

C SAINT JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH CORNERSTONE



December 2006



*Frost and cold, ice and sleet,
glorify the Lord*

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Editorial: Goodness and Mercy

The Christian new year, unlike its western and Chinese counterparts yet to come in January and February, begins softly and without fanfare. The picture is one of darkness, but with an all-important far off light and the focus is on house cleaning. The story line is epic - a promise made so long ago no-one can remember when is about to be kept, and will involve the intersecting of God and human kind. The transforming event which captures our attention throughout this Advent season is in fact something that happens all the time - an unexpected, yet joyfully received pregnancy.

The most exhilarating and perhaps the times of greatest potential in our lives are when some fresh possibility is on the horizon. In a sense we live out our days as an Advent people. This past year as we celebrated 125 years as a parish, we searched for and found a new rector in Fr. Mark. The seeds of something entirely new are constantly being planted in our minds and bodies and souls. Some of them will take hold and ultimately find unique expression through us alone. The joyous anticipation that we feel in our personal advents is evidence that the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in the plans and dreams that we hold dear. It is God's intention that through the events and contacts in our lives we participate in the building up of the Kingdom and we can renew that role each Advent by following Mary's example. In the middle of the turmoil and confusion of our times, we can with great humility say *yes* to the Lord by owning past errors and altering behavior in order that our energy and initiatives continue to reflect His purpose and love.

As people of faith, we understand that the earth is a crucible and our lives the active ingredients for God's creative genius. Surely the very reason for our being is to gestate and give birth to goodness. Through words and actions we are to be seen as agents of hope, as assurance that God's promise has been kept and living evidence that he is indeed with and in his people. For it is a willingness to open our humanity, indeed to soften our hearts towards each other, that allows the mystery of God to be welcomed into our midst and to bear fruit.

2000 years ago Jewish people of good faith shared a growing confidence that a Messiah would come. God would send His people a new leader; a king, a guide to freedom, peace and fulfillment. Their prayers were about to answered in the most extraordinary way! This December at St. James' we anticipate new life, deeper faith and nativities of our own creation. Advent is about repentance and forgiveness and starting over, it is about the efficacy of hope and the affirmation and triumph of good. Our faith tradition identifies God as present in every human life and it is that truth which is about to be re-born into the world, into our parish and into the hearts and souls of each one of us.

Allan Duncan



Words of Encouragement

messages of love for the people of God

Across the centuries Christians have spent Advent reading and listening to the Gospel narrative that leads to the birth of Jesus Christ. Luke sets the scene precisely and, quoting a metaphor that would echo through the literature and music of the ages, he tells us the story of John the Baptist and his message of repentance in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Sincerity in our desire to turn away from sin and towards God is an instinct that slants us in the direction of the nativity and the hope that this birth can represent in our own lives. As we anticipate the arrival of none other than the Son of God, we are called to let go of all that separates us from His love and are reminded of exactly how to do that in the ancient words of the prophet Isaiah.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Taconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

*“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.
And all people will see God’s salvation.”*

Luke 3:1-6 TNIV

Cornerstone

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Cornerstone is published fourteen times a year, including special Christmas and Easter editions. We are pleased to receive articles from the parish family for printing in *Cornerstone*. If you have an idea for an article for our reporters to write, please contact Allan or Gail.

The cost to our parish of publishing *Cornerstone* is \$15 a year if you pick up your copy at church, \$30 if it is mailed to you. Donations to support this ministry of the printed word are greatly appreciated, and may be offered through your envelope (clearly marked *Cornerstone*) or mailed to the church office.

Advent Lessons and Carols

The carols sung at the Advent Service of Lessons and Carols, and throughout the subsequent liturgical seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, have deep roots in the tradition of Christian worship. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, carol-singing had become an integral element of seasonal worship. Though carols, and indeed the celebration of Christmas itself, were banned in England by the Puritan regime of Oliver Cromwell during the seventeenth century, they were preserved and augmented in the New World, and eventually restored as a beloved tradition in Britain.

The Service of Nine Lessons with Carols was first drawn up in 1880 by Archbishop Benson when Bishop of Truro for use in that cathedral on Christmas Eve. This service was later simplified and modified for use in King's College Chapel, Cambridge for Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had just been appointed Dean of King's after experience as an army chaplain which had convinced him that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship. Dean Milner-White went on to devise an Advent Carol Service in 1934.

Since then, this service has been adapted and used around the world at Advent and at Christmas time. Wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service, as Dean Milner-White pointed out, derive from the lessons and not the music. According to him, "the main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God seen through the windows and words of the Bible."

As in past years, the St James High Mass Choir will be joined by the Abendmusik Vesper Choir in singing this service on Sunday, December 10, at 5:30 PM. The service this year will include musical settings by Distler, Stanford, Tomkins, Handl, Guerrero and Palestrina. The offering taken will benefit the Saint James Music Academy. Plan to attend!

Gerald Harder

Step Ministry Christmas Gifts

Would you like to give a Christmas gift to one of Fr. Matthew's step ministry contacts? Nancy Zimmerman is organizing a "street shoebox" initiative (based loosely on the Samaritan's Purse schoolchildren's project). If you would like to fill a shoebox with approx \$50 worth of gifts (perhaps some people could pair up), read on! Contents should total approx \$50 per box, to ensure equitable distribution. Please combine from the following list:

- ✦ Warm wool socks - new only
- ✦ New gloves - new only
- ✦ Booklet of 1 Zone bus tickets (approximately \$19)
- ✦ Phone card for \$10 or \$15
- ✦ Consumable treat in sealed wrapper (Toblerone, other chocolates)
- ✦ Starbucks gift card (\$15)
- ✦ Packs of Cigarettes (\$8)

All gifts must be new – no recycled clothes, and no food items or canned goods.

Please wrap the box and the lid separately, so that the box can be opened without unwrapping. Any items given must fit into a shoebox. Gifts must remain unwrapped

Please deliver your box directly to the church office (604-685-2532) by December 17. Tax receipts will not be issued for this. Think of it as giving to a family member.

For further information, please contact Nancy Zimmerman at 604-224-2526.

Nancy Zimmerman



An Opportunity For Renewal By the Holy Spirit

Since the season of Advent ushers in the New Year for Christians it offers to us an opportunity to reflect upon our priorities and resolve for the coming year. During the Autumn I have circulated to the Church Wardens, the Trustees and my fellow clergy a document which lays out the lead I wish to offer to our community of faith concerning our “envisioning.” Now that Advent has begun I offer this to all the people of St. James’. I would be pleased to hear from you directly if you have any comments you wish to share. Also on Wednesday, February 7 at 7:00 pm in the Bishop’s Room we have scheduled another “Conversations with the Rector,” which will be dedicated to this theme and to which all are welcome.

Introduction

Discerning the mind of Christ by a community of faith is always an ongoing journey. The duty of discernment never ends since in this life we can never wholly apprehend and live out the purposes of God.

How do we discern the mind of Christ for St. James’?

How do we live the mind of Christ as the community of faith that is St. James’?

As disciples of Christ who seek to express our faith through the community of faith of St James’ these two questions must be articulated and held at the centre of our common life by the leadership of the Church. Daily we pray, “Thy will be done, Thy Kingdom come.” When we offer this prayer with attention and integrity we cannot but ask of ourselves and one another in the presence of the Holy Trinity these two questions. Discerning the mind of Christ and living the mind of Christ define who we are in Christ.

A community of faith which treasures this quest is a Church which recognizes that we are always and simply a pilgrim people continually seeking to be converted by the Holy Spirit. At the judgement Christ will lovingly search our whole being for signs of conversion through the Holy Spirit.

Recognizing and accepting where we are

The 125th Anniversary Year has seen a great deal of activity which has required the time, energy and talents of many people, often the same core group. A period of interim ministry is always unsettling for a church by its very nature. This has been compounded by the death of Fr. Retter, a greatly beloved and long-serving rector. On behalf of the Parish, the Canonical Committee has with perseverance and thoroughness

completed its responsibilities. For all these reasons, and from questions arising from the decision made by the Diocesan Synod concerning the blessing of same-gendered committed relationships, the past few years have been an exhilarating and demanding time of change and adjustment. In consequence of this there is fatigue among the core group of active parishioners and beyond. Yet falling attendance figures, concerns surrounding monetary giving and the excitement of a new chapter in the life of St. James’ result in a sense of urgency that something must be done: new programs established, changes to the liturgy, young people brought back to the Church, engagement with the neighbourhood reinvigorated, modifications to buildings and property and so on. A complicating factor is that each constituency group in the parish has a sense of what it desires to happen with little or no reference to the other constituent committees, groups, guilds and associations through which the community of faith is expressed. The lines of communication and decision making in the parish are at best not clear.

Often a vision for “our” Church is specific to an interest group and is based on secular models of good practice. The term “envisioning,” often used to describe the process of creating a “vision statement,” has complex layers of meaning. It may evoke a sense of an essentially creative stage in a process which has not been followed through. It may bespeak a well-used secular model and language which has been appropriated too freely and uncritically by the Church. Because of these associations I am intentionally avoiding the language of “envisioning” where possible. But I seek to offer to you a radical and mature Christian method which may bear similarities to secular envisioning models. The essential difference is a recognition of faith and providence in the process. But I prefer not to speak of a process but rather a pilgrimage or journey of conversion.

Taking a lead

I am convinced that as a community of faith in all our rich diversity we need to be given permission to rest in the Lord. Some, perhaps many, people are feeling fatigued and, or, disengaged with St. James’. We do not have to rush into the creation of new programs and schemes to secure a rise in attendance and income. We do not need more forums, courses and strategic plans.

We do need to do less and listen more. We need to minimize all our operations so that we simply maintain

our core activities for a while. We do need to let go of all our ideas and stratagems and intentionally commend ourselves to the Lord with trust. Our busyness to achieve and succeed for the Lord is often the greatest impediment to discernment. Given the journey of the parish over the past few years we need a mission to ourselves. We need to focus on our interior life, which is our life in the Spirit, both as individual baptized Christians and as a community of faith. There is so much potential in our community of faith, probably more than we can imagine. If we continue with great busyness in our exterior life we limit the opportunities for the Holy Spirit to transform our latent talents into fruits of the Spirit.

I propose we give ourselves to a “season” of refreshment and renewal beginning this Advent. Its purpose is that as a community of faith we intentionally commit to returning, retreating and resting in the Lord. This “season” (it may be six months or two years, we must not prescribe the timing of the Holy Spirit) will be a journey in which we intentionally seek to discern the mind of Christ for St. James’ through returning, retreating and resting in the Lord. This stage of discernment will essentially be characterized by abandonment and scrutiny.

Return. Retreat. Rest. The community of faith that is St. James’ has always been and is special. I believe God has a special purpose for St. James in the years to come. We can be confident in God’s purposes when we pause to reflect upon the remarkable faith of people and clergy who have been led to worship and serve through our community of faith. There is a vision for us to discern that will be life-giving, reconciling and prophetic in our neighbourhood, in our diocese of New Westminster and in our Anglican Communion. The challenge and opportunity for us now during the season of refreshment and renewal will be for us to return, retreat and rest in the Lord.

Discerning the Mind of Christ: Abandonment

Return. Being busy for the Lord can easily become distracting. All too often we can lose sight of the purposes which initially motivated us into action. We all need to intentionally return to Christ who is the source and ground of our life. Our return may be facilitated through: confession, especially the habit of an examination of conscience; acts of recollection through prayer, contemplation and silence; prayer and fasting.

Retreat. We all need to intentionally make time to be with Christ. This requires of each of us the keeping of a habit or ‘rule’ of life. An expectation of our weekly

attendance at Mass can be complimented with a habit of daily prayer, reflection and study. Every baptized Christian can be encouraged to explore and establish a relationship with a mentor / confessor / spiritual director. Individual and / or parish times of retreat can become a normative aspect of our discipleship.

Rest. Resting in the One who is the source of grace is truly refreshing and renewing. Through stillness and silence we can grow in confidence in our divine belovedness through Christ. We can entrust ourselves to the source of life and take the risk of trusting ourselves to one another within the body of Christ. This requires a letting go of the categories by which we define one another and accepting each other as sisters and brothers.

A shared commitment to returning, retreating and resting in the Lord will enable us to abandon ourselves to the Divine will. When we encourage and support one another to intentionally entrust ourselves wholeheartedly to the Lord this abandonment radically opens our life to the mind of Christ.

Discerning the mind of Christ: Scrutiny

Scrutinizing our life as a community of faith is essentially to celebrate our life in Christ with radical truthfulness. All aspects of our Parish life from the individual roles of parish officers to every constituent committee, group, guild and association of St. James will be asked to prepare a document in which the past is remembered and celebrated, the present is accurately described and hopes and fears towards a vision for the future are identified.

The scrutiny comprises three considerations:

- 1 a celebration of the past through a comprehensive remembrance and an acceptance of the past;
- 2 a celebration of the present through a truthful account and acceptance of the present circumstances;
- 3 a celebration of unknown future possibilities through identifying and accepting our hopes and fears.

Scrutinizing all aspects of our life as a community of faith with that radical truthfulness which is the fruit of abandonment will enable a healthy means for the discernment of the mind of Christ.

Living the mind of Christ

When abandonment is complimented with scrutiny we discern how to live as a community of faith. Discerning the mind of Christ and living the mind of Christ are interdependent, reciprocal and complimentary imperatives of our Christian discipleship.

The hoped for outcome during this season will be that the Lord reveals to us how we are to orientate (vision) our life as a community of faith and how to journey (mission) in the Way of Christ. (Secular models would here speak of a strategic vision and a mission statement.) It would be foolhardy to second guess the mission Holy Spirit before we had even begun to intentionally discern the mind of Christ through refreshment and renewal. But scripture, tradition and experience would bear testimony that as discerning the mind of Christ is characterized by abandonment and scrutiny so living the mind of Christ will be marked by sacrifice and service.

The parish profile through the discernment led by the Canonical Committee identified five goals. A radical and mature pursuit of these goals will be enabled through a period of refreshment and renewal. It is our task to take a lead in teaching and modeling this understanding of how we discern and live the mind of Christ. The wholeness and well-being of St. James will depend on our capacity and skill to lead the parish in this way of discipleship. We are offering the hardest and most wonderful way of being disciples of Christ.

Over to you

Essentially discernment is always a quality of attention and listening. Nothing would be easier than for me to present to you a strategic plan outlining goals and

objectives in the short, medium and long term. It is true, I have some sense already where I discern the Lord is leading our community of faith. But I and you need to dedicate ourselves to the task of discernment through abandonment to God and scrutiny under God. This demands of us all a willingness to take risks, to wholeheartedly trust in the providence of God and to humble our self-confidence before God. I place before us the highest expectations. I seek to invite you along the narrow way of radical and mature Christianity, at its best what our Anglo-catholic tradition has always held before the Church, because I believe St James' has such a special place within the purposes of God.

So we have before us an opportunity to journey together with a shared commitment to discerning the mind of Christ. Through this renewed journey of discernment we look forward to the building up of the body of Christ by the grace of God. It can be an opportunity to celebrate the rich diversity of our gifts and talents, to encourage one another in our discipleship of Christ and grow together through fellowship and service. I hope and pray you can join me, my fellow clergy and lay leadership team in this adventure of discipleship.

Fr. Mark Greenaway-Robbins

Glory to God From Generation to Generation

At month's end we will have completed a cycle of events planned by the Parish Committee to commemorate one hundred and twenty-five years of St. James' Anglican Church in this place (1881-2006). We will have been witness to an eclectic range of activity.

Archbishop and Frances Somerville attended our 2005 Patronal Feast and on that day, initiated a busy calendar of celebration. The months that ensued were marked by a progression of "happenings." each one unique and all worthy of note: 125 Years of Fashion with Ivan Sayers; a Clergy House wine and cheese gathering; a Lenten presentation of an original play; the Pilgrimage to Compostela; the Team St. James' Sun Run; Dedication Sunday attended by the Mayor of Vancouver; the Flower Show attended by the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia; St. James' Day, 2006 with greetings from the Primate; the Antiques Road Show and Auction; the Heart of the City Program; our Latin community participation for All Saints and All Souls; and to close, a December reprise of the Christmas Carol Harbour Cruise.

Interspersed throughout were periodic presentations of glorious musical programs (choral and instrumental) and masses of liturgical and devotional splendour.

To all of you who participated in our celebrations, the Planning Committee is most grateful.

All of these endeavours, including the preparation of souvenirs, the compilation of a cookbook, and the choir CD required considerable dedication on the part of many, and all shared one intention. The building of community to the Glory of God was our purpose. We have celebrated our 125th as a People of God ever focused on Christ's commandment to Love One Another.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: And the Government shall be upon His shoulder: And His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:2,6

Glory be to God from Generation to Generation. Amen.

Robert Gauthier

A Coming Home Society Story

“My name is Donna...I am a 19 year old Métis woman and I have an addiction to crystal meth. My addiction got so bad that I lost everything that was precious to me. When I came to Young Wolves Lodge I didn't have anything to show...not even my pride of being Métis. At the Young Wolves Lodge I got my culture back and that changed me in so many ways. I thank my Creator for guiding me into the right path...”

Donna is a recent graduate of the CHS' alcohol and drug recovery program at the Young Wolves Lodge. She was invited this summer to mentor other Aboriginal youth on a canoe journey on her ancestral reserve in Saskatchewan. She feels she is called to further her education and pursue a career as a youth worker.

Donna rediscovered her culture by going to sweat lodge ceremonies, participating in a drum group, attending aboriginal pow wows, cultural gatherings and workshops. The young women get to these activities by bus and skytrain. This takes hours of time and restricts what they can attend.

Money to purchase a van has just been awarded through a federal grant. However, the federal program's "bare-bones" budget does not include money for car insurance, gas or maintenance.



Our Christmas Wish

We invite you to give these young women the gift of a year's transportation. Your donation will enable them to attend more cultural activities, help them get to doctors, financial aid workers, probation officers, and social workers. With a vehicle, staff can bring the young women's children to the house more

often for visits. The young women will feel safer, no longer in danger of running into people from their old life as can happen on the bus or skytrain. Every dollar you donate will carry the young women closer to a brighter future.

Please mail your donation to:

The Coming Home Society, 303 E. Cordova Street, Vancouver BC V6A 1L4. Make your cheque out to 'The Coming Home Society'. A tax receipt will be mailed to you. Thank you for helping us help these young aboriginal women!

If you would like to make a donation to the Coming Home Society as a Christmas gift to a friend or relative, the Coming Home Society will send that person a thank you card for being the kind of caring person who would inspire the giving of such a gift. A tax receipt will be sent in either your name or the name of the person in whose name the gift is being given.

For further information, contact Linda at 604 433-8047 or ladams59@hotmail.co

Linda Adams

Return to Melanesia

This "Ol Tasiu," which translates as "Old Brother," has just returned from two months in the Solomons. It was quite an adventure, for it was filled with chances and changes and much love, joy and peace too. Praise the Lord and the Melanesian Brotherhood for that!

My well-laid plans, as all well-laid plans, never quite worked out the way they were intended. I had planned to stopover in Vanuatu for ten days and fly up to the island of Ambae where the Brotherhood has its Headquarters. I was to lead the Brothers and Novices in a four day workshop. When I got off the plane in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, after hours of travel, I

found that all the local planes were grounded for two weeks. Fortunately I had been met by the Brothers from our Household in Port Vila and I had three days relaxing with them before I hopped an early plane to the Solomons. Of course I arrived unannounced in Honiara, but soon I was swarming with surprised Brothers and Novices wishing me welcome. Finally that evening after a bumpy ride on our truck I was again welcomed by happy hordes to Tabalia, our Headquarters, and got settled into the same small room which I had inhabited for the previous six years. And so it was back again to the routine of the community.

And what is that routine, you may ask? Well, “First Bell” is at 5:30 am, Offices and Mass at 6, then Breakfast at 7:30 (a cup of black tea and a hardtack biscuit), “Morning Office” at 8, then it is working in the garden or whatever. The Angelus is at noon – “Sorry, no lunch”- then more work (except on Friday afternoon; that’s the time for soccer!). The “Swim Bell” sounds at 4:30 which means “Everyone to the showers!” Evensong is at 6:00 pm followed by supper – a bowl of rice or yams and greens cooked in coconut milk. Evenings are filled with choir practice, or Bible study, or visiting local villages etc. Finally at 9:00 pm it is “Last Office” and to bed.

Having an extra week, I went off to visit Bishop Terry Brown, a fellow Canadian, who is the Bishop of Malaita, a large island diocese six hours away by tramp steamer. What a wonderful, hectic five days of happiness – though little peace. His house is perpetually crammed with people, some more permanent than others, but crammed it always is. Midst the comings and goings of visiting clergy and families etc and the five or six young men who seem to be more permanent, midst all that cooking and chattering and singing, there is Bishop Terry cooking up a storm, working away on his computer or meeting with diocesan officials. Restful? No. But a home filled with love!

Back home to Tabalia the last three weeks of October my days became busier for it was the time of our Regional Conference. All the Brothers posted in the thirty-five Households throughout the Solomons hoped to be there, but because of isolation, lack of transport or no funds, only eighty were able to make it. The Conference began with a three day retreat led by the retired Archbishop of Melanesia. This was followed by a week of meetings in which Brothers gave their reports on their ministries. The evenings were more relaxed with “Plays-in-the-Round” (“The Prodigal Son”, “Bishop Patteson” etc) acted by the Novices.

The last week was mostly of my doing. First I led a three-day workshop on “Prayer & Leadership” followed by a two and half day retreat for three Brothers who were to be ordained deacons on our feast day of SS Simon and Jude that weekend. The retreat was at the Sisters of Melanesia who fed us until we were near bursting. A wonderful Spirit-filled time it was. Back to Tabalia on the Friday evening, I received a message from the Archbishop to say that I was to preach on the Sunday at the festivities! Needless to say, it was a bit hectic for me – at least mentally – but it was physically more so for all the Brothers and Novices

who were preparing to host the hordes of people either already there or coming for the ordination and the admission of forty-seven Novices as Brothers.

What a day was Sunday, October 29! The Archbishop arrived at 5:30 am and the service began at 6:00. It ended at 11:30! There were over 1000 people at the Mass (200 inside and 800+ outside). The Novices were first admitted as Brothers with many tears of joy. Then the three Brothers were ordained. More tears of joy. Then the Mass (and a twenty minutes sermon!) followed by a huge procession to the graves of our seven Martyred Brothers, -Hold on! We aren’t finished! –followed by a traditional feast on the soccer pitch. Somehow everyone found a place to squat on the ground before the ton of food laid out on banana leaves. There were speeches galore and finally a closing prayer and people rushed to the five trucks which would begin to take them back to Honiara. Meanwhile we went for our “swim” and got ready for Evensong. Whew! What a wonderful gathering of Christians.

The following week was more relaxed before I staggered onto the plane for Vancouver. Those eight days were filled with quiet brotherly chats and working in our garden etc. What a wonderful family is the Brotherhood! On November 9 after Mass there was a parting breakfast with the Community, then midst hugs and laughter, we waved goodbye and off I went to the airport to catch my plane. I confess those last goodbyes were filled with tears, but also with a heart crammed with love. And so back home at St James’ these “Old Bones” are still filled with that Melanesian love and joy. Yes, I will return again in 2007, God and Head Brother willing. Before I do, however, Head Brother, Caulton Weris, hopes to visit us here in Vancouver. If it be, then many here will also know what I mean by “Melanesian love & joy” – and “Melanesian peace” too!

Brother John Blyth

The Pilgrimage of St. James: A Journey Towards Peace

“How can you bring peace to the World when there is no peace within yourself?” While I was in Bosnia/ Herzegovina visiting a place called Medjugorje, where it is told that an apparition of the Virgin Mary took place as she appeared to six teenagers on June 24, 1981, I overheard a woman addressing a group of young Catholics. These young adults came there on pilgrimage. As they were preparing to walk the Stations of the Cross, which are laid out in such a way that it takes you on a lengthy and difficult journey through the rugged hillside, she spoke these words to challenge each person to reflect on the peace which is lacking in their own life. She expressed that the message that the Virgin Mary gave was that peace was vital to our world if it was to survive, that peace must reign between God and man, between people, and within our own hearts. This comes only from God. This message was given to those teenagers so that they could go and share it with the world. To discover the peace which was lacking in my own life was to become a quest on a different pilgrimage that I was about to embark upon.

As many of you may know, I live in a busy community in the D.T.E.S., St. Chiara Community, where many different needs present themselves, needs that range from taking care of the lovely children to offering friendship and hospitality to the friends and neighbors around us. As a community, we have been involved in resisting and speaking out against social violence, specifically poverty, war, and abortion.

In resisting war, I had the opportunity to travel to Iraq in December of 2002, just before the start of this last invasion. I fell in love with the people and the rich culture and at the time couldn't imagine the pain and suffering they would have to face with another US led invasion. Upon returning home I became actively involved in speaking out against the impending disaster which was about to unfold for the Iraqi people. This became more intense over the year that followed once the invasion was underway. Grieving over what was taking place, I began to lose a deep God-centered peace in my soul. It became increasingly difficult for me to accept having peace in my life when I knew that those I had met in Iraq were not granted peace. What followed was burnout and spiritual fatigue as I struggled to find my centeredness and hope in God.

“How can you bring peace to the World when there is no peace within yourself?” This summer these words impacted me deeply while I took time away for a six month sabbatical and traveled throughout Europe with

my friend Jen (and fellow community member). What impacted me the most in that time was the 1,600 km pilgrimage that we walked through France and Spain to Santiago de Compostela, better known as The Pilgrimage of St. James. It was in the process of walking to this place that I was able to find peace and centeredness once again.

The Way of St. James is an ancient pilgrimage across France and Spain that thousands of modern day pilgrims walk or cycle (and some still travel on horseback). For most, the pilgrimage starts in a town called St. Jean Pied de Port, on the French side of the Pyrenees, crossing through the mountains and entering Spain on the other side. The distance from this town to Santiago de Compostela is approximately 750 kms. Jen and I started in a town in France called Le Puy en Velay which added 750 kms of beautiful French countryside to our pilgrimage.

Many pilgrims that we met along the way were walking to rediscover the purpose and meaning that is lost in the emptiness of our society. For me, it was to rediscover the peace which I had lost while struggling against our violent and empty world. It was a difficult journey since the way in which I was hoping to find God was very different than what I had expected. At first I envisioned that God would somehow daily speak to me in that “still small voice” kind of way and that questions I had would be quickly answered. But it did not happen this way. Instead, I struggled daily with the physical and mental challenges that the pilgrimage put forth and only slowly, over time, was able to recognize the important truths that the journey encouraged. They were lessons which emphasized weakness over strength, honesty over pride, vulnerability and openness over assurance, simplicity over accumulation, and putting others over self. Only in these ways, in true humility and in the shedding of one's ego in complete surrender to God, does true life and peace emerge.

Amazingly enough, the pilgrimage was able to answer so many questions that nothing else in my life prior to that could. Perhaps it was that I took time away that I was able to sort out and rediscover the important truths that bring hope and peace. Perhaps many of us find it hard to draw from the source of life in the emptiness and the busyness that exists around us. I think it is vital, if we are to remain faithful and devoted to God, that we find the time to draw from that source lest we lose all hope and peace and a sense of our true selves.

Irene Vandas

Seize the Forgotten Season to Explore the Forgotten Sacrament

During this season of Advent we at St. James have an opportunity to focus our preaching, teaching and reflection upon confession and the sacrament of reconciliation. The Church has traditionally taught that Advent is a season during which the baptized people of God prepare for the second coming of Christ as Judge at the Last Day.

Each one of us will have to give an account to God for our lives. This we profess every Sunday in the words of the Nicene Creed that Christ, “shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead.” Yet too often we seem to be more concerned by the judgement of our fellow human beings than that of our Creator. “What will people think of me? How do I look? Am I behaving and speaking in an acceptable way so that I will fit in? Am I living the lifestyle that makes me look the way I want to be seen?” Our lives tend to be shaped by how we perceive others judge us rather than by opening our inner and outer life to the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

The sacrament of reconciliation is a gift from the rich treasure of our Anglo-catholic tradition that is available to you at any time that you ask for it. Since each one of us is going to have to give an account of our life to God why not take up the habit now in this life rather than wait for the life to come? I invite you to consider some of the many myths surrounding the sacrament of reconciliation.

The sacrament of reconciliation is an old fashioned, out-dated practice which has no relevance in contemporary society.

If you believe this myth, do you believe that sin is old-fashioned and irrelevant? Is not each one of us constantly in need of reconciliation with God, others, our world and ourselves? Sin infects our lives and the lives of those around us. Sin corrupts, alienates, distorts, mars and pollutes all our relationships. All creation is in need of healing and wholeness. That redemption has been won for us through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The challenge for us as Christ’s disciples is to live out this redemption. We are called to be, in St. Paul’s language, ministers of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:17-20) Some, perhaps many, of us most of us do not really, truly believe that we are forgiven in Christ. When we truly have the assurance in the very ground of our being that we are forgiven we are free. “For freedom Christ has set us free.” (Gal. 5:1) We are becoming who we are created to be in Christ. Jesus says: “I came that

they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

The sacrament of reconciliation is given to us so that we might more fully live that freedom, abundance and peace in Christ Jesus. Out-dated? Old-fashioned? The sacrament of reconciliation could not be more contemporary and relevant for our world which is crying out for healing and wholeness.

‘I don’t need to make my confession to a priest when I can talk directly to God myself, thank you very much.’

During the sacrament of reconciliation the priest overhears the confession which is made to God. We know from the Gospels that Christ himself entrusted his disciples with authority. The priest is an icon and an instrument of God’s forgiveness. It is never the priest who forgives, but rather God in Christ through the ordained ministry of the priest.

Please understand that it is a rule now in this parish that those clergy who hear confessions must regularly make their own confession to a priest. So we are not preaching and teaching a practice which we are not first living ourselves. And be assured that every priest under the ‘seal of the sacrament’ can never reveal what is spoken during this sacrament.

Our Anglo-catholic tradition has always honoured and understood the mystery of grace when, after due preparation, we speak aloud our sins to God within the hearing of a priest. Picture if you will the Gospel story of the prodigal son. The prodigal child returns to the parent: “But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20) My personal experience of making confession is profoundly shaped by this story. Christ kneels with us during the sacrament embracing and upholding us with his constant love.

Christ lifts us to our feet with joy assuring us that we are forgiven. Christ weeps with us. Christ rejoices with us. What a sacrament!

‘The hardest part of the sacrament of reconciliation is the speaking aloud of our confession to a priest.’

This is not usually true. Most of us find that it is the examination of conscience which is the most challenging part of confession. Good preparation before confession is essential. One prepares by examining one’s conscience. There are various ways of doing this, for example by reflecting upon certain

passages of scripture and meditating on questions. Simply put one prays to the Holy Spirit, "Lord reveal to me what you would have me confess." We will offer practical resources for examining our conscience during this season and beyond.

How many of us have spent time in preparation examining our consciences before praying the words of a general confession at Mass: "Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things and judge of all people..."? So whether or not we regularly make our confession, an essential part of our rule of life is a regular examination of conscience. If we truly pray the confession at Mass we must have prepared beforehand. It is not being at the liturgy which makes us Anglo-catholics. Rather it is living the liturgy in every moment of our lives.

What can be very hard, however, is finding a priest with whom one feels comfortable to share in the sacrament of reconciliation. A parishioner of St. James wrote to me on the subject recently, I quote with permission: "I think the majority of people, particularly with a first confession are uncomfortable with the interaction between confessor and penitent, and I can't believe this is simply not an issue". It may be challenge to find a priest one is comfortable with, but persevere. We will do all that we can as a clergy team to help you. Please do not distance yourself from this sacrament for this reason.

'I am an Anglo-catholic I have never made regular confessions so I don't see why I should consider it now!'

An Anglo-catholic is committed to a rule of life the purpose of which is the daily conversion of life by the Holy Spirit. We believe in the transformation of all life

through the Holy Spirit by following our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father. "Tradition is the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church." (Vladimir Lossky – Russian Orthodox theologian)

The sacrament of reconciliation, when a regular part of our rule of life, is an opportunity to open our whole being and personality to the life-giving, life-transforming, grace of God. If we neglect making an examination of conscience at least as a weekly commitment in our rule of life we fail to exercise and enliven our conscience. Most of us in the daily round of our ordinary lives are overexposed to images, words and sensations which ultimately diminish the faculty of our conscience.

So don't forget Advent. Amidst all our busyness as we prepare for Christmas remember that this season is given to us as an opportunity to prepare ourselves for meeting with Christ as our judge. Seize this season of Advent as an opportunity to rediscover a wholesome practice of confession. Take up the habit of a weekly examination of your conscience. Take up the habit of celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation. Do not allow this gift of the Church and the kingdom to remain a forgotten sacrament. Christ became incarnate in order that we might live the gift of life in all its abundance, with freedom and in peace. Confession based upon an examination of conscience, the making of a well prepared general confession and celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation as part of our rule of life ensures our ongoing conversion into that life for which Christ died.

Fr. Mark Greenaway-Robbins

World AIDS Day December 1, 2006

This year an ecumenical service was held at Christ Church Cathedral and I was privileged to take part in it with several other clergy and the Men's Choir.

The clergy wore albs and red stoles: a fitting combination – white for the cure that is so badly needed and red for the pandemic we still face here and elsewhere.

The Primates World Relief and Development fund provided the liturgy and an excellent photo display which was placed at the back of the Chancel. To my surprise there was a picture of myself indicating that I was the first Anglican priest to come out – gay and HIV+. To see the picture was for me an indication of how much better I am getting on the medication we

fought for. However, there is much more to be done.

The Rev. Margaret Marquardt and I read the commission: Lord God, give us the spirit of courage, so we may be open in our concern for all living with HIV/AIDS; Give us the spirit of challenge, that we may not accept silence and prejudice without question; Give us the spirit of compassion, that we may see the world through the eyes of those who suffer. Give us the spirit of gentleness, that we may listen to those who cry out for understanding; Give us the spirit of togetherness, that we may truly love one another as ourselves. And give us, we pray, the gift of your Spirit so that we may be empowered to do your work and your will.

Fr. Michael Forshaw

The Anglican and Diocesan Cycle of Prayer

December 3 — The First Sunday in Advent

We give thanks for the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain, its clergy and people; and for theological summer internships supported by the Partnerships Department of the Anglican Church of Canada. ✠ We pray for all infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and for people, churches, governments keeping their promises and commitments in the fight against HIV and AIDS. ✠ In our companion diocese of Taiwan, we pray for Advent Church, Taipei Hsien, the Rev. Dr. Lennon Chang, Chaplain (*twinned with St. Andrew, Langley*). ✠ In our diocese, we pray for St. Andrew, Langley, the Revs. Scott Gould and Paul Guiton; and for St. Andrew, Pender Harbour, the Revs. Robert Korth and Celia Howard.

December 10 — The Second Sunday in Advent

We give thanks for the parish of Falkland Islands, its clergy and people. ✠ We pray for Shirley Newell, Volunteer in Mission from the Anglican Church of Canada, teaching English at St. Thomas' College in Gurutalawa in the Diocese of Colombo, Church of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). ✠ In our companion diocese, we pray for Holy Trinity, Keelung, the Rev. Matthew Lee, Vicar (*twinned with Holy Trinity, White Rock*). ✠ In our diocese, we pray for St. Clement, North Vancouver, the Rev. Sarah Tweedale; and for St. George, Kingcome Inlet, the Rev. Howard Jacques.

The Third Sunday in Advent — December 17, 2006

We give thanks for the diocese of Kushtia in Bangladesh, the Rt. Rev. Paul Sishir Sarkar, bishop, its clergy and people. ✠ We pray for an understanding and practice of mission, that we may hear God's call and respond in our local context. ✠ In our companion diocese, we pray for St. Peter, Chiayi, the Rev. Jason C.S. Ke, Vicar (*twinned with Church of the Good Shepherd, Vancouver*). ✠ In our diocese, we pray for St. Jude's Anglican Home, the Rev. Trudi Shaw; for the Stewardship Development Committee, the Rev. Kevin Dixon (Chair), Paige Dampier, Staff; and for the Environmental Unit, Dr Rosie Hyde (Chair), David Dranchuk, Staff.

December 24 — The Fourth Sunday in Advent

We give thanks for the Rt. Rev. Dr. Alexander John Malik, Moderator, Church of Pakistan and Bishop of Lahore. ✠ We pray for the Peace and Nonviolence Working Group of the EcoJustice Committee; and for peace on earth, goodwill to all. ✠ In our companion diocese, we pray for Church of the Good Shepherd, Taipei, the Rev. Lily Chang, Vicar, the Rev. Elizabeth Wei, and the Rev. Philip Stringer, English Chaplain. ✠ In our diocese, we pray for the Archdeacons: the Ven. Ronald Harrison Acting (Burrard) and Executive Archdeacon; the Ven. Louis Rivers (Capilano); the Ven. Andrew Pike (Vancouver); the Ven. John Bailey (Westminster); the Ven. Beverley Stewart (Fraser); and the Ven. John Struthers, Director of Deacons.

December 25 — Christmas Day

We give thanks for the diocese of Lainya (Sudan), the Rt. Rev. Peter Amidi, bishop, its clergy and people. ✠ We pray for peace with justice in Sudan. ✠ In our companion diocese, we pray for St. Timothy, Kaohsiung, the Rev. Michael T. H. Lui, Vicar (*twinned with St. George, Maple Ridge*). ✠ In our diocese, we pray for St. John the Evangelist, North Vancouver, the Revs. Daniel Meakes, Tess Meadows, and Brock Lupton; for St. John the Evangelist, Whonnock, the Rev. David Findley-Price; for St. John the Apostle, Port Moody, the Revs. Catherine Hall, Anne Anchor, and Trudi Shaw.

December 31 — Christmas 1

We give thanks for the diocese of Lexington (USA), the Rt. Rev. Stacy Fred Sauls, bishop, its clergy and people. ✠ We pray for discernment to see God's work in the universe and in the human family. ✠ In our companion diocese, we pray for St. James, Taichung, the Rev. Dr. Charles Chen, Rector, (*twinned with St. James, Vancouver*). ✠ In our diocese, we pray for Church of the Epiphany, Surrey, the Revs. Stephen Rowe, Michael Feit, and Len Dyer; for the Diocesan Evangelism Unit, the Rev. John Oakes, Chair, and all those ministries that bring Christ to those outside the Church; and for the Ministry Resources Committee, the Rev. Paul Borthistle, Staff.

Did You Know That.....

The Pacific Baroque Orchestra, which is UBC School of Music's ensemble in residence, in partnership with the UBC Learning Exchange and, of course, St. James', and with the support of Spirit of BC Arts Fund and 2010 Legacies Now presented the first of this season's series of free concerts in the Downtown Eastside. A large, appreciative audience gathered at St. James' on November 24 to enjoy The Joy of Baroque Opera with guest artist Nancy Argenta who has been lauded as "the supreme Handel soprano of our age." The proceeds from the free-will offering were designated for our newly-formed St. James' Music Academy.

The Men's Club retreat which had been scheduled for December 1-3 at Westminster Abbey in Mission was cancelled because of the snow and will be re-booked sometime in 2007.

Celia Dodds attended the Canadian Mothers' Union Biennial Conference in St. John, New Brunswick, November 15 to 19. The keynote speaker was Susan Wilson, the Overseas and Outreach Coordinator from Mary Sumner House, the headquarters of the Worldwide Mothers' Union, who updated the gathering on the newest projects overseas and in England.

We wish to thank Pivot Legal Society for graciously providing the copies of the winning photographs taken by our Walker family which accompanied the article by Hannah in November Cornerstone. Hannah's winning photograph Kiss on the Steps is the cover of the 2007 Downtown Eastside Portrait Calendar Hope in Shadows. This is the fourth annual contest sponsored by Pivot. Parishioner Sophia Freigang, who is a photographer, won third place for her photograph of Woodward's, which is the calendar image for April. Sophia sits on the boards of the Carnegie Community Association Centre and Pivot Legal Society, and is also involved in the Heart of the City Festival. The Calendars are for sale by the Walkers, and are in over ninety retail outlets around Vancouver and on the internet.

The Women's Guild and friends have wrapped three hundred and twenty-three pairs of 'hot socks' for the Mission to Seafarers and seventy-three toques have also been provided for seafarers who are in the port of Vancouver at Christmas time. Thank you to all our dedicated workers!

Did you see the article on parishioner Judy Graves by Gary Mason in the *Globe and Mail* on December 6? It was part of the ongoing coverage on homelessness in Vancouver and issues of concern to the Downtown Eastside. We also congratulate Judy, who is a grandmother for the first time. She reports that the baby, born December 4, has his father Martyn's mouth and forehead, his mother Pieta's nose and feet and fingers, a chin resembling Judy's, and the nature of a contemplative. Congratulations and love to you all!

Parishioner Peggy Smyth has provided a very fine copy of a photograph of Sister Frances and Fr. Cooper for St. James' archives. It is from the photo collection of Peggy's mother, Mrs. Marjorie Brown (Mrs. J. H. Browne), who was a Life Member of St. James' Women's Guild.

Elizabeth Brandson has been the messenger bringing another treasure trove of items for the archives from her neighbor at Bowen Island, Stella Meal, daughter-in-law of Maude Meal. There is a newspaper clipping from July 13, 1971 showing incoming Bishop David Somerville in consultation with Archbishop Godfrey Gower; an air mail letter from Fr. Whitehead to Mrs. Meal, sent July 6, 1949 from British Columbia House in London, with personal greetings, and specific comments and advice about the Sanctuary Guild and the distribution of duties; a printed card from 1906 listing the Christmas services and greetings from Fr. Clinton; a small, much-used booklet Sanctuary Guild St. James' Church detailing Object of the Guild, Rules, Duties of Members, the Office of the Guild – twelve pages in all; and various photos.

We are unable to build our future if we are unfamiliar with our past. Many thanks to Peggy and Stella (via Elizabeth) for these contributions to our archives.

There are still some reservations available for the Carol Ship cruise on December 18. Please contact Gretha Warren at the Church Office or Clarke Jackson at 604 684-6924 to participate in this fun-filled evening.

We wish Fr. Wright a happy 89th birthday on December 14. Our love and best wishes always to a very special member of our family!

Sheila Glen

Stones and Mortar

- December 10 Boutique Sale after all masses
5:30 pm Advent Lessons & Carols with the Abendmusik Choir assisting. Freewill donations to benefit the community. Reception by the Women's Guild with Boutique Sale
- 13 6:30 pm Benedictine Community in the Sunday School Room
- 15 7:30 pm Pacific Baroque Orchestra Concert. Vivaldi "The Four Seasons"
- 17 4:00-6:30 pm Neighbourhood Carolling, with refreshments in the Bishop's Room before concert
7.30 pm musica intima Free Concert
- 18 7:00 pm Carol Ship cruise, with buffet supper, carols & entertainment Tickets \$75 per person, Grethe at 604-685-2532 or Clarke at 604-684-6924
- 19 7:00 pm New Member Ministry, in the Bishop's Room
- 24 Usual Sunday Masses
10:00 pm Carols
10:30 pm Christmas Eve. Mass of the Nativity
- 25 Birth of the Lord 8.30 am Mass
10:00 am Sung Mass with Children and blessing of the Crèche
- 31 Usual Sunday Masses. St James 101 after High Mass
5:30 pm Evensong and Devotions
- January 6 Feast of the Epiphany. 10:30 am Mass followed by Pot Luck lunch. Bring breads, meats, cheeses, vegetables or fruits. Soup and coffee will be served

Music at St. James'

December 2006 is a month of music at St. James'. The Abendmusik Vesper Choir returns to St. James' on December 10 at 5:30 pm to join our High Mass Choir for Advent Lessons and Carols. It promises to be, as always, a service of glorious music. The St. James' Music Academy is to be the recipient of the offering.

The major shopping event of the year occurs to-day, Sunday December 10, following each Mass and after the Advent Lessons and Carols at 5:30 pm. The Women's Guild will be selling their delicious home baking and wonderful preserves, and special items from their Boutique. 125th Anniversary souvenir items for sale include book totes, glass mugs, the St. James' cook book, St. James' fleece vests, and our presentation tins of truly marvelous chocolates. Happy shopping!

Friday, December 15 at 7:30 pm the Pacific Baroque Orchestra present their next free concert, and are joined by guest violinist Lucinda Moon, concertmaster of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra in a performance of Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

Neighbourhood Caroling has become a St. James' tradition and will occur this year on December 17 from 4:00 – 6:30 pm followed by refreshments in the Bishop's Room. Immediately following we are honoured to have another free community Christmas Concert performed by the excellent choir musica intima.

Sunday and Feast Day Lectionary Readings

December 3 — The First Sunday of Advent

Old Testament: Jeremiah, chapter 33,
verses 14-16

Psalm 25, verses 1-9

Epistle: The First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians,
chapter 3, verses 9-13

New Testament: The Gospel according to Luke,
chapter 21, verses 25-36

December 10 — The Second Sunday of Advent

Old Testament: Baruch, chapter 5, verses 1-4

Psalm: Cantic 19 (The Gospel according to Luke
chapter 3, verses 7-18)

Epistle: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians, chapter 1,
verses 3-11

New Testament: The Gospel according to Luke,
chapter 3, verses 1-6

December 17 — The Third Sunday of Advent

Old Testament: Zephaniah, chapter 3, verses 14-20

Psalm: Cantic 3 (Isaiah, chapter 12, verses 2-6)

Epistle: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians, chapter 4,
verses 4-9

New Testament: The Gospel according to Luke,
chapter 3, verses 7-18

December 24 — The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Old Testament: Micah, chapter 5, verses 2-5a

Psalm: Cantic 18 (The Gospel according to Luke
chapter 1, verses 47-55)

Epistle: The Letter of Paul to the Hebrews, chapter 10,
verses 5-10

New Testament: The Gospel according to Luke,
chapter 1, verses 39-55

God of power and mercy, you call us once again to celebrate the coming of your Son. Remove those things which hinder love of you, that when he comes, he may find us waiting in awe and wonder for him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*The Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent
The Book of Alternative Services*

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