

A LENTEN GUIDE



DIOCESE OF HURON



It's been a great joy and privilege to see this project come to fruition, thanks to the support of the Diocese of Huron and its Sesquicentennial Committee.

In Isaiah, the prophet says that the word that goes forth from God's mouth will not return empty, but will accomplish the divine purpose of saving and transforming God's people (Isaiah 55:11). In the meditations that follow, we see our Diocese as a people not only shaped by 150 years of history, but as a people who are called into being and called to ministry by the Word of God. Lay and ordained, young and old, the voices in this book show God encountering us, one by one, each in our own set of circumstances. There is a diversity of voices here to be sure, but the same themes of call, transformation, and salvation ring out again and again. You'll see this clearly, for example, in the three consecutive meditations on 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, from 19 through 21 March, whose authors all point, each in their own way, to St. Paul's call to be new creations in Jesus Christ.

In this book you will find a meditation for almost every day of Lent, to accompany you on your individual pilgrimage to the cross. I am sure that each reader will be nourished in different ways, and I am equally sure that all will be well fed, for God's Word does not return empty to God. God's Word is heard, fully and definitively, in the One who rises from the tomb, whose call to ministry and salvation is not stilled by death. May this little book be a series of words and pathways that leads you to the Risen Word on Easter Sunday.

In Christ,
The Rev'd Dr. Michael Peterson, Editor

FOREWORD

It is my privilege and honour to write this introduction to your Lenten Devotions as the Diocese of Huron celebrates its sesquicentennial. I pray that this year will be a time of great joy and excitement as you consider the past, ponder the present and vision the future. As your diocese has throughout its history so our Church today faces many challenges. To my mind the other side of challenge is opportunity and just as our Lord, “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” to accept the cross so we must face the challenges before us and see them as opportunities.



One of those challenges/opportunities is our own spiritual growth. Too often we are so busy telling others what to do and how to think that we stop listening to each other and to God. These meditations, coming from a diverse group of lay and clerical writers, will enable you to nurture your faith by listening to their experiences and hearing the voice of God.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts. I commend this book to you in this Lenten season of fasting, prayer and self-examination. My hope is that you will take the time and create the space to strengthen your faith in this year of celebration.

Yours faithfully,

+ Andrew

*The Most Reverend Andrew S. Hutchison
Archbishop and Primate*

GREETINGS,

The diversity of the reflections offered in this Sesquicentennial Lenten Devotional booklet represents the mosaic that is the Diocese of Huron in 2007. Each person brings their own experience in ministry and their own awareness of the Spirit moving in their lives to bear, as they consider the Scripture portions they were given as a part of this special 150th Anniversary Ministry. Every person who will use this devotional resource will find some nugget of insight in the material contained in this booklet. One of the great realities of this project has been the realization that, in these days, we are truly mutually responsible and interdependent members of the Body of Christ living out our Christian Faith as members of the Diocesan Family here in Huron. We have much to offer to one another and we have much to celebrate in this Sesquicentennial Year as we remember our history and imagine our future.

I am personally very grateful for the leadership of Captain the Reverend Dr. Michael Peterson who has seen this project through from an inspired concept to the finished document you hold in your hands. The support of Mr. David Parson and those associated with the Huron Church News has been invaluable.

It is my hope and prayer that you will find the use of this booklet to be a blessing as you observe the Season of Lent 2007 and follow the one who we claim to be our Light and our Life.

Faithfully yours,

*The Reverend Canon Christopher B.J. Pratt
Co -Chair of the Sesquicentennial Committee
of the Diocese of Huron*

ASH WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY, 2007

JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17 OR ISAIAH 58:1-12;
PSALM 103:8-18; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B-6:10;
MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

The Scripture readings for this first day of Lent expose a problem at the very heart of the Christian life and teach us a salutary lesson. It is a relatively easy thing to enact liturgies, rehearse rites and practice pieties. Much more difficult it is to perform righteousness, to loose the bonds of injustice, and to let the oppressed go free. External observance is one thing. Inner dispositions sourced in and nourished by God's reconciling love and mercy are quite another. The temptation here may well be to opt for one or the other. I polish up my piety for Sunday morning. Or I throw out all that old lumber and build anew with whatever lies closest to hand: politics, ideology, the liberationist scraps of modernity, the Pandora's box of postmodern style. Quietism or activism. Inner or outer.

Scripture, by contrast, tells us in the language of Joel that rending our hearts is more important in God's eyes than rending our garments. But it also tells us through the voice of Isaiah and Jesus and in the example of Paul that the way we open our hearts to such rending is through practices like fasting, keeping God's covenant and remembering to do his commandments. Indeed, the human heart turned Godward only knows what true righteousness and justice are as it ponders these things and does them. In other words, we learn from Scripture that what God requires from us is the fruitful marriage of inner dispositions and outward acts in worship and daily life. The heart filled with and formed by God's compassion and steadfast love must learn again and again the faithful obedience which is our covenant response. How? Jesus Christ makes reconciliation with God 'for our sake,' says Paul, 'so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.' Jesus is the one in whom purity of heart and righteous practice come together perfectly and inseparably. 'In him' that same possibility opens up for each of us, for all of us together. Amazing grace.

*The Rev'd Canon Dr. Timothy Connor is
Rector of St. George's Anglican Church, London.*

THURSDAY, 22 FEBRUARY, 2007

LUKE 9:18-25

Jesus is praying alone. He asks his disciples 'Who do the crowds say that I am?' Then he asks them what they think. Peter's words are on the tip of his tongue, 'The Messiah of God.' Who do we say Jesus is? Ponder this question, but ponder it with the rest of this passage in your heart. Our response may be on the tip of our tongue, yet like Peter we may find that we fail those very words.

Proclaiming Jesus as Messiah is the entrance to this passage, a doorway to a deeper reflection on discipleship. Jesus tells all who seek to follow him that we are to deny our selves and take up our cross daily. Simply driving around town with 'Jesus is Lord' on our bumper sticker is not sufficient according to the one we would follow. The faith we proclaim also shapes how we live.

What does this mean? Ponder the promises of your baptismal covenant (BAS p. 159). Following Jesus involves treating all people with dignity, working for justice in our time, serving Christ in all persons (not just those we find easy to like or accept). Denying self means we are aware of the ways that we sin, the aspects of life that get in the way of our relationship with God and that we do something about that. Again and again, we turn to God, seeking the strength to change our ways. Ask yourself, 'Does my life proclaim by word and example, the faith I profess? In what ways have I allowed my self-protective ways to replace the cross I promised to carry?'

Proclaiming Jesus as Lord of our life is what we are called to do. May that proclamation be so evident in how we live that all will know the one we follow from more than our use of word and symbol. We can remain at the doorway of our faith saying 'Yes, I believe' or we can enter into the fullness of discipleship. Let's follow Jesus, let's allow our lives to proclaim the good news of Christ!

*The Rev'd Canon Kim Van Allen is Rector of
The Church of St. Alban the Martyr,
London (Huron at Highbury).*

FRIDAY, 23 FEBRUARY, 2007

How do I do a meditation? (Especially during Lent). I know - I'll wait until I am retired. Well, I am retired (supposedly) and I have been for sometime and I am setting aside a time for mediation. Am I? - I don't think so. So I'll turn to the professionals and seek out their advice and wisdom. The Anglican sisters of Saint John the Divine in Toronto - I certainly can meditate or do a Lenten devotion when I am with them. However, the truth is I am not often at the convent.

Certain things I do know. I need to be alone when I meditate. I find being alone in a church or chapel can be very helpful. I also like sitting in a summer chair looking at the ocean and all its mood swings, to me the best place to be with God, watching the real wonders of His creation. Hang on a minute- let me check out other resources that come to mind. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church says that "exponents of Christian spirituality, mental prayer in its discursive form.... Its method in the devout reflection on a chosen (often Biblical) theme with a view of deepening spiritual insights." Well! The church and the ocean still look pretty good to me. Of course St. Ignatius of Loyola comes to mind. Good writings and readings for beginners, but my sense is that Ignatius was not the chatty type like me. The regular Oxford Dictionary is more vague on the whole topic of meditation. I still think I will leave it for when I get to the church or the ocean.

Everyone prays, even though I read in a novel by a retired priest in Toronto "that retired clergy are well known for the fact that they do not pray at all." Well, since this is Lent I turn to the author George Herbert who, in his book, says "prayer.. is reversed thunder". I like that! The focused meditation and prayer is opened to a larger interior. Let's step briskly into the interior, and then take our time. Settle into this spacious interior, and make yourself comfortable. It's Lent.... have fun . As for me I can't wait to get to the ocean.

*The Rev. Canon David R. Hartry
is a retired priest in the Diocese of Huron,
and is active in interim ministry.*

25 FEBRUARY, 2007

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

PSALM 91:1-2,9-16

Shelter, refuge, dwelling place - Psalm 91 offers us images of security and safety, reinforced by a promise of angelic protection. A popular choice for bumper stickers (*This car is protected by Psalm 91*) and accessories for military personnel and firefighters, Psalm 91 is often invoked as a kind of talisman to cope with anxiety, danger or threat.

Many of us have at one time or another longed for the kind of security that seems to be promised within Psalm 91. Yet, the word “*shelter*” brings to mind precarious times when I have been most keenly aware of my lack of security and stability; times I have taken rudimentary refuge that still left me exposed and vulnerable, whether under an overhanging rock in the midst of a storm whilst hiking, or behind a thin curtain while keeping vigil beside a family member’s hospital bed.

As happens often in the Gospel, Jesus turns our notions of security upside down. Seeking assurances that we can avoid risk and pain leads to greater dangers. Just when we feel most self-possessed, perhaps even because of our chosen Lenten disciplines, we are in the greatest peril. Jesus recognized this when words from Psalm 91 were used to tempt him - if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple for God will command the angels to protect you. But Jesus, confident in God’s care, throws away the seeming security of grasping power and demanding God’s protection. Instead, Jesus chooses to walk in the way of faith and trust, dependent on God’s generosity, a walk that leads to the cross but also to resurrection.

What cherished notions or temptations of false security might God be inviting us, as individuals and the church, to leave behind as we journey through Lent?

Marilyn Malton is a member of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener, where she serves in Christian education and youth ministry, and as a synod delegate. She is also Director of the Renison Institute of Ministry at Renison College in Waterloo.

MONDAY, 26 FEBRUARY, 2007

ROMANS 10:8B-13

The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

Simply put, St. Paul is reminding us that we are so close to the love of God that some times we forget that He is within us. He is within our whole being, ready to move forward and in the process give us counsel in our lives in a way that is more infinite than we could ask or imagine. In our quest for peace within we are challenged to renew our faith in the risen Christ, a challenge of our faith in the basics of Christianity. If we consciously rely on His power, we are able to lean on him ... with all of our care and sorrow, with all the difficulties of this life; we are always near the edge of conscious involvement with our Saviour. He is so near to us, in our hearts and minds, just under the surface, ready to reveal Himself in our lives and in our faith.

Paul asks us to consider the whole crux of our Christianity. Not only does he ask us to believe, he asks that everyone put on the armour of light, that all peoples of the earth share our God. His passage written to the Romans tells us that we all are children of God. We must all learn to function together around this ever-shrinking world. It is so apparent that without some trust and dialogue, some communication on this sorry earth, we will continue to see the same world wars and conflicts rear up in flames. We must all do our part to understand the other opinion, the other faith, that other tongue.

God is in our midst, reach out and touch the hem of His garment. Ask for His help. You will receive it.

*David Parson is editor of the Huron Church News,
and a member of the community of faith at St. James' Church,
Stratford, where he is a sometime acolyte.*

TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY, 2007

ISAIAH 55:10-11

LOVE MADE KNOWN

For as the wind and rain beat down against the coast, and did not relent until all was laid low, making all who survived come forth and act, giving hope to those who lived and peace to those who received, so came the message of God; and the message of hope was not empty, it was the revelation of Love incarnate.

PASTICHE BASED ON ISAIAH 55:10-11

One cannot fully appreciate the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the southern coast of Mississippi. It looks like a bomb has been dropped and all has been laid low three blocks in from the coast. The wind beat against the shore for twelve hours straight, bringing with it a 30 foot wall of water.

Hurricane Katrina was the great equalizer - she discriminated neither between rich nor poor; young nor old; black nor white; male nor female. Katrina rained down on everyone and laid them low. Remnants of a people sifted through the rubble finding that nothing much was left: shards of glass where a window gave way, a roof resting in a stand of trees, steel beams where the house once stood, stairs leading nowhere.

This same remnant of people looked around and saw signs of hope in God's creation. In time new life sprung up from the soil; ducks returned to the pond and paddled around; the hibiscus bloomed and the butterflies drank deep from its flower; God's people shared their abundance and brought food and water for the hungry and thirsty.

In time the people saw life in the Crucifix of Katrina - green shoots grew from the branch of a tree stripped bare and that was adorned with a fish net (reminiscent of a shroud) put there by the wind and rain. The message of love was received - "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

The Love of God became incarnate - the Love of God sowed seeds of hope - the Love of God brought peace in the midst of chaos and loss!

The Rev'd Eleanor Caruana is Rector of Christ Church, Huntingford, and Church of the Good Shepherd, Woodstock, and has been active in volunteer ministry at Camp Coast Care, on Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, 2007

PSALM 51.1-2

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

... "Have mercy on me, O God"... a petition, a cry to God for help. We often say this in our day to day lives but do we really stop to think about what we are saying? "Lord have mercy" can be a glib response to an everyday action, but if we take a moment to collect our thoughts, imagine how much more powerful that petition might be.

... "according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions" ... God's love and mercy is limitless. Why are we not laying before God all of our sins, all of our sorrows, all of our desires? (It is easy in theory but difficult in practice.) The problem is that the busyness of life catches us up. The forty days of Lent provide us with a time to re-teach ourselves how to be in relationship with God. Forty days in which we are able to repent of our sins, to cast off the cloak of transgression and to prostrate ourselves before the Lord. Forty days to petition God... "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" ... absolve me of my declared iniquities, and cleanse my soul as I prepare for the resurrection of Christ.

God does not require a great deal from us. But he does oblige us to repent and turn to him. In light of Christ's sacrifice we should have little difficulty in turning to the Lord in prayer and asking for forgiveness. Jesus has already taken on the difficult task of dying on the cross for our sins so that we may be reborn into new life through him.

Join me this Lent in spending forty days in the wilderness that we create for ourselves. Take time out of your busy day to pray for mercy, forgiveness and new life.

Most merciful God, have mercy upon me, in your compassion forgive my sins, both known and unknown, things done and left undone,

O God, uphold me by your Spirit that I may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(SERVICE OF 'THE RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT', BAS P. 168)

Trish Taylor is coordinator of Huron's Diocesan Youth Synod

THURSDAY, 1 MARCH, 2007

MATTHEW 7:7-12

That erstwhile Anglican cleric and later Cardinal, John Henry Newman, described Lent, these forty days preceding Easter, as “the season of humiliation”. Humiliation in this context may best be understood as an opportunity to repent, amend, and confess.

And what better place to do that than in the communities of faith in which we live and worship? In this passage from Matthew, our Lord urges his followers to repent, amend, and confess, not in a vacuum, but in the context of a living, breathing Christian community. “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give is the measure you will get.” (Matt. 7:1-2). The word “you” is best translated in the plural - “you all”.

This injunction of Jesus to show mercy and forgive can be difficult and indeed “humiliating”. It means making the shift from the ideal Christian church in our heads to the Christian church rooted in reality. The fact remains, we all have definite ideas of what church should look like. Who has not been hurt, dismayed, or disappointed by the words or actions of a brother or sister in Christ? In this age of ‘a la carte’ religion, it is easy to become disillusioned by what some call the institutional church. When that happens, one is tempted to continue the search elsewhere for the ideal community or to strike out on one’s own. A recently published book, “God On Your Own”, reflects this trend. It has much to commend itself in terms of taking the spiritual quest seriously.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that God will not permit us to live for one moment in an idealized dream church. In spite of its imperfections and sinfulness, the church remains nonetheless Christ’s body on earth. Disillusionment with others and with any luck, ourselves, can lead to some new beginnings. God’s grace shatters any false conception of Christian community and forces its members to take a hard look not only at the quality of their relationships, but at the church’s very nature as a community - in, with, and for Jesus Christ.

Recently, my son said to me, “Lose the shirt!” I took that to mean, get rid of it. As Lent progresses to Holy Week and Easter, we are invited to lose the baggage that weighs us down and inhibits genuine community. May we allow ourselves to be ‘humiliated’ by repenting, amending, and confessing within the context of a loving community.

The Rev’d Canon Bob Schroeder is the Honourary Assistant at Grace Church, Brantford.

FRIDAY, 2 MARCH, 2007

No One Put to Shame

If I have learned anything in my thirty years of parish ministry, it is the message of Romans 10:11, that “No one who believes in God will be put to shame”.

Our God is a loving and forgiving God. He does not hate anything he has made. His healing, saving power permeates the Universe, and we find ourselves in His holy presence like fish in the sea.

It's a tragedy that our false pride, which leads us astray, does not allow us to turn back to the Lord. “God couldn't possibly forgive me for what I have done”, people say. We insult the Almighty by reducing His infinite love and mercy to puny, human dimensions. Like an all-consuming fire, God's Holy Spirit purifies and ennoble those who surrender to His power. When we are united with God, our simple acts of kindness touch the very core of human hearts. The divine spark within us transforms this world into the Kingdom of God.

The gentle rays of the sun caress the haggard face of a homeless boy with a tender touch, but the ground is still cold. He is standing on the grate from a bakery shop to keep his bare feet warm. The owner of the shoe store across the street stares at him with indifferent eyes. An elderly woman comes by. Without a word, she reaches for the boy's hand and leads him into the shoe store. There, she buys for him a pair of boots and heavy woollen socks.

“Are you God's wife?” the youngster asks her.

Stunned by the question, the woman hesitates for a moment, then she replies, “No, I'm not God's wife, but I'm one of His children.”

The boy's eyes brighten up as he says, “I knew you must be one of God's family.”

Yes, we are Children of God, destined for an everlasting glory.

“Not one who believes in God will be put to shame.”

The Rev'd Canon Mario Hryniewicz is priest-in-charge of St. Luke's Church and St. John's Church in Brantford.

4 MARCH, 2007

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

LUKE 9:28-36

Throughout this year there will be many opportunities when we will be able to celebrate what it means to be Christians, to be Anglicans and to be a part of the Body of Christ here in the Diocese of Huron. As wonderful as those moments will be, they will also fly by with a speed that will be difficult to comprehend. Patient, prayerful preparation will have gone into those "mountaintop experiences".

The experience of the Transfiguration begins with prayer. As Jesus prays, there is something about him that visibly changes. His destiny, his passion, his death, his resurrection and ascension will come as the fulfillment of all that the Law and the Prophets have foretold. Even in the midst of this unique moment, the disciples who witnessed this event do not truly comprehend the significance of what is actually taking place. They must wait until a stranger walking along the road to Emmaus says, "How dull you are! How slow to believe all that the prophets said! Was the Messiah not bound to suffer thus before entering upon his glory? Then he began with Moses and all the prophets, and explained to them the passages that referred to himself in every part of the scriptures" (St. Luke 24: 25-27).

Empowered and renewed for his mission and ministry, Jesus comes down from the mountaintop and is immediately thrust into the reality of the ministry to which he had been called. There will be times during this Sesquicentennial Year when we will come away from moments of celebration and be called to immediately respond to opportunities for ministry and witness. The transitions may not always be easy. Jesus models for us a pattern of life where every situation is approached with prayer and an openness to the presence of God's Spirit in each moment and in each person we meet.

As you journey through the Season of Lent 2007, spend time in prayer listening to how God's guidance will enable you to experience life in all its fullness. We may not always understand the meaning of the moment, but the reality of our faith allows us to make the claim that the one who we have named as our Light and Life shares in our mission and ministry every day of our lives.

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Rector of St. John the Evangelist Church, Kitchener*

MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2007

LUKE 6:36-38

Today's passage directs us to go gently into the world. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful; don't judge, don't condemn; forgive; give. As we treat others, so will we be treated. When we look at ourselves in God's world, do we appreciate how we deal with others?

When Jesus spoke, he talked about what he could see. He saw how badly people treated each other. Jesus could see the poor, whom the more fortunate did not seem to notice. He saw those who were sick or with disabilities, and the poverty caused by their suffering. Jesus could see the outcasts of society, who had no one to listen to their troubles. Jesus saw how people condemned the poor and the sick as they did little to reach out to them, because society felt that the poor deserved their troubles. Then there were those who held grudges for slights, whether large or small, real or imagined, nursing them for years. Jesus could see how people would keep what they had, without regard to the needs of those around them.

What does Jesus see when he looks at us today? Are we merciful, as he directed? Do we judge or condemn? Do we forgive or even give? Do we even see those around us? What could we do for them? What stops us from dealing with the systemic issues that keep the illiterate, the poor or the disabled from what they need? Can't we do more to assist those with HIV/AIDS, both here and abroad? How could we help the victims of violence? What could we do to help the millions of children suffering around the world? Where is God's love in a life scant on mercy and forgiveness?

Going gently into the world is not about being passive. It means actively reaching out as we embrace God's love. Allow God's love to guide us to help those living around us.

The Rev'd Deacon Ken Brooks is Deacon at St. Anne's (Byron) in London with a ministry of outreach to the low-income and disabled communities in London, as well as Elgin and Oxford Counties.

TUESDAY, 6 MARCH, 2007

ISAIAH 1:10-20

In Bodenhausen's painting of the Madonna, sepia tones offer warmth and depth to the picture of Mary standing on smoky clouds, white veils and robes falling in layers around her. A beam of sunlight shines from above; mother and the babe in her arms are awash in this Divine light.

Only upon very close inspection do you notice, in the bottom right hand corner of the scene, the distant image of three crosses on a hill. Mary's dark eyes stare from the picture, penetrating, accusing, while Jesus looks upwards to her face. By their faces, you know they both understand the meaning of true and willing sacrifice. The shadow of the cross, though distant at this point, is still present, and cannot be denied.

In the same way, Isaiah's voice jumps from the page, accusing, challenging. God is not looking for meaningless offerings void of just action, and threatens to withdraw the Divine eye and ear. Abandonment for the sins of humanity looms close in the harsh denunciation from the prophet's pen.

It is early in Lent, with a long road to travel before the journey to the cross on Golgotha is complete. But the cross is there. It cannot be denied. Nor should we wish to deny it, for our redemption lies there.

God's edict rings out, not as condemnation, but as a willing gift: wash yourselves clean...; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now...says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

I fall at the foot of that distant cross and repent, feeling the mercy of God cascade over me like the waters of my baptism, washing away the scarlet sins from my soul. And the light of God's mercy pours out upon me from above. The eyes of the Divine convict me, and I am strengthened for the journey to the cross. Come now...you shall eat the good of the land I have to offer.

The Rev. Catherine Ascah is Rector of the Anglican Parish of North Lambton, ministering to Christ Church, Forest; St. Paul's, Thedford; St. John's, Kettle Point.

WEDNESDAY, 7 MARCH 2007

MATTHEW 20, 25..28

But Jesus called them to him and said “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

In my ministry at the Daily Bread Program, the realization that I sometimes have enormous power over the lives of the men and women who come to me for help when they have nowhere else to turn, truly overwhelms and humbles me. As I walk beside them for a while, listen to their stories, and feel their pain, fear and loneliness, I must always remember what I say and do can have a very real impact on their lives. To serve them as Christ would serve is to do all in my power to help, to look after, to comfort all who cross my path. I pray for the strength to live up to this high calling, and for the patience, compassion and wisdom to look closely at each individual. I pray that I may see the face of Christ in everyone I encounter, every day. I pray that I not become a part of the systems that have failed so many.

Occasionally, during these special moments while being privileged to share a very personal time with a stranger who is driven by need, and often by desperation, I am able to help them find a solution, albeit, often only a temporary solution, to ease their incredible stress and strain. Sometimes, all I can do is listen and care. And, occasionally, I have been blessed when a brief, fleeting moment of unexplained pure Joy washes over me.

On reflection, I realize that I may have been allowed small glimpses of the Kingdom of God - on earth - in the here and now - that cause me to believe that in serving, and loving, we are truly instruments of this Kingdom.

Jesus calls us, as his followers, to help bring this Kingdom about. It is not something strictly for the “Hereafter”. It is there for us to experience while following in the path He set for us, serving all that we encounter, every day. This for me is a most powerful lesson in the Gospels of Christ.

Jane Moffat is an involved parishioner at Christ Anglican Church in London and has the privilege of being coordinator of The Daily Bread Program at St. Paul's Cathedral.

THURSDAY, 8 MARCH, 2007

PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:1

Do you have any idea why we mark the forty days of Lent year after year? Some people fancy this season as a sombre sojourn meant to remind us of what miserable good-for-nothings we are. We give up chocolate or some such other pleasure of life so we can feel as miserable as we really are.

Well, if that's your conception of why we observe this purple-clad season, you are suffering from a gross misconception. We mark these forty days so that, when we come out at the other side, we may know in new and more profound ways our identity as it is defined by life in Jesus Christ.

Sociologists have a theory of the looking-glass self: you become what the most important person in your life - spouse, parent, boss, whomever - thinks you are. How would your life change, then, if you truly believed the Bible's astounding words about God's love for you, if you looked in the mirror and saw what God sees?

Lent is about our discovery or rediscovery about who we are in Christ, about who God says we are.

If you have lingered at any length in the epistles of Paul, you may have noticed that the beloved apostle was deeply concerned with the question of identity. In his Letter to the Philippians, for example, he described his audience as "citizens of heaven," confident that this title would encourage the Faithful as they lived their lives in Christ. Paul was persuaded that we become and are what the most important person in our life thinks we are.

Archbishop Tutu claims he always preaches one message to his people: God loves you. "I tell them that," he says, "because the entire culture tells them that they are unlovable, and I have to give them the message of who they really are."

You become and are what the most important person in your life thinks you are, and God names you as God's own, deeply loved by God.

I bet that if, in these forty days, you really recognize this truth, it will change your life!

*Jay Koyle is a professor in the Faculty of Theology
at Huron University College, and
Associate Rector of St. Aidan's Church, London.*

FRIDAY, 9 MARCH, 2007

GENESIS 37:3-4, 12-28

For most of us the story of Joseph and his coat is one we have heard many times, whether in Sunday school, at church, or if we've been to see a rendition of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. This familiar story inspires me to stay strong and believe in human compassion. Joseph's brothers wanted to kill him because they were jealous of the attention he received as his father's seeming favourite. When one of the brothers named Rueben heard of the plan he wanted to save Joseph from the death his brothers had planned. Rueben convinced them to spare Joseph's life and throw him into a well, hoping to save his brother later and return him to their father.

This action shows how strong human compassion can be, since it is not an easy thing to go against the group or the social norm. Rueben is a strong individual and should be a role model for all of us. Rueben is one of the reasons why this story is so inspirational. If we all had a person like Rueben to look up to in our times of need, like Joseph did, the world would be a much better place.

But the story is not just about human compassion. It is also a story about how God saves and empowers people like Rueben and Joseph. Sometimes God calls us to become a strong person for someone else, to rise up to a situation, great or small. This story of sibling rivalry turned bad helps us to understand how God calls us to do what is right and stand up for all humanity.

*Joshua Houle worships at Christ Church, Maxwell,
and is a Youth Delegate for the Diocese of Huron
at Provincial Synod.*

11 MARCH, THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

ISAIAH 55:1-9

The children gathered close as they poured cups of water into a large clear bowl.

The teacher asked them, "What do we know about water?" Excited voices cascaded over one another as they called out, "It covers the earth"... "our bodies are made up mostly of water"... "Frogs sing and swim in it"... "And ducks"... "and whales"... "we can play in it and float in it"... "we need it to live"... "so do animals and plants"... "we wash in it"... "we pour it on the ground to help seeds grow"... "we pour lots and lots of it at baptisms"... "it makes me feel good when I drink it"... "it makes dry land green".

The teacher then showed them a very peculiar thing, a bunched up ball of a very dead, uprooted plant, dull brown in colour. Ever so gently they passed it from one to another, feeling its brittle dryness. "It's prickly!"... "it's dead!"... "throw it out!" She smiled, "Place it into the water...wait...watch...listen..."

There was a barely audible ping as small tendrils started to unfurl ever so slightly... "Sweet!"... "Awesome"... "Huh?"

The plant spread its leaves, tiny fingers reaching out into the water. The children watched in reverent silence as the water restored it before their very eyes!

Conversation gurgled up anew, ebbing and flowing from water restoring plants to God restoring dry land and dry lives, from our thirst for God to the Source of Life who never ever gives up on us.

Just when they were about to decorate the cups as reminders of the lesson, a small voice asked, "How come everyone doesn't have clean water?" The tides turned as the exchange of ideas became an opportunity to live them out, to be a source of life for others. Cups lovingly blessed with crayon and stickers, were filled with water and shared with community. Come Easter the baptismal font virtually overflowed with coins poured out from those same cups, enough to provide clean water for eighteen households a world away!

Source of Life, Soften our hearts with your gentle rain, fill us with an unquenchable thirst to be a channel for your overflowing love this day, and always.

The Rev'd Deacon Gerry Adam serves children and youth at Huron Church Camp and St Michael and All Angels in London.

MONDAY, 12 MARCH, 2007

2 KINGS 5:1-15A

One of the great gifts of silent or contemplative prayer, also known as Christian meditation, is that it frees me from trying so hard to “get” something from God. Like Naaman in today’s Old Testament reading (2 Kings, Ch. 5) I can approach prayer and my longing for healing with my assumptions and expectations of how God will heal all those parts of me that are wounded, broken, divided, lost. Like Naaman I can come to prayer aware of my status (he is a successful commander), my connections (he has access to powerful people), my offerings (he brings gold, silver, fine clothing as gifts). In short, I can be as confused as Naaman about where the real Source of my healing lies.

At the midpoint in Lent, the story invites you and me to remember that it is our poverty and simplicity that we bring to prayer. The poor, less powerful people in the story highlight this truth. The captive servant girl knows that healing lies with God’s prophet Elisha. Naaman’s servants know that healing is available if only their master will let go of trying to be in command.

In silent prayer, Christian meditation, we too learn each day to turn the attention off ourselves and towards God. We are learning to be in God’s presence. We let go of words, thoughts, images, ideas. We enter that poverty of spirit Jesus teaches us will lead us to God. We allow ourselves to be fully present to the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. Because Christ is always in communion with God, we are simply entering the stream of prayer already happening. Like Naaman we are learning to immerse ourselves in the constant stream of God’s healing love.

John Main, a great teacher of contemplative prayer said, “The first step in conversion is to allow ourselves to be loved by God.” As you and I continue our Lenten journey of turning back to God, may our daily prayer be marked by simplicity, silence and openness.

The Reverend Glenda Meakin

Glenda is a teacher of Christian meditation and conducts meditation retreats in Canada and the US

TUESDAY, 13 MARCH, 2007

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

Paul issues stern warnings to the Corinthians that they are risking God's wrath by the things they do. His five exhortations end (see verse 12) with the words "watch out that you do not fall"

2000 years later, it would be so easy for Paul to warn us in much the same way. We could easily fall prey to the trappings and distractions of this modern life while allowing so little time in our lives for God. We could actually find ourselves blaming God for the trials that seem to be beset us in our homes, places of work, schools and institutions. We could easily be walking on the edge of our faith thinking that we simply have no choice but to succumb to the pressures and temptations around us, given the massive weight of our burdens. After all, if God gave us these burdens, how can we possibly think otherwise?

Let's now turn to verse 13 of Paul's letter to seek some answers. Even Paul may have realized the severity of his criticism of the Corinthians and found it necessary to interrupt the flow of his exhortations with some words of reassurance. Paul says "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone". Okay so, we are no worse off than our neighbours ... not exactly the fix we were looking for is it?

But then he says "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it".

Wow! What a loving God! He does not measure us against our neighbours, He measures us individually, and He is well aware of our limited capacity to withstand daily burdens. For He knows that our "way out", is our faith which, allows us to "hang onto to the promise of salvation that "He" made to us" in spite of all the trials and tribulations that are going on in our daily lives. God would never risk losing one of His children so why would God test us beyond our strength? The answer is simple. He wouldn't!

Enjoy your day, because God has you in mind in all He does and in all you will face. Feed off of the strength He breathes into you and above all, keep the faith!

*The Rev'd Deacon Robert P. Sicard M.B.A. is a member of
All Saints', Waterloo, with outreach ministry at
The Court at Laurelwood, Waterloo, Ontario*

WEDNESDAY, 14 MARCH, 2007

MATT. 5.17-20

Lent is the time in the Church year in which we are invited to reflect intentionally on our walk with Jesus, our attitudes and our actions. The Gospel text addresses itself to the question of the connection between the demands of discipleship and the law, those statements of God's will given on Mount Sinai. The bold assertion in the Gospel text is that our Lord came not to destroy the Hebrew scriptures, but to fulfil them. God's Reign announced and introduced in the person of Jesus Christ, does not set aside the promises and the demands presented in the law and the prophets; rather it completes them. Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection is the climax in God's covenantal relationship with the people of God. His story gives meaning and shape to all the previous stories. The law is not something that can now be set aside. It is something that is to be obeyed and shared. As the Reformed theologian Karl Barth clarified, it is only by the covenant of grace, that the law becomes something that Christians are called and empowered to obey. The law gives shape to grace-filled lives.

Jesus' vision for grace-filled lives goes beyond even adherence to the law. Whilst the religious hierarchy of his day were often fastidious, even severe, in their observance of the law, Jesus calls his disciples to a more thorough-going and radical form of discipleship. It is an obedience that aligns head with heart, where a whole new way of being with others is envisioned. It is a community in which scandalous reconciliation, disturbing truth and embarrassing generosity are embraced. Above all it is a community where, as Jean Vanier both proclaims and lives, one dares to enter into covenantal relationship with those who are most vulnerable, relationship characterised not by benevolence, but by humbling mutuality and reciprocity.

The Rev'd Dr. Timothy Dobbin, is Priest Associate at St. George's Anglican Church, London and teaches sessionally at Huron University College and St. Peter's Seminary.

THURSDAY, 15 MARCH, 2007

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

I feel a responsibility to observe the season of Lent. For although, as Christians, we are all “under the cloud” of our Saviour God—that is, under his divine guidance and grace—nevertheless, like the Israelites of Moses’ day and the Corinthians of St. Paul’s, we experience doubt, we complain, and we test the Lord. We also wander from his path.

Every Christian has a duty to practice self-examination and to confess each sin to Almighty God. Lent provides a special opportunity to do this. In 1 Corinthians 10, St. Paul warns the people not to let down their guard, because they will experience temptation. He reminds them that the ancient Israelites—though sheltered under God’s cloud and fed by his manna—succumbed to temptation and did evil in God’s sight. He warns the Corinthians that they are no different: “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall” (10: 12).

Our world has changed greatly from the worlds of Moses and St. Paul. Yet we are assailed by the same temptations, “setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” Their pagan gods have become our idols of consumerism and sexuality. We buy and buy, but want still more. We waste and pollute. We sacrifice our children on the altars of pornography. The results of our idol worship are Poverty, Pollution, Disease, Famine and Death. And just like the Israelites and Corinthians, we rebel and complain. We want to do it our way, not God’s way. Even when we suffer God’s correction, we stubbornly continue along the same path.

Lent is my opportunity to examine myself, to pray and to read the scriptures—to see where I have been rebellious, complaining, going my own way instead of God’s—also to confess, and to ask for his grace that I may once more “delight in his will and walk in his ways, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Elaine Balpataky is a Lay Reader; and Chancel Guild, Choir and Parish Council member at St. John’s in Tillsonburg,

FRIDAY, 16 MARCH, 2007

PSALM 81

The NRSV translation of this psalm opens with “ Sing with joy to God our strength * and raise a loud shout to the God of Jacob”. Almost all of the great anthems that we’ve inherited from the Anglican tradition use the BCP translation. Byrd’s “Sing Joyfully” and Batten’s “O Sing Joyfully” of the Sixteenth Century, and Sydney Campbell’s “Sing We Merrily” of the last century, all capture the Psalmist’s exhortation to “sing lustily and with a good courage” to quote John Wesley’s *Instructions for Singing* (1751).

Wait a minute...this is a Friday in Lent! How can we go about praising God with a loud shout when we’re supposed to be fasting, and not using *Hallelujah* (or *Alleluia*) until the Easter Vigil? Are we not to follow the example of St Paul’s Cathedral in the “other” London that sings unaccompanied settings and motets on Friday throughout the year, not just in the penitential seasons? Verse 3 talks about “the day of our feast”. Can’t be today, surely. The editors of the Daily Office Lectionary must have meant to leave the first four verses out, and forgot to. The rest of the psalm is suitably Lenten. We have stubborn hearts, the disobedience of God, and, of course, the Lord of Hosts subduing the enemies of Zion in a timely and appropriate manner.

Which brings us back to the original question: why praise the Lord with loud music on a solemn Friday in Lent? I say, why NOT? The darkest psalm of the lot, to me, is Psalm 22 v. 1-20, which suddenly changes gears and the psalmist “will praise you in the midst of the congregation” and for nine more verses rejoices in God’s mighty works and justice. The same contrast is found in Psalm 102 vs. 1-11 (misery and pain) then vs. 12-28 (God’s incredible sovereignty over all creation).

Paul exhorts us to give thanks in all things...misery, loneliness, bereavement, depression. He’d probably add Lenten Fridays to that list as well! I suggest listening today to a recording of J S Bach’s Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor for organ solo. Organists believe that Bach wrote the Fantasia as a scream of pain on the death of his first wife. The accompanying fugue is a dance, a paean of praise, which ends in a blaze of light and glory. On this traditionally “dark” day of the soul in Lent, let’s find time today to sing, praise, and give thanks to God for all his many blessings to us.

Angus Sinclair is a well-known musician in the Diocese and holder of the Order of Huron. He is the accompanist to the Three Cantors and Director of Music at Grace Church, Ilderton, and St. George’s, Middlesex Centre.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT, 18 MARCH, 2007

LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

Are we ready for our hearts to be touched so that Jesus' words can find a home in us? As Jesus tells the story of the Prodigal, we are invited to listen and pay attention to the deep stirrings that give us a new awakening. During Lent we need to hear Jesus' voice with our hearts so we don't miss the sacred possibilities of new life and new relationships. Our actions will testify to what we hear.

Anyone who has been in the wilderness up north without light knows how scary that can be! We feel lost and it's a struggle to find our way. When we realise we can't rely on our own resources, that's when we find our real selves and there is gift in relying totally on our Creator. What a joy when we can go from being lost to being found!

Unjust systems can send people off into a distant country. It's a place for some, where they forget they are loved and so will often look for love in other ways. Where there are broken relationships, the distant land is a familiar place. Being reminded that decisions in the past have led others to painful spaces sometimes opens to us a reality we don't yet understand but is the beginning of a longing for reconciliation. The Prodigal Father recognises the wounds and surrounds them with unconditional love. When we can name the wounds within our culture, it leads us to embrace others.

All are equal when we come to Great Mystery. Jesus' suffering and forgiveness enabled Creator's love to be seen. The same love celebrates Easter happenings in us. The darkest places are resurrected and Creator wants reconciliation for both brothers in Jesus' parable, so he gives us hope. We don't know how the story ends but there is no doubt about Creator's heart and the transforming love that makes new relationships possible.

I am so thankful that I have experienced this kind of loving through my ministry with First Nations.

*The Rev'd Canon Gaye Whippey is Rector of the
Parish of Zion Church, Oneida, St. Andrew's Church, Muncey*

MONDAY, 19 MARCH, 2007

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

When I see a baby being baptized, I am filled with awe and wonder at the powerful work God does in our lives - all our lives, not just the life of the one being baptized. With a baby, physically so new and freshly made, we can imagine God's new creation, and celebrate it.

But we often forget that God is constantly renewing, refreshing and recreating us. If anyone is in Christ, says Paul, there is a new creation. A new creation made, not by human hands, but by God. It is difficult, at times, to celebrate what God has done and is doing, in us. Sometimes it is easier to think about our failings, our difficulties, how we fall short. But from now on, says Paul, we regard no one (not even ourselves) from a human point of view. The baby being baptized is to see the world from God's point of view, with divine eyes, and so are we.

And when we look with God's eyes, see, everything has become new!

By ourselves, we are separated, soiled, and self-centred; because God has reconciled himself to us, we are renewed, refreshed and recreated.

What do we do with all this renewing action of God? How do we react to God's reconciling work in our lives? Some of us don't like all this renewal - we would like everything to stay the same, thank you very much. We remind ourselves that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And if it's good enough for God, it's good enough for us.

Some of us like to keep all this reconciling love to ourselves. We focus on our own personal growth and seek a deeper and deeper, more personal relationship with God.

But Paul proposes another option. He reminds us that we are Christ's ambassadors. We are to take on Christ's work in the world, and, as Christ works through us, continue to bring all people to God in Christ. When we do this, we truly experience all the richness and fulfillment of God's reconciling love.

The Rev'd Dr. Dalice Sim is the Rector of St James' Church in St Marys and St Paul's Church in Kirkton.

TUESDAY, 20 MARCH, 2007

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

Today's epistle reading is one of the many places in scripture that could be described as "the gospel in miniature." We see again the Good News of a gracious, reconciling God who has opened a path of salvation for all people. I was so taken with this passage a number of years ago that I memorized it: these words have been floating around in my brain for some time.

The reading has much drama and an obvious climax (vs 17), emphasized in the NRSV by an exclamation mark: "see, everything has become new!" Still, over the years, it has been the first clause of the first sentence that has most often invaded my consciousness: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view." As I people-watch in a mall, or scan the faces of fellow Sunday worshippers, all the while making dozens of judgments with the flit of an eye, I am confronted by these very serious words. And there is often a sense of deserved guilt: these eyes of snap judgment are not consistent with one to whom God has given the ministry of reconciliation.

Now this clause in isolation will not be very helpful. "From now on" echoes past New Year's Resolutions, or vows taken at the beginning of Lent. But we do not develop a new vision of those around us by gritting our teeth and determining to be nice. Paul has placed these words within a context: our new way of seeing people is accomplished entirely in our envelopment by Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has changed us: he has made us a new creation. Just as Jesus opened the eyes of so many blind while on earth, so, too, he touches our eyes and gives us a new way of regarding people as we live our lives wrapped up in him. So from now on, from this day forward, in the power of Christ, we regard no one-not the long-winded neighbour, not the irritating co-worker, not the attractive salesclerk-no one-from a human point of view.

Nancy Spring teaches Sunday School at St. George's London, and is a leader in the Alpha programme.

WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH, 2007

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

From now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

Christianity forces us to take people seriously. The early Christians saw Christ in a new way, and we have come to understand that our discipleship obliges us to see our fellow human beings in a new way. C.S. Lewis said that when we look at people we might be tempted to look down at them, forgetting that they might become 'god-like'.

On the day of resurrection Jesus admonished Mary Magdalene not to hold on to him. "I am returning to my Father and your father, to my God and your God." The reality of the resurrection led the apostolic church, just as it leads ourselves today, to a fuller understanding both of Jesus and of ourselves. As St. Paul understood, Jesus shows us that the promises of the risen life came not only to him, but also to all humanity. Consequently human beings too have to be regarded in an entirely different light. "The old has gone, the new is come!"

Along with the joy of this new life we are reminded of the character of the new kingdom. Jesus constantly taught that he came not to be served, but to serve. He identified himself with the suffering servant in Isaiah, and exhorted his disciples to be servants and slaves of all. The ministry of service for Christians is related to our recognition of each human being as created in the image of God and worthy of devotion and honour. There is an almost seamless link between service to our fellow human beings and the worship of God because every human being is a living image of God presented to our eyes!

Each human being is holy on two accounts: made in the image and likeness of God, and incorporated through baptism into the new kingdom. So our ministries of service flow in a natural and inevitable way from the New Kingdom inaugurated by Jesus. They are the outcomes of our worship of God, and our recognition of the renewal of the world effected by Jesus.

*The Rev'd William Bradley is Rector of St. John's Church
(Sandwich) and chaplain to Mission to Seafarers
in Windsor.*

THURSDAY, 22 MARCH, 2007

JOHN 5:31-47

In this reading we see Jesus being persecuted by the Jews for the heinous crimes of curing the sick on the Sabbath and the blasphemy of pronouncing himself as the Son of God.

It should come as no surprise to any of us that the Jewish authorities see this upstart Jesus as totally upsetting the established Church. He is messing with the Law and threatening the very foundation of Judaism. As well, Jewish tradition regarded testimony on one's own behalf as invalid (Jn 8:13).

There is proof that Jesus' testimony about Himself as the Son of God is true, because God testified about Him in three ways:

1. by direct or audible voice and the visible sending of the Spirit as a dove during the baptism of Jesus
2. by revelation of the Old Testament Scriptures through the prophets and angels. This may have been intended to be the most powerful of the three.
3. by the miracles of Jesus.

If you insert yourself into this scene it is not hard to understand not only the enormity of Jesus' claim but also how incredulous this must have seemed. Would we view this scenario any differently than those whom Jesus was addressing? I think not. Step back and you may see the painting differently. It is an advantage that we modern day Christians have over those in Jesus' time.

Jesus knows that His time on earth is rapidly coming to an end. He acknowledges that His testimony about Himself is hard to swallow. He offers proof of His Divinity through human testimony (John the Baptist), miracles (works of power), and the voice of scripture.

We could see Jesus as boastful. We should see Jesus as living proof of the power of God on earth.

Ted Winter worships at St. James Church Ingersoll. He has just completed his Certificate in Religious Studies at Renison College in Waterloo and is currently the Lay Chaplain at Woodingford Lodge Nursing Home, Ingersoll.

FRIDAY, 23 MARCH 2007,

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-6:2

Time is a strange phenomenon. Sometimes the days just fly by, and at other times, every minute seems like an hour. Most of us live our lives in the illusion that we have all the time in the world. Yet, in my life as a chaplain, I regularly encounter people who suddenly have this illusion shattered. No one has a visit to the Emergency Room on their list of 'things to do' for the day. This is true even for people with chronic illnesses. I once accompanied the mother of a multiply handicapped child, who, as the child lay dying, looked at me and said, "I always knew he would die. I just didn't think it would be today."

Life is fragile. None of us know what the next moment will hold. All we have is this moment, and each moment is a gift, a miracle of God's grace to us. In Christ, each moment is a new opportunity. In each moment, God offers us a chance to start again - to be a new creation.

The season of Lent is a time to renew and strengthen our spiritual lives. It is a time of reconciliation - a time to reflect on our relationship with God, to acknowledge our brokenness, to ask for God's forgiveness, and to accept God's gift of healing grace. Paul tells us that in this journey of reconciliation, God does not count our brokenness against us. In fact, God entrusts the message of reconciliation to us as instruments of God's grace and forgiveness in the world! We are ambassadors for Christ and channels of God's grace and mercy to those around us.

So, seize the moment! As God's new creation, live life as God wants it to be! "For now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!"

The Rev'd Adèle Miles has worked as a chaplain in various contexts over the last 22 years. Originally from Montréal, she is chair of the Chaplaincy Committee of the Diocese of Huron.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, 25 MARCH, 2007

JOHN 12:1-8

What follows is an image that speaks to me often, but most especially in the season of Lent and Holy Week, when my thoughts are drawn to my parish community - what it is and what it can be - the challenge before us but also the calm that envelops us. I imagine our communities taking upon themselves the look, feel and even smell of Lazarus' house. What an interesting gathering of individuals - Lazarus of course, Judas, Martha and Mary, with Jesus.

With Lazarus we think of miracle, mystery and the unexplained. No one knows how it is that he is even alive except that Jesus, with tear stained face and broken heart, willed with the Father, that he be lifted from the arms of death and returned to family and friends.

Judas also gathers around the table with Jesus. Jesus knows the darkness that resides in his heart yet shares with him and the others the bread, wine and honey from the table. Jesus accepts and forgives this broken man even before he has inflicted deep pain upon him and his company of followers.

Martha is busy taking care of people. She is passing food, filling empty cups and keeping conversation calm and generous. She is giving of herself so that others may find a moment in their day to relax, reflect and share in the presence of friends. She gives of herself so that others may be refreshed.

Mary knows something very special and she is grateful. She shows her gratitude with fine smelling perfume. She anoints the feet of her master, he who has restored her to wholeness and freed her of shame, and in so doing treats all of the people gathered at table to a fine and rare fragrance - a wonderful symbol of the beauty and goodness she has now discovered within herself.

Lazarus' home is a place of miracle, forgiveness and acceptance, service and generosity, conversion, healing and wholeness. The Saints of God gather in Lazarus' home around Jesus. May the gift that Jesus offers to us in this story form our homes and our communities in this holiest of seasons.

The Rev'd Dr. John Chapman serves the people of God as a diocesan priest and as Dean of Theology at Huron University College, London.

MONDAY, 26 MARCH, 2007

SUSANNA (SUSANNA 1:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-60)
AND A NAMELESS WOMAN (JOHN 8:1-11)

Unlike her sister - the so-called adulterous woman of John's Gospel - Susanna has been given the power of a name. But like her later sister, Susanna is condemned by the righteous religious establishment. The victim is blamed for her circumstances by the righteous ones in their zeal for their place in the courts of God. Susanna, perhaps more boldly than her sister of the Christian gospels, with the strength of her identity reveals the tragic irony. It is the very people who should be standing with her - her own people and those who have been appointed to positions of justice - who condemn her "without examination and without learning the facts", as Daniel points out. So focussed are they on their own righteousness that they cannot see the part they themselves are playing in the injustice perpetrated on the victim. It is the Divine Spirit, outside the religious establishment, that stirs up justice in the end and overturns the righteous zeal of the power brokers.

How much justice is left unfulfilled by the failure of the powerful to see the responsibility given to them? How long must victims of injustice endure the blame for their state while the righteous look for ways to increase their personal sanctity and profit from the suffering of the little ones?

God's Spirit stirs a Daniel and a Jesus to shame the righteous and the powerful for "pronouncing unjust judgments and condemning the innocent". God gives us Susanna and a nameless woman among the many other marginalized ones of the world, presenting us with the opportunity to act for God's justice and mercy. What role will we claim for ourselves in the story of justice in the world? Can we dare give a name and a face to the victims of injustice that stand vulnerable before us?

The Rev'd Greg Smith is parish priest of Christ Church, London. The Huron Hunger Fund/Primate's World Relief and Development Fund and Integrity London are two important pieces of his ministry.

TUESDAY, 27 MARCH, 2007

PHILIPPIANS 3 4B - 14

I read two newspapers a day and one part of both papers I never miss is the obituaries. Also, when on holiday in the United States I always read the New York Times and never fail to read the obituaries in it as well. Obituaries are an interesting reflection of our society and the issues and concerns that are important in people's lives. I have read obituaries full of the accomplishments of individuals, with spouse and family towards the end - almost as an afterthought. Memorial donations are often requested and one sees the organizations and interests that have been important in a particular individual's life.

In today's reading from Philippians, St. Paul provides the outline of what might have been his own obituary as he lists his privileges of birthright and his accomplishments, almost daring anyone to provide a more admirable and extensive list. Then he proceeds very emphatically, to say the least, to discard it all as rubbish, as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. I can't help but think how interesting the obituaries of Christian men and women would be if after the usual list of background and accomplishments a disclaimer were added that the deceased considered 'all the above' as rubbish and loss because of the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

St. Paul is nothing if not focused and one who sees and understands his priorities as a man of faith very clearly. .

Today as we read and reflect on this passage, it would be helpful to list and focus upon the things which often take undue precedence in our lives and see where some re-ordering of priorities in our faith journeys might occur

*Archdeacon D. Ian Grant, Retired,
Assistant Priest, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario*

WEDNESDAY, 28 MARCH, 2007

PHILIPPIANS 3:4B-14, JOHN 8:31-47

“Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly kingdom.”

If we attempt to practice one of the traditional Lenten disciplines, such as fasting or a special time of prayer, meditation or study, we may find that this pursuit proves quite arduous over forty days. Our determination to persist may be undermined by the rigours of our chosen discipline, or by the many other demands that the world asks of our time and attention. And yet, as any long-distance runner can tell you, success comes from doggedly and persistently putting one foot in front of another.

St. Paul’s athletic metaphor of running a race reminds us that our discipleship is no idle calling. Our willingness to persist in the demands of our parish lives and tasks, our ability to work with (and sometimes forgive) our fellow Christians, and our ability to confidently assert the creeds of our faith in an age increasingly hostile to our truth claims — all these things require deep reserves of spiritual stamina. Left to ourselves, we cannot sustain our calling and we will burn out spiritually. Wisely, the apostle prefaces his exhortation to the Philippians by telling them not to count on being “confident in the flesh”. Rather, he says, set your sights on Christ Jesus, and fix all your desire on the resurrection he offers to each believer.

The same high calling of discipleship is expressed in today’s reading from John’s gospel. As people fall away, unwilling to commit to the hard teachings and difficult words of Jesus, Christ tells the few remaining believers that “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (Jn 8:31-32). Notice that this teaching hangs on the word “continue”. As with St. Paul, perseverance and stamina are demanded of true disciples. It is only by trusting in Christ’s grace, and thirsting for the freedom only he can give us, that we can reach our goal as disciples.

This Lent, may we persist in our callings as disciples and encourage one another to keep our eyes on the prize: our salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Captain the Rev’d Dr. Michael Peterson is Rector of Grace Church, Ilderton, and St. George’s, Middlesex Centre. He teaches sessionally at the Renison Institute of Ministry, and is Chaplain to the Fourth Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment.

THURSDAY, 29 MARCH, 2007

“Together in Faith and Life”

PHILIPPIANS 3:4B-14

Ah, the journey of Lent and the knowledge that we are all in it together is great comfort to me! “My one desire is to know Christ and the power of his Resurrection,” writes Paul in his letter to the Philippians! What a wonderful reminder to all of us of what discipleship and the journey of faith are all about! Sometimes we can forget what the centre of Christian faith is about. Christian faith is about New Life in Christ! New Hope! New Love! New Being! Our Lenten journey is not a “denominational” (sic) journey but rather a journey of faith practiced together by all the baptized! Together, we move forward in faith. Together, we mature in discipleship. Together we journey through the sufferings of this world with the sufferings of Christ our Lord. Together we grow in self-understanding and in outreach to others. Together, we grow in faith, hope, and love. Together, we learn and experience that the greatest of these is Love. Together, is a key word to understanding the biblical faith and our baptized life. When doing mission work, we do so better together. Together, let us love one another and others as the people of Christ’s Church in the world today. Together, we go forward in discipleship bearing witness to Christ’s Resurrection! Together, I know you are with me and you know I am with you! Together, a key word for our understanding Christ’s Resurrection and its power and strength for living our faith in the world today. Together is God’s word for you, for me, for us, today and forever. Amen!

The Rev’d Jon R. Fogleman is Pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Guelph, a founding member of LARC and a former Lutheran partner to the Anglican Council of General Synod.

FRIDAY, 30 MARCH, 2007

PEERING INTO MAN'S STORY AND FINDING A WOMAN'S -
PHILIPPIANS 3:4B-14

Imagine the seaside village of Philippi, where a narrow river runs out. Paul wends his way along the river seeking a holy place with holy people. He finds a worshipping group led by Lydia. Paul tells Lydia and her congregation about Jesus. You can read in Act 16 how they all accepted the truth of Jesus and were baptised by Paul.

Imagine now that little Christian congregation huddled around Lydia at the river. She has received a message from Paul and is reading it to others.

Paul explains how he has been able to grow in his faith in Jesus, by reviewing all that has been important to him and deciding that much of it just doesn't fit anymore. Jesus is now central and abundant in his life. Paul has crossed a line. Hebrew heritage, faultless zeal as a Pharisee and one who lived under the law - Paul considers it all rubbish, now that he has embraced Jesus. He has set aside circumcision - the male-only sign of belonging - in favour of the all-encompassing sign of baptism.

Long before history was recorded in scripture, the rot set in about women being lesser than men. It remains entrenched in many cultures, sometimes in our culture and church. Women's stories are easily glossed over because they are often hidden in a man's story. Two thousand years ago Lydia, a trusted and generous matriarch, became the overseer of a small Christian community.

Can Lydia and her congregation read this letter from Paul without reckoning what they might regard as rubbish? Can we? What rubbish can we discard? Does any of it have to do with the inferiority of any group within the human family? Paul draws us further into the Christian way by inviting all his readers to know Jesus. God, Paul tells us, has called all of us to a higher way - a way that puts Jesus as the centre of our lives and a way that cherishes all people as children of God.

*The Rev. Canon Brenda Clark
is rector of the parish of St. Hilda's-St. Luke's, St. Thomas.*

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION, 1 APRIL, 2007

LUKE 19:28-40

As I sit at my computer in Advent writing a reflection for Palm Sunday, I find myself singing a chorus from "Jesus Christ Superstar." Losing it? Perhaps. Suddenly I find myself part of an extraordinary scene from the whirlwind drama of Jesus' life. The atmosphere is electric. Excitement, anticipation and unbridled joy charge the moment as Jesus and a throng of Passover pilgrims converge on the Holy City of Jerusalem.

"Hosanna Hey Sanna Sanna Hosanna; Hey Sanna Hosanna Hey JC, JC won't you smile at me?; Sanna Hosanna; Hey Superstar" For Jesus, this is the culmination of all that he had offered to anyone who would receive. His teaching and preaching about a new way of living and loving ... his compassion and care for the poor and the marginalized ... his healing and restoration of the diseased and broken ... all had brought him to this moment in time. And it is good.

Caiaphas the High Priest, however, is less than impressed. This rag-tag band of pilgrims and their Boy Wonder threaten the holy status quo and just might upset the already uneasy situation with the Roman occupying force. Something has to be done.

"Tell the rabble to be quiet, we anticipate a riot. This common crowd, is much too loud. Tell the mob who sing your song that they are fools and they are wrong. They are a curse. They must disperse." Jesus, however, is caught up in the moment. The exhilaration he feels can only mean that God is in this place and time. What is, is what must be. It is the Father who has brought him to this point. Caiaphas and his cronies just don't get it! Things are changing. The kingdom is breaking upon all God's children. Why can't they see it?

"Why waste your breath moaning at the crowd? Nothing can be done to stop the shouting. If every tongue were stilled the noise would still continue. The rocks and stones themselves would start to sing." The satisfaction of putting those self-serving priests in their place is short-lived. The crowd suddenly shatters the moment.

"Hey JC, JC won't you die for me? Sanna Hosanna Hey Superstar" As Jesus' countenance changes from radiant with joy and exhilaration to stunned and uncertain, the impact of this day becomes clear. As Hosannas echo through the streets of Jerusalem, somewhere off in the distance storm clouds are forming. It is time to buckle up. The wild ride we are on is about to plunge into a deep dark tunnel. Evil is not easily defeated. The power-brokers of this world do not give in with out a fight.

Darkness is upon us. Now we can only wait for the rising of the Son.

*The Very Rev'd Terry Dance is
Rector of St. Paul's Cathedral and Dean of Huron.*

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK, 2 APRIL, 2007

JOHN 12:1-11

Some great gifts given in love can be so moving that the giving can be difficult to witness and the receiving too much for us to bear. As Jesus dines with his beloved friends, Mary does something which only love can do. She took the most precious thing she had and spent it all on Jesus. The gift itself was expensive. Her loving act was beyond measure. Extravagantly she took a pound of costly perfume to Jesus and in humility she stooped to anoint his feet and to dry them with her hair.

Mary was oblivious to all around her except for Jesus, but there were those who witnessed the giving of this gift. If they did not see at first then certainly the fragrance, which filled the house, drew their attention. The gift was not celebrated by Judas who was critical of this loving act. Judas viewed her act as extravagant wastefulness because of greed and he was unable to welcome the gift. The hardness of Judas' heart made it impossible for him to enjoy the fragrance of the gift and to embrace the sight of love acted out in such a way.

But Jesus received the gift whole-heartedly. He welcomed Mary and let her give her gift as she wanted to. Jesus shows us how to receive a gift. He does not respond by saying "this is too much" or "you shouldn't have". He does not turn away from Mary or allow her gift to be hidden. Neither does God hide his gift from the world. God did something which only love can do. He sent us his Son, Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Saviour.

The Lord Jesus showed us the extravagance of his love by pouring out his precious blood for us and by anointing us with his Holy Spirit. May we not turn away from this gift, or criticize it or diminish it by saying it is too much. Let our hearts be softened and receive with grace God's act of love which is beyond measure.

*The Venerable Jane Humphreys
is the Rector of St. Luke the Evangelist (Broughdale) and
Archdeacon of Middlesex.*

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, 3 APRIL, 2007

ISAIAH 49:1-7; PSALM 71:1-12; 1
CORINTHIANS 1:18-31; JOHN 12:20-36

The Life of Faith

The Old Testament readings focus today on the meaning of a mature spiritual life. Psalm 71 laments the insecurity even of the faithful, particularly as a life closes. Isaiah 49 on the other hand bubbles with the confidence of one that has received a call, and eagerly anticipates fulfilling it.

The New Testament readings (Jn 12: 20-36 and 1 Cor 1:18-31) carry forward these two themes, and Holy Week provides a focus for these “up” and “down” sides of the life of faith. “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” (Jn 12: 23). We can hear the words of Isaiah’s enthusiasm echoed as Jesus says, “Where I am there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me the Father will honour.” (12:26) Even so, “My soul is troubled. And what should I say-Father, save me . . . ?” (21:27) His answer, in courage and humility, is “No, it is for this reason I have come to this hour” (12:27). We should remember this response in Holy Week especially when the action seems to focus so much on Pilate, Judas, Peter and the weakness of the disciples, the Sanhedrin’s machinations and the fickle mob. Jesus was the active player; the events are not a political assassination.

And Paul (as so often) puts it best: “For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18). Paul reminds us it is not our wisdom but God’s that operates here. “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong” (1:27). “[God] is the source of life in Christ Jesus who became for us wisdom from God” (1:30). Look at the world around us; substitute your own contemporary nouns into context: “Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified” (1:22-23). And think to what you subscribe, as you recite the Christian Creeds at Easter.

Rob Lofthouse is a Lay Delegate from Church of the Holy Saviour of Waterloo, a retired teacher of English, and an active lifelong student.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, 4 APRIL, 2007

HEBREWS 12:1-3

William Blake in his poem "London" wrote, "In every cry of every Man, in every Infants' cry of fear, in every voice in every ban, the mind-forg'd manacles I hear."

Life need not be that dreary, for we have a God Who loves us, Who cherishes us, and Who provides for us. What we need to do though, is to continually put Him and His ways first, reaching out to Him in all that we do. We need to put our bodies in His strength, our minds in His Wisdom, and our souls in His infinite heart. So when we find ourselves in times that bring us down, we go to the Source of All that is Good and Worthy for our recovery. And when life is well and joyous, we immediately give our thanks for His Blessings.

May Church, Scripture, and Prayer keep us in solid relationships with our Lord, and with one another.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name,
Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
let us also lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely,
Give us this day our daily Bread.
and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,
And forgive us our trespasses
looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our Faith,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Who for the sake of the joy that was set before Him endured the
Cross, disregarding Its shame,
And lead us not into temptation,
and has taken His seat at the Right Hand of the Throne of God.
but deliver us from evil.
Consider Him Who endured such hostility against Himself from
sinners,
For Thine is the Kingdom
so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.
the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*The Rev'd Raquel Mack is a recently ordained priest
in the Diocese of Huron.*

MAUNDY THURSDAY, 5 APRIL, 2007

JOHN 13:1-15

We spend the 40 days of Lent getting rid of, or giving up, all that is between us and our being able to stand with Christ to say: "Into your hands I commend my spirit." As we read in the letter to the Philippians, we prepare to "let this mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself to the point of death on the cross." We demonstrate this willingness to join our Saviour's sacrifice by bending down, with towel and basin, and wash each other's feet.

Why do we use feet? It's precisely because it makes us feel uncomfortable, vulnerable in the ministrations of another, that we use feet. Like Peter, we too might be too proud to wash feet or have another wash our feet. We need such ceremonies to help us enter into Christ's self-offering, rather than just hearing about it or watching a "select few" experience this.

Jesus turned the wisdom of the world upside down and showed us with the sacrifice of his body and blood what true greatness is all about. The same body and blood that bent down as a servant to wash the feet of his disciples, the same body and blood that is our Supper, now bends your body down to wash the soiled feet of one another, cleansing one another. We do this so the world will know the truth of God. "By this all will know that you are my disciples, when you have love for one another."

Jesus loved us to death, before we loved him. He loved us and laid down his life for us. Let us commit ourselves to always being a Church which finds that it is in serving that we find life in its fullness.

*Canon Harnadek serves at St. Matthew's Church in Windsor:
Of special interest to him is the primacy of baptism in
Christian life and the re-establishment of the Catechumenate
in the Church of Christ.*

GOOD FRIDAY

HEBREWS 4:16

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In order to encourage our faith, the writer of Hebrews asks us to look back, look around, and look ahead. This is a relay, the writer says, and I want you to look back and see who passed you the baton. By faith, Abel, Enoch, and Noah responded to God with the best that they had. By faith, Abraham and Sarah set out with a promise, as good as dead in their own minds, but they became the parents of us all, by faith. By faith, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, struggled with God, and found covenant relationship with God. By faith, the women and the disciples recognized the risen Lord. By faith, whoever brought you to Christ, handed on to you what they were given - that which you hold in your hand - your faith.

Look back... and... look around. They're all here. It's like you are entering the great stadium near the end of the race. You've come a long way, and there is a way to go, but you're getting there. And just when you start to lag a bit, you look around. And you see that we are running together. And together, we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. The previous runners have taken their place in the stadium, and they are cheering us on.

Look back, look around, and look ahead. Looking ahead, we see that we are still following the lead runner, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, Jesus. We are winded and tired, but clearly this is the race that counts. So we strip off anything that would slow us down. All the weighty encumbrances and shackling sin.

It is hard to make that sound gracious... to those who haven't been in the race. But you have been in the race, and that's why you'll recognize that this same Jesus who hung on the Cross is now running ahead of you. And the writer of Hebrews points out the destination - there!... is the throne of grace. There Jesus goes, on our behalf, leading us to the fullness of God.

The Rev. Todd Townshend is Associate Rector, St. Aidan's London, and teaches Homiletics in the Faculty of Theology at Huron University College.

HOLY SATURDAY

LAMENTATIONS 3:1-9,19-24

We Wait

Years ago, I remember descending into an abandoned mineshaft tucked away in the beautiful mountains of West Virginia. Our guide had distributed miner's hats outfitted with a piercing light. The comforting shafts of light emanating from our headgear danced in the darkness as we made our way into the bowels of that old coal mine. Reaching our destination, we were then directed to switch our lights off so that we could experience total darkness. To experience a complete absence of light for the first time caused an immediate anxiety-provoking moment. Not being able to see your hands gyrating madly just inches from your face is quite unnerving. I can still sense that dramatic moment when our lights were switched back on again and the light burst through the black darkness.

Liturgically, Holy Saturday is the time of darkness: an absence of light and hope. On God's Friday, Jesus was executed and abandoned by almost everyone. Laid in a borrowed grave, the stone sealed the tomb in the darkness of defeat and despair. The words of Lamentations describe it so well:

"...he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light
....he has made me sit in darkness like the dead of so long ago"
(Lam 3:2,6)

But even in the midst of the darkness of death, we wait in hope for God's piercing light to burst forth.

"...but this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end." (Lam 3:22)

Saturday, we dwell in the darkness waiting for God to act to bring about our life and our salvation.

Watch, here comes the light of God's love in Christ. Alleluia morning is coming!

*The Rt. Rev'd Robert F. Bennett
is Suffragan Bishop, Bishop of Norfolk*

SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION

Witnesses and Lilies

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

As we contemplate the church universal it is impossible to imagine how many millions of people will say and hear these words. These words are at the heart of our faith. The disciples did not spend their time trying to explain this truth, they spent their time proclaiming it.

On this first day of the week - Easter Day - we experience afresh the majesty and mystery of Christ's victory over death. In the Acts of the Apostles the author Luke reminds us that we are called to be witnesses to this truth. As witnesses we are to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth that the Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

My early memories of these words and of Easter worship are associated with lilies and their wonderful fragrance. As an altar server I would sit, stand and kneel near them, so lovingly prepared and displayed by Altar or Chancel Guild members. Again this year the lilies have bloomed and the trees have issued their blossoms and perhaps leaves. And once again the promise of spring has come just as it has so many years before. Our Easter celebrations, as they have for so many centuries and for 150 years as a Diocese in southwestern Ontario, remind us that we need to be touched by our risen Lord. Touch me again Jesus and remind me that love is better than hate. Touch me Jesus and remind me that right is stronger than wrong. Touch me Jesus this Easter and assure me that life has conquered death. Touch me Jesus and remind me of my calling to witness to your resurrection and to say "Jesus lives!".

Jesus lives in your life and mine, in your church and in every church in our diocese, in this country and throughout the world. Jesus - yesterday, today and tomorrow. As we celebrate Jesus alive in our Diocese in 2007 let us by words and deeds show forth God's love for the world in the years to come.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

*The Right Reverend Bruce H. W. Howe
is the Eleventh Bishop of Huron*



The Rt. Rev'd Robert F. Bennett, Suffragan Bishop, Bishop of Norfolk and The Right Reverend Bruce H. W. Howe, Eleventh Bishop of Huron

A COLLECT FOR EASTER DAY

ALMIGHTY God, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: We humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Portrait of a Young Fürleger with Loose Hair

*Albrecht Dürer: 1497; Oil on canvas,
56 x 43 cm; Städelsches Kunstinstitut,
Frankfurt*

This portrait, together with the Portrait of a Young Fürleger with Her Hair Done Up, forms part of a rather beautiful and uncommon diptych.



The very fine brushstrokes of this exquisite painting and the sharp distinction between the areas in light and those in shadow give the face a sense of plasticity, endowing it with a particularly vivid expression. Scholars demonstrated that the two portraits truly formed a pair and that they were acquired together in 1636 in Nuremberg by the count of Arundel, whose engraver, Wenzel Hollar, made two engravings modeled from them.

In 1673, the portraits were acquired, together as always, by the bishop of Olmütz, from whom they later went on to Carl von Waagen, of Munich. Afterward, the two portraits were separated.

*Published by the Anglican (Episcopal) Diocese of Huron
The Anglican Church of Canada in celebration of the
150th anniversary of the Diocese, February, 2007.*

Design and concept: Soliloquy Communications