

St. James' E-pistle

August 7, 2015

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Yesterday (August 6) was the Feast of the Transfiguration, the day when Christ's glory was revealed to some of his disciples on the mountain. I thought you'd like to know.

But does that knowledge affect your life?

In one way, no. It's not going to get you more money or higher grades. It's not going to change the outcome of your game.

But the Transfiguration does tell us something, not only about God but about ourselves. We are more than we appear to be.

All you need to see this is the recent discussion about a new picture on the \$10 dollar bill. In case you missed it, some time ago, a suggestion was made to remove Andrew Jackson from the \$20 bill and replace his likeness with that of a woman. A couple of months ago, the Treasury Department said it would put a woman on a bill, but it would be the \$10 bill (though Alexander Hamilton would also appear on the bill somewhere) rather than the \$20. Why this sudden change was made is a different - and important - conversation, but I am interested in the potential new faces for our currency.

Among the women suggested to appear on the \$10 were Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Sacagawea, Amelia Earhart, Susan B. Anthony, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

In at least one poll, Eleanor Roosevelt was the favorite of Americans. There are good reasons why someone else might go on the bill instead of her, but it is a testament to her influence in the US, and in the world, that she is so highly thought of.

But for a long time, nobody would have suspected there was that much to her. She was a mild-mannered if not meek wife, cowed by her assertive and critical mother-in-law. Something changed in her - necessity, as much as anything - which made her step out of the shadows and shine in ways even she might not have thought possible. When she found her voice, she made sure that she would be heard. She was chief campaigner for her husband, not to mention eyes and ears among the people. She worked for equal rights for people of color, for women and for the poor. She helped guide the country toward signing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There was no one moment, perhaps, when she began to shine like Jesus on the mount, but shine she did. There was more in her than was first apparent. There is more to each of us than might be apparent, too. If this feast day teaches us anything, it is that God is at work in

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ways we can't imagine, but that if we are open to it, we will see God at work in those around us and in ourselves.

So look around, there may be a brilliance nearby that you hadn't seen before.

In Christ,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Buildings and Grounds Meeting: Join us! If you want to be involved in our church in a hands-on way, if you want to make our property a more attractive, more inviting space, and if you want to spend time with some really good folks, join the Buildings and Grounds Committee! Buildings and Grounds is going to have a meeting on ***Saturday, August 15***, at 6:00. Location to be determined soon - but for now, mark your calendar!

Rural and Migrant Ministry is looking for donations of school kits to be given to the children and youth that attend their summer camp programs. A list of what is needed is in the narthex. ***Donations will be accepted through Sunday, August 9th.***

Rebuild the Churches Fund: Bishop Dietsche has asked each parish of our Diocese to join him in contributing to the rebuilding of the seven African-American churches that burned recently. ***We will hold this special collection on Sunday, August 30th.***

Episcopal Relief and Development will be highlighted with a ***special collection honoring their 75th Anniversary celebration being held on Sunday, September 27th.***

The Community Garden needs plastic bags for Friday's Food Pantry clients. A bin is in the Narthex, so please remember to bring them in on Sundays.

Also: We now offer fresh flowers with vases each Friday. If you have small vases in good condition that you would like to donate, that would be great! Please put them in a bag marked "Community Garden" in the narthex.

Graveyard Tour Actors STILL Wanted! We are putting out the call for actors and have received good responses so far. Now we need more! So far, we have four definite, two probable, and a potential actor. That's half of what we need. I'd love to have more parishioners involved, so if you haven't contacted me yet and would like to act, NOW is the

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time! For 2015, we have **seven characters**: One role (Dr. Bard) is filled. Here's what we need for the rest:

- 2 Rev. John McVickar - a younger man (mid-20s, early 30s would be ideal but can go older). First rector of St. James'.
- 3 John Germond - a 40-50ish man. Ideally can play organ. Organist/choir director for 35 years.
- 4 Ellen Roosevelt - athletic woman early 20s. Winner of 3rd US Open.
- 5 Richard Jenkins - between 40-70 man. Former slave, first sexton of St. James'.
- 6 Catherine Carl - almost any age can work (20s - 90s. She lived a long time). Richard's daughter.
- 7 Emma Victoria Pitkin Marshal - 50-70ish woman. Poetess of Hyde Park.

We are also looking for **tour guides** - it will be a little different this year, and will have special training with Fr. Chuck. Please see Fr. Chuck if you would like to act.

LAST CALL: Summer Youth Conference: I strongly encourage any young people (rising 6th graders to rising college Freshmen) to attend the Summer Youth Conference at Incarnation Camp Center this summer. ***The dates are August 16-22.*** More information is on a flier below. I have financial aid for anyone interested. Again, I strongly urge this!

Take Some Business Cards: We have created some Business Cards for St. James' Church, and we want you to take them. These cards have our service times and contact information for the church office, but no personal names. Carry them around with you because you never know when you might have a conversation that leads you to talk about Christ and your church. If you have a card with you, you can simply give it to them and let them know it has all the information they might want to get started exploring St. James'. When we run out, we can always get more, so please take a handful this Sunday!

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."

- 9 The Church of St. John the Divine, Tomkins Cove
- 10 Trinity Church, Wall Street, Manhattan

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- 11 All Saints' Church, Harrison
- 12 Trinity Church, Mount Vernon
- 13 St. Mary's Church of Scarborough
- 14 St. John's Church, Tuckahoe, Yonkers
- 15 On the feast day for Saint Mary the Virgin, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
we pray that we might have faith to follow wherever God leads.

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

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.

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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, Susie Buhalis, Jim And Sharyn Burke, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jane Gagliardoto, 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, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Marguerite Spratt, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Anita Drake.

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): Mary Gabel, Ashley Cotton, Gordon Mackenzie, Jim Matranga and Suzann Kinne

Birthdays
(next week): Angela Henry, Vince Asher, Tom O'Mara, Shirley Ferris and Liz Granados

Acolytes:
August 9: Jasmine Thatcher
August 16: John Beyer

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Altar Guild:	August 9: Team Number III August 16: Team Number I
8 a.m. Readers:	August 9: Deb Belding and Lynne Koch August 16: Angela Henry and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	August 9: Wilma Tully and Andy Hall August 16: Russell Urban-Mead and Judy Douglass
Ushers:	August 9: Andrew and Tonya Hall August 16: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	August 9: Janet Bright and Joanne Lown August 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	August 9: Diane and Scott Wyant (and Bruce, Brett, Arthur and Grace Parent) and Brian, Joanna, Juliana & Matthew Zocchi August 16: Bill, Regina and Laurel Ardini and Vince Asher
Coffee Hour Hosts:	August 9: No Coffee Hour August 16: No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33

Psalm 130

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

John 6:35, 41-51

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

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Sermon Preached on
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
(August 2, 2015)

"Captain Obvious"

You are probably familiar with the phrase, "Thank you, Captain Obvious." But in case you aren't, I will explain. This is a phrase often used when somebody says something so patently - and unhelpfully- obvious as to be absurd.

For example, you're on a picnic when it starts to rain. Your friend looks up and says, "It's raining." You reply, "Thank you, Captain Obvious." They can make it worse, of course, by adding, "We're getting wet." To which you reply while hurriedly gathering up your picnic basket and blanket, "Captain Obvious strikes again." You get the idea.

As far as anyone can tell, Captain Obvious was first used in print in the 1990s, but the concept has been around forever. You could certainly imagine the Prophet Nathan in today's Old Testament reading saying it to David.

Think about it. David, as we've been reading for the past couple of weeks, has raped Bathsheba, murdered her husband, and taken her for his wife. Nathan comes to David to tell a story which will lead David to condemn himself.

When Nathan shows David that it is he himself who has committed the crime, David says, "I have sinned against the Lord."

You think?

But it's not that simple. Because David only admits to sinning against the Lord. How about sinning against Bathsheba? Or Uriah? Why is THAT sin not obvious to him as well?

We've touched on this the past week or so. David doesn't really see the depth of his sin - his crime - because people rarely do. We are brilliant at justifying our own behavior while condemning identical behavior in others.

Jesus has a similar moment when he states the obvious - only it wasn't obvious to anybody but him. He has fed the 5,000 and walked across the water to be with the disciples. A bunch of the people who had been fed, however, camped on the beach rather than go home, so when they woke up the next day and didn't find Jesus, they got in their own boats and went after him. It's not THAT big a lake, and it probably wasn't hard to figure out where he had gone. Anyway, they find him, and Jesus says, "You are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves."

This is a smack in the face, but painfully obvious. They are there not because of the relationship with God that Jesus preached, the love eternal. They're there to be fed again. And again and again. This guy produces food out of thin air- how cool is that!

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He's pointing out the obvious which we ourselves have difficulty seeing even in our own faith. We're all for God as long as God's giving us worldly good. Or to put it another way, we are all for whichever god will assure us the best wealth and comfort on earth.

"Give me that Powerball Lottery, and I'm all yours. Guarantee I have food for life, and I'm yours. Make my business prosper, and you are my god."

All those folks just thought they were following a holy man. They didn't see that what they were doing was following their stomachs. Jesus had to point it out.

They are skeptical - in large part because their ancestors told stories of Moses producing manna and water. But Jesus tells them that the real bread from heaven was never just food. It was life - the eternal life that God gives. He's telling them to look past the physical and see what God is really doing in the world.

When it looks like they finally get it, they say, "Sir, give us this bread always." And Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." We are so used to hearing that Jesus is the bread of life that we don't even take in its meaning. Jesus is life because Jesus embodies God's love. Relationship with God is not dependent on God physically taking care of us on earth.

What Jesus said about them only being there because of their stomachs - we can see that in this story. It's always obvious when it's other people.

But just as David could see the crime of another without seeing his own, so perhaps we're able to see how **THOSE PEOPLE** were just looking for God to do physical things for them - but we fail to see the same in ourselves.

The whole point is really obvious, isn't it? If we do not honestly examine our lives - daily, not just during Lent - then we run the risk of missing what's right before our eyes. We are guilty of the very sins we condemn others for. We are all too often swamped in the very same immature theology for which we look down on others. The lessons, then: get your life in order first - and ease up on others. It may be obvious, but sometimes it has to be said. Amen.

Join us for the 2014

SUMMER YOUTH CONFERENCE



Open to youth entering grades six through first year of college. For more information, email us at: NYYouthConference@yahoo.com

Summer Youth Conference is a spiritual retreat for teens in a summer camp setting. We come together for a week to worship, play, and sing. Our days consist of a theme-related morning program with discussion groups, daily services, swimming, boating, and sports. Our evenings are full of activities like a dance, talent show, and campfire. At the end, we return home a little different than when we arrived; stronger for the love and friendship we've added to our lives. Please join us for the week, and make friendships that can last a lifetime!



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Ivoryton, CT

Incarnation Center provides over 700 acres of wooded trails and a mile-long private lake for over 15,000 visitors per year. Founded by Church of the Incarnation, Manhattan, and assisted by churches in the Diocese of New York and Connecticut, Incarnation hosts over 200 church groups and thousands of campers every year.

To find out more, visit:

www.incarnationcenter.org

