

Interim's Corner

Fighting Demons

By Rev. Won-Jae Hur

When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman court in the fourth century and moved into mainstream society, many Christians felt that the integrity of the faith was compromised. Earlier generations of Christians entered the faith by making a costly choice that risked persecution and martyrdom. With Emperor Constantine's rule, the age of the martyrs came to an end and people began entering the faith because Christianity suddenly became aligned with the powerful and privileged.

At this time, Christians who wanted to follow Christ in the fullest way possible fled the urban centers of power and went into the deserts of Egypt. In the wilderness they would seek the kind of authentic faith that their predecessors lived through a life of simplicity and prayer. These Christians later came to be called the desert fathers and mothers, and they left for future generations a fountain of spiritual and practical wisdom through their collected sayings and stories.

Central to their wilderness experience was battle with demons. The silence of the desert allowed little outward distraction and no avenues of escape from oneself. As they set out to live a life of ceaseless prayer and labor, they confronted head on those destructive forces which exist in everyone. Language about demons sounds foreign today, but the desert Christians used that imagery to name those things that threatened to derail them from the path of life, such as pride, hatred, listlessness, lust, greed, and despair. They saw the spiritual life as a relentless war against these forces in the hope of securing victory through their singular dedication and the grace of God.

Although the desert Christians lived a unique form of life as monks and hermits, their insights into the inner life and practice of love have larger significance. Their struggle with demons represents the universal struggle that we all go through when we come face to face with paralyzing, destructive forces. Whether these are traumas, addictions, social injustice, or some other pattern of inner or outer oppression, struggle is an unavoidable and fundamental part of spiritual life. That is because where the Spirit is, there is freedom (as Paul reminds us). The Spirit is not



Holy Week and Easter for the St. James Community

Palm Sunday ~ March 28

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. Palm Sunday Liturgy
(procession at 10:00 a.m.)

Monday ~ March 29

7:00 p.m. Eucharist

Tuesday ~ March 30

7:00 p.m. Eucharist

Wednesday ~ March 31

7:00 p.m. at Trinity Church
North of Market Area Ministry Worship

Maundy Thursday ~ April 1

6:30 pm Community Supper and Eucharist,
Stripping of Sanctuary

Good Friday ~ April 2

12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy
with Veneration of the Cross

Holy Saturday ~ April 3

9:00 p.m. at Grace Cathedral
North of Market Area Ministry Worship:
Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday ~ April 4

8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Eucharist

content to leave us in Pharaoh's Egypt, but stirs up that deep desire for freedom within us.

The example that these faraway and rather strange predecessors of faith set for us teaches us to see struggle as part of the spiritual journey. A story about Macarius makes the point not without humor:

Once the famous Abbot Macarius was traveling across the desert, and decided to spend the night in a pyramid, where, of course, the bodies of many pagans had been laid to rest over the years. Unconcerned by the presence of death all around him, the old man dragged out one of the mummies and put it under his head for a pillow. Of course the local devils flew into a rage over such boldness and decided to scare him off. From the other bodies they began to call to the mummy under the abbot's head, "Lady, come with us to the baths!" Another demon took the role of the lady-mummy who was being used as a pillow and answered, "I'd love to, but I can't. This stranger is holding me down." The elder, not the least bit frightened, sat up and started to pummel the corpse while shouting at it, "So get up and go swimming if you can!" When they heard this response, they cried, "You win!" and they fled in confusion.

The image of an elderly man in the midst of dead bodies who answers his demons without fear is an unusual portrayal of faith. But the image conveys Macarius' ability to stay put in the face of fear and to respond with courage and humor. This humor gives the story a sense of both realism and transcendence. His faith has freed him to confront his demons and even laugh at their ploys.

The Lenten season is a journeying into the wilderness. As with Jesus' temptation and the desert Christians' inner battles, the wilderness is often a place of confrontation and struggle. During the season of Lent, we follow this ancient practice of going into the inner desert to look at and name the forces that keep us from living fully in God. We undertake spiritual disciplines to ground us in God's grace and to sustain us. If the struggle intimidates and tires us, the example of the desert Christians and of Jesus himself assures us that we can overcome all our demons through faith and grace. They remind us that we are never alone, and that on the other side of struggle is freedom.



Your Subscription Fee: One Staple!

If you've received a paper copy of this Journal in the mail, you'll notice something missing in the upper left-hand corner. To ensure that the USPS will keep processing our mailings at a reduced rate, we've had to leave out the staple. Please supply a fastening of your own for these pages, and please accept our apologies for this odd inconvenience!

Love from Mary Muñoz

Dear friends at St. James,

It was while I was immobilized in an Atlanta hotel room, injured by an auto accident and grieving my recently deceased mother, that I got a voice mail from Doreen Canton saying, "You're on the St. James prayer list." I can't tell you how much it meant to hear that "voice from home" at such a challenging time. I want to thank you all from the depths of my heart for your thoughts and prayers, and give you a quick update.

We had a beautiful service for Mom at the Atlanta parish where Ray and I were married and where we sang for 14 years before our move to San Francisco and St. James.

The choir sang "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," and brought down the house. The assistant rector had visited with my brother and me before the service to learn about us and our mother, and her homily was very moving. As Ray insightfully said, she allowed us to see my mother's giftedness instead of her challenges, health and otherwise.

Now I am recovering at home. My broken rib and bruised chest are the "problem children" that are keeping me on pain meds – though I am off narcotics during the day now, which has been a godsend in allowing me to feel more myself. My right foot was thought to be fractured but is just badly sprained, and I am walking with a brace/boot as needed. So all in all, very good news indeed.

Hal and Jane Weston were present and available in Atlanta. What a gift. Jane spent the night with me at the hotel the first night when I was wheelchair-bound, and watched over me for much of the week until Ray and Lily arrived. So you see, St. James stretches very far and very wide, and is a most special community.

Warmest regards and giant hugs to all of you from the Muñoz clan; please keep sending the prayers, and we'll send another update as recovery continues. We have a roomy guesthouse in Phoenix, available any time.

Love from Mary, Ray, and Lily



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

By John Harrison,
Junior Warden

The Shrove Tuesday pancake supper was particularly enjoyable this year, due to the musical entertainment provided by Ed Wilcox's S.T.E.P. Wire Choir, a truly talented group of young violinists.



A group of about 70 dined on pancakes accompanied by bacon, sausage, and fruit – and were subjected to John Harrison's somewhat stern annual reminder that the festivities were supposed to be followed by a Lenten observance of penitence and reflection, prior to the glorious day of Easter.

Many thanks to those who helped! Noreen Huey provided the checklist which practically put the event on automatic pilot. Doreen Canton shopped and provisioned for the event. Elia Pochron thought through the decorating and entertainment possibilities. Carole Jan Lee helped with both decorations and cooking. Rose Scarff, Mary Balmana, and Meg Bloomfield anchored the kitchen crew. Indispensable help was provided by the Young Grillmeisters – Taylor Pochron and Cyrus Wesson – supervised by Ryszard Pochron, who in turn was supervised by Emma Archer-Dusté, who was critiqued by JJ Harrison. The efforts of those who stayed to clean up, including Mary Ann Faris and Roger Wickstrom, were also greatly appreciated.



Help Wanted

The Vestry needs a **Clerk**, whose duties will consist of attending about 10 regular Vestry meetings during the year, as well as the semiannual and annual meetings of the Parish, and recording the proceedings of all those meetings (or arranging for a substitute in the event of a calendar conflict). The Clerk has voice at Vestry meetings, but does not vote.

St. James will need a **Treasurer** as of Pie Sunday (probably in March, but exact date to be scheduled). Our outgoing Treasurer Anne Purcell, after five years of diligent and much appreciated service, needs to concentrate on her new job. The Treasurer is responsible for submitting regular financial reports to the Vestry, which are then published to the St. James community. The Treasurer participates in the creation of the budget, and is responsible for monitoring the work of the paid bookkeeper to see that expenses and income are properly allocated to the appropriate accounts in Quickbooks. The Treasurer has voice and votes at Vestry meetings, and is also a voting member of the Finance Commission and the CLC Board. This position provides a great opportunity to shape the strategic development of St. James!

Anne will be pleased to work out a graceful turnover of these responsibilities to ease the transition. Given that the obligations and demands of the position may involve uncertainties, the Vestry is prepared to consider applicants who are willing to "try out" the position, before making a commitment to serve for at least the remainder of the current Vestry term.

If you have any calling to either of these positions, or know someone who might be interested in one of them, please contact any member of the Vestry.

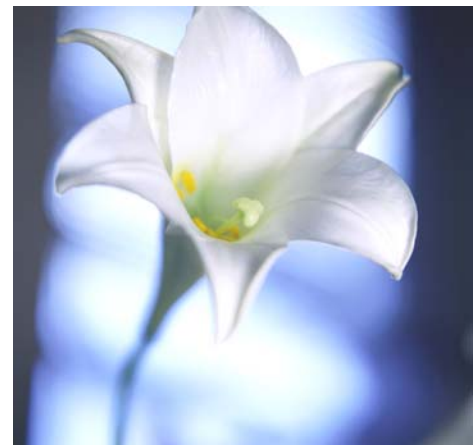
Easter Comes Early This Year ...

and the Flower Committee needs your help
to make the church beautiful!

Honor a loved one with a contribution
to the Flower Fund for Easter Sunday.

All tributes will be listed in the Easter bulletin

Make your gift soon, and help St. James bloom!



Now Accepting Rector Applications!

By Jan Vennari, Rector Search Committee Co-Chair

The Rector Search Committee has completed the Parish Profile and corresponding diocesan paperwork to officially put the word out that St. James is accepting applications from those interested in becoming our new rector. With this official posting, the Committee will solicit nominations and applications and begin the process of reviewing them. The deadline for applications is March 31.

We invite you to read the Parish Profile, posted on the St. James website at <http://www.stjamesf.org>. So many of you influenced its content and direction – for which we're very grateful! Special thanks to Susie Caragol, whose editorial assistance gave the Profile real polish.

Please keep the Committee in your thoughts and prayers as this all-important discernment takes place. And, as always, let any of us know if you have questions.



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*"Be still, and know
that I am God."*

Morning Meditation at St. James during Lent

Wednesday Mornings
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.
Feb. 24 – March 24

*Reflection on Scripture
and a simple Eucharist*

A Well-Kept Secret At St. James

By Carole Jan Lee

Did you know that there is a columbarium at St. James?
Do you know where it is located?
Are you aware that there are still spaces available?
Have you left instructions for disposition and services after
your death?

It was in 1999 that the decision was made to establish a columbarium at St. James in the side chapel (named the Hosmer Chapel, after one of the parish's early members). A creative carpenter installed 25 niches in the back of the altar, as well as wheels that provide easy access to the columbarium. A brass plate on each niche identifies the person whose ashes are interred there, and a Memorial Board on the wall bears the names of all who rest in the columbarium.

If you wish to see the columbarium or would like information about purchasing a niche, please contact the church office at 415-751-1198 or stjames@stjamesf.org. Single and double niches are available.

The Gift Planning Department of the Diocese has a form you can use for leaving final instructions on disposition following your death. Stating your wishes in advance will spare your family the burden of grappling with that decision. You may also want to leave instructions for your funeral or memorial service, including favorite Bible verses or hymns and persons you wish to preside. Request the form from the Gift Planning Department at (415) 869-7812 or RichardS@DioCal.org.



Time and Talent: Rose Scarff

By Barbara Burgess

Anyone who has received the laying-on of hands in the side chapel on a recent Sunday, or added someone to the prayer list in recent months, has been touched in some way by



Rose Scarff. The Healing Ministry Team is close to Rose's heart, and is something she's always had an interest in. "Since I am here (I am certain) because of healing prayer for me when I was a baby, I have always felt drawn to pray for the healing of others," she explains. "Doing laying-on of hands and praying out loud was a bit intimidating at first, but the rewards are many." One of those rewards is "praying for those who don't even know they are being prayed for."

Rose first came to St. James for the Christmas Eve Service in 1991 and started attending regularly in January 1992. She was first attracted by the building, then the friendly people and the liturgy. At one point she needed to spend several years back east for family reasons, then was delighted to return to St. James and re-involve herself in parish life. "St. James is a very friendly, welcoming place," she says, "and if you are looking for spiritual food and a place grow stronger with God, this is it, thanks to the people and the rectors here."

Rose says the main reason she attends church is to sing hymns. The choir was the first ministry she joined at Saint James, and she still sings in it. In fact, she says singing is its own reward. "I don't sing because I'm happy — I'm happy because I sing." The choir has been the catalyst for both her most memorable experience and her biggest challenge. "The main challenge for me in choir is learning the music, since we only practice just before the worship service. I don't have much musical training and no great talent, so I don't pick up new songs as quickly as some of the others. So I don't often feel confident when we are singing." Her most memorable experience came one year with a previous organist/choir director, Jim Casey. "He was a very talented young man and a good teacher. Our choir was bigger then, and we met on Wednesday nights for practice. Not only did we get a musical education from Jim, but we had a great time getting to know each other.

Jean Liston in particular used to have us in stitches with stories about her younger days in the choir when she lived in Colorado."

Rose also has fond memories of the Women's Group which was active when she first attended St. James. "We met every other Saturday morning for a short worship service and Eucharist and then for breakfast and discussion. I loved the fact that the women were all different ages and from all walks of life, so that there were many different views of whatever we were talking about. That group no longer meets, but I made many good friends through it."

Over the years Rose has also taken part in study groups, dream workshops, writing workshops, and Buddhist meditation offered at St. James. She was also invited to help with the Altar Guild, and says she is still learning the ropes for clean-up. "Giselle had to twist my arm a little to get me to help with Altar Guild, since I'm not too keen on housework, but it's not so bad now that I've done it a few times." Maybe it was her experience with the Altar Guild that gave Rose the inspiration to take on another form of "holy housekeeping" at St. James by joining the Vestry in 2010.

For Rose, the most rewarding part of parish life has been "getting to know the people of St. James better — we are a great bunch!"



Feasting on the Word

**A Journey through
the Gospel of Mark**

**Selected Thursdays
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**



*Bi-weekly Thursday evening meditations
on Scripture, using the ancient art of Lectio Divina
Dinner follows in the Parish Hall.*

*Join us this month on the 11th and the 25th
and on Saturday the 27th
for a special Quiet Day
of Reflection on the Passion*



Photo by Christie Higgins

Living With Mental Illness

By Christie Higgins

My dear fellow parishioners,

A mental illness or mental disorder is a disease, like cancer. Mental illness implies a chemical imbalance in the brain. My form of mental illness is Schizoaffective Disorder, which is incurable and is among the most disabling mental illnesses.

"Mental illness is a psychological or behavioral problem. Over a third of people in most countries report meeting the criteria for the major categories of mental illness at some point in their life." One view of mental illness, the diathesis-stress model, expresses the belief that the behavior of the mentally ill is both a "result of genetic and biological factors and of life experiences." This model assumes that there is a "predisposition towards a certain disorder in combination with certain kinds of environmental stress." (All quotations are from Wikipedia.)

In my case there was the existence of a dysfunctional, highly stressful, abusive, and alcoholic home environment, coupled with the considerably above-average amount, extent, and strength of stress that I withstood in the United States Army. I was, and am, extremely vulnerable; therefore less stress was needed to trigger my Schizophrenia. (I was schizophrenic in the U.S. Army; I am schizoaffective now.)

Schizophrenia, as described by Wikipedia, is a "psychiatric diagnosis ... characterized by abnormalities in the expression or perception of reality." Schizoaffective Disorder is "a mental disorder characterized by recurring episodes of elevated or depressed mood, or simultaneous elevated and depressed mood," combined with symptoms of Schizophrenia.

In the Army, I suffered from hallucinations – seeing people who weren't there, thinking that the television or the radio

was talking to me. I felt the stress physically, emotionally, and mentally. Currently I suffer from occasional bouts of depression, anxiety, obsession, and irritability.

Researchers Holmes and Rahe found that "the more life events were experienced, the more stress was experienced ... [and that] this could be linked to a person becoming ill." In my case I have experienced repeated homelessness, success, materialism, and conformism.

Since 2005 I have been treated by the top psychiatrist at St. Mary's Hospital. He provides state-of-the-art medications for me, as well as talk therapy.

Mentally ill people are usually suicidal, not homicidal. Psychological and social support, as well as medications and self-help, can improve their condition. Stigma and prejudice add to their suffering.

In Him,
Christie



Aspirations

By Jon Owens

HIV is still much on the minds of San Franciscans. Some people may be able to recall the AIDS epidemic, when people in our city were dying left and right. Where are we today?

How have things changed?

When I lived in Oklahoma and Nebraska I was often involved in helping fundraise for non-profits dealing with HIV patients and issues. Unfortunately it was looked on as a homosexual disease and had a lot of stigma attached to it. Today we see that the disease is on the rise in the heterosexual community and that people are more sexually promiscuous, fearing the disease less because it has become more of a chronic condition.

I am open about the fact I have HIV. I have begun trying to affiliate myself with the Stop AIDS Project (a non-profit organization) in San Francisco. This gives me a chance to help educate people about the disease. Today, multiple medications have extended people's lifespan to 37.5 years, and medication can be reduced for some people to



one pill once a day. I hope that, as scientific research continues, the numbers will improve even more.

Where is the community of faith in all this? I see an AIDS Memorial Chapel at Grace Cathedral, but where are we as a church doing education and relief work? The Episcopal Church USA advocates for both national and international health care bills in support of preventing and treating this disease. HIV efforts are a part of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, which we as a church support. Some dioceses, like the diocese of Oklahoma, have founded an independent non-profit to help with case management and support services to HIV-positive people in their community.

In a city like San Francisco, where HIV is so prevalent, where is the church-based outreach programs to show the church has its hand in support? Are we really looking at the demographics of our community? One in four homosexual people in San Francisco live with this chronic illness. And 13% of San Francisco is considered homosexual, according to some census estimates. If you do the math, this is a substantial number – and doesn't even take into account heterosexuals who have the disease.

The church has always had a role in healthcare in general. Today we see churches selling off hospitals, and less and less funding being allocated for chaplaincies and spiritual support services for the sick. Where do we as a church see our ministry of presence? I was so excited to hear from Mary Balmana that the Area Ministry team wants to

develop a healthcare program. I am not sure what they will be covering and to what extent, but at least it is a chance to branch out.

Do we as a church discuss HIV prevention or sex education with our youth groups? When I was a youth in the church they would talk to us on the subject once a year, and it was always an uncomfortable topic for the adults to address with the teenagers. When I was a youth minister this topic was never discussed, because parents did not want us talking about such issues.

Today I am proud of our public school system in San Francisco for trying to address HIV/AIDS, starting with basic information as early as kindergarten. In my YMCA after-school program, for World AIDS Day, we followed up the educational program by the student health services by having the students construct a paper AIDS quilt which hangs from the ceiling of the hallway in our school.

Now, one may ask: aren't there already social services in the city for people with HIV? I would contend that what we as a church can offer better than any other kind of organization or entity is faith, hope, and love. These are the virtues that I believe anybody with a chronic illness really needs. Take a moment and ask yourself: what would it look like to you if the church were to offer some sort of outreach service to HIV-positive people in our city? This, to me, is being faithful to the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.



*Support the CLC!
Support our local musicians!*

COME AND ENJOY

The St. James Chamber Players
Sunday March 7
7:00 p.m. in the Nave

Dvorak, Mozart, and Brahms
played by world-class musicians
from the SF Ballet Orchestra,
donating their time and talent
to raise funds for the Community Learning Center!
Suggested donation \$10.00



To SUPPORT and ENJOY this wonderful opportunity:

- Show up! We need more parishioners there!
- Volunteer to help with publicity or set-up! Contact Ed Wilcox at 415-412-6723

Spiritual Blessings of a Mentor and Friend

By Brenda C. Wong, MFT
California Counseling Institute

In an article I wrote for the Journal in May 2009, I described a significant person in my life, Helen, a woman who had passed away shortly before that writing and who had been like a second mother to me. Helen blessed me with a true “felt sense” experience of unconditional love and acceptance. I felt so “seen” by her and valued for just being me. In this article, I would like to expand on this theme of being blessed and gifted by special people who have touched my life in profound ways.

Another significant person in my life is Christina. It is not possible in this article to do full justice to her life, but I will attempt to share one eminent element of it. Christina, fortunately, is still alive on this earth plane. At age 80, she has been valiantly fighting a rare form of cancer.

When I first met Christina, a Marriage and Family Therapist, she was leading a dream group and woman’s support group that I had joined. That was more than 22 years ago. Over the course of these years she, like Helen, has given me the gift of love and friendship. She has also shared with me her wisdom about the human heart and spirit. This latter gift of her special wisdom, her relationship with spirituality, is what I would like to focus on for this article.



Christina was born into a Catholic family and, while choosing to be a “non-practicing” Catholic for a period of time, she connected with her spiritual nature in her own unique method of exploration. Along the way she has devoted herself to studying and delving into other practices to forge her own. Her process includes consistent



COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER ONGOING CLASSES AND EVENTS

For Children and Youth

Saturday Learning Time

9:00 a.m.-noon. Call 415-751-1199 for information.

ASPIRE After School Program

M-F 2:45-6:00 p.m. Call 415-751-1199 for information.

Suzuki Music Lessons

Call 415-412-6723 for information.

Youth Empowering Youth (Homework Help Center)

Call 415-751-1199 to volunteer.

Children’s Yoga with Ms. Homa

Call 415-752-2192 for information.

For Adults

“Always Active” Senior Exercise

Mondays 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall.
Wednesdays 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall.

Buddhist Meditation

Wednesdays 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

Overeaters Anonymous

Sundays 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. in the Caldwell Room.
Tuesdays 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

Debtors Anonymous

Tuesdays 5:30 – 7:15 in the Caldwell Room.

California Collectors Club

2nd and 4th Fridays, 6:00-9:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

meditation and prayer to the Christian God and Jesus, with whom she most resonates. Equally important, she finds much spiritual comfort and alignment with the Mother Mary, or, as Christina will often refer to her, the Divine Mother.

One message Christina conveys consistently to me is that I am surrounded by God's love, Divine Universal Love. This Love is eternal and omnipresent, ready and available to all who seek. She tells me that I just have to get quiet, pray, and meditate, and I will know; I just have to ask for help, and I will receive.

As stated earlier, Christina has been dealing with cancer. In her prayers and meditations, she has received the answer that this is not yet her time to die. Have faith! This is her message to her loved ones. Have faith that she has other work to do on this earth! Have faith that she is in "right" communication with God and the Divine Mother! Even if she were to die soon, she knows that she, her spirit, her soul, will be taken care of – another aspect of her deep, abiding belief, gained through direct communication with her Mother God.



She has encouraged me, oh so adamantly, to trust and to connect with this higher spiritual force, so that I can experience what she calls this "no-words-can-describe" phenomenon of Divine Love which she says encompasses all living beings. When

she describes these intense, personal experiences to me, I see in her face and body a transformation, a state of grace, as if she has been transported to another place, space, and time right in front of my eyes. Though I am no expert on religion or spirituality, I have heard people refer to the "many faces of God," and I know that I am witnessing one of them when I see Christina manifest her feelings. When I see and hear her spiritual truth and conviction in such palpable ways, and when I bear witness to a remarkable life lived with such love and soul, I can have hope and continue to develop more faith that I too am loved and at one with the Divine.

As I cling to my human attachment to having Christina in my life for as long as possible, I want to appreciate from day to day, every moment that I can, her spirit and this gift and message she brings me. In deep gratitude to Christina for blessing my life.



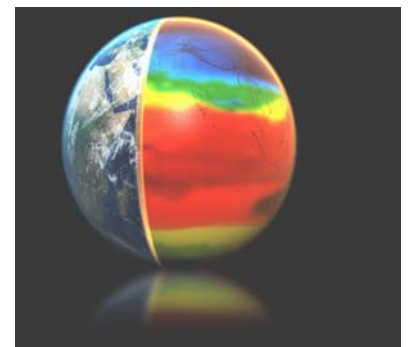
Hell and High Water Climate Change, Global Warming, and Other Matters of Consequence By James A. Turner

And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth!
– Matthew 13:42

And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.
– Genesis 7:12

Since the Diocese of California is active on environmental issues, I thought it appropriate to address the issue of global warming. Is global warming real? Are humans causing global warming? Is the Bible right – are we staring into the face of Apocalypse Now? Are we going to suffer unbearable heat? Are our coastal shores going to drown in rising sea waters as the Earth's ice caps melt? Are our populations and our agriculture going to suffer severe dislocations? These are some of the questions being raised, and herewith begins a series of little essays addressing some of the controversies over climate change and global warming. Certainly we and those who follow us have not only a vested interest in the truth about global warming but also an obligation to seek out this truth for the sake of humanity. We are not being served well in this endeavor by all the rumors, innuendos, and misunderstandings that currently abound.

I begin by stating that yes, global warming is a fact, and that periods of global warming have been a part of Earth's history for eons. I will, in the course of these essays, show you the evidence that makes it a fact. Yet there





are many doubters, and most recently, with snows on the East Coast heavier than any since records have been kept, we hear the loud voices of those doubters declaring that these winter snows are proof that global warming is a hoax, and so is the idea that man has caused or contributed to it – and they have pilloried Al Gore in the process. In contrast, there are knowledgeable scientists who tell us their records indicate that the last few years have been the hottest on earth for centuries.

Assuming for the moment that I am correct, that climate change and global warming are indeed facts, I have to ask why there is so much vehement opposition to these concepts. In answering this, one should keep in mind that climate change is an exceedingly complex phenomenon, the study of which involves climatology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, physical geography, paleontology, oceanography, and other sciences. These multiple scientific facets make climate change very difficult for the non-scientist layperson to understand, and I think that is part of the problem. Humans also have a natural tendency to deny what they don't understand and/or don't want to believe, and that contributes to the opposition. Making the problem of understanding worse is the lack of leadership, lack of understanding, and lack of political will to either understand or to lead, even if it might be in the best interests of humanity to do so.

A poll of the American public by the Pew Research Center in 2009¹ showed that the public understood that scientists thought carbon dioxide was responsible for global warming, and yet were lacking in understanding of the more complex scientific issues. For instance, only 32% of the public believes in evolution, in contrast to the 97% of scientists who fully accept it. If you would like to have a little fun, find out if you are more science savvy than the average American by taking the little twelve-question "Science Knowledge Quiz" from Pew Research by going to

¹ Pew Research Center, July 9, 2009: *Public Praises Science, Scientists Fault Public, Media*. Section 5: "Evolution, Climate Change, and Other Issues."

Google and typing in pewresearch.org/sciencequiz. This will bring up the quiz, which is quite easy to take.

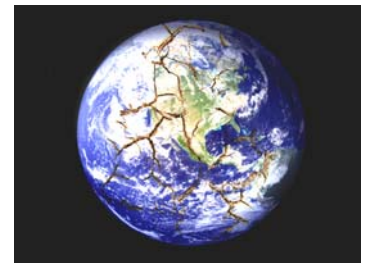
This essay will serve as a very brief introduction to climate change by outlining some of the important factors involved. Earth's climate is affected by two sets of major influences. The first set is of extraterrestrial influences, including solar output, earth-sun geometry, and interstellar dust. Solar output includes heat, light, and other forms of electromagnetic radiation which reach the Earth's atmosphere. Earth-sun geometry includes the Earth's changing angle of tilt toward the sun, its rotation on its axis, and the changing shape of its orbit around the sun. Interstellar dust includes all gas and dust which pervades the space between the stars, including our sun, and can affect the amount of sunlight reaching earth. All have an influence on Earth's changing climate.

The second major set of influences on Earth's climate is terrestrial, centered on Earth itself. These include ocean, atmosphere and land influences such as the chemistry of the atmosphere, reflection of heat from Earth's atmosphere and surface, the heat exchange mechanism between atmosphere and ocean, continental drift, and volcanic emissions into the atmosphere.

While keeping these influences in mind, I will explore some of the issues next time.



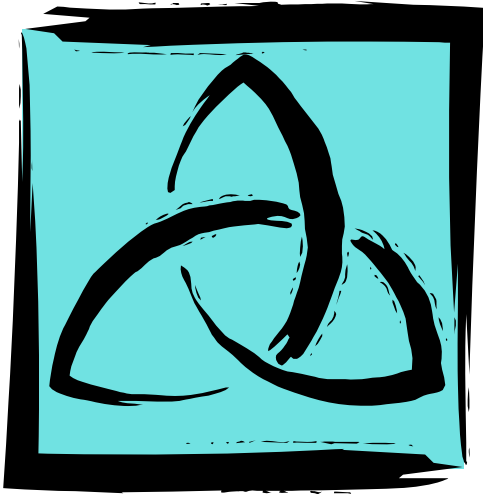
Almighty God,
in giving us
dominion over
things on earth,
you made us
fellow workers
in your creation:



Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the
resources of nature, that no one may suffer
from our abuse of them,
and that generations yet to come may
continue to praise you for your bounty;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

- Book of Common Prayer



This woman who suffered so much, and who was some times so hard to understand, had gone deep into herself ... and she came up with a plain and simple way to think of God. Nothing new, no crashing cymbals and rolling drums, no tah-dah, just something that she very evidently believed. Having arrived (perhaps laboriously, perhaps not) at this simple way to think of her God, she passed it on to her kids.

She now has no problems connected with life. I see her in her children's eyes. Now I know why Mary has such an uncomplicated way of looking at God, and why she sometimes smiles to herself in church.

Her mom taught her: God is Love.

Shalom



Thoughts While Shaving

By Ray Muñoz

Like a lot of other people, I have this picture of God as that tall, clean, white old man with a lot of hair. We have grown up seeing God depicted in this manner – so much so that cartoonists use it to show hapless, funny individuals going before God to get their funny comeuppance for their all too human infractions. To me, other more serious images of this kind (e.g., the Sistine Chapel) are just as meaningless.

What is a way to think about God without letting these images (graven images?) elbow out something that I can capture and hold on to? It's hard enough to be a part time agnostic....

Many years ago in Puerto Rico I had a nanny who warned me that *Papa Dios* – Daddy God – would punish me for being such a wise guy. This is the image that has lashed its octopus legs around my mind since those days: a punishing God.

Every once in a while I hear of a way to counteract this horrible image (I hope my kids don't have an image of me as a punishing dad!), and this way is a simple, clean, clear, and very sound way to get to the essence of God. So simple, so believable, that one would think that it came out of the mouth of some well known savant. In truth, the idea has been shouted from the tree-tops for ages, but it took one particular person to bring it to my attention in a new, fresh, and believable way.

My mother-in-law Pat recently passed away. Pat had Parkinson's Disease for some twenty years, and she also had a lot of other problems off and on, mental illness being one of them. Nevertheless she seemed placid in her illness, and when she passed away she did so with the grace of someone who had found a handle on life and on her coming death.



The Grace of Intercession

By Elizabeth Nelson

"[The prayer of] intercession brings before God the needs of others ... that God's will may be done."

-- *Book of Common Prayer*



For most of my life I've fought shy of what may be the best thing about me – because, well, that's what I do. Lately God has found a way to help me end that fight and

start becoming more fully, more usefully myself ... because that, bless God's heart, is what God does.

Here's what I'm talking about: For most of my life I've fussed at myself because I don't spend more time praying. I've prayed the way many busy Christians do – on my feet and on the fly, and in church on Sundays – but I've always had the sense that Someone wanted more of my time and attention, more opportunity to let a dialogue develop and a relationship grow. I wanted that too ... and I also didn't. I'm too reserved to pursue any relationship easily, including one with God; it's hard for me to believe that good can come of anyone, even God, getting to know me well. So I've flirted off and on with different forms and



schedules of prayer, never sticking with any of them for long, always aware of an unanswered invitation at the center of my life.

Then finally, one day late last year while I was fussing at myself again about praying and not praying, a simple quiet thought dropped into the middle of

the fuss and rearranged it. *Didn't you promise to pray regularly for the people on the St. James prayer list?* was the thought. *Forget about how prayer might affect your precious self; how about just keeping your promise?*

Bingo. Also, well, *duh*.

The next morning I was sitting at my desk before breakfast, with the prayer list in my hands. The following morning I was there again, and the morning after that. Soon I'd added a short reading as a starting-point, and a Collect or two from the Book of Common Prayer to conclude. Soon after that, it occurred to me (another quiet blast of the obvious) to follow up the St. James prayer list with a more personal list of my own. Relatives and friends and co-workers, including a few whom I struggle to forgive; loved-ones of loved-ones whom I'd promised casually at some point to "keep in my thoughts;" public figures for whom I have strong affection (or strong

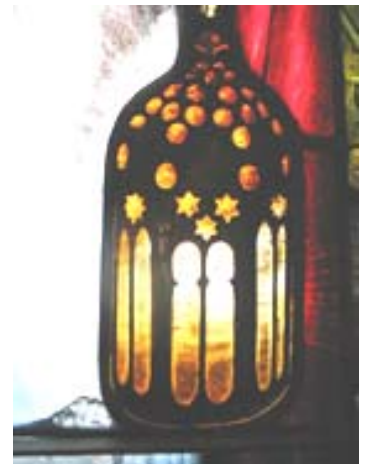
sentiments of another kind) ... they walk in and out of my prayers now on a daily basis, not just when I happen to remember.

I try to keep my prayer for each person as open as possible to God's will, even – especially – when I have specific ideas about what God should be doing. "Hold her in Your heart," is how it often comes out; or, "Give him what You know he needs." I pray in words, because I live my life through words; people who live through images, for example, might have an easier time praying by visualization. I know one faithful, feline-loving intercessor who pictures each person she prays for as a bedraggled cat, gradually relaxing and starting to purr in the warmth of a healing sunbeam. Kitty-prayer; why not? God seems to understand it.

Here's one image that often penetrates the wordiness of my own intercession: a huge bright net, woven from tiny strands of loving intention connecting your heart to mine, my heart to hers, each heart to God's. Every prayer adds another strand, strengthens our connectedness, allows more love and healing to move around the net.

I've used a lot of words to describe how I practice intercession; when it comes to describing the results, words and I fight shy of each other. What can I tell you, what can I possibly know, about the effects of my prayer in the lives of the people I pray for? God was busy loving them long, long before I started telling Him to; if my earnest, sleepy attempts to remember them in His presence have woven a few more strands connecting them to the Source of love and healing, then that's a blessing ... one that almost seems like none of my business.

As to the effects in my own heart and life – well, "spectacular" is not a word that accurately describes anything I do before eight o'clock in the morning. But it has been, it continues to be, extraordinary. Quiet, drowsy, cheerful, methodical, and simply extraordinary, in the simplest and most ordinary ways. That invitation that I fussed so long about answering? It's answered. That's all I'll say. Except: If you've been praying this way for years with no fuss whatever – thank you, and bless you. And if you haven't yet, or haven't lately – try it. Seriously. You're invited, too.



CALENDAR

- March 3 7:30 a.m. Morning Meditation and Eucharist at St. James (see p. 4)
6:30 p.m. NOMA Area Ministry Lenten Series, at St. James
- March 7 Commissioning of our new Vestry at 10 a.m. service
Healing Ministry Team meeting after 10 a.m. service
"Take Action Against Human Trafficking" Presentation after 10 a.m. service
7:00 p.m. St. James Chamber Players Concert (see p. 7)
- March 10 7:30 a.m. Morning Meditation and Eucharist at St. James (see p. 4)
6:30 p.m. NOMA Area Ministry Lenten Series, at Trinity Church
- March 11 *Lectio Divina: Journey through the Gospel of Mark* (See p. 5)
- March 14 St. James Chili Cook-Off!
- March 17 7:30 a.m. Morning Meditation and Eucharist at St. James (see p. 4)
6:30 p.m. NOMA Area Ministry Lenten Series, at St. Francis Church
- March 20 St. James Preschool Clothing Sale
- March 24 7:30 a.m. Morning Meditation and Eucharist at St. James (see p. 4)
6:30 p.m. NOMA Area Ministry Lenten Series, at Incarnation Church
- March 25 *Lectio Divina: Journey through the Gospel of Mark* (See p. 5)
- March 27 *Lectio Divina* Quiet Day: Reflection on the Passion
- March 28 -
April 3 Palm Sunday and Holy Week (See p. 1 for schedule of services)
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**We welcome your articles
on or before the 15th
of the month.**

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