**MISSION AND THE MASS**

*third in the series “Mission in the Diocese”*

Fr Richard Lewis, Priest-in-Charge
Church of the Holy Trinity, Danville

During the past few weeks, many of us have spent a lot of time in endless drive-thru lines which provide ample opportunity to read hundreds of bumper stickers. Every agenda, sport, college, honor student, and car dealership are well supported. We are reminded to vote, eat, co-exist, shop, pray, and even, yes, believe it or not, Go to Mass. While many of those sentiments certainly are deserving of a free car wash, the last one brings about images of priests with buckets and soft towels lovingly hand washing the vehicle of a faithful servant. But, simply going to Mass is just the beginning.

Jesus has said to us, “Be ye perfect.” He did not mean that He expected us to achieve perfection on earth, but He did mean that that must be our goal, and that we should not be content with anything less. The worldliness of our outlook is so ingrained in us that our achievements can in fact be very far short of those ideals.

God does not demand of us impossibilities, but what He does demand is wholehearted sincerity. The real gift we bring to the Holy Sacrifice is not primarily our own love and obedience—we are not our own saviors

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CONTRIBUTING

Communication serves a crucial function in every ministry. Sharing information among congregations, committees and individual members is no small task. Welcoming new members to our diocesan family also requires unique communication efforts at all levels.

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+Rt Rev. Daniel H. Martins

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MISSION AND THE MASS, continued
— but the love and obedience of Jesus, the Savior of all. However small our own contribution may be towards that gift, He will make up the entire difference; provided only that we keep on trying to do all that we can in the matter.

Often, we think of the act of Communion as our act of receiving. Our point of view may be that we come to the Holy Communion to receive all we can from God. Joyfully, then, we go out and receive all we can from others. Communion, rather, is God’s act of giving. We must think of ourselves as coming for God to give to us his Holy Mysteries, so that we may go out to pass them on in His Name to our neighbors. After Communion, Christ in His fullness is dwelling within us in our body and soul. An intimate union has taken place between Him and us. This we share and this we give as a gift from God.

Since we are spiritual creatures, the miracles God can do through us are spiritual miracles. We offer to God the perfect human life of Jesus, and with it we offer our own little lives. We give thanks over them and God transforms our gift making it heavenly and divine. As that transformation is revealed by the breaking of our own desires, the life which is heavenly and divine, that life of God can be given to all those whom we are around everywhere and every day.

A few years ago, when the vestry of Church of the Holy Trinity in Danville developed a strategic plan addressing both the physical and spiritual needs of the community, it was established that we are not program-centered or media-centered, but Eucharist-centered. While much of the plan was designed to be modified with changes due to time and circumstances, one aspect is always to remain constant: All that we do begins at the Mass, at the Altar of Sacrifice. All devotion, all study, all outreach, and all fellowship are the continuation of the offering made in the Holy Place. As the Our Father is the perfect prayer, the Mass is the perfect union of the Trinity and the Communion of Saints.

Here we offer our praise, our prayer, our intentions, and our thanksgivings. Here we receive, and then we give. The giving is the essential continuation of the Eucharist.

Jesus once wanted to feed five thousand people. He could not do it while He remained empty handed. All that anyone could give Him were just a few bits of food.

It was all that they could give Him. Therefore it was enough.
As I write, we are about three weeks into the second stage of the “Coronatide” season. By the time you are reading this, most or all of Illinois is probably in Phase 4 of the state’s reopening plan, with groups up to fifty permitted to gather, and indoor seating allowed in bars and restaurants, with appropriate distancing and masks. Most of the Eucharistic Communities of the Diocese of Springfield have resumed some form of in-person worship—of course, under highly restrictive conditions. This is not the beginning of the end, but it is arguably the end of the beginning.

COVID-19 precautions will be with us for several months to come. We will be wearing masks and maintaining a space between those who do not already live under the same roof for at least the balance of this calendar year. I’m hoping that we might be able to find a safe way to restore some level of congregational and choral singing at some point in the next few weeks, but I’m still gathering information on that subject.

Ever since the shutdown descended on us with a bang in mid-March, we have had to grope our way through this crisis with a great deal of improvisation. I am greatly gratified by the impressive and tenacious creativity demonstrated by our clergy and lay leaders throughout the diocese as we have sought to temporarily re-invent the look and feel and warp and woof of our common life. Not being able to come together in our church buildings for the celebration of the Eucharist on the Lord’s Day has required us to re-examine and re-think our very sense of identity as a Christian community. We’re not sure who we even are if don’t at least have the ability to be at Mass on Sunday.

Some good has come of this already. Patterns of keeping in touch with people, especially those who were already homebound before we all were and/or those who live alone have been made more robust. There is solid anecdotal evidence that the daily offices are being prayed more faithfully by more people than has perhaps been the case in the entire history of the Episcopal Church. There have been important teaching opportunities, especially around the (not always obvious) distinction between the celebration of the Eucharist and the reception of Holy Communion. We have thought through issues of worship and community and sacramental life in ways that would not have otherwise occurred to us. We have become more adept at using technology (like Facebook Live and Zoom) that will probably continue even after we are able to resume normal patterns of church life.

Part of this ferment has caused some to question the value of many tokens of communal Christian practice such as church buildings and furnishings, sacred art, and even the central necessity of the Eucharist itself. While these questions are perhaps all worth pondering, I’m reminded of the standard advice that policy decisions—or theological views, for that matter—should not be formulated in reaction to exceptional circumstances. I suppose there is a theoretical outside possibility that this particular novel coronavirus is a slowly-unfolding “black swan” event through which a providential God brings a conclusion to human history, and that the “life of the world to come” is a relatively imminent experience for all of us. It seems more likely, though, that, like all other epidemics, this one will wind itself down, one way or another, and exit the stage. Life will doubtless be inflected in some subtle ways, but we will largely return to the status quo ante.

With such a presumption, then, we can profitably reflect on the intricately complex but unified system that is the Church, the Body of Christ. If the baptized members of the Church make up the actual body, then might we suppose that this body is clothed? Our buildings, our beautiful altars and sanctuaries, our icons and paintings and stained glass and statues, our cemeteries and columbaria, the literal “fabric” of our enfleshed discipleship, constitute the apparel with which the Body of Christ is clothed. So ... yes, we do need these things. They act as a social lubricant, both for our benefit and the benefit of those whom we encounter in the world. In the hierarchy of revelation, Christ himself is the sacrament of God. This, in and of itself, answers the question about the necessity of...
FROM THE BISHOP

KEEPING OUR CLOTHES ON, continued

the Eucharist. It establishes the “sacramental principle, that God chooses to communicate himself via sacramental means. This makes the Church the sacrament of Christ. The actions we call “sacraments,” then, are the sacraments of the Church. The material fabric of church life “clothes” the sacraments in apparel appropriate to the occasion.

In the larger economy of grace, it all works together: the “human resources” of the Church, together with her “material resources,” present a “clothed” Body of Christ to the world. Part of the Church’s beauty is that she has a variety of different “outfits,” from the grandeur of St Peter’s Basilica to the humble simplicity of the “little brown church in the wildwood,” and everything in between. The need to find our way through the time of the virus has cut us off from our wardrobe. It is “meet and right” that we be about re-familiarizing ourselves with it. We want to be well-dressed, after all!

+Daniel

MISSION IN THE DIOCESE

THE GREAT COMMISSION
By the Rev. Dr Gregory A. Tournoux, Christ Church, Springfield

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20)

When someone is dying or leaving us, his or her last words are very important. In fact, they are, most of the time, their most salient. The Gospel from Matthew 28:16-20 depicts Jesus leaving His disciples with His Great Commission. The Great Commission was extremely critical to our Lord’s early disciples and for Christians throughout history.

You see, the Father God gave Jesus authority over heaven and earth. On the basis of that delegated authority, Jesus instructs His followers to make disciples. Put differently, Jesus still commands His people to tell others the Good News of His loving salvation, and to make them disciples for the Kingdom of God.

We are to go—whether it is next door, at work, or to another country—and make disciples. This call, moreover, is not an option. It is not a suggestion, it’s not an idea, and it is not a notion! It is a command of Jesus Christ, for all who believe in Christ as Savior and Lord. After all, we are asked in the baptismal covenant to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God and Christ.”

In all honesty, we are not all “evangelists” in the formal sense. But, we have all received spiritual gifts that we can use to help fulfill the Great Commission, so to be disciples who make disciples.

Furthermore, as we obey and reach out to others with Christ’s love and message of forgiveness, we have comfort in the knowledge that Jesus is always with us to empower us and guide us. He said, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” How can we share the Good News?

Invitation
First, remember that evangelism is a process. Evangelism takes time. Evangelism works through relationships. As Leonard Sweet puts it, “Post-modern evangelism…can be summarized in one word: Relationships.”

continued on next page
Herb Miller reveals the difference between thriving Churches and non-growing congregations with these words: *Person-to-person invitation.* Miller writes:

70 to 90 percent of persons who join any church in America come through the influence of a friend, of a relative, or of an acquaintance. No amount of theological expression from the pulpit can overcome a lack of invitational expression from the pews.

Having said all that, evangelism is praying for and then inviting our friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors to worship, or to mid-size gatherings such as picnics, Shrove Tuesday suppers, and more.

**Love**

Secondly, to do evangelism we have got to love people really well. We have to love people who would never set foot in a church or who are lapsed from the Church. The Lord is not contained inside the four walls of a church. Thus, we go with the Holy Spirit inside of us, reaching out to pre-Christians beyond the church edifice, as agents of LOVE. As John Maxwell says, “People don’t care how much we know until they know how much we care.”

Olympic snowboarder Kelly Clark put it this way, “My ministry, and what God is doing in my life, is really found in my career in the marketplace. I’m in an industry where it is very foreign and it’s very counter-cultural. I get to love these people really well who would never attend a church.”

That’s what we’ve got to do too: Be agents of love! Evangelism is person-to-person invitation to the life of the Church. Evangelism is loving people really well!

**Small Groups**

Finally, evangelism is bringing and including pre-Christians in small groups of 4-10 people, who meet weekly: for prayer; Bible study; caring relationships; loving fellowship; and ministry based on one’s gifts. Without any questions, the most fruitful and significant evangelism is the relational connectedness of a small cell group. Richard Peace states it this way:

In a successful small group, love, acceptance and fellowship flow in unusual measure. This is the ideal situation in which to hear about the kingdom of God. In this context, the “facts of the gospel” come through not as cold proposition but as living truths visible in the lives of others. In such an atmosphere, a person is irresistibly drawn to Christ by his gracious presence.

So, what is our call? What does the Lord ask of us? To be disciples, who make disciples! Invite people to the Christian community! Love people really well! And build ‘Great Commission’ small groups throughout our communities and beyond!

Remember that the “Harvest is plentiful.” Consequently, the Lord needs laborers to go out “into the harvest.”

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST DEACON**

Carter Aikin was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons by Bishop Martins on the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist at St Paul’s, Carlinville.
STEPPING OUT IN FAITH
By Dana Harris, Church of the Redeemer, Cairo

In January of 2018, the church purchased an abandoned office building behind the church with the vision we could grow our Outreach ministries. It was in rough shape, a roof that had leaked for years, the ceiling falling in and rotted studs from the moisture. We had a building and a vision but that’s about it.

Fund raising efforts started in earnest the first year and a half. We raised a little over the purchase price and back taxes that were owed.

To move our fund-raising efforts forward last fall a parishioner committed to match every donation dollar for dollar made thorough Christmas. That was just the nudge we needed for the Spirit of giving to move our hearts.

Next someone else stepped up and said they would match any donation made through Easter. We started sharing our story of how God is doing mighty things at the Church of the Redeemer in little Cairo, Illinois.

Jan. 2020, we started obtaining bids on restoring the property and the amount needed seemed unattainable. We had about a third of what was needed to repair the building, but the leaders of the church were moved to step out in faith and start the project trusting in God to provide. Construction started early February.

Every time our account would be down to a few hundred dollars and just about the time the next installment payment was due to the contractor, God would provide enough to cover the payment. Not once but several times.

Not only did he provide the funds, but he provided a contractor with the love of Jesus in his heart to do the work and people in the church donating their time and talents.

Stepping out we faced our fears of the unknown and failure of one more “coming soon” promise in Cairo that would never materialize. But here we are 2.5 years later in a beautiful house of God that will be consecrated by the Bishop next month.

I don’t know what stepping out in faith looks like for you: Whatever it is, don’t ignore it. Recognize it, act on it. It all starts with taking the step of faith involved in saying “yes” when God calls you to follow Him. Stepping out to do what seems impossible can be scary. Step out in faith that God will provide what you need to accomplish whatever he wants you to do. Go ahead and keep taking steps of faith, expecting God to give you everything you need along the way.
This time last year, June 2019, St Mary’s Episcopal Church didn’t exist—according to the internet anyway. We didn’t have a website and we were not on Facebook. If you did a search for St Mary’s, Robinson IL, you would have seen a generic Google Maps picture with the church partially obscured by a bulldozer being towed by. Last Easter, 2019, our worship schedule became variable after the retirement of the Reverend Ann Tofani (we still miss her). We needed a way to update members and visitors of our alternating worship schedule—different times and days each weekend. We reached out to Hannah Dallman, Diocesan Communications Coordinator, for help and we decided to go online. Hannah helped us set up a simple Facebook page last June. We used Facebook to post our worship schedule and what type of service— alternating between Morning Prayer on Sundays and Eucharist on Saturdays when the Reverend Ben Hankinson would celebrate with us (we miss him, too). At that time, we had no idea this Facebook page would go from an afterthought to a lifeline.

After the Covid-19 surprise, we followed local and diocesan guidelines and suspended services. Our last in-person service was March 8. For a few weeks, our members searched online for churches which had already jumped into online worship. I personally found myself Sunday morning internet surfing, listening to 4 or 5 sermons each Sunday: sometimes my sister’s Methodist church, my mom’s Baptist church, or maybe Fr Ben in Edwardsville or Fr Sean in Champaign or maybe my former Episcopal church in St. Louis. I noticed how very different each online service was. One pastor would sit with coffee at the breakfast bar in his house. Another would preach in a city park with birds and squirrels defying coronavirus precautions. Still others continued with full liturgies, vestments and Eucharist.

After about 3 weeks of this, it was clear we needed to do something to keep ourselves—St Mary’s—together as a community. Luckily, we had a resource from the digital generation. Morayo Akande, a lifelong Anglican and member of St. Mary’s, was only half a country away in Providence, R.I. and was willing to help. In fact, Morayo had already been helping the church in Rhode Island with moving worship and individual members online after they had suspended services. Morayo talked us through our options—either Zoom or Facebook Live. We decided I would be the first worship leader to try Facebook Live for Morning Prayer on April 5. Morayo helped Cindi, one of our last holdouts from Facebook, to get set up with a quick Facebook page and we were ready.

There was just one problem: I had given up Facebook for Lent! It seems God had different plans. (I was quite happy without Facebook, by the way.) The first edition of “St Mary’s Online” went better than expected with a bouncing membership of around 17 people that first Sunday.

Over the course of the week there were over 250 views of that service. (Granted, probably 50 of those were mine.)

Since that start, Morayo’s mom, Lorraine Akande, has led Morning Prayer and Bishop Martins enthusiastically granted Morayo a Worship Leader’s license and she has stepped up and led from Rhode Island, too. For Easter this year, we challenged ourselves and had a Zoom meeting worship service. Each person was encouraged to include flowers in their screen view which made for extra visual appeal and fellowship. Our next challenge will be Zoom singing together.

This is church in a way we would never have imagined. We’re checking on each other via Facebook post, text, phone call, Zoom meeting, and some even using old-fashioned US Postal service. The Spirit remains and we’re still a church together. Like us on Facebook!
HYMNS AND HOPS AT EMMANUEL, CHAMPAIGN

“What famous author thought hymns were ‘fifth-rate poetry set to sixth-rate music?’”

This and other questions like it added to the fun at Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church’s June event, Hymns and Hops, a hymn-sing-meets-pub-night that was planned by Emmanuel’s choirmaster, Christopher Mason; organist, Michael Fisher; and curate, Marisa Crofts.

The night opened with hymns from both Easter and Pentecost. Mason and Fisher recorded the hymns in Emmanuel’s sanctuary so that the participants could sing along in their respective homes. Favorites like “The Day of Resurrection!” and “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” gave everyone the chance to enjoy the music they had missed on those festival days.

For many of the attendees, Hymns and Hops was the first time in several months that they had opened a hymnal. “I was amazed how viscerally moving it was simply to be holding a Hymnal 1982 in my hands and singing the alto line along with my Emmanuel community,” said Mother Beth Maynard, Emmanuel’s rector.

Mason and Crofts then hosted the “pub quiz,” which consisted of 10 hymn-centric questions, including the above mentioned as well as stumpers like “Which British composer was the most prolific composer and arranger of hymns in the 1982 Hymnal?” (The answer? Ralph Vaughan Williams.) Much to no one’s surprise, Fisher won.

Following this was a brief devotional on Revelation 7 by Crofts. She began by wondering why the angels and heavenly creatures sang so much and concluded by observing that they sang in praise of a God who brought peace and unity out of violence and discord. “Every time we sing together as a church,” she said, “whether that’s in person during mass or right now thanks to the Internet, we join our voices with that heavenly choir, praising the God who was and is and is to come. . . . When we sing [we’re] telling our world—and ourselves—that we worship a God who sent his Son to die for us while we were still sinners, so that we might live eternally at peace with him.”

More hymns came after the devotional. These included “Be Thou My Vision” and “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.”

All in all, the participants were able to sing 12 hymns along with Mason and Fisher’s recording. “Hymns and Hops was a fun and engaging way for us to be as together as possible through the community of collective singing,” said Mason. The event will likely come around again—which will give us all time to study up on our hymn trivia, so that someone can challenge Fisher for the Pub Quiz crown.

To join our digital events, look for our Facebook page, updated daily.

FIRE AT ST PAUL’S, ALTON

Please keep the community of the Episcopal Parish of Alton in your prayers as they recover from a fire that badly damaged their property on June 23. We will follow their recovery with updates on our blog.
AROUND THE DIOCESE

NEPAL 2020
By Deacon Thomas Lankford

At the request of Bishop Barnabas Titung and Archdeacon Mahinda Garau, of the Church of the Himalayas, Elisabeth and I were again convinced to travel to Nepal to lead a series of seminars and visit with a number of local churches. We left Springfield Wednesday, February 20 for Chicago and then Thursday afternoon left O’Hare on Turkish Airlines for Istanbul. After 8 1/2 hours in the airport, we embarked on the last leg of the journey with a 10 hour flight to Kathmandu, Nepal.

We were met at the airport by Archdeacon Garau and his family and taken to his home in Kathmandu. We stayed with him and his wife Dipika, their two daughters Daisy age 7 and Glory, age 2. We enjoyed celebrating Daisy’s birthday and getting reacquainted with the family and the daily routine of the household. It hardly seemed that a whole year had lapsed since we were there.

Beginning Monday, Feb. 24th, I was privileged to lead a three hour seminar each day to a group of about 16 of local clergy (including Bishop Titung) on the Seven Anglican Sacraments. Fortunately, the class had a reasonable grasp of the English language, so it was relatively easy to cover the material and answer many of the questions. We celebrated an Ash Wednesday service, an uncommon liturgy for the local churches. I had the privilege to preach for the church service on each of the Saturdays. (The Christian church in Nepal holds their worship services on Saturday, as it is the religious day for the Hindu majority. Sunday is a day of work. The seminars resumed Monday through Friday.

Most of the following week was spent either teaching or visiting various house churches in the Kathmandu area. It is interesting to note that within the vast metropolitan area (7+ million population) there are many residential enclaves with distinctive backgrounds. The Sherpa community, originally from the mountainous region of Northern Nepal, has a thriving church in a very humble unmarked structure in rugged terrain.

On Sunday, March 15, Elisabeth and I were driven by our host from Kathmandu to Chitwan in South-central Nepal, about a 5 hour trip over two-lane mountainous roads which consisted of more potholes than pavement. We stayed in a very pleasant hotel in Chitwan with “western” toilets and hot water (not potable, but providing a much needed shower). Monday and Tuesday we spent the days in Nawalaparasi teaching an assembly of approximately 35 pastors from the surrounding area. It was 4+ hours each day (10 am to 3 pm) with a lunch break. Thanks to an excellent interpreter, it was possible to provide basic teaching on the Anglican perspective of the seven sacraments and a brief overview of the current status of the Anglican Communion and the Global Anglican Futures Conference. The question and answer periods were quite lively and suggest that they understood much of what was presented. It was a high-point of the trip for me to encounter so many committed faithful pastors in the face of obvious opposition to Christian ministry. Although officially “tolerated,” the government continues to harass, imprison, and oppose and Christian ministry in Nepal.

Wednesday was spent visiting six different pastors and churches in
the rural area of Nawalaparsi. We were told that the average attendance (Saturdays) in each of these churches was from 25 to 50 each week. Simple buildings with corrugated metal roofs, cement floors, simple lecterns, and a drum set for music with guitars. Usually decorated with colorful streamers and plastic flowers. Few plastic chairs, as most Nepali sit cross-legged on the floor. I was amazed that our host was able to locate each of these churches through a maze of dirt roads without any directional signs or instructions. GPS is unheard of, and road names or addresses are unknown. We were graciously received and spent time with each of the pastors and their families. It is a significant change from the well-appointed churches in the diocese of Springfield, but indicative of a vibrant faith in the face of difficult circumstances.

We left Chitwan Thursday morning to return to Kathmandu. En route we received a telephone call from our travel agent in Kathmandu instruction us to go directly to the Turkish Airline offices to arrange for the next available flight out of Kathmandu. We anticipated leaving the following Wednesday; however, the airport was being closed and flights were being cancelled. We were fortunate to be able to obtain confirmed seats on the only Turkish Airline flight the next morning to Istanbul, Turkey. We quickly packed and were driven to the airport next morning by our host and his family. We were required to be there 3 hours early, and most of that was consumed by customs, luggage check-in, and various passport and ticket confirmations. The plane was full with a wide variety of people, both young and old, and many nationalities. It was evident that this was the next to last flight out of Kathmandu for some unknown period, so Istanbul was one of the few destinations available.

We arrived in Istanbul Friday evening, having been told that we would not be accorded the overnight hotel stay we enjoyed last year. We had not arranged for an visa for Turkey. Checking with Turkish airlines, we found that they would provide hotel accommodation, so we finally obtained a short-term visa for Turkey and eventually were transported 45 minutes by bus to a reasonable hotel, QUA (different from the one last year, but given our condition, quite a lot better than sleeping in the airport). We learned an important lesson in the new Istanbul airport (significantly larger, newer, and much more efficient than O Hare) that when we asked for assistance in traversing the distances between the various agents, customs, security, etc. due to age (and feebleness) we could get wheelchair and assistants. It made getting through the various check points, etc. much faster and definitely easier. We availed ourselves of that service in both Istanbul and Chicago.

The new airport in Istanbul is reputed to be the busiest in Europe and the departure board which listed scheduled flights was composed of mostly cancellations with very few flights outbound. We boarded the Turkish Airline flight Saturday afternoon to O Hare. The flight was full, with no empty seats, as many individuals had been told that they had to leave their assignments wherever and return to the US within 24 hours. Many of the “younger” individuals on the flight were Peace Corp volunteers who had been directed to leave their posts within 24 hours and were definitely traveling light: backpacks only. Everyone seemed quiet and thankful to be able to be on a flight to the US.

We arrived home to the “shelter in place.” We are thankful for the trip, your prayers, and our health. It has been quite an “adventure” to be of some service in the name of the Church. As tiring (both physically and mentally) as it has been, the sense of accomplishment has been worth the effort. Thank you all for your prayers for our safe return. The experience was a strong reminder of how fortunate we are in the Diocese of Springfield.
Sometime this summer, I will retire. I shall have been ordained for nearly 47 years. In September of 1973, as a new deacon I became Curate of St Clement’s Church in San Clemente, California, which was then the Western White House during Richard Nixon’s presidency. After two curacies, in 1978 I became Rector of Blessed Sacrament Church in California, a position I held for 34 years. After a first retirement in 2012, I came to the Diocese of Springfield where I became part-time Priest-in-Charge of St Thomas’, Salem and St John’s, Centralia. That was more than six years ago.

Now I am approaching seventy-two and my career is mostly history. As I look back, I have lots of memories: being ordained with Harry Townes, a noted television/movie actor who became a good friend; celebrating Mass on a beach, in a forest, and on a mountaintop during numerous youth retreats; saying the Daily Office in a cave with several college students; an emergency baptism of a newborn triplet who would not survive, leaving her sisters to be raised as twins; ministering to a newly-converted young woman who had been raised by parents who were Satanists, and protecting her from their pursuit; becoming friends with the author Kathryn Lindskoog, a friend and correspondent of C.S. Lewis, who was confirmed in her house since she was paralyzed with M.S.; being the instrument that converted an exotic dancer who had attended a funeral at which I preached, and who remains dedicated to Christ more than forty years later; preaching at the funeral of a young murder victim in the presence of her murderer, who would not be arrested for about 15 years when technology caught up to the evidence; baptizing an old man on his deathbed who had spent most of his life as a member of a cult; baptizing a family of Jehovah’s Witnesses; ministering seven years to a woman who had been described by the police as “one of the most savagely abused children in California history” so that she could become functional in society; walking down California coastal highway 1 with a priest-friend in formal clergy suits, tennis shoes, and Navy pea-coats while cars drove by honking greetings to us; performing a wedding for a “punker” couple with everyone in the congregation festooned with spikes, tattoos, and dyed hair and the bride seven-months pregnant; the amazing infusion of hundreds of college students into the Anglo-Catholic church of which I was Rector; and working with a forensic psychologist to track down the actual murderer of a woman whose husband, a member of my church, had been arrested for the murder—and who remains in prison 28 years later through the indifference of the legal system. These are just a few of the memories that come to the surface without much effort.

I have performed about 150 weddings and the same number of funerals, baptized at least 500 people, and heard about 800 confessions. I figure that I have said Mass about 6,000 times and preached at least that many sermons. Like all priests and ministers of the Gospel, I have my share of failures and successes, of sins of which I am greatly ashamed and grace-filled acts for which I am grateful to our God who guides and empowers—and in everything I see his always-reliable grace and mercy and beauty.

Since 1973, the world has changed, the Episcopal Church has changed, and I have changed, and through the changes both the joys and sufferings of my ministry have been intense. Over the years I have been undeservedly loved by many people, and suffered grievously and equally undeservedly from the anger of a dozen or more others who projected on me fiery rage over hurt done to them by others. I have mental and emotional scars, and carry wounds that cannot ever heal in this life. I have learned what St Paul meant when he wrote, “Let no one trouble me, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” The marks are both evidence of deep suffering and tokens of the glory that ultimately triumphs.

But over-riding all, from the rich and heady days of seminary I can draw an unbroken line to my life today, and note surely that through the years there has always been the golden thread of all-encompassing joy that no one can take away. I lay down active ministry with a mixture of feelings—satisfaction, gratitude, poignancy, sorrow... Yet the priesthood remains at the core of my calling and therefore of my identity for ever. Praise be to Jesus Christ!
As we move into the various phases of reopening our churches and our communities, there are many other things which won't be on that list. Summer camps and programs, including our own Episcopal Church Camp, have been cancelled for the summer and left parents and children wondering what to do with their summer. Here are some ideas.

Pray and worship together. Whether you're gathering in person at the church or livestreaming from home, be sure to do it as a family. In the midst of so much change and uncertainty, the continuity of corporate worship for children and youth is important to know that God's presence is not limited to the good or easy times.

If you do find yourselves praying from home, be sure to be as engaged as you would be in the church building. Arrive on time and prepare for worship by quieting your minds and hearts before the Lord by turning off or removing extraneous distractions from the space. Likewise, when you would normally do things like stand, sit, kneel, or make the sign of the Cross during the liturgy, do the same in your living room. Sure, you might need to bring a pillow with you for your knees or make accommodations for space and physical ability, but in incorporating action helps bring about a fuller participation in our worship, particularly in a time when we are separated from each other and our regular worship spaces. Plus, it has the added benefit of getting little ones moving at various times throughout rather than expecting them to sit like statues on a couch for an hour.

Another consideration is praying together as a family outside of Sunday morning. The Daily Office is a great resource available in various formats from using a Book of Common Prayer and a Bible to downloading apps and other digital adaptations. Use whatever system works best for your family so that your children may see the example you set and the importance you place on prayer. And don't be afraid to talk about what is read. Even if you don't have all the answers, it's an opportunity to encourage questions and curiosity in our children about their faith as they grow in the knowledge of Scripture and of our Prayer Book tradition.

To spice things up a bit, you might consider taking some of these sessions outside as we often do at Church Camp. High noon might not be the best time in July and August, but if you're a family that likes to eat breakfast on the patio or that grills out for dinner, pray the Office or one of the Devotions for Individuals and Families before or after the meal. Do you have a firepit or gather outside later in the evening? Consider praying Compline by firelight or flashlight. As restrictions lift and more people are engaging in outdoor gatherings, consider inviting friends or neighbors to join you for one of these.

Speaking of neighbors, while this season may be tough for those with children and youth cooped up at the house for the last few months, consider taking this opportunity to reach out to those who may be shut in due to age or health considerations. Bring the kids along as you run errands for a member of the church family and explain why you're helping. Take a walk around the neighborhood and be proactive about waving and saying hi to those who can't or don't get out very much. If they're up to it, maybe even invite them to one of those outdoor gatherings mentioned above. However you go about it, model what compassion for others looks like even in the midst of your own trying times.

Another option is to incorporate arts, crafts, and music into your repertoire. The resources available online are almost limitless in terms of generating ideas. While you may wish to hold on to some of their creations, this is another area where we might encourage a card, drawing, or project created for the purposes of giving it away. Who knows what a hand-drawn card with the simple words, “Jesus loves you,” on it might do to brighten someone's day or to spread the Gospel to others?

These ideas are just the beginning of what you and your families can do with the extended time together this summer. If you’ve got some great ones, share them with us and with others. Whatever you do, be intentional about the role of faith in your family by the activities which you choose so that you may grow together in the love of God and of neighbor.
ECW ANNOUNCES OUTREACH FUNDRAISER

Each year, the Diocese of Springfield chapter of Episcopal Church Women raises money for a different Outreach Project. The chosen project for 2020-2021 is The Kwek Society (Kwe’k means “women” in the Potawatomi language).

The Kwek Society provides first-period kits and educational materials, pads, tampons, and underwear to Native American girls and young women without ready access to these expensive supplies. Many Native American young women, particularly those living in the rural US, do not have access to a sufficient number of pads and tampons when they have their periods. As a result, they may skip school altogether, suffer embarrassment or ridicule during the school day, or impact their health by using supplies longer than intended or by making do with makeshift supplies like wadded up toilet paper. To protect their dignity and health, the Kwek Society provides pads, tampons, period kits/moon bags, puberty/period education materials, and underwear to Native American girls.

We encourage you to pray for the young girls and women and to give generously to support this year’s diocesan ECW project.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

You can find the most up-to-date Deanery Reports at our website at: https://www.episcopalspringfield.org/diocesan-documents-reports

You can find the latest news and stories on our blog at: https://www.episcopalspringfield.org/category/blog/

Please include those in our diocese who are pursuing Holy Orders in your prayers:

- Dante Anglin, Postulant - St Michael’s, O’Fallon
- Michael Clark, Postulant - St Mary’s, Robinson
- Devin Fryling, Postulant - St John’s, Centralia
- Mark Klamer, Postulant - St Michael’s, O’Fallon
- David Knox, Candidate - Trinity, Mattoon
- Timothy McNutt, Postulant - Episcopal Parish of Alton
- Pete Sherman, Postulant - St Luke’s, Springfield
- Danny Shuler, Postulant - St Thomas, Salem
**JULY (remainder)**

19  Bishop w/ Church of the Redeemer, Cairo

26  Bishop w/ St George’s, Belleville

**AUGUST**

09  Bishop w/ St Paul’s, Pekin

15  Diocesan Council, 10 am
    Diocesan Center, Springfield

**SEPTEMBER**

13  **DEANERY MEETINGS**
    Darrow Deanery, 3 pm
    St Thomas’, Glen Carbon
    Eastern Deanery, 2 pm
    Trinity, Mt Vernon
    Northeastern Deanery, 4 pm
    Holy Trinity, Danville
    Hale Deanery, 2 pm
    St Mark’s, West Frankfort

20  **DEANERY MEETINGS**
    Northern Deanery, 2 pm
    St Matthew’s, Bloomington
    Northwestern Deanery, 3 pm
    Trinity, Jacksonville

27  Bishop w/ St Matthew’s,
    Bloomington

**OCTOBER**

02-03  **143rd SYNOD**

04  Bishop w/ St Stephen’s,
    Harrisburg

13  Bishop w/ All Saints’, Morton

18  Bishop w/ St Mark’s,
    West Frankfort

25  Bishop w/ St Mary’s, Robinson

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