

St. James' E-pistle

June 27, 2014

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

We are only one week away from Independence Day. Sure, our graduates are celebrating independence already, but for the rest of us, we'll have to wait till the 4th.

Independence is something that our graduates will soon discover is a multi-faceted gift. It is pretty much the same whether you are a high school senior stepping out of the home for the first time or a new country figuring out what the future will be.

Independence has many wonderful benefits, not least of which is nobody tells you what to do. But anyone who has ever tried to be truly independent can tell you that there is no such thing. We are all interdependent upon each other. Nobody in this life earned their own way - they had help. There is no person on this earth who doesn't need others. Even hermits have contact with, and often help from, others.

The same is true of the church, by the way. There is no private spirituality, no solo religion. Each of us is on the same journey, and each of us needs each other. That is why we have church in the first place. We worship together, and in doing so, strengthen the prayers of each other. We study together, and in doing so, teach each other in ways we could not learn alone. We serve together, and in doing so learn that we can do more as a community than we ever could by ourselves.

We depend on each other, so while Independence is great, especially when it means freedom from a despotic overlord, Interdependence is infinitely better.

That's one reason I keep talking about the importance of coming to church. Believe it or not, it's not because we need your money. Most folks make their pledge and pay it whether they attend or not.

The importance of attending church on a regular basis is that without you, I am weaker. Without you, I am less wise, less encouraged, less assured in my relationship with God. We are lights to each other, and without each other, our paths are dark.

So do yourself a favor - and do your brothers and sisters the same favor. **Make your Declaration of Interdependence!** Now's the perfect time. Who knows, your presence here might even spark some beautiful fireworks!

In Christ,

Chuck+

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The News of the Diocese

Prayers for Nigerian Terror Victims: Please consider using this prayer in your daily devotions as you remember the more than 200 girls kidnapped in Nigeria by the terrorist group Boko Haram. While it is true that there are millions in equally desperate situations and facing equally unjust treatment, focusing on one specific case of injustice and evil may help us remember all who suffer similarly. (This prayer comes by way of the Rev. Steve Holton for the Episcopal Muslim Relations Committee).

Prayer for the kidnapped Nigerian girls May 2014

O God, we cry out to you
for the lives and the freedom
of the 276 kidnapped girls in Nigeria.
In their time of danger and fear,
pour out your strong Spirit for them.
Make a way home for them in safety.
Make a way back for them
to the education that will lift them up.
Hold them in the knowledge
that they are not captive slaves,
they are not purchased brides,
but they are your beloved daughters ,
and precious in your sight.
Change the hearts and minds of their kidnappers
and of all who choose violence against women and girls.
Cast down the mighty from their seat,
and lift up the humble and meek,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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.diocesenyny.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

29 On the feast day for Saint Peter and Saint Paul we give thanks for the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

30 Foundation for Religion and Mental Health

1 St. James' Church, Goshen

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2 The Congregation of St. Saviour, Manhattan

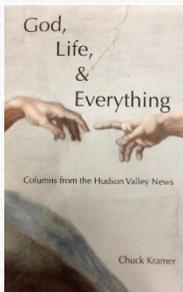
3 The Church of the Incarnation, Manhattan

4 On Independence Day we give thanks for the freedom to worship as the Spirit leads.

5 The Church of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Manhattan

Children's Community Chorus: St. Margaret's Church in Staatsburg is inviting all children between the ages of 8 and 13 to join their free, non-denominational Children's Community Chorus. St. Margaret's received a grant to form this group which is not only a singing group but a class intent on teaching all children how to read music. The idea is for the chorus to sing at various community concerts as well as once a month during St. Margaret's worship. If you would like more information, please call Fr. Allan Ford at 914-299-3148 or leave a message at 845-889-4181.

The News of the Church



Book Now On Sale: Fr. Chuck's book, "God, Life, and Everything" is now available for purchase! It will be in the parish hall after church at a cost of \$12.95. (plus \$1.05 tax). Checks should be made out to "The Hudson Valley News." Come on over to coffee hour and meet the author! He will be happy to autograph it if you wish. ;-)

Join the Fall Pilgrimage: Last March, five of us went on a Lenten "Rail Trail" Pilgrimage. It was successful enough that folks wanted to try it again! The Vestry has authorized a Fall Rail Trail Pilgrimage for September 13-14 - **but only** if we can get 15 people to register (to justify the expense of a supply priest). So, this Sunday there will be registration forms. If you are interested, please take one! But note that there will be a non-refundable \$15 deposit required to hold your spot (refundable only if we do not get the required 15 people). The deadline for registration is August 10. Because of the difficulty in finding supply clergy, this deadline cannot be changed.

ACTORS! Auditions Being Held for Graveyard Tours: Auditions have been set for roles in this year's Graveyard Tours. A closed audition - for parishioners only - is Tuesday, July 8 at 7:00 PM at the Chapel. The second audition, is Tuesday, July 15, also at 7:00 and

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also at the Chapel. There are seven dates for tours: October 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, and 31. The goal is to have two actors for every role. If you would like to act, please contact director Andrew Burgreen at jabjen@juno.com.

Wanted: New Acolytes: As the school year draws to an end, we will say goodbye to our graduating acolytes (and wish them luck in college!). This opens up a couple of spots on the acolyte list, and we want you! New acolytes need to be at least 9 years old and willing to be trained. Please see me (Fr. Chuck).

Girl Scouts Fundraiser: Girl Scouts Troop 10114 is having a pancake breakfast fundraiser at Applebees on June 28 from 8-10 a.m. Tickets are \$6. The troop is also selling gas card raffle tickets, with drawing that morning at Applebees (but you need not be present to win). Amelia McNamara and Taylor & Travyn Triola are all members of Troop 10114. Contact Maggie McNamara (773-9108) or Jodi Triola (489-4216) for tickets.

Writers Camp at FDR Historic Site: We received the following announcement from the Hudson Valley Writing Project at SUNY, New Paltz. The director emphasized that there is significant scholarship money available:

ENRICHMENT WRITING. HYDE PARK. FUN.

ROOSEVELT-VANDERBILT HISTORIC SITES. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.

The HUDSON VALLEY WRITING PROJECT and the National Park Service invite you for a week of writing and hiking as you explore the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt Historic Sites: the home of FDR, Val-Kill, and the Vanderbilt Mansion. Writers will explore fundamental questions of human rights from many perspectives and will write in a variety of styles. This program will be co-taught by 2 HVWP expert teachers in conjunction with the National Park Service Education Specialist. REGISTRATION, SCHOLARSHIP INFO, & FAQs: www.newpaltz.edu/hvwp.

Outreach Committee: The Outreach Committee will have our next meeting on Wednesday, July 2nd at 7:00 p.m. in the Wilks Room.

Plastic Bags Needed: The Community Garden is starting to harvest our early crops. We need more plastic bags to transport and distribute the vegetables at the Food Pantry. Please put them in the bin in the narthex during the growing season. Thank you.

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Gluten Free Communion: Remember, if you have gluten allergies/intolerance, we have gluten free communion hosts. Please let Fr. Chuck know if you would like that option.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Ashley Coyne, Kathleen Craft, Michael Day, Jane Gagliardoto, Kasey Gaulin, John Golden, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Andy Hall, Harold Hall, Liz Handman, Brooke Helton, Rev. Don Hoger, Dalton K., Barbara Knakal, Rosemary Leuken, Doris Mack, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Pat Rooney, John Schroeder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Bobbie Wells, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

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 (week ending June 29):	Suzanne Schroeder and David Triola
Birthdays (next week):	Tara Cotton and Lucille Ogden
Acolytes:	June 29: Eden Ciferri, Rebecca Gausepohl and Chris Santos July 6: Bryanna Burkhardt, Chris Granados-Kramer and Monica Rizzo
Altar Guild:	June 29: Team III July 6: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	June 29: Debbie Belding and Lucille Ogden July 6: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	June 29: Donna Beyer/Judy Douglass July 6: Russell Urban Mead/Sophie Ciferri
Ushers:	June 29: Donna and John Beyer July 6: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne

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Pledge Clerks: June 29: Paul Littlefield
July 6: Deb and Doug Belding

Coffee Hour Hosts: June 29: The Choir
July 6: Ross and Connie Eames, Jodi Triola and Pat Rooney

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 22:1-14

Psalm 13

Romans 6:12-23

Matthew 10:40-42

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

Sermon Preached on
Second Sunday after Pentecost
(June 22, 2014)

"To Have No Fear"

I know Fathers Day was last week, but I wanted to show you what I got as a gift from my family [show picture]. This is me giving my 18-year-old son a piggy back ride. Remember three weeks ago when I was away at that Tough Mudder challenge course event? Well, one of those challenges was to carry him 50 yards. That was perhaps the easiest and most fun obstacle. Some of them frightened me, especially jumping from a 15 foot tower into muddy water.

Another present my family got me was a 25 pound weight - to help me in my training for the next Tough Mudder when Chris turns 18. That kind of scares me, you know? I figure I got lucky surviving the first one. But...I am training despite the fear. Perhaps I am learning how to face my fears a little bit. After all, you only live once, right?

And yet, so often we let our fear control our lives.

Let's take a look at fear for a moment. What makes you afraid? It can be anything from spiders in the bathroom to terrorists to the existential fear of what lies beyond this life - anything. Just think about your fears. [Wait] Fear is so complex - it's not just fear for our

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personal safety but for our loved ones, for the future...sometimes it's just undefined chronic fear.

Now, when you read in scripture, "Do not be afraid" or "Fear not" or "Have no fear," does that make your fear go away? Maybe not. Maybe the best we can do much of the time is not let it control us.

In our story in Genesis, Hagar hears those words, "Don't be afraid." Her fear for her child is obvious, and God's words are meant to comfort her. But there's more fear in this story than just Hagar's. Let's look at it for a moment.

All we hear in today's lesson is that Isaac grows and has his weaning party, that Ishmael plays with him, Sarah gets mad for some reason and kicks Hagar and Ishmael out of the household with a skin of water and some bread. What is that all about?

My answer: fear. Based on scriptural reports of Abraham's age at the time of both Ishmael's and Isaac's births, Ishmael is between 14 and 17 years old at the time of Isaac's weaning. He's not a little kid. Sarah sees a strong young man who technically is next in line to lead the family because he is Abraham's first son. She fears for her own son. Ishmael is competition. She gets rid of the competition before it's too late - and she can do so now because Hagar is still her slave.

So Sarah's fear drives her to do what we might think of as a despicable thing. Before we judge, however, let us just ponder our own fears again and consider what we might do when we feel that we or our children are threatened. Sometimes our fear controls us, and we respond in ways we might regret.

Hagar faces that same fear. Her son, for whatever reason, seems near death after their exile. She has only one option - to call upon the Lord. And God hears her.

Just like today's collect says, "You never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving kindness."

It would be great if that were always the case, wouldn't it? If all you had to do was call, and God answered just the way you wanted. But often, we don't get the results we want. Jesus reminds us in today's gospel that following Christ, that putting our trust in the Lord, does NOT mean we won't come to physical harm. In fact, Jesus tells his disciples that bad things WILL happen, that they will be physically harmed, even killed. That they will face conflict even with their own families.

But he says to them: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." He's saying, don't let fear of physical harm stop you from doing what is right for the soul. Physical death is inevitable, no matter how it happens. The soul, however, lives. It can be harmed by hatred and fear, but only if we let it.

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So what does scripture mean when it says, "Fear Not"? Because I get afraid a lot.

Hagar reminds us - even when we feel alone and abandoned - to still throw our fears to God - because God hears. Jesus reminds us to live fully, not avoiding what we fear, because we are more than just our bodies. As Paul says in his epistle to the Romans, "Death no longer has dominion." We all die, but in Christ, we live in eternity.

When scripture says to have no fear, then, it does not mean not to feel anxious. Rather, it means to know that wherever we are - whether it's standing on a 15-foot platform about to jump or standing in front of a crowd about to speak what might be unpopular words - God stands there with us. God ALWAYS stands with us, in this life and the next. And it is because God is always with us that, even when we are afraid, we do not have to live in fear. Amen.