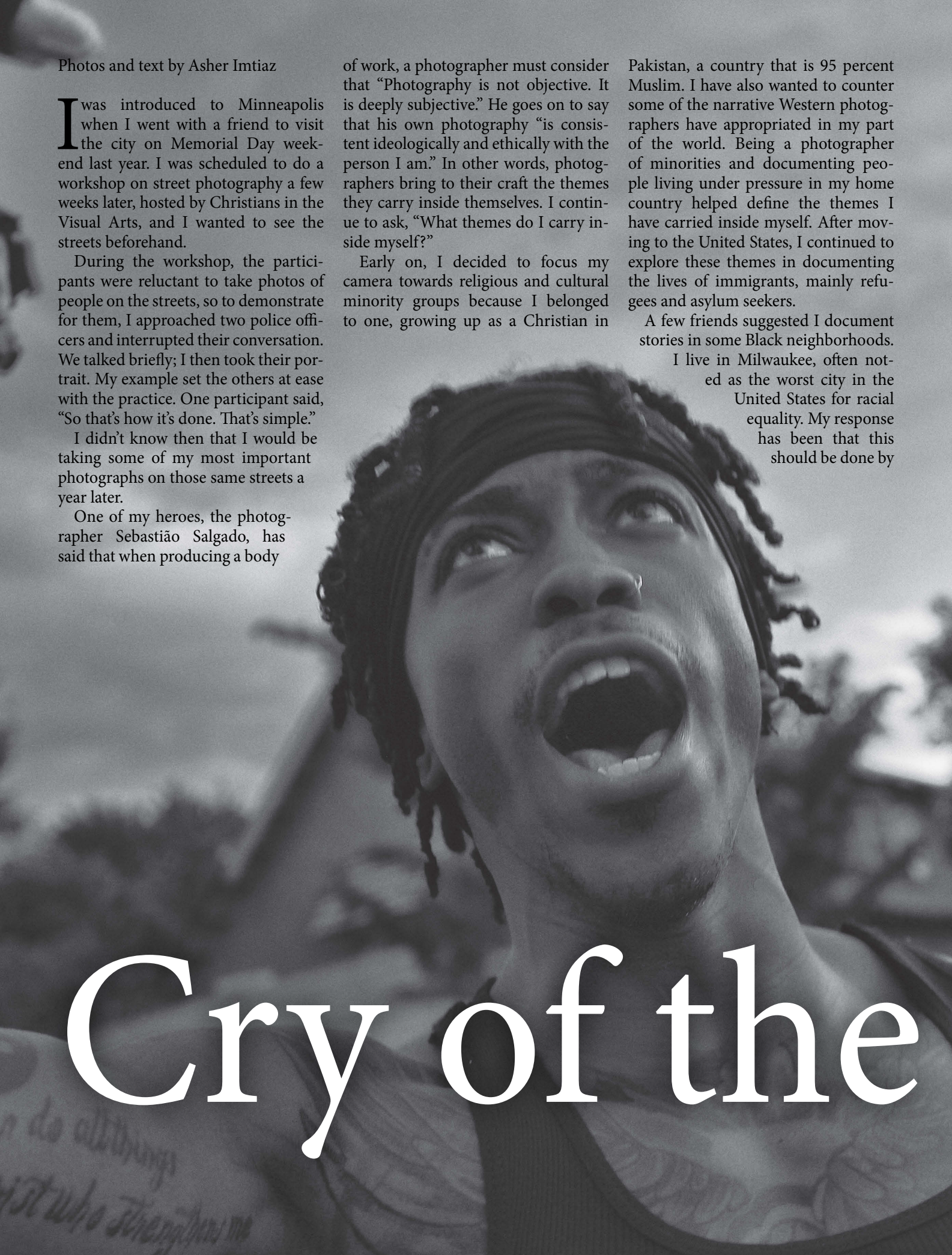
In the final version of the painting, however, Rockwell used a vertical format, eliminating the vigilante executioners, whose presence is indicated only by their shadows cast ominously on the ground. The artist limits himself to a stark, monochrome in sepia tones, the only other color being the red blood staining the shirt of the wounded student worker.

One of the students already lies dead or dying on the ground, while the wounded black student grasps desperately to his male companion as he falls to his knees from the shot. Both of them would be dead, like their friend, within minutes. Their bodies were then bulldozed into a pit being dug in connection with the erection of a dam near the edge of town. Both the construction worker who operated the machinery used to cover up the murders and members of the local law enforcement were complicit in the crime with the Klan.

This relatively large, dramatic piece by the artist at the summit of his powers is a far cry from the light, anecdotal charm of many of his earlier illustrations. Even in his more serious works, like the *Four Freedoms*, the artist never rises to the sublime, tragic pathos of this masterful, deeply moving piece executed, like the others, in the last decades of his life, a fitting close to a brilliant career. No one could ever accuse this highly rhetorical and poignant painting of being kitsch or trite, slurs commonly hurled against his illustrations.

The publishers of *Look* decided in the end to reproduce a preliminary oil sketch of the final version of the work instead of the finished painting, an editorial decision with which the artist, understandably, was disappointed. The large, fully-realized, highly-polished and realistic painting itself, shown here, in the collection of the Norman Rockwell Museum, is arguably the most powerful work of the artist's entire career, comparable to Goya's *Third of May* or to Picasso's monumental antifascist painting, *Guernica*.

Dennis Raverty is an associate professor of art history at New Jersey City University, specializing in art of the 19th and 20th centuries.



Cry of the

Photos and text by Asher Imtiaz

I was introduced to Minneapolis when I went with a friend to visit the city on Memorial Day weekend last year. I was scheduled to do a workshop on street photography a few weeks later, hosted by Christians in the Visual Arts, and I wanted to see the streets beforehand.

During the workshop, the participants were reluctant to take photos of people on the streets, so to demonstrate for them, I approached two police officers and interrupted their conversation. We talked briefly; I then took their portrait. My example set the others at ease with the practice. One participant said, "So that's how it's done. That's simple."

I didn't know then that I would be taking some of my most important photographs on those same streets a year later.

One of my heroes, the photographer Sebastião Salgado, has said that when producing a body of work, a photographer must consider that "Photography is not objective. It is deeply subjective." He goes on to say that his own photography "is consistent ideologically and ethically with the person I am." In other words, photographers bring to their craft the themes they carry inside themselves. I continue to ask, "What themes do I carry inside myself?"

Early on, I decided to focus my camera towards religious and cultural minority groups because I belonged to one, growing up as a Christian in Pakistan, a country that is 95 percent Muslim. I have also wanted to counter some of the narrative Western photographers have appropriated in my part of the world. Being a photographer of minorities and documenting people living under pressure in my home country helped define the themes I have carried inside myself. After moving to the United States, I continued to explore these themes in documenting the lives of immigrants, mainly refugees and asylum seekers.

A few friends suggested I document stories in some Black neighborhoods. I live in Milwaukee, often noted as the worst city in the United States for racial equality. My response has been that this should be done by

Wounded

a Black photographer who understands their own people. I reasoned that as someone on the path to immigration, I should just focus on immigrant stories.

Back in Minneapolis a year later on Memorial Day weekend, I was challenged again to capture the stories of African Americans. I was planning to walk in the 80-degree weather, to relax in a hammock at a park, read poetry, and enjoy a barbeque. Then, on May 26, my friend told me that a video came out of a black man who was killed by a police officer a block away from where I was staying.

Earlier this year, during Lent, I wrote a devotional for my church in which I was reflecting on the idea that "we all play some role in the suffering of people. Because of our actions and inaction, real lives are affected." The devotional kept coming back to mind. I found myself among suffering people, among ashes and dirt, and I knew I had to respond.

Those following the news know what happened the rest of that week. It was my first time in such protests, and I was not ready at all. The first night I experienced tear gas, the second day I was hit an inch below my left eye with a rubber bullet. I thank God it missed my eye. After 10 days, the bruise left by the rubber bullet disappeared. But the thought remains, "What should I do with what I see with these eyes, and how can it help? What is the right thing to do?"

Standing among the protestors, I

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Cry of the Wounded

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heard the cries of wounded people and witnessed their pain. They were angry and grieving, and not just because of the death of one man, but because of many deaths over the generations caused by racist systems.

In his book *The Wounded Healer*, Henri Nouwen narrates a story from which I've taken a thought to carry with me: "If you had looked into his eyes, you would have known." The assumption is that we recognize our own brokenness and woundedness. Only then can we become a bridge that allows us to know the pain and woundedness of another. We step into other people's wounds out of our own woundedness.

When I look into someone's eyes, they look back. When they see through the camera, they realize that fraction of a gaze is for me, but their questioning gaze is also for everyone who will witness the photograph. In that moment, they are asking me to honor them and who they are and what they represent. I think honoring a person standing in front of you is always right. God is at eye level.

Asher Imtiaz lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and works for IBM Watson.

As I stood among the protestors, I heard the cries of wounded people and witnessed their pain.

The Earth Beneath Your Feet

By Mari Reitsma Chevako
Milwaukee, May 29, 2020

("In this time of human quiescence, the creaking of some potentially dangerous faults may be detected better than ever," NY Times, 4/8/20)

Gone the hum of your human endeavor.
Your great cities lay quiet,
your machines no longer whir,
your games and music have ceased.
Listen: the earth beneath your feet
is heaving and groaning.
Can you hear the migratory birds
trilling each to each? Indeed.
But what does it matter
if you still won't believe
a black man can thrill
to the sound of a yellow warbler?
Leash your damn barking dogs.
Call off the police.
You have a moment here,
your volume reduced,
your cacophony hushed,
to hear the fault lines creaking,
uphold justice, defend the oppressed.
But mostly you mark
the sound of your own heart, the swish of air
in and out of your lungs.
You check your pulse,
you measure your breaths.
But what of the breaths
of the men on the pavement
knees on their necks?
You boast that you stand
on the right side of the divide,
the right side of the country,
the right side of the street.
You take up your guns
your superior red blood surging,
pledging an oath to your country, yourself,
as if when the moment comes
the earth won't swallow you up.
Who asked this of you,
this trampling, this restless to and fro,
demanding rights in my name?
Untie the blindfold from your eyes
and wind it around your lips.
You are not immune.
Away from me, away.
I don't dread what you dread,
nor fear what you fear.
I make the earth tremble in place
and shake the heavens on high.
And you, white Christian,
festooned with your star-spangled shirt—
I never meant your skin to carry
the privilege you claim. Even you
are made from ashes and dirt.

EDITORIAL

Blood of the Black Christ, Shed for All

> All right, I was colored. It was fine. I did not know enough to be afraid or to anticipate in a concrete manner. True, I had heard that colored people were killed and beaten, but so far it all had seemed remote. —*Richard Wright at age 8,* Black Boy *(1945)*

Global protests in service of racial justice seem, in many places, to be jumpstarting real reforms of policing, and perhaps also of the culture of incarceration and of long-entrenched inequities in education, work, housing, healthcare, and more. The protests, following the blithe and brutal murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, have provided for Americans, and for tens of thousands of others, an opportunity to redress racism and the persistent prejudice against dark-skinned persons right round the world.

Americans are facing again the greatest, gaping wound in our history, namely, the historic enslavement of African-descended persons and the perduring oppression — material, cultural, psychic — of their progeny down to the present day. The muscle memory of terror, indwelling the minds and hearts of oppressed and oppressor, hovers in our collective consciousness as something learned by all who dwell here, including those with no direct experience of the recent or more distant past. In so many ways, the past is not past at all. And so it falls to a new generation of white, Black, and Brown persons, Native and Asian Americans — *Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics* — who believe that Black lives matter to try our best, God helping us, to seize the moment and imagine next steps.

We write with a traditional conviction, modeled by the Civil Rights Movement, that American Christians are called to work alongside all persons of good will in service of truth, justice, and the spontaneous comity of neighborly affection that may lead to systemic, reparative change. Such cooperative work may very naturally — in fact, certainly will — occasion evangelization; and imagine the power of a cross-denominational movement of Christians, setting aside their differences in order to proclaim the gospel clearly, with one voice! We should not doubt that faith, hope, and love still preach. By divine design, all men and women long to exchange shame for new life and light. All yearn to breathe the clean air of confession, forgiveness, and penance. All, given the chance, would reach out to touch the hem of the Lord's garment, and be healed.

One Blood

In his book *Race* (2005), Anglican priest-scholar Kenneth Leech reports that race is "a biologically meaningless concept. Every human being shares over 99.9 per cent of her or his DNA with everyone else, while the tiny variations which remain differ more within ethnic groups than between

Allan Rohan Crite

them." "No human population," therefore, actually fits "the biological definition of a race." Of course, scientific consensus notwithstanding, most if not all cultures around the world have been slow to understand or accept this.

Anglicans have historically thought of nations of people, hence also of our national churches, in terms of discrete *races*, with explicit reference to England as the original context for communion and as a hurdle to be overcome. The bishops assembled at the Lambeth Conference of 1920 welcomed with satisfaction an emerging global family "no longer predominantly Anglo-Saxon in race," hence less attached to "Anglo-Saxon traditions." On this account, Anglicans might look forward, they wrote, "to the far greater variety in the expression of the one faith and of devotion to the one Lord, which must necessarily ensue when the churches of men who are *strangers in blood*, though brothers in Christ, come to fuller age and to more characteristic development." Progressive for its day, but still paternalistic and race-essentializing.

The hope of a trans-national, pan-cultural, diverse and non-uniform, ecumenical communion of brothers and sisters in Christ remains profound, but it needs refining with respect to "race" alienation, even 100 years on. We need to learn to think and speak about culture, tribe, language — biblical peoplehood (*genos* or *ethnos*) and nationhood (*gentes*): Gentile commonality — without recourse to essentialization of blood, which is an error both of anthropology and soteriology. In Christ, our natural familial and tribal claims are remade *in one body through the cross*, so that Jews and Gentiles together, as *one new humanity*, may lay claim to the *commonwealth of Israel* (Eph. 2:11-16). Who, then, are my mother and my brothers? "Whoever does the will of God" (Mark

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3:34-35). As the collect bears witness, God has made of "one blood all the peoples of the earth." That being so, *bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh* (1979 BCP, p. 100, Second Collect for Mission; cf. Acts 17:26).

Preferential Option for Blackness

Within such a pattern of prayer, the Lord reveals a corresponding law of belief with respect to race as a deepening of gospel Catholicism, which would re-order our loyalties and loves in and after the person of Jesus as incarnate, crucified, risen, and glorified. Here we can learn from African Methodist Episcopal theologian James H. Cone's *God of the Oppressed* (1975), a landmark text of Black theology, understood as a dynamic combination of Black experience, Scripture, and Jesus Christ in the American context. Service of particular peoples and places entails going native (see 1 Cor. 9:22), both for pragmatic purposes of communication and as a matter of moral solidarity, in imitation of our Lord who *emptied* and *humbled* himself, "taking the form of a slave" (Phil. 2:7,8).

Cone runs with this idea by arguing for a contextualized Black Christology for American Christians. To be sure, Jesus was a Jew. But Jesus' messianic mission to "all the families of the earth" (Gen. 12:3) centers upon God's commitment to liberating the oppressed. As Jesus testified at the start of his ministry, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free" (Lk. 4:18-19). In turn, Jesus' iconic abuse and death not only effects the salvation of the faithful but also sets an example for their imitation, so that, taking up their own crosses, they may follow God's preference for the poor. "In America," observes Cone, "the oppressed are the people of color — black, yellow, red, and brown." Therefore "their struggle is Jesus' struggle, and he is thus revealed in the particularity of their cultural history — their hopes and dreams of freedom" (pp. 33-34).

In this place, solidarity with people of color functions as a God-given test of Christian orthodoxy. Racism is its heretical opposite, a "refusal to speak the truth or to live the truth in the light of the One who is the Truth" (p. 36). Just as true love of God necessitates love of neighbor (1 John 4:20), right belief is bound to, and indistinguishable from, right action, or otherwise falsely held. Given the historic enslavement and subsequent second-class status of Blacks, down to the present, feeding, welcoming, clothing, and visiting our Black brothers and sisters amounts to caring for the *Black Christ* that they are (see Matt. 25:40). Here, all American Christians may find a measure for the Word of God they wish to hear and obey. As Cone writes:

> no gospel of Jesus Christ is possible in America without coming to terms with the history and culture of that people who struggled to bear witness to his name in extreme circumstances. To say that Christ is black means that God, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, not only takes color seriously, he takes it upon himself and discloses his will to make us whole — new creatures born in the spirit of divine blackness and redeemed through the blood of the Black Christ (p. 136).

Black Lives Matter More

Interestingly, the idea of a Black Christ may also be found in the writings of Frank Weston, the fiery and influential missionary bishop of Zanzibar from 1907-1924. A white English Anglican, Weston made it his life's work to "break down the barrier which separated black from white" by articulating, for his context, a "missionary ideal" of blackness, that is, "to become as the black man, and to identify oneself with black ideals" (H. Maynard Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar* [1926], p. 36). Addressing the first Anglo-Catholic Congress in London in late June of 1920 — exactly one hundred years ago, the week before the start of the Lambeth Conference — Weston urged a "disestablishment of the world from its position of power within the Church." This would yield, he promised, a properly "external manifestation" of the faith, that may "make men see the Naked Christ of Calvary as our Ideal" and "the Coloured Christ of Nazareth as our centre of Brotherhood" (*Report of the First Anglo-Catholic Congress* [1920], p. 85).

As brothers and sisters of color in our day have insisted that Black lives matter, white Christians are bound to join them in solidarity and service, especially when we all confess the same faith. In biblical terms, the question must recur to the moral norm of 1 Corinthians 12:22-23: "the members of the body that *seem* to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think [*and have long thought*] less honorable we clothe with *greater* honor." In the face of a sometimes flagrant, always simmering white supremacy in the bones of the modern West, white Christians have a responsibility, as disciples of Jesus, to insist that Black lives matter *more*, and to find ways to live this out. As St. Paul prescribes, we should commit ourselves to clothing our indispensable Black members — and their communities, schools, and churches — with greater honor, as a matter of mutual subjection in the body. We are doubtless a long way from managing such a thing, but we err if we deem it an idealistic dream and not an evangelical mandate. Just as division between the churches contradicts the gospel, imperiling its communication and our own souls, so too attempts to undo the Church's single-body character of Jews and Gentiles reconciled amounts to courting condemnation (see Eph. 2:11ff.; 1 Cor. 11:32).

In the longest view, Christians on every continent, of every tribe, tongue, and people, must mark the history of war, conquest, subjugation, and enslavement that have been the collective lot of our one race, the human race, since exile from the garden. All of us, everywhere, at all times (*omnibus, ubique, semper*) are complicit, hence judged and condemned, awaiting rescue and repair. The same is true of our divided churches. When grace comes, justification and sanctification can only, by a divinely appointed pattern, follow upon conversion and new life: sacramental and social reparations. In this way, our second births and perseverance may indeed, by God's mercy, move us beyond mutually assured destruction into new bonds and alliances and new politics: leagues of nations and of churches, as in the last century; and pan-cultural, pan-racial solidarities in the present one, washed, all together, in the blood of the Lamb. ❑

Breathing Life into a World of Injustice

By Charles Wynder, Jr.

The world is gasping for breath. The novel coronavirus's chief death-producing modality is to deny our ability to get oxygen. Humanity has witnessed more than 7.5 million confirmed cases. More than 100,000 of nearly half a million global deaths have occurred inside the United States. Some communities are bearing a particularly historic and disproportionate burden. Nationwide, Black people are dying at more than twice the rate of white people. Latinos in Washington State comprise only six percent of the population but 20 percent of the coronavirus cases. Indigenous communities have the highest per capita rate of infection. The Navajo Nation faces possible decimation.

The world is gasping for breath. Unable to work remotely from home, large numbers of Black and Latino people work on the frontlines of the pandemic. Working without adequate personal protective equipment and labor protections guaranteeing appropriate ventilation and physical distancing, they carry the burden of exposure. Jobs in warehouses, post offices, meat packing plants, hospitals, and in sanitation have been designated as essential. Amidst these challenges, Asian Americans have faced physical and verbal abuse during the pandemic. The disparate impact on minorities has led these communities to speak of a dual pandemic: the novel coronavirus and virulent racism.

Weeks of large, sustained protests have gripped cities and towns across the United States and around the globe. The

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cries for justice following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery have involved deep calls for change. Some commentators believe these multiracial crowds chanting *Black Lives Matter* have the potential to propel significant change in the nation's criminal justice system and policing.

Public acceptance of the deaths of Black people at the hands of police and the disproportionate deaths from the novel coronavirus point to the deadly reality of a racialized hierarchy of human value. People and systems in American society consistently provide better care, extend greater opportunity, and provide sizeable rewards to people who are identified as white. Meanwhile, policies, practices, and procedures leave Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian Pacific Islander people backed against a wall of diminished life chances and death. This value gap has significant consequences for individuals, families and whole communities.

In a recent essay entitled, *How Do We Change America?* Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor says this question around making change is as old as the nation itself. She writes of how the question is asked against a backdrop of "a palpable poverty of intellect, a lack of imagination, and banality of ideas pervading mainstream politics today." She contends, "old and failed propositions are recycled about, proclaimed as new, reviving cynicism and dismay." Too often, this description characterizes the Church's response to historic opportunities for transformative justice-making.

Are we willing to participate in reimagining ourselves, our communities, institutions, and way of being?

I ask with a great sense of urgency. My son will turn 5 in August and, as all parents do, I wake each morning thinking of his development and flourishing. He speaks fluently about the "virus blob" and often names the way his life has changed to accommodate this new reality. I ache when I envision him fighting the virulent racism that seeks to destroy his dreams, potential, and very life. My mind recalls the words of James Baldwin in his book, *The Fire Next Time*: "If the concept of God has any validity or any use, it can only be to make us larger, freer, and more loving."

Imani Perry's *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* captures the work I am called to live into at the intersection of my vocation as a parent and a priest. She writes, "Breathing life back into the past, pulling from the ranks of your history, is how you build yourself. You are born to something and someplace; you become of a living accord and road. This is how we move forward. Letting the constraints of the moment die a little bit, to breathe life into the process of becoming."

Her words ground me as a Black priest working to advance social and racial justice. They point to the hope necessary to faithfully exercise anew the power of imagination. COVID-19 promises to transform whole societies. Jobs, businesses, colleges, and many churches will cease to exist. New ways of conducting the work of daily life will emerge. Structural racism will remain embedded on the other side of the pandemic if we do not work to disrupt it. We cannot assume progress and change one year after commemorating the 400-hundred year anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans to former British North America.

"How is God calling the Church to co-labor in the work of transforming the people, institutions, and communities of the nation?"

God is inviting the Church to live fully into its vocation as the body of Christ, committed to embodying a prophetic imagination. We can work intentionally to resist the dominant American ideology of white supremacy which works to cement a racialized hierarchy. The Church can work with others to reimagine the life force of the nation so that it accepts the lifegiving, loving, and liberating movement of God in the world.

Walter Brueggemann asserts, "[t]he formation of an alternative community with an alternative consciousness is so that the dominant community may be criticized and finally dismantled. But more than dismantling, the purpose of the alternative community is to enable a new human beginning to happen." This is the work of the Church at this time. She must actively participate in the reimagination of everything so that God's freedom and politics of justice and compassion reign.

Conversely, the Church must participate in the development of a new narrative that centers society on God's economy, focused on human flourishing, an ethic of care, and renewal.

Reimagine All of Society During the Dual Pandemic

The capacity of the Church to co-labor with community leaders depends on our willingness to release our current concepts of the world. Policing and the criminal justice system need to be deconstructed, reconstructed, and transformed anew. The nation cannot default to a militarized police force focused on social control of Black and Brown bodies. Public safety must be redefined and reimagined. The Church must recall that Jesus lived in an occupied land subject to constant policing.

Conversely, the Church must participate in the development of a new narrative that centers society on God's economy, focused on human flourishing, an ethic of care, and renewal. This renewal is possible if we decenter our gaze on force and domination exercised by the government. Instead, we can reimagine the commonwealth to focus on the goods of public education, community health, meaningful work and labor for all people.

Live into Solidarity and Justice

Many in the Church have read *Just Mercy* or heard author Bryan Stevenson say, "It's actually in proximity that we hear things that we won't otherwise hear, that we'll see things we won't otherwise see. The things we hear and see are critical to our knowledge and our capacity to problem solve." The ability to fully live into the commitments we make in our baptismal covenant is enhanced when we are proximate and decide to embody an ethic of subsidiarity.

What if we lived out a commitment to the intrinsic value of all people, recognizing that we are all created in the image of God by living into the virtue of solidarity? The people who gather, worship and serve as Church are called to embody solidarity with others in material and spiritual ways. Too often, we fail to understand the centrality of moral proximity and solidarity.

Collaborate with Others to Advance Regional Race Equity

When addressing the question, "Who is my neighbor?" churches tend to embrace programs which change race dynamics on the personal or interpersonal level. Too often congregations, dioceses, and denominations have been less interested in the work of concrete systemic change. Imagine the network of community-based congregations that constitute dioceses equipping all members to advance racial justice and equity. Churches would study the racial disparities in their local communities; understand the roles that policy, public revenues, segregation, and gentrification play in reinforcing racial hierarchy and racism; and advocate for system change. Think about the impact a diocese could have when its congregations join interfaith and ecumenical efforts to work in multi-sector initiatives to advance and sustain regional race equity.

Understand Freedom is a Constant Struggle

History teaches us that we cannot assume progress or change will happen. Racial injustices continue and the coronavirus numbers are on the rise in many states. The dual pandemic continues to wreak havoc on life. Will we choose to resuscitate the Church and breathe life into efforts to bring God's justice on earth?

The Rev. Charles Wynder, Jr. is staff officer for social justice and advocacy engagement for the Episcopal Church.

Standing at the Doors of the House of the Lord

The President's Photo-Op and Our Need for Repentance

By Elisabeth Rain Kincaid

One of the strangest images of this strange time will undoubtedly be that of the president of the United States standing in front of a boarded and burned Episcopal church (St. John's, Lafayette Square), awkwardly clutching a Bible for a staged photo-op. As the story behind the picture has emerged, the photo appears even stranger.

First, the White House did not seek or receive permission from the parish or the Episcopal Diocese of Washington for the photo-shoot. Rather, the use of the church's grounds was denounced in stinging tones as an act of anti-gospel appropriation by the Rt. Rev. Mariann Budde, the Episcopal Bishop of Washington.

Worse, though, in order to gain access to the front of the church, police fired a chemical spray at the peaceful protesters, forcing them to disperse. These protesters included an Episcopal priest from a neighboring parish. The irony was compounded by the fact that this photo-op followed the president's speech in the Rose Garden in which he promised to deploy military forces to replace local action in states which are "not under control."

In Jeremiah 7, God tells the prophet to go and stand in the gate of the Lord's House and call out to the passers-by, warning all who enter: "Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place" (7:3). He describes what true amendment requires: rejection of the sins of murder, idolatry, adultery, and robbery in favor of the actions which the Lord loves, namely, "if you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt" (7:5-6).

In contrast, those who do not repent, who fail to hear the prophet's true message, fall into the trap of trusting "in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord'" (7:4). Despite their evil actions, they believe that they are safe because they enter the Temple of God and call upon his name — not knowing that the Lord sees and marks all of what they do and rejects them because of their actions, despite their performance of false piety (7:11).

In the photo-op in front of St. John's Episcopal Church, President Trump positioned himself in the place of the prophet Jeremiah — at the gates of the House of the Lord. However, the message to which he called us was the very message that the Prophet Jeremiah declared the Lord condemned. Behind a façade of piety, the president promises a false safety through his military threats against protesters and his consistent attempts to drum up support from Christian grievances regarding lost social capital and cultural influence. Like those entering the temple and closing their ears to Jeremiah's indictment, his crude use of the visible signs of the Christian faith encouraged those who prefer to say, "This is the house of the Lord" rather than listen to what the Lord actually says.

In this image the Church has been presented in stark terms with a choice. Do we seek to protect our own influence by siding with those in power, even though they view Christians and Christianity as a means to their own ends? Or do we side with those who seek justice, and pay the price of unjust users of power: the protesters fleeing the public square in response to the sudden deployment of chemical irritants? The answer, for anybody with a superficial knowledge of the scriptures the president was holding, seems obvious: we serve a God who "opposes the proud" while he "gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

However, while it is easy to condemn the violation of the message of the gospel that the photo-op represents, it is important for the Church to remember that the reason the president chose to appear in this way is simple and utilitarian: this type of appropriation of the Church has worked in the past and he thought it would work now. As abhorrent as his actions are, they only worked because in the past we, as the Church, have failed to rebuke and challenge exactly this type of appropriation and have not made it clear that we choose justice and love over safety and power.

White Christians are responsible because we have let the president and other Americans believe that the Church was the building, rather than people of God on the move with those in the square. There are many ways that the Church in America needs to repent, change, and grow, many of which the protests across our country are making plain. The president's shameful demonstration throws into bold relief another area of needed repentance. We have allowed the powerful to believe that not only can the things of God be co-opted to promote injustice, but that this is what we want. We must ensure that this never happens again, by making clearer than ever before whose servants we are and which way we follow.

Elisabeth Rain Kincaid is assistant professor of Christian ethics and moral theology at Nashotah House Theological Seminary.

White House photo

BOOKS

Public Service and the Church's Mission

Review by Charles Hoffacker

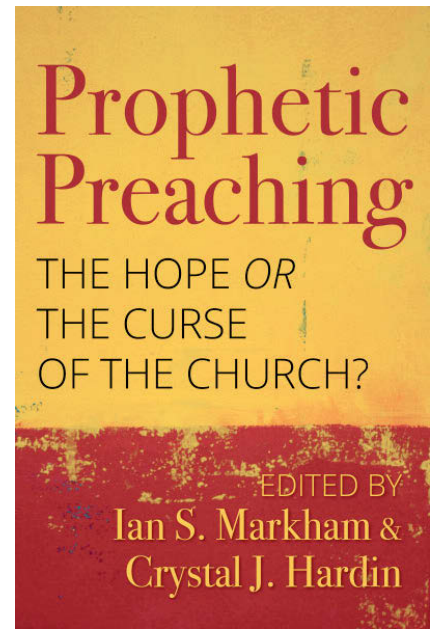
This collection of 11 essays addresses the delicate task of whether and how preachers can effectively speak to political, public issues from the pulpit in the light of the gospel. The context is today's Episcopal Church. The contributors are all Episcopal clergy with the exception of a Baptist pastor who teaches in an Episcopal seminary. The intended audience includes preachers, seminarians, and anyone interested in the interplay between Christianity and the public square in contemporary America.

Those who read the essays in the order in which they appear will be rewarded with an intuitive sense of how the collection is more than the sum of its parts. The essays are diverse and vary significantly in quality. Together they offer much that merits further consideration. The editors of this volume and the contributors to it, many of them connected with Virginia Theological Seminary, deserve credit for addressing directly a topic that needs attention, not simply in the Episcopal Church, but in all Christian communities.

One shortcoming of *Prophetic Preaching* is an inadequate attention given to exactly what is meant by prophetic preaching and how it fits into larger frameworks by which the church and its mission are to be understood.

Another shortcoming is the way in which the terms "political" and "politics" are used frequently in a dismissive way. Politics, like sex, is often an occasion for sin, but like sex, politics can be, and often is, good. While politics is never an ultimate good, it can serve the common good, and deserves measured respect for doing so.

A positive theological perspective on what politics can be will prove necessary in the immediate future. Many an intelligent person with a functioning moral compass and a desire to engage in sacrificial public service will be needed.



Prophetic Preaching
The Hope or the Curse of the Church?
Ed. by **Ian S. Markham** and **Crystal J. Hardin**
Church Publishing, pp. 149, $18.95

As Frances Perkins, devout Episcopalian and exemplary public servant, put it in 1948, "The withdrawal of Christian people of high purpose and great nobility of mind and heart — the withdrawal of people like that from political life — has been a terrible loss not only to the world, but particularly to our form and organization of government and society."

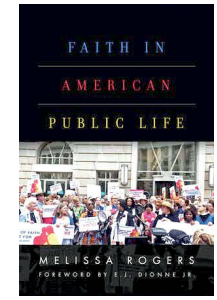
This volume about prophetic preaching deserves to be complemented by contemporary theological reflection on Christian citizenship and callings to public service.

With a couple of exceptions, sermons are not included here. An excellent collection of sermons on public issues from an Episcopal preacher is *In the Midst of the City: The Gospel and God's Politics* by Barkley S. Thompson, dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, reviewed several months ago in these pages.

The Rev. Charles Hoffacker is an Episcopal priest and author of A Matter of Life and Death: Preaching at Funerals.

Two Views of the Common Good

Review by Nathaniel A. Warne



Resisting Throwaway Culture

By **Charles Comosy**. New City Press, pp. 150, $19.95

Faith in American Public Life

By **Melissa Rogers**. Baylor, pp. 350, $34.95

Charles Comosy's *Resisting Throw Away Culture* and Melissa Roger's *Faith in American Public Life* offer two distinctively different approaches to thinking about the relationship between secular and sacred polity.

Charles Comosy wishes to break through the polarization in politics. The views of liberals and conservatives inside the Church seem indistinguishable from those outside the Church. Politics distracts us from the kinds of reflections on "the good" that are needed if true moral progress is to be achieved. Comosy argues that a Consistent Life Ethic (CLE), as articulated in the Catholic tradition, demonstrates a cohesive way forward towards a single vision of "the good." CLE is a way of life that has, at its heart, the creation of a culture of encounter and a clear dedication to care for those on the margins who are not given the opportunity to speak on their own behalf. Comosy thinks that the values essential to CLE, for example, the irreducible value of human persons, hospitality, mercy, as well as ecological commitments, are also attractive for those outside of Catholicism. He argues that these values can be the basis by which a fractured people can come to agreement and advance towards "the good."

A strength of this book is its sustained argument against consumerism and a throwaway culture, in which commodities as well as people can be reduced simply to things whose value consists in being bought, sold, used, and discarded when there is no longer a market value for them. People become inconvenient when their good conflicts with the interests of those who benefit from a culture of global consumerism.

Comosy writes, "a primary value in throwaway culture is maintaining a consumerist lifestyle, but to cease caring about who is being discarded, most of us must find a way to no longer acknowledge their inherent dignity." We have become detached from encounters and meaningful friendships in favor of relationships of utility.

Drawing on Catholic commitments, Comosy considers a number of contentious topics in American politics from the perspective of CLE and a consistent "pro-life" ethic. Pro-life commitments, for him, are relevant to abortion, but also to preserving the life of the immigrant, those in poverty, and non-human parts of creation. He makes a convincing argument for how a disposition to capitalist consumerism destroys the possibility for an authentic, flourishing life. He upholds a vision of politics, laws, and institutions that can create the conditions in which citizens develop the kinds of lives and habits appropriate to this particular understanding of the good.

His understanding of the role of politics has drawbacks, as it overlooks significant parts of American political life, namely the American commitment to liberalism and pluralism. How is this pro-life ethic helpful in creating space for people who identify as gay or transgender, for example? They have their own understanding of goods that do not easily concur with the religious commitments he aims to uphold. Comosy is suspiciously silent on this issue; Melissa Rogers is not.

Rogers addresses the collaboration between faith and the common good in American public life. By surveying some of the most important developments in American history concerning the relationship between religion and the state, Rogers warns her readers about contemporary threats to religious freedom and pluralism, including hostility against religious minorities. One's ability to worship in freedom without having other values and conceptions of the good impressed on them is among the values embodied in the First Amendment, a guarantee of religious liberty.

We may be hard-pressed to find in America today a single conception of "the good" on which everyone agrees. Rogers favors an America in which the government remains neutral towards promoting one understanding of "the good" over another. But one wonders how successful this approach has been. Early in her book, Rogers discusses the "Test Acts" where no test can be given for one to hold public office. Even so, in recent history we have yet to have a presidential candidate that does not, it seems, feel obligated to profess some form of Christianity even if that profession is deeply disingenuous. Is this a religious test by popular opinion?

Rogers' book is an excellent guide to federal law and policies relevant to religion and public life in American history. The book walks the reader through the political and religious commitments latent in the American ethos by looking at key Supreme Court cases and watershed events. Rogers subtly describes the philosophical commitments present in the earliest years of our country and as captured in the nation's founding documents, that being a liberalism that is free from any one conception of the good. This view of politics is intentionally less optimistic about the human capacity to self rule. Laws are necessary, not because they provide the conditions needed to experience a robust sense of flourishing and "the good," but as protections against people whose self-interests would seek to harm others. Political institutions, then, are set in place to protect, and not necessarily to nourish. This is where we see the fundamental disagreement in these two books in approaching religion and politics.

Pressed to their fullest understanding of the relationship between political and religious life, the two views on how to move forward towards unity become incompatible. Are political institutions intended to habituate citizens to a single conception of the good, as Comosy argues? Or are these institutions intended to protect all religious life and protect citizens from each other, as Rogers examines in the American ethos? Both books succeed in provoking thought.

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(Continued from page 13)

and normally meets for about 10 days every three years. The legal department is scouring the canons to determine how best to conduct the necessary business virtually.

Curry and Jennings wrote: "we are also committed to supporting our hosts in the City of Baltimore. General Convention represents economic impact of $21-23 million to that city, whose longstanding racial disparities and economic distress have been intensified by the virus."

Washington National Cathedral is cutting 15% of its staff due to economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, Episcopal News Service reports.

Effective July 1, the cathedral will reduce its full-time workforce by 15%, eliminating 13 full-time and 13 part-time positions. Another 12 full-time employees will be fully or partially furloughed, and most remaining part-time employees will work fewer hours.

The Very Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith, dean of the cathedral, made the announcement on Facebook, calling the cuts "both necessary and hard to accept."

Despite past accusations of complicity in genocide, a former Rwandan bishop has been reinstated by the Church of England, and is serving as a non-stipendiary interim minister in the Diocese of Manchester.

The Guardian reports that the Rt. Rev. Jonathan Ruhumuliza, 64, the former Bishop of Kigali, was reinstated after an attempt by the British Home Office to revoke his refugee status failed.

Ruhumuliza, an ethnic Hutu, allegedly misled foreign churches and press outlets about the severity of the Hutu government's attempt to exterminate the nation's Tutsi population. In 100 days of slaughter in 1994, Hutu militia groups killed 800,000 Tutsis, about 70% of the country's Tutsi population, and raped between 250,000 and 500,000 women.

For a second time, **a former Archbishop of Canterbury has been forbidden to officiate as a priest** in the Church of England.

"The Church of England said new evidence linking Lord [George] Carey, 84, to a review into allegations of abuse against the late John Smyth, had emerged," according to the BBC. Smyth, the former chairman of Iwerne Trust, was wanted by police at the time of his death in connection with multiple allegations of pyscho-sexual beatings by boys who attended the conservative evangelical trust's camps for students at elite British schools in the 1970's and 1980's. Current Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby is an alumnus of the Iwerne camps, as are many other leading evangelicals in the Church of England.

Archbishop Carey has not been accused of committing abuse himself. He previously had his Permission to Officiate (PTO) revoked in 2017 based on his handling of a different convicted abuser, Peter Ball, and he resigned as an assistant bishop of the Diocese of Oxford. His PTO was restored later.

Gen. 25:19-34 [Isa. 55:10-13]; Ps. 119:105-112 [Ps. 65: (1-8), 9-14];
Rom. 8:1-11; Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23

Conflict and the New Humanity

"Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled within her; and she said, 'If it is to be this way, why do I live?' So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two people born of you shall be divided; one shall be stronger than the other, and the elder shall serve the younger'" (Gen. 25:21-23). The firstborn, Esau, red and hairy at birth, grew to become a skillful hunter and a man of the field. Jacob, who gripped the heel of Esau when coming into the world, grew to be a quiet and cunning man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau; Rebekah loved Jacob. The sons struggled, the parents were pitted between them, a domestic disturbance symbolizing the rise of two nations. God acted, and conflict was nearly promised. Of course, this is perplexing.

"Do not think," Jesus says, "that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household" (Matt. 10:34-36). Mary's *Magnificat* reveals an even broader social upheaval, and the words of Simeon to her suggests her own inner struggle. "And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35). Mary's *fiat* was not a single undisturbed consent to providence, but an inner pain she endured in the gaping wound of her maternal love.

The soul, the family, communities, and nations are in conflict. They are not to remain so forever, but divine action causes a kind of provisional sifting, a judgment, a crisis. When the Eternal Word of the Father arrives as the implanted Word for us, the evil one comes to snatch the Word, trouble and persecution cause many to fall away from the Word, the cares of the world and the allure of riches choke the Word. Until these conflicts and dangers are faced, the seed will not find good soil (Matt. 13:19-23).

"There is therefore," St. Paul says, "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). To whom does he refer when he says *those*? "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27-28). While it is true that "the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead" will give life to our "mortal bodies," this new embodied life is, in a sense, the disintegration of the sinful, false, and narrow life we all live. "Sin-weakened" law rules our unredeemed lives and leads us to death. Christ, on our behalf, deals with sin, bearing all its condemnation until none remains. Jesus Christ brings forth a new, unheard-of humanity.

Jesus is a new start after every conflict is faced, and every dividing wall of hostility falls. In the words of Karl Barth, "The whole realm of humanity is confronted and dissolved." Beyond the realm of humanity, we find, in Christ, a New Humanity. Vested in Christ, we discover the only real peace we will ever know, a peace reaching all the peoples of the earth.

Look It Up

Read Psalm 65.

Think About It

God is the hope of all the ends of the earth. Open your heart to humanity; feel its conflict and sorrow. Now put on the New Humanity of a new and everlasting peace.

Gen. 28:10-19a [Isa. 44:6-8];
Ps. 139:1-11, 22-23 or Wis. 12:13, 16-19 [Ps. 86:11-17];
Rom. 8:12-25; Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43

The Consolation of Divine Presence

St. Matthew writes, "From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, '*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani*?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Matt. 27: 45-46). These words are the opening verse of Psalm 22, part of a lamentation that concludes with confidence in God: "My soul shall live for him; my descendants shall serve him; they shall be known as the Lord's forever" (Ps. 22:29). The Son's absolute obedience to the will of the Father does not, however, imply that the passion and death of Jesus were a gnostic phantom.

He indeed suffered, and so do we in union with him. And while our suffering is not, as his is, all suffering, our share in human anguish can bring us to the same cry of dereliction. There are times when God seems far away, when all hope is lost, when the pit closes its mouth. I have been there. I have preached, celebrated the liturgy, carried out pastoral duties, said my prayers, while lost in the turbulent sea of my own inner anguish and grief. My experience, though personal, is not unusual. This is suffering many people must endure.

Occasionally, as a gift and encouragement, we have moments or even seasons that are quite the opposite, when God's presence is deeply felt and known. While this should not always be expected, it should be welcomed and savored and stored up as a reserve for more challenging days. Consider, then, a moment when the presence of God was [is] broad and universal, touching and reaching everything and everyone.

(Continued on next page)

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"Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. He dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south" (Gen. 28:1-14).

A rock for a pillow, the black night for a covering, a dream giving vision, Jacob heard of a God extending east and west, north and south upon an ever-expanding humanity. God is among every family, language, people, and nation; God is the hope of all the ends of the earth. God is the creator of a Catholic Church, the house of God. God is not, however, only upon the earth. God opens a gate to heaven and hangs a ladder between earth and sky upon which the angels of God ascend and descend. Like the beams of the cross, the presence of God extends in every direction to everyone and everything.

In the time of our mortal flesh, the children of the kingdom and the children of the evil one live together, and these two children are in all of us (Matt. 13:38). Thus, at times, God may seem far away. At other moments and times, a veil is lifted and God is felt and known everywhere.

Look It Up

Read Psalm 139:7-9.

Think About It

Whoever has died is freed from sin.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 8 Pentecost, July 26

Gen. 29:15-28 [I Kings 3:5-12]; Ps. 105:1-11, 45b or Ps. 128 [Ps. 119:129-136]; Rom. 8:26-39; Matt. 13:31-33, 44-52

Prayer in the Spirit

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with *sighs too deep for words*. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26-27). Even if words are used in prayer, the Spirit intercedes with groans and sighs more profound than words. In prayer, we cry, and groan, and sigh in the Spirit. "When *we cry*, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:15-16). "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:22-23). Because we have "the first fruits of the Spirit," our prayer is not only labor pain, but also the joy of a New Humanity about to emerge. Prayer is not what we think or say or feel, but the Spirit's work in us and interceding for us.

In a treatise on the Psalms, St. Ambrose reflects on the mixture of words and music and their combined power. What he says is illuminating for all prayer in the Spirit. The Spirit who intercedes is the Spirit of the Risen Lord, and so the whole mystery of Christ is at work in prayer. "In the Psalms, then, not only is Jesus Christ born for us, he also undergoes his saving passion in his body, he lies in death, he rises again, he ascends into heaven, he sits at the right hand of the Father." In a sense, this is prayer, the life of Christ in us by the power of the Spirit.

Ambrose continues, "A psalm is a blessing on the lips of the people, a hymn in praise of God, the assembly's homage, a general acclamation, a word that speaks to all, the voice of the Church, a confession of faith in song. It is the voice of complete ascent, the joy of freedom, a cry of happiness, the echo of gladness. It soothes the temper, distracts from care, lightens the burden of sorrow. It is a source of security at night, a lesson in wisdom by day. It is a shield when we are afraid, a celebration of holiness, a vision of serenity, a promise of peace and harmony. It is like a lyre, evoking harmony from a blend of notes. Day begins to the music of a psalm. The day closes to the echo of a psalm" (*Explanation of the Psalms*; Ps. 1, 9-12). The Spirit does all this work in us, bringing us to divine depths beyond mere words.

My day begins with the recitation of psalms, though typically prefaced with a hymn appropriate to the early morning. Again and again, I have seen these words:

Nostros piis cum canticis
With our pious songs
Fletus benigne suspice,
kindly receive our tears
Quo corde puro sordibus
That, having purified our hearts from sin
Te perfruamur largius.
We may enjoy you more fully.

Prayer is much more than words. Prayer in the Spirit is the sighing, groaning, and weeping of our not-yet fully redeemed humanity. Prayer in the Spirit is also a cry of happiness, an echo of gladness, the joy of freedom, security, and wisdom. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but we have the Spirit who searches all things, even the depths of God, and prays in us and for us.

Look It Up

Read Romans 8:26-27.

Think About It

Prayer is a gift.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 9 Pentecost, August 2

Gen. 32:22-31 [Is. 55:1-5]; Ps. 17:1-7, 16 [Ps. 145:8-9, 15-22]; Rom. 9:1-5; Matt. 14:13-21

The God of All Nations

Speaking the truth in Christ, St. Paul reveals his anguish over "my kindred according to the flesh" who have not received the message of Jesus Christ. "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 9:2-5).

The promises of God to Israel are irrevocable. The Church, therefore, cannot think of itself as an enclosed treasury of divine promise and favor. Divine promises to Israel, and, for that matter, providential guidance to other peoples and nations, have a place in the Church, felt as "a great sorrow and unceasing anguish" (Rom. 9:2). The Church is in pain because its life in Christ extends to every family, language, people, and nation, and yet this truth is not and has never been fully realized. In a sense, Paul's anguish is necessary, a wound for the Church to bear in all times. The Church is in birth pangs as it awaits the incorporation of all humanity, not merely along institutional lines, but in the hearts of Church members.

Consider the inner life of Jesus. "*When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.* When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children." (Matt. 14:14-21). Jesus Christ is the lovingkindness of God poured out upon all flesh. Jesus Christ is bread for the world. His compassion is his Cross, a "sorrow and unceasing anguish" as he gives himself in sacrificial love. All those who have been baptized into Christ are called to share this pain.

Our God is the God of all nations. "See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that you do not know shall run to you, because the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you" (Isa. 55:5). "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great kindness. The Lord is loving to everyone and his compassion is over all his works" (Ps. 145:8-9).

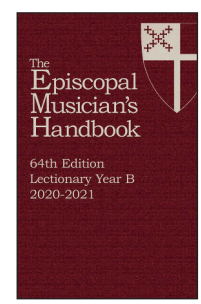
If we tell ourselves that our love extends to everyone and our compassion to all the works of God, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. We are often narrow, small, constricted, and exclusive; our hearts are hardened, and our necks stiff. In this state, we feel little real pain; we invest in our personal protection and promote our own blindness. It would be a blessing to acknowledge this, and then take the first steps toward a broader vision of God and humanity.

Look It Up

Read Matthew 14:19-21.

Think About It

Five thousand men, besides women and children, equals the whole human race.



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