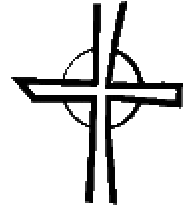


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THE SPOTLIGHT WINTER 2007

INCUMBENT'S MESSAGE

We Are on the Road with Jesus

The gospel reading for the second Sunday in Lent this year relates how Jesus receives a warning that Herod Antipas, the local ruler, wants to kill him. Jesus reply to this advice is rather strange. He declares that he is busy today and tomorrow casting out demons and healing the sick, and, on the third day, he will reach his goal. Jesus says that he is now on his way, and then he implies that he will accomplish his purpose only when he reaches Jerusalem.

Jesus claim is that even another person's murderous intentions cannot divert him from where his course is taking him. Jesus has discerned where his heavenly Father has wanted him to go. Our salvation will not happen unless Jesus has fulfilled that divine will to its ultimate end in Jerusalem. For that reason, Jesus had determined that, whatever others like Herod might intend for him, it only matters what God ordains. Jesus will remain utterly faithful and push on to where God the Father has directed him.

Luke has artfully arranged his gospel to convey the inevitability of Jesus' progress towards Jerusalem. From the ninth chapter of this work, where Luke announces that as "the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face towards Jerusalem," until its completion fifteen chapters later, the events related in Luke's gospel occur either on the way or in Jerusalem.

There is nothing stopping Jesus. Likewise in the second volume of the work that Luke has authored, the Acts of the Apostles, the word of Jesus spreads forth from Jerusalem in ever-widening circles until it reaches its eventual destination in Rome.

Luke wants the reader to realise that, from Galilee to the capital of Judaism in Jerusalem, and then from Jerusalem on the outskirts of the Roman Empire to the very centre of Mediterranean culture and government in Rome, the message of God's love for us that Jesus bore proceeded inevitably. Nothing deters what God sets forth to have happen. Just as Jesus continued on his way to Jerusalem, despite the warning about Herod, so the disciples realised that he was now continuing with them in that same spirit on the route from Jerusalem out into the wider world

That poses for us the central question of the Easter season that we are about to enter. If Jesus continues to walk with us on our road to Emmaus and onward, what are the opportunities and challenges that we see? Where are we travelling and what will endanger us on the way? What goal has God set for St. Matthew's, Oriole, that is so compelling that we will defy the threats of Herod?

What are we willing to risk and to sacrifice in order to embark on the adventure of a world in which the living Christ is present? How do answers to these questions affect the use of our resources, especially in the allocation of our time and money?

For us to envision this future for our parish about what God is calling us to accomplish, we will need to have as many of our members as possible involved in the process. When each of us has had an opportunity to be involved in giving our opinions and helping to shape the vision of where we are going, then we will know even more certainly that Jesus remains present with us. It is in us together that his Holy Spirit is now incarnate.

In order for us set in view ahead of us the destination towards which we wish to travel, we will have to establish what we have the capacity to do. We therefore need to explore the identity of this congregation that we have established on the basis of our past accomplishments. We will then realise the possibilities this identity holds for the future. We will have to examine what is happening in the vicinity of our church building and determine what connections our congregation currently has with what is now happening in this neighbourhood.

The mission that our parish will have before it must takes into account the culture and the environment in which the congregation is situated. It will take into account the gifts of each member of the congregation and base itself on the core values here of the congregation. Therefore, a team of our advisory board members are now contacting ministry groups within our parish to conduct discussion with their members about their experience with the group and what they have found most fulfilling and exciting about their involvement with it. Then our team will ask what the group thinks that it might do further to enhance the health and vitality of our parish.

Our team working on this visioning is doing demographic research on our local neighbourhood at Don Mills and Sheppard. It is trying to develop some processes to help our parish to think strategically in developing a plan for us to follow over the next few years.

We will want to reflect on this in the light of the scriptures and our traditions of the Anglican Church.

Finally our hope is to bring all this to a weekend intergenerational congregational event in which as many members of the parish as possible come together in order to assess what we have been learning and to find our direction for ministry. Once that we have, in our weekend congregational workshop, reviewed our environment, assessed our gifts, and determined what our mission and our part in making our dreams a reality, might be, we will set specific strategies with measurable goals and criteria for success. We will draft our strategies for implementation in the smaller team, but the planning team will continue to share regularly with all the ministry groups in the parish what it is proposing for us.

Therefore, I hope that most of you involved in the ministry of the parish will have a chance to participate in the discussions over the next six to eight weeks as we prepare for the weekend parish planning conference. Then watch for announcements of the conference itself to be held in mid-May or early June. We would like to have as many parishioners as possible involved in that weekend, beginning with Friday evening, continuing through Saturday morning and afternoon, and concluding with worship on Sunday morning. It will be wonderful for us to celebrate Easter by accompanying Jesus “on the way” as we set forth for our next objective.

May you have a happy Easter,

Rev. Brad Lennon



An Introduction to the Services of Holy Week and Easter



Passion/ Palm Sunday

The sixth Sunday in Lent is **Passion/Palm Sunday**, emphasizing the Passion of Christ that was preceded by the short-lived, but exuberant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Many recall Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as Palm Sunday, which it has been for much of the twentieth century. Many of us remember when Passion Sunday was observed on the fifth Sunday in Lent. With the revision of the ecumenical calendar and the introduction of the Common Lectionary/Revised Common Lectionary, the proposed liturgy for this day moves from a lesser emphasis on the palms (Liturgy of the Palms) to the greater emphasis on the Passion (Liturgy of the Passion).

The word "passion" has powerful implications. Theologically, we use it to describe the suffering love that Jesus had for each of us when He was beaten, mocked and crucified. The world counterfeits this word by applying it to strong feelings of romantic, even lustful, attraction, but we also use it to refer to an obsessive drive that motivates us to do something we enjoy or greatly care about, which is why we can say that Jesus cared passionately about us while enduring The Passion.

The strong love that Jesus exhibited in His ministry and on Good Friday is a lesson on what it means to have "compassion" for others: We walk with them in their sufferings, we "suffer with". It's passionate love in its holiest form.

Read the scriptures for Passion Sunday with an eye on how much they reveal Jesus' passionate love for you. See yourself in the passion of the people who enthusiastically welcomed Jesus and in those who rejected and denied Him. Consider how much compassion Jesus must have had for you when he suffered and died for us.

Tenebrae

A new service of worship that we are introducing this year during Holy Week is called Tenebrae. It comes from a service in the early Church, taking its name from the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows".

The Tenebrae service recreates emotional aspects of the Passion. With each reading from scripture, a candle is extinguished. Gradually all the candles are put out until only a single candle, symbolizing our Lord, is left remaining lit. Then, toward the end of the service, the Christ candle too is hidden, as a sign of the apparent victory of the forces of evil over good. Yet, at the very end of the service, a loud noise is made (the "Strepitus") that signifies the closing of the tomb and the earthquake at the time of Jesus' death. The hidden candle is then restored to its place, showing the ultimate triumph of good over evil. By its light we will all depart the church in silence.

The Easter Triduum

The term Triduum means "three days." What the Triduum commemorates, that which makes it the "culmination of the entire liturgical year," is the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus was willing to die for our sins and was resurrected, death no longer is the end of life for us. It is the beginning of new life. We gather at the Easter Triduum to remember the saving act of Jesus and the miracle of his resurrection. Because Jesus died and was resurrected, we live.

The three days are counted as the Hebrews counted their days, from dusk to dusk. Therefore, the three days of the Easter Triduum are from dusk on Holy Thursday to dusk on Good Friday (day one), dusk on Good Friday to dusk on Holy Saturday (day two), and dusk on Holy Saturday to dusk on Easter Sunday (day three). Each of those days "tells" a different part of the story of Jesus' saving action. On Holy Thursday we remember the Last Supper. Jesus gives us the Eucharist and tells us to "Do this in memory of me." He then washes the feet of the apostles. On Good Friday we remember the passion and death of Jesus. We celebrate the resurrection of Christ either at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night when new members are baptized and welcomed into our Catholic community or on Easter Sunday morning.

We look at the Easter Triduum as one single celebration that lasts for three days. We cannot separate the death of Jesus from his resurrection. We do not spend all of the three days in church, but at various times during those days, we are called to church to gather and remember together. When we are not in church, we are asked to keep the spirit of those days even in our homes, if possible. Those days are not days of "business as usual."

Maundy Thursday

Owing to the general use of sandals in Eastern countries the washing of the feet was almost everywhere recognized from the earliest times as a duty of courtesy to be shown to guests. The action of Christ at the Last Supper (John 13:1-15) invested this act with a deep religious significance. Following his washing of the disciples' feet, Jesus told them, "*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*" In Latin, the word used for "commandment" was *mandatum*, which led to "Maundy" Thursday. Therefore, churches today continue the practice of foot-washing on Maundy Thursday.

Foot-washing may seem a little out-of-place today. Most of us wear shoes that keep our feet clean from the roads on which we walk. Kneeling in front of a friend or stranger, pouring hot water on their feet, and gently toweling them dry helps me remember to follow Christ, who "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant." For those who allow me to wash their feet, you will remember Peter's questioning of Jesus: "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Surely I am unworthy to be served in this fashion! Therefore, the foot-washing obliges us to be humble and obedient, to give thanks and receive the grace that others offer to us. It is good preparation for Friday, when we meditate that Christ was not only willing to wash our undeserving feet, but to give his life that we might be redeemed. For all that the Thursday in Holy Week derives its name from the "Maundy" of this obligation, the focus of most Maundy Thursday services is in our commemoration of the institution of the Last Supper, the founding of the eucharistic sacrament in which we share in Christ's body and blood.

Good Friday Liturgy

Because of the reading on Good Friday of John's account of Jesus' Passion, we often think of this day from the same view as the other three gospels. Lent, however, ended at dusk on Thursday. Good Friday is not a time a sadness, but rather, in the light of John's gospel, we should experience it with anticipation of what is happening with Jesus in this gospel. For all the austerity of the stripped altar and lack of furnishings in the church, John wants to see Jesus' mounting the cross as his being taken up, in one single action, into the resurrection and ascension to the throne of heaven.

We begin the service in silence with no procession. There is no need to process. This service does not stand alone; it is a continuation of what began on Holy Thursday. After the Passion we are reminded that there are many people in the world who need our prayers, and so in our role as priestly people we pray a more lengthy and elaborate form of the General Intercessions.

Then a cross, the symbol of our salvation, is brought forward for us to hold in the highest regard. The veneration of the cross is a practice unique to Good Friday. It is our opportunity to humble ourselves before the awesome saving action of Christ. We approach the cross and acknowledge its power in a number of ways. We can genuflect before the cross, kiss it, kneel before it, touch it with our hand, or stand before it and say a short prayer. The method we choose to show our respect is our own choice. After veneration we might want to follow the stations of the cross around the worship area. Or we can leave church in silence to continue our prayer at home and then to return to the church on Saturday evening for the Easter Vigil.

The Easter Vigil

The earliest Christian observance of Easter consisted of a vigil of watching and waiting, fasting and prayer, that lasted through the hours of darkness. Because the vigil began after evening prayer when, as every night, the evening candle was lit, in the Western church on this particular night this light ceremony was eventually understood as symbolising the return of the light of Christ and the beginning of the Easter celebration.

The Easter Liturgy contains four main elements which are intended to form a single whole but may also be celebrated separately, as is shown in the different ways that Churches over the years have used and adapted the material. These elements of lighting the Easter Candle and hearing the scriptures developed into two of the four key constituent parts of the Easter Liturgy, namely the Service of Light and the Vigil of Readings. The other two are the Baptismal Liturgy and the Eucharist, or Holy Communion.

The Vigil is probably the oldest feature of the Easter celebrations. From its earliest times the Church would keep watch through the night and meditate on the mighty works of God. They would pray until the earliest hours of the morning when Christ's resurrection was acclaimed. The Vigil is properly a service for the night and begins at sunset on Holy Saturday. The heart of the Vigil is the reading of key passages from Scripture telling of God's saving love.

The Service of Light proclaims the resurrection of Christ from the dead in word and action, in silence and sound. The Easter Candle, symbolising Christ, the light of the world, is lit and carried through the Church and progressively passed to the whole congregation. The Exsultet, an ancient Easter Song of Praise, is sung as the climax of this liturgy.

The Baptismal Liturgy marks Easter Liturgy as not just one of the Easter services but a major Baptismal event, because baptism and Easter have been closely linked from at least the end of the second century. Lent became the period of preparation for entering into the Church's fellowship through baptism at Easter. Candidates entered into the life of Christ's death and resurrection in the midst of the Church's celebration of them. It is therefore appropriate that there should be a celebration of Baptism and/or confirmation on Easter Day, or at the very least, there should be a Re-affirmation of Baptismal Vows by the Christian community as a public declaration of their union with Christ in his death and resurrection.

The Eucharist is the proper climax to the Easter liturgy when we are sacramentally reunited with our risen Lord.



Holy Week Schedule

Palm/Passion Sunday ~ April 1

- 8 am. Blessing of Palms,
Reading of the Passion Gospel
and said Eucharist
- 10 am. Palm Processional dramatic reading of
the Passion Gospel and Sung Eucharist

Monday in Holy Week

April 2

- 7 pm. Homily and said Eucharist

Tuesday in Holy Week

April 3

- 7 pm Tenebrae (Latin for darkness) is an ancient Christian service marked by the gradual extinguishing of candles until only a single candle, considered a symbol of our Lord, remains.

Wednesday in Holy Week

April 4

- 7 pm. Homily and said Eucharist

Maundy Thursday

April 5

- 8 pm. Commemoration of the Last Supper,
Foot Washing, Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday

April 6

- 10 am. Good Friday Liturgy, Via Dolorosa and
Stations of the Cross

Saturday

April 7

- 8 pm. The Great Vigil of Easter, Service of Light
Renewal of Baptismal Vows, and
First Eucharist of Easter

Easter Day

April 8

- 8 am. Day of Resurrection
- 10 am. Choral Procession and Sung Eucharist

Seven Stanzas at Easter

by John Updike

Make no mistake: if He rose at all
it was as His body;
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the
molecules
reknit, the amino acids rekindle,
the Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,
each soft Spring recurrent;
it was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled
eyes of the eleven apostles;
it was as His Flesh: ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes,
the same valved heart
that — pierced — died, withered, paused, and then
regathered out of enduring Might
new strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,
analogy, sidestepping transcendence;
making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the
faded credulity of earlier ages:
let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mache,
not a stone in a story,
but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow
grinding of time will eclipse for each of us
the wide light of day.

And if we will have an angel at the tomb,
make it a real angel,
weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair,
opaque in the dawn light, robed in real linen
spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,
for our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are
embarrassed by the miracle,
and crushed by remonstrance.

(John Updike, *Telephone Poles and Other Poems*
[New York: Knopf, 1964], 72-73)

Faithworks Campaign 2007

Each year over 200 parishes and congregations participate in the annual Faithworks appeal to raise funds for 13 community ministries and 3 partner agencies. These provide services to those most in need across the Diocese of Toronto. This year our campaign at St. Matthew the Apostle Church will begin on Sunday, April 15, and will continue for the following three weeks. Watch for the campaign materials, posters and brochures, to be set out just before Easter.

The theme of the campaign is Building Communities of Hope. It reflects our diocesan goals of

- Making our Anglican life seeker friendly;
- Creating distinct and supportive ministries which respond to and reflect the diversity of our society;
- Advocating Christ's message by being a courageous and persuasive voice for the homeless, the poor and the marginalized.

On Sunday, April 22, we are hoping to have the Rev. Andrew Wesley, of the Toronto Urban Native Ministries, speak to us about his work. It is one of the Faithworks funded ministries that we have supported. The Toronto Urban Native Ministry provides social services and pastoral care to disadvantaged Aboriginal women and youth. In this past year, Faithworks, in a joint effort with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, has funded at the Toronto Urban Native Ministry the social worker to counsel homeless native people in downtown Toronto.

Faithworks also permits a portion of funds raised for FaithWorks in our parish here to be retained for our own outreach projects. Therefore, look for our own Outreach Committee members to speak about Faithworks on Sunday, April 30. Faithworks raised \$3,128 in this parish in 2006, up from \$2,332 in 2005. Let us see if we can improve as well in 2007 as we did last year, by raising \$3500 this year towards the overall diocesan goal of \$1,500,000.

Ladies Appreciation Brunch

Men of the parish invite the women of the parish, (of all ages) to attend a Brunch in their honour on Sun. Apr. 29 at **11:15 am.** in the Fellowship Hall. Men interested in assisting please speak with Bob Stevenson. To order the proper food quantities, we will ask you to sign up a week or two in advance, please watch for future notices. Donations at the brunch are welcome to help defray costs.