

St. James' E-pistle

March 18, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

This is the week. Holy Week. Since becoming a priest, I have always loved and simultaneously dreaded Holy Week.

Why?

It's busy. That's it, really. There's a lot to plan, and for those of us who are not natural organizers, it's stressful.

On the other hand, it is beautiful. It's powerful. It leaves me in tears of wonder and makes me want more.

Even Maundy Thursday - that awkward moment when the priest says, "Who wants to get their feet washed?" and everyone stares at the ground hoping he won't look at them. Even that is a powerhouse of a service. Not because of the feet - listen, if you don't want to get your feet washed, I'm okay with that. Someone will always do it, so if it grosses you out, don't feel pressured.

But come anyway, because at the end of the service... the stripping of the altar while the psalm is recited! It gives me goosebumps.

Good Friday has two completely different events that make me love the day more than seems appropriate. The Community Walk of the Cross has no comparison. We have so many churches taking part this year - carrying our giant cross around town. Then in the evening, the liturgy that concludes with the Veneration of the Cross... I mean, I have seen people cry as they came up to touch the cross or maybe lean their head against it for a moment. It's so heartbreaking.

But I reserve my personal favorite for the Easter Vigil. Where else can we start outside with a fire, enter into darkness, sing the Exsultet (which I adore), and then burst into light? It is the first Easter service, but it is really the moment of transition from death to life.

Now, don't get me wrong, I love Easter morning, too. A lot! I love the flowering of the cross! I love the Easter Egg hunt. But mostly, I love shouting to the world that He is Risen Indeed!

I know, I know. I'm the priest. I have to love this stuff. But I loved it long before I was a priest - back when I didn't have to stress over the details. There's a lot to love because liturgy draws out emotions. It is all about experience. You don't have to understand liturgy, just feel

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it. This is the time of year when you can sink yourself into the agony, the anger, the fear, and the grief, only to feel - really feel - the joy of regaining what you thought was lost.

Make the most of your Holy Week and Easter. Dive into it. Be with us this Holy Season.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Sunday School News:

Sunday March 20th: No Sunday School- Please participate in the Palm Sunday Service.

Sunday March 27th: No Sunday - Happy Easter

April 3rd: Sunday School resumes for Bright Sunday.

Join the Churchyard Committee! Our churchyard committee wants you. The committee oversees one of the most historic graveyards in the region, and is responsible for making sure it is kept up. It handles the sale and digging of graves as well. If you value our churchyard and want it to continue to be a source of comfort whose loved ones rest here as well as historical interest to those who visit, please join our committee. If you're interested, you can contact Carol Vinall at vinehall3@aol.com.

Help Liberty Station: Following a period of exploration and discussion with Jocelyn, a staff member at Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), the Outreach Committee made the commitment to support Liberty Station and the work of SSVF.

Some background: SSVF is under the umbrella of Hudson River Housing. Their goal is “to promote housing stability among very low-income Veteran families who reside in or are transitioning to permanent housing.”

We have too many homeless and/or at-risk Veterans in Dutchess County. SSVF is there to provide needed services to these Veterans. For Veterans who find themselves homeless, Liberty Station, provides housing, various services and hope.

Thomas Moody, a US Army Veteran, says it best - “When I got back to Poughkeepsie, I probably spend a couple of weeks living out of my truck and it was just one of those things. I didn't want to be a burden . . . I have a lot of family here but I'm also a very prideful person so I thought it was important to me to try and work this out myself. And with the help of SSVF I was able to do that. It was very quick. I believe I was in Liberty Station the following day. I've been serving as the superintendent for the past seven months.”

If you haven't picked up your Lenten calendar, please do so. This year's calendar is a prayer calendar reflecting the challenges our Veterans and active service personnel encounter.

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Check out our Liberty Station table as you enter the Parish Hall for breakfast. There will be copies listing the needs for Liberty Station and SSVF. There will be a basket to receive your donations. In addition, we will have a video showing Tussing Elementary School of Virginia singing - THANK YOU - Soldiers.

Our support of Liberty Station and SSVF is ongoing with support continuing throughout the year. Please prayerful consider supporting our Veterans.

Thank you - St. James' Outreach Committee

A Men's Retreat:

Although we do not normally advertise events for other organizations, this retreat may be of interest to some. The minister running it, the Rev. Randy Prentiss, is pastor at Arlington Reformed and retreat director at the Taconic Retreat Center (where our youth have gone to the Bridge Builders Camp). Here is what he says:

MID-HUDSON MEN'S RETREAT

April 8-9.

26 hours of RENEWAL

Get closer to God; get closer to each other.

What is this?

An opportunity to get away with other guys for rest, renewal and retreat. We will do this through worshipping, laughing, playing, learning, talking, being away and being together.

Why?

Guys need a break. Guys need to get away. Guys need God. Guys need each other. Its' a good thing.

When?

Friday April 8, 6pm, thru Saturday April 9, 8 pm.

Where?

Taconic Retreat Center at intersection of Taconic Parkway and Rte 199, Red Hook.

30 minutes from Poughkeepsie. 45 minutes from Hopewell Junction. www.taconicrcc.net for info and directions.

Who?

A group of guys from a variety of local churches are putting this together, for...

All men 19 and older...

We hope that a group of guys from a variety of local churches will come and have a great time.

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COST: \$115 includes 4 meals and 26 hours at camp. Climbing Tower and zip line additional cost (optional).

For the first time in a long time, many men from around the Hudson Valley will get together at the TACONIC RETREAT CENTER. We will be away for 26 hours to think about the things that are really important in our lives – our families, jobs, relationships, and God. Join us to reflect upon what's really important in our lives, and to have some fun.

This retreat offers a chance to bring focus to our lives and our faith. We will worship, laugh, rest, listen, learn, play (basketball, ultimate Frisbee, football, kan jam, and whatever you bring) and get to know each other. We are limiting our time to 26 hours so even busy guys with families can pull away to join us.

Pledge Envelopes: If you pledged but have not yet received your pledge envelopes, you can do so on Sunday. You can also pick up your 2015 statement of giving (helpful for taxes).

PLEASE PLEDGE! If you have pledged for 2016, thank you! If you have not yet pledged, it's not too late. We would like 100% participation this year in pledging, no matter the amount.

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Holy Week And Easter At St. James'

Thursday, March 24 - Maundy Thursday

7:00 PM

Maundy Thursday Liturgy with Stripping of Altar

Friday, March 25 - Good Friday

10:30 AM

Community Walk of the Cross,
beginning at Regina Coeli Church

7:00 PM

Good Friday Liturgy with Veneration of the Cross

Saturday, March 26 - Holy Saturday

8:00 PM

Easter Vigil with New Fire and
First Communion of Easter

EASTER SUNDAY! March 27

8:00 AM

Easter Communion with Music

10:00 AM

Easter Communion with Music
Easter Egg Hunt for kids follows

St. James' Episcopal Church
4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538
845-229-2820
www.stjameshydepark.org

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The News of the Diocese

Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: Please pray for these diocesan ministries this week. If you want to check out the entire year's calendar for intercession, it's simple to find - go to <http://www.diocesen.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

- 20 Palm Sunday The Cathedral Congregation of St. Savior at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine
- 21 Prison Chaplains of the Diocese
- 22 Clergy of the Diocese
- 23 Sextons of the Diocese
- 24 Maundy Thursday Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors of the Diocese
- 25 Good Friday Hospice Chaplains of the Diocese
- 26 Holy Saturday Altar Guilds of the Diocese

Praying For Peace Everywhere:

Let us continue to light a candle for peace in the Holy Land - and everywhere. Prayer is our most potent antidote to hatred.

1. Candle for Peace

Please also light a candle on Fridays - holy to both faiths - for Peace

Let us Light Candles for Peace

Two mothers, one plea:

Now, more than ever, during these days of so much crying,
on the day that is sacred to both our religions, Friday, Sabbath Eve

Let us light a candle in every home - for peace:

A candle to illuminate our future, face to face,

A candle across borders, beyond fear.

From our family homes and houses of worship

Let us light each other up,

Let these candles be a lighthouse to our spirit

Until we all arrive at the sanctuary of peace.

2. The Mothers Prayer:

God of Life:

You who heals the broken hearted, binding up our wounds.

Please hear this prayer of mothers.

You did not create us to kill each other

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Nor to live in fear or rage or hatred in your world. You created us so that we allow each other to sustain Your Name in this world:

Your name is Life, your name is Peace.

For these I weep, my eye sheds water:

For our children crying in the night,

For parents holding infants, despair and darkness in their hearts.

For a gate that is closing – who will rise to open it before the day is gone?

With my tears and with my constant prayers, With the tears of all women deeply pained at these harsh times

I raise my hands to you in supplication: Please God have mercy on us.

Hear our voice that we not despair That we will witness life with each other, That we have mercy one for another, That we share sorrow one with the other, That we hope, together, one for another.

Inscribe our lives in the book of Life

For Your sake, our God of Life Let us choose Life.

For You are Peace, Your world is Peace and all that is Yours is Peace,

May this be your will

And let us say Amen.

*Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum
English Translation Amichai Lau-Lavie*

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Barbara Knakal, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Charles Pardee (husband of Sally), Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson (brother of Mary Gabel), John Ross, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Beatrice, grandmother of Angela Henry. Please also pray for Vanessa Grace.

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Schedules

A Note about Schedules: The names you see below are those listed on their respective schedules. There are often times when, due to sickness or travel, substitutes are asked to fill in or trade positions. This will probably NOT be reflected in the lists below—so, if there is an inconsistency between what you see here and what you see on Sunday, that is alright.

Birthdays (this past week):	Aric Tegmeier; Chuck Kramer; Don Ogden; Braeden Hall
Birthdays (next week):	Jack Kinne; Joann B. Clark; Leighann Ciferri; Douglas Belding
Acolytes:	March 20: Jasmine, Jaylen and Bill March 27: Nancy, Kirstin and Deirdre Mae
Altar Guild:	March 20: TBA March 27: TBA
8 a.m. Readers:	March 20: Debbie Belding and Lucille Ogden March 27: Angela Henry and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	March 20: Wilma Tully and Justin Bohlmann March 27: Donna Beyer and Andy Hall
Ushers:	March 20: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher March 27: Donna and John Beyer
Pledge Clerks:	March 20: Paul Littlefield and Janet Bright March 27: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	March 20: Deirdre Mae Micker; Mike and Annette and Mike and Gage Minter; Nancy Montero March 27: Carl and Jean Needy; Joan & Bud Oetjen
Coffee Hour Hosts:	March 20: See sign-up sheet March 27: The Parish

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

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NOTE: Audio recordings of some sermons are now available on St. James' website, www.stjameshydepark.org Look under "Worship"

Sermon Preached on Fifth Sunday in Lent (March 13, 2016)

"Passion"

When you hear the word "passion," what do you think of? Usually, it's intense emotion, deep caring, strong feeling. But, you could also hear it and think of Jesus' crucifixion. You know, the Passion of Christ.

In today's Gospel, we have both meanings.

If this story seems familiar to you - a woman anoints Jesus while he's at a meal with disciples, that's because it's in every single Gospel. True, Luke's gospel does something completely different with it and makes it almost a different story altogether, but the fact that all four gospels have a woman come in and anoint Jesus means that this is important. And shocking (as it is said to be in every gospel).

Moreover, Mark and Matthew are pretty close to John's version. But, there are a couple of big differences.

First, in John, this woman has a name. Mary. She's the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Lazarus was raised from the dead just one chapter earlier. [I have my suspicions that the order has been changed by John, but that's neither here nor there]. Mary and Martha only appear in one other Gospel - Luke - and it is in Luke where Martha frantically serves the tables while Mary sits at Jesus's feet with the disciples and listens to his teaching. She defies convention in Luke, and she does it John, too, for while Martha serves table here, Mary leaves behind the serving to something even more radical than sit at Jesus' feet.

And this brings us to the second big difference. Mary anoints Jesus' feet. In Mark and Matthew, it is an unnamed woman who comes into the house and anoints Jesus' head. In all three cases, Jesus says that what she has done is anoint him for his burial.

Mary not only anoints his feet, but dries them with her hair. Why would she do such a thing? As Mark and Matthew make clear, anointing his head would have given the same message.

Well, here we can take a peek at Luke's very different version. Luke tells us that the nameless woman is a known "sinner". She washes Jesus's feet with her tears and dries them with her hair because her sin has been forgiven. Because her great sin has been forgiven, so her love for Jesus is great. Big forgiveness equals big love.

But in John's version, Mary anointing Jesus' feet and drying them with her hair has nothing to do with her own sinfulness. Rather, it has to do with her passion. Here, Mary knows Jesus. She,

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Martha and Lazarus are all beloved friends. In John's Gospel, Jesus has not warned the disciples repeatedly that he would die. Rather, he tends to say, "My time is not yet" or "My time has not yet come." NOW, with Mary, his time has come, and she is the one who not only announces it to the disciples but feels it in her soul.

For Mary - the one Jesus asked for when he came to Lazarus's grave - She knows what is to happen. She is performing a prophetic action, and it is breaking her heart. Her actions are deeply felt, deeply caring - passionate - as she foretells of the Passion of Christ.

Let's pay attention to this point. She is the first to not only see but acknowledge - as much pain as it brings - that Jesus must and will sacrifice himself. She may not grasp the full importance of that act - that Jesus' death will lead to resurrection. But then, her brother had just been raised from the dead by Jesus, so who knows? Regardless, she knew dark times were just around the corner.

How important is this act? With Passover just around the corner, Jesus' death is nearly upon us. In the very next Chapter, Jesus will share the last supper and - in a mirror image of Mary's shocking anointing - he will wash the feet of his disciples. Then he will tell them to do likewise. This act is so important that it is modeled by us to this very day. (though admittedly, I'm not going to dry anybody's feet with my hair).

John's Gospel deals differently with this story than the others in that he gives the woman a name. And he intensifies her passion.