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SUNDAY'S READINGS

Sharp Contrasts

'Surely your reward is great in heaven' (Luke 6:23)

The Sixth Sunday After the Epiphany, Feb. 11, 2001

Jer. 17:5-10; Psalm 1; 1 Cor. 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

The four lessons for today, including the psalm, present strikingly sharp contrasts. In the first lesson, there is a contrast between "mortals who make flesh their strength" and therefore dwell in a "salt land," and "those who trust in the Lord" and are like a tree that remains green even in drought. The psalm presents the same contrast.

In the epistle, the contrast is between being destined for eternal life made possible by the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and being "of all people most to be pitied" if Jesus is not raised from the dead. In the gospel, the contrast is between blessings pronounced upon those who suffer for various reasons, and woes pronounced upon those whose satisfaction is in the things of this world.

The contrasts in these lessons are far sharper than most people are likely ever to experience. Most of the time, our lives are a blend of goodness and

sinfulness, sickness and health, happiness and sorrow, satisfaction and want. The great gulf between the extremes in these lessons teaches the greater truth — that at the end, there shall be no blend of good and evil, but ultimate, pure goodness or complete corruption. All paths before us, and all possible choices we can make, lead to one or the other of these ends.

The key to understanding and making right decisions is provided in the "blessings" Jesus pronounces: Those who are blessed are the poor, the hungry, the weeping, the hated, and the excluded — namely those who, for whatever reason, do not see the good things of this world as their final end. Jesus makes it abundantly clear that the despised and suffering are particularly loved by him.

Those who are rich in the things of this world often have to work a little harder to recognize that these things can beguile, but can never truly satisfy.

Look It Up

Compare Luke's version of the Beatitudes (6:20-23) with Matthew's longer version (5:3-12). What are the differences?

Think About It

Recall a situation in which you lost something of great value. Was there a blessing in its loss? How did the loss affect your relationship with God?

Next Sunday

The Seventh Sunday After the Epiphany

Gen. 45:3-11, 21-28; Psalm 37:1-18 or 37:3-10; 1 Cor. 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

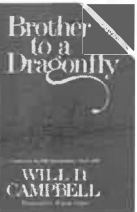
Lenten Learning, Loving and Living

By Travis Du Priest



HEAVEN IN STONE AND GLASS: Experiencing the Spirituality of the Great Cathedrals. By Robert Baron. Crossroad. Pp. 128. \$16.95.

A wonderfully informative book that helps us "read" the great cathedrals of Christendom. The author covers historical, architectural and symbolic functions: shelter and safe haven, light and darkness, church as mother, church as ship. Simple black and white illustrations.



BROTHER TO A DRAGONFLY. By Will D. Campbell. Foreword by Jimmy Carter. Continuum. Pp. 288. \$26.95.

A 25th anniversary edition of the popular story of mid-century family life in Mississippi by minister and social activist Will Campbell, who was himself the subject of the PBS documentary "God's Will." The book was highly praised by novelists Walker Percy and Robert Penn Warren.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS: The Writings and Reflections of Fr. Raymond E. Abbitt. An Autobiographical Account of His Years in the Service of His Church and Country. St. David's Episcopal Church (623 Ector St., Denton, TX 76201). \$14 paper.

Prisoner of war, founder of parish day schools, engaging preacher and humorist, Fr. Ray Abbitt shares memories of family and friends, vignettes of war and peace and humorous stories from all phases of his rich and insightful life.

BEACH WALKS. Pp. 221. **BEACH WALKS II.** Pp.223. By George Thatcher. Quail Ridge. \$9.95 each.

Charming pocket-sized books, seasonally arranged reflections on the Creator and creation, with delicate pen and ink illustrations, for the water's edge walker in all of us. "God saw that his handiwork was good. And so it is" sums up these refreshing meditations.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE CRUCIFIXION. By Joseph Fichtner. Liturgical. Pp. 60. \$4.95 paper.

Re-tellings of the gospel passion narratives from the points of views of the major characters: Peter, Judas Iscariot, Barabbas, the Roman Soldiers, the Two Thieves, Mary Magdalene and others. Ends with Christ Crucified. Well done.



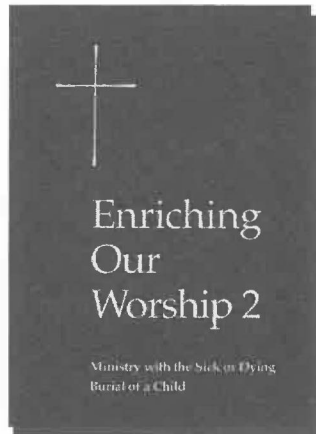
THE TRIDUUM AND EASTER SUNDAY: Breaking Open the Scriptures. By John J. Pilch. Liturgical. Pp. 50. \$4.95 paper.

A scripture teacher at Georgetown University illuminates the scripture readings for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. Gives a Mediterranean cultural view as well as literary perspective and brief practical tips for the homilist.

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Theologian Lauds Martin Luther King's Influence on American Christianity

Too often, says Kelly Brown Douglas, theologians and historians fail to note how significant an influence the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. had on the development of Christianity in America.

"King virtually saved Christianity in the United States from becoming a meaningless civil religion, completely alienated from the core of what makes us Christian in the first place," said Ms. Douglas, professor of theology at Howard University in Washington, D.C. "Just as he challenged the United States government to live up to the rhetoric of human equality, liberty and justice for all, he also challenged the

Christian church to live up to the meaning of a faith centered around Jesus. And likewise, he challenged the doctrine to live up to the core prophetic tradition."

Prof. Douglas spoke to more than 200 people at the fourth "Becoming the Household of Jesus Christ," an annual stewardship conference in the Diocese of Michigan that is transforming the often-held understanding of the term stewardship. The event was held Jan. 12-13 at St. John's Church, Royal Oak, Mich.

"I understand stewardship as everything I do after I say 'I believe,'" said Edwina Simpson, parishioner at

Christ Church, Dearborn, and a co-founder of the annual event. "What does God call me to do with the gifts God has given me to do? Anytime I can move into a deeper relationship with God, I can answer that question better."

The first year, she said, the workshop looked at the theology of money, followed in 1999 by a practical study of how churches could engage parishioners on their fiscal and physical resources in 1999. This year's discussion was on racism and privilege in the church and society.

"It was because of who Jesus was, what Jesus did, and most significantly, because of his death on the cross, that King was certain that being a Christian meant a life of radical protest against any form of injustice," Prof. Douglas said. "In King's view, Christians had an unavoidable duty to, as he put it, 'bear the cross for the freedom of our people.'"

Furthermore, it is not for some paternalistic impulse that the church must, as Jesus did, side with the poor and the oppressed, she said, but rather it is because the poor and the oppressed — the underside in society — are most able to understand, without compromise and complicity, a society and a culture of domination.

"God's vision is characterized by the absence of unjust hierarchy, privilege and domination ... In other words, there are no rich, there are no poor; there is no black; there is no white ... [It is] an absolutely new arrangement of human understanding."



Herb Gunn photo

Prof. Douglas: Martin Luther King, Jr., challenged the church "to live up to the meaning of a faith centered around Jesus."

Two Groups Pledge Mutual Support for Establishment of Separate Province

Two of Anglicanism's largest self-described orthodox organizations, the Anglican Mission in America (AMIA) and Forward in Faith/North America (FIFNA), have pledged mutual commitment to establishment of a province inside Anglicanism but outside the Episcopal Church.

Leaders of the largely evangelical and charismatic AMIA and of predominantly Anglo-Catholic FIFNA met jointly prior to AMIA's Jan. 17-21 "homecoming" for 800 jubilant and determined members from 29 states. The event was held All Saints' Church, Pawleys Island, S.C., the home parish of the Rt. Rev. Charles Murphy, who along with the Rt. Rev. John H. Rogers was consecrated a year ago in Singapore by overseas primates anxious over the recent trends in the Episcopal Church.

So unexpectedly large was the crowd that television cameras had to be used to relay services from the main church of the sprawling campus. Workshops offered practical as well as

spiritual guidance.

On hand likewise was Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini, to whose province of Rwanda Bishop Murphy and his AMIA congregations formally belong. (Bishop Rodgers' congregations are part of the Province of Southeast Asia.)

Under the agreement to strengthen their ties, AMIA and FIFNA began in January a joint study of the only issue that puts some of their members at variance — women's ordination. The study is scheduled to last two years. AMIA bishops have agreed to abstain in the meantime from ordaining women as priests.

As the Pawleys Island event got under way, three organizations — AMIA; the Reformed Episcopal Church, which broke from the Episcopal Church in 1873; and the Anglican Province of America, a catholic-oriented continuing church — issued a statement pointing toward possible intercommunion.

William Murchison

Standing Against the Death Penalty in Oklahoma

Calling upon the Diocese of Oklahoma to ask itself how capital punishment contributes to the betterment of society, the Rt. Rev. Robert M. Moody is asking churches to ring a bell for two minutes at 6 p.m. on execution days.

In what is being called a demonstration "For Whom the Bell Tolls," churches without bells have been asked to drape an outside door in black or tie ribbons around trees or utility poles.

"I recognize that capital punishment is a sensitive issue for many thoughtful men and women," Bishop Moody said in a pastoral letter to the diocese. "I recognize that Christian men and women differ on this issue. However, as your bishop, I ask you to prayerfully address this issue anew ... I ask you to prayerfully consider 'What is the mind of Christ on this issue?' For me, I have concluded that capital punishment contributes nothing that betters our society and I cannot imagine

our Lord condoning capital punishment."

Last year, 11 persons were executed in Oklahoma. This year eight executions, one every Tuesday and Thursday during January, were scheduled or carried out.

In 1999, the Diocese of Oklahoma passed a resolution opposing the death penalty. General Convention has expressed similar sentiments.

"I know there are a significant number of people who believe capital punishment is an appropriate way to curb crime and is a just punishment for criminals. I'm not saying they are wrong," Bishop Moody told MSNBC television recently. "But even if they are right, the fact is people will be executed in the name of the state. Those are souls that need to be prayed



Lori Carter photo

Protesters stand outside the governor's mansion in Oklahoma City Jan. 16, the night Floyd Medlock died by lethal injection. Hundreds of people, including some Episcopalians, gathered at the site in January. Executions were scheduled in Oklahoma every Tuesday and Thursday of the month.

for along with the souls of the victims of the crime."

The demonstration is part of a national campaign of churches organized by the group Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants, a Washington, D.C.-based criminal justice reform organization.

Trinity Institute's Founding Director Remembered

The late Rt. Rev. Robert E. Terwilliger influenced the lives of thousands of clergy and lay members of the Episcopal Church, first as the founding director of Trinity Institute in New York City and later as Bishop Suffragan of Dallas.

The Rt. Rev. Michael Marshall, assisting Bishop of London, who had been the preacher at Bishop Terwilliger's consecration in 1975, called attention to that formative influence during his opening address at a gathering Dec. 29-30 in Dallas to commemorate the 25th anniversary of his consecration. Bishop Terwilliger died on June 4, 1991.

Bishop Terwilliger enjoyed significant parish ministries on both the

west and east coasts before launching the Trinity Institute, a new pioneering ministry sponsored by Trinity Parish, New York City. It was through his

Friends, former students and colleagues gather in Dallas 25 years after Bishop Terwilliger (left) was consecrated.

work as the founding director of the institute that he rose to national prominence. He influenced generations of young priests and many bishops, as he preached and taught at a number of conventions and conferences.

The annual conferences of Trinity Institute brought thousands of Episcopal clergy to New York, where they heard the leading theologians of the day from Europe, including Archbishop Michael Ramsey, Cardinal Suenens, Prior Roger Shutz of Taizé.

The commemoration began with

Solemn Evensong sung by the choir of the Church of the Incarnation. On Saturday, the event moved to St. Matthias' Church in Dallas, where the Rev. Charles Miller, rector of Church of the Transfiguration, New York City, spoke on "The Man and His Mind."

Formerly on the faculty of Nashotah House, Fr. Miller, who has been doing research for a biography on Bishop Terwilliger, traced the bishop's formative years, as the son of a Methodist minister and in theological studies under the mentorship of Richard Niebuhr. Following a sung Eucharist, participants visited the mausoleum at the Bishop Mason Center, where Bishop Terwilliger's ashes are interred, for prayers and thanksgivings. The late bishop's only daughter, Anne, was an honored guest at the weekend commemoration.

(The Rt. Rev.) Jack Iker



Collaborative Leader

Bishop Epting Looks Forward to Mission Opportunities as Ecumenical Officer

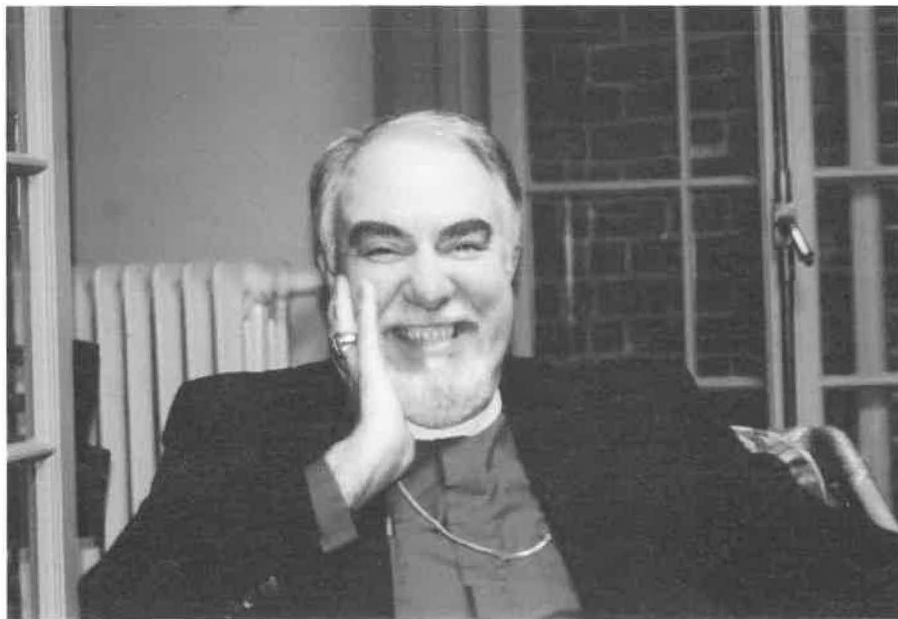
For 12 years, the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting, Bishop of Iowa, has maintained his office in Mills House, an elaborate brick mansion located in an exclusive residential section of Des Moines. The estate was donated to the diocese in 1953 by a wealthy and eccentric family of Episcopalians.

Beginning in April, just a few months after inauguration of the historic agreement between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Bishop Epting will change titles and office locations when he becomes deputy director for ecumenical relations for the Episcopal Church. He will be the first bishop to occupy that office.

Bishop Epting grew up in Florida, in a Baptist family that drifted out of regular church attendance. When he was about 12, a neighbor invited his family to attend All Saints' Episcopal Church in Winter Park. Betty Wolf, a member of the parish, said All Saints' at that time was known for its Christian education and inclusive approach to Anglo-Catholicism, convictions Bishop Epting carried over into his ordained ministry. His embrace of ecumenism is relatively new, however.

His conversion to the power of ecumenical unity was sudden and literally a matter of life and death: Bishop Epting and representatives from a number of other dioceses and faiths teamed up to defeat re-instatement of capital punishment in Iowa, not once, but four separate times. The relationships established during those campaigns have created a strong spirit. "It's changing the state," he said.

Bishop Epting said he is excited to bring his leadership style to his new position. Other bishops who know him regard Bishop Epting as a collaborative leader, someone with mostly centrist positions and drawn toward spiritual discernment and prayer.



Steve Waring photo

In April, Bishop Epting will move from his office in Des Moines to New York City.

Early on in his episcopacy, Bishop Epting said he concluded that certain issues just don't lend themselves to voting and he has focused on moving diocesan leadership away from the idea that, as he puts it, the mind of Christ can be revealed by a 51 percent majority.

Ever since his wife, Pamela, died about two years ago, his length of time as diocesan has left him feeling restless. One problem is that there aren't many places one can go in the Episcopal Church from bishop, and, at age 54, Bishop Epting is still a relatively young man.

Despite good credentials (he has served as an Executive Council liaison to the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations since 1994 and was due to become chair this year) and a passion for the topic, Bishop Epting said he was genuinely surprised when the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop, offered him the position of ecumenical officer.

If he was surprised, he was also eager to get behind the controls and see if the new agreement can fly. In many respects, he is taking over at an opportune time.

"Whether it's church starts or sharing clergy we can do it better together, Bishop Epting said. "Up until now we've had to concentrate on administration and theology. I think as we begin to focus on mission, we're only getting to the exciting part now."

He is optimistic that the proposed exception rule, under which ELCA members could reject on theological grounds the concept of ordination by bishops within the apostolic succession, will not prove a hindrance to progress.

"First of all there is very little that (the Episcopal Church) can do about it one way or the other," he said. "There will probably be some non-compliance. If it is rare, then the whole thing will probably be little more than a bump in the road. If it is

widespread, that will be more problematic. It will mean that we really are not in full communion. I really don't think that will happen, however."

Any substantial changes approved by the ELCA at its General Assembly in August will have to be reconciled by

**Now might be
a good time
to reach out to
people of other
faiths, says
Bishop Epting.**

the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, a consultative body of mutual support on which Bishop Epting will be one of seven Episcopal representatives.

The idea of exceptions reminded Bishop Epting and a number of other Episcopalians of the conscience clause which the Episcopal Church included about 25 years ago when it regularized the ordination of women.

"We've cited that as an example of probably not the best approach," he said. "We do think it's a bad idea to change what we've both already agreed to. Having said that, we do recognize that some (Lutherans) have problems with the historic episcopate. The House of Bishops has made it clear, however, that clergy (who seek exceptions) won't be transferable. The main thing is to try and remain in unity."

During the time Bishop Epting has served on the ecumenical relations committee, the majority of the group's time has been devoted to finalizing the agreement with the ELCA. With that work completed, he said it might be a good time to reach out to people of other religious bodies, such as Orthodox believers as well as practitioners of Islam and Judaism.

"I think there might be some opportunities for us to work together in the Middle East, for example," he said. "It would be hard to imagine anything as major as (the agreement with the ELCA) anytime soon, but it's hard to say. The Episcopal Church is like a leavening influence."

Steve Waring

When a Loss Becomes a Gain

When the Diocese of Upper South Carolina passed a resolution last year in support of the NAACP tourism boycott, it looked as though the diocese might be penalized \$20,000 by the hotel where it had been scheduled to meet.

The decision to reduce the usual two-day convention to one and to hold it at Trinity Cathedral in Columbia instead of the Adam's Mark Hotel meant canceling the contract with the hotel, at a possible loss to the diocese. However, Adam's Mark manager James Gibson and the Rt. Rev. Dorsey Henderson, Bishop of Upper South Carolina, came to an agreement that converted the hotel's penalty into food to feed the hungry.

In the past year, 11 agencies and groups have benefited from donations. The last donation of 60 turkeys

was made on Jan. 5 and divided among the Salvation Army, St. Lawrence Place, a transitional housing ministry administered through the cathedral, and Sister Care, a shelter for women and children.

"I continue to be grateful that we took a stand based on a principle of the gospel, and through grace and the cooperation of James Gibson and the Adam's Mark what could have been a financial loss was used for Christian outreach to feed the poor," said Bishop Henderson.

The tourism boycott is in protest against the South Carolina House's refusal to remove the Confederate battle flag from atop the Statehouse dome. The Legislature raised the flag in 1962 to honor the Civil War's centennial, and then never took it down.

Pam Steude

AROUND THE DIOCESES

Concern for Children

The first convention under the direction of the Rt. Rev. John P. Croneberger, Bishop of Newark, was quite different in many ways from conventions of recent memory.

The Jan. 20 event held at St. Paul's Church in Patterson focused only on completing the canonical business of the diocese and left discussion of a long-term strategic vision to a separate meeting, Jan. 26-27.

Eighteen resolutions were passed, including one calling on clergy and lay leaders to take steps in concert with local clergy associations, school authorities, recreation commissions, and sports leagues, to discuss and mitigate the negative impact upon children and youth when having to choose between worship or religious education and school-organized activities.

During the coming year, a seven-member committee will study the issue from an ecumenical perspective and report back its findings and recommendations to convention.

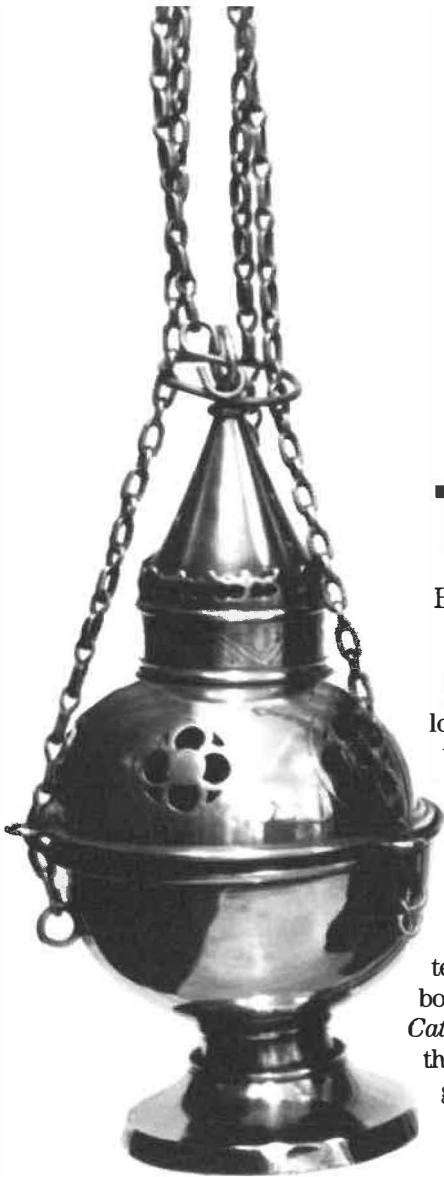
Other successful resolutions included support for General Convention's statement on human sexuality, development of rites "to support relationships of mutuality and fidelity other than marriage," and condemnation of Episcopal dioceses that do not comply with national church canons on the deployment and licensing of female clergy.

Two resolutions drawing perhaps the most discussion were in opposition to "reparative/conversion therapy" for gay and lesbian persons and the policy of the Boy Scouts of America that prohibits gay men from being troop leaders.

Bishop Croneberger's address called for realization of a diocesan vision in which Episcopalians become the living and active word and sacrament. In order to realize that vision each parish should be a "mission outpost."

A budget of \$2.99 million passed with 32 percent of that figure set aside for outreach.

Ronnie T. Stout-Kopp



This Lovely Fragrance

By David J. Lynch

A song I sang as a boy chorister began, “What is this lovely fragrance wafting like to the scents of flowers in spring?” I recall neither the rest of it nor the author’s intended meaning, but the words remind me of incense.

The late Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, in his book, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, recognized that the intellectual insights of evangelical Anglicans are a valuable contribution to the life of the church, not the least of which is their respect

for scripture. Vows taken by clergy when they receive the sacrament of holy orders include affirmations that scripture is the word of God and that scripture contains everything necessary for salvation. Just as Jesus saw himself in the context of the Jewish scriptures, Christians should see incense in scriptural terms.

When I see a recessional with clouds of incense, I think of Isaiah 6:1-6, where God chose a prophet in the midst of a temple full of incense and sent him into the world. A church filled with incense moves me to fulfill our common task as Christians, as Christ commanded (Matt. 28:19), to make more Christians.

But let’s begin at the beginning. In Genesis, God made the trees and plants on the Third Day (Gen. 1:9-13). Incense comes from gums, resins, and spices produced by trees and plants. Hence, in offering incense, we offer God’s own creating back to God, as in the hymn, “All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own, have we given Thee.”

In Exodus (30:1-8) God gave specific instructions for establishing a temple which included an altar of incense where God expected “regular” (in some translations, “perpetual”) offerings of incense. Verses 34-36

give detailed directions about what kind of gums, resins, and spices should comprise the incense. Incense thus reminded the temple worshipers of God’s presence and connected them with God as its fragrance ascended.

Some early Christians criticized incense as reminiscent of pagan worship. But pagans are God’s children, too. God made us for worship, and intended us to worship with all that is within us as expressed in Psalm 103:1, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.”

True, pagans burn incense; much of our worship — prayer, song, candles, bread, wine, vestments — pagans also do. Christmas itself derived from the pagan holiday of Saturnalia. Yet incense was burned in the Jewish temple worship as a sacrifice to God and to mask animal sacrifice odors. Christians used it to purify the air of early churches, so as to create a pleasing environment for humans to commune with God while creating a “ritual consciousness” to rouse and direct our energies to spread the word.

Burning incense is as natural as words for humans to express themselves in worship.

Given the universality of incense in human worship of the divine (it has been used from the dawn of history in nearly every culture, from Northern Europe to Arabia, to Israel, to Turkey to Asia), one cannot help but conclude that burning incense is as natural as words for humans to express themselves in worship. For Christians, the difference is who we worship and why.

Continuing in Exodus (30:37), God commands that the recipe for divine incense be used only for worship and not for common perfume. In Numbers (16:1-30), God looks to the identity and intent of the offeror. Two-hundred fifty elders assembled to challenge the leadership of Moses and Aaron. All 250 took their censers into the temple and offered incense, thinking that doing so would invoke God’s favor. However, God, more amenable to the ministries of Moses and

Aaron than of the rebels, caused the ground to open and the Lord's fire to consume them. The following day, when the people of Israel continued their rebellion, God visited a plague upon them. Aaron, acting on Moses' instructions, went into the temple, put incense into his censer and swung it before God to atone for the sins of the rebels, stopping the plague.

In the context of God's displeasure with the lack of diligence among temple priests who had not been attending to their duties, God commands, "From the rising up of the sun until the going down of the same, Incense shall be offered unto my name." (Mal. 1:10) Is not this context similar to the state of the nearly-dead

When incense is missing from worship, it is conspicuous by its absence.

Anglican Church of the late 18th century, later brought back to life by the revival of our catholic faith via the Oxford Movement, which promoted incense?

Incense first appears in the New Testament (Luke 1:8) when Zechariah, tending to his duties as a priest, learns of the impending birth of John the Baptist while offering incense. It is thus a harbinger of good news, appropriate to be used at mass in the gospel procession.

The kings gave frankincense and myrrh to the baby Jesus (Matt. 2:11). Susanne Fischer-Rizzi, in *The Complete Book of Incense*, points out that frankincense, the main ingredient in Christian liturgical incense, improves the carrying power of the human voice in rooms where it is burned. University research documents the antiseptic and purifying qualities of frankincense known in Arabia and Egypt for millennia before the birth of Jesus. Frankincense also has a psychoactive component which expands one's consciousness. Myrrh, like frankincense included in temple incense, was commonly associated with healing, relieving pain, calming confused and exhausted people, and preparing bodies for burial.

Christian writers, notably St. John the Divine, recognized the powers of incense and the importance of its role in the relationship between God and humanity. An unnamed bishop once said, "there are but two smells in the afterlife, incense and brimstone. You'd better get used to one or the other." The odor of brimstone is promised to those who follow Satan (Rev. 14:9-11). Earlier in Revelation (8:3-5) an angel stands before God with a golden censer giving to him "much incense" with which the prayers of the saints ascended to God. Although the unnamed bishop's statement was probably in jest, it does ask a serious question: Should our worship emulate that of God in heaven, or separation from God?

Dom Gregory Dix, in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, not only points out that the people of the New Testament did not oppose incense in worship, but he suggested that the disciples may have burned incense during the

Last Supper. However, this use of incense, according to Dix, was a domestic, rather than ritualistic, use of incense, and the first Christians often burned incense in their homes to give themselves pleasant surroundings. Incense did not become a regular feature of Christian worship until the fifth century. Despite the Reformation, it continued in some English cathedrals until the mid-17th century.



The 1979 prayer book mentions incense in *The Order of Worship for the Evening and the Consecration of a Church*. In his *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, Marion Hatchett not only proclaims that our prayer book is the first to mention incense, but describes it as "honorific, fumigatory, and festive" and "thought to have purificatory powers, was used in times of sickness and to cleanse ... it was a worthy and expensive gift, thought to be pleasing to God and efficacious for the atonement of sins."

When incense is missing from worship, it is conspicuous by its absence. Worship must address the fundamental truth that God created us with five senses. The Song of Solomon demonstrates that love involves all of our senses. So too, the church, to express its love for God and to communicate God's love for us, added ceremonial, bells, vestments, plain-song, and of course incense to what was once a simple rite originally performed in homes and catacombs. These accouterments function not to detract from worship, but to engage the entirety of ourselves, souls and bodies, to become a living sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered to God in the Eucharist.

And a church offering incense is an explicit acknowledgment that the Bible is the word of God and contains truly everything necessary to salvation — including the appropriate odors for worship! □

David Justin Lynch, an estate planning lawyer, has occasional thurifer duties at St. Paul's in the Desert, Palm Springs, Calif.



The Lay Eucharistic Minister's High Calling

I am a LEV — Lay Eucharistic Visitor. For some five years I have been licensed by my bishop, under the supervision of a deacon, to carry communion on Sundays from the altar to the lame, the halt and the blind.

On the second Sunday of each month, I am sent out, standing for my congregation's "Sending Out Prayer," with my neat little kit, to four home communions. Old friendships have been renewed and sustained by my visits; new friends have been made.

"Is that you, Nancy?" says Sallie, sitting sightless by her sunny window one afternoon in the assisted living residence. She recognizes my voice from our 30 years together. Energized, she leans forward for news. "How are things down at the church?" she asks. Sallie has been a matriarch of our church, and at 95 she continues to pull strings from her chair beside the window. We'll trade the liveliest gossip for 40 minutes. Twenty will be given to a devout communion.

If Sallie's is my liveliest hour, Charlotte's is my most intellectually stimulating. I did not know Charlotte before this bond united us. A former businesswoman, highly educated, now reduced to books on tape, she has a wealth of life experiences and knowledge to share, as well as interest in events local and national.

Charlotte's life has not shrunk to the chair in the sun, or to the couch in the sun, where I usually find Rae asleep, curled up in her 97-year-old body. Rae's hearing aids avail little. I sit beside her on the sofa, holding the large-print pages before us to read together. (Rae, a priest's widow, reads right along through my administration words). As best I can, I try then to make conversation.

It was easier when I had Josie, developmentally a child, who laughed happily at my com-

ing and smacked her lips "Good!" at the communion wine. Last week I visited Gertrude, in her bed receiving oxygen as I broke my wafer into a least fragment and intinctured it in the wine before laying it on her tongue. I lied to Gertrude. "Are you from Trinity?" she asked hopefully, recalling her church in another city. "Yes I am," I said, smiling down over the bedside rail. Gertrude smiled.

There are four of us presently carrying communion regularly from my church. Besides us, the deacon also has her assigned communicants. One regret that we LEVs have shared is

that too often we travel with our kits to fill in as substitutes for priestly ministrations. In the original design of our ministry, we were never to replace a priest's presence in a home, hospital or long-term care facility. For months at a time we may be the church's only sacramental presence. We are an easy option. By no means are we exploited, but we serve at times with wounded consciences for what is missing to these humbled exiles from the altar rail.

At one time I thought I might have a calling to the priesthood. Thanks to a government grant which felicitously allowed me to pursue whatever I wished with my grant money, I was able to explore my calling. In volunteering among older, needy people, I found I didn't need to be ordained to serve in

the high callings the church could let me fill. To be a Lay Eucharistic Minister is the culmination of that calling. Following Sunday's "Sending Out Prayer," I can kneel to recite with fervor thanksgiving for strengthened authority "to do all such good works as Thou hast prepared for us to walk in."

Our guest columnist is Nancy Westerfield, a writer who is a member of St. Luke's Church, Kearney, Neb.

Did You Know...

In a recent survey of British socialites, 27 percent of the more than 3,000 people who responded said they are members of the Church of England.

Quote of the Week

The Rt. Rev. Michael Garrison, Bishop of Western New York, on the mentality found at some congregations: "Sometimes the title 'Episcopal' on the front of our churches is a thinly painted veneer. We would actually rather be 'congregational,' independent, or 'presbyterial'."



For months at a time we may be the church's only sacramental presence.

Leader for Equality

In 1977, Absalom Jones, a previously little-known African-American priest who lived 200 years earlier, was added to the *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* calendar of the Episcopal Church. The “lesser feasts” provide opportunities for observances of the lives of men and women who have borne witness to the faith. The observance of the Feast of Absalom Jones has proved to be among the most popular on the calendar.

Born a slave in 1746, Absalom Jones was convinced that God was the Father of all mankind and intervenes on behalf of the oppressed and the distressed. He became a lay preacher in a Philadelphia Methodist church and was active in a ministry of evangelism to African-American residents of Philadelphia. A variety of issues led him and others into the Episcopal Church, where he was ordained a deacon in 1795, and to the priesthood in 1804. Absalom Jones and a friend founded the Free African Society, a self-help organization for African Americans. He was an outspoken opponent of slavery and became one of the first to challenge the Episcopal Church to take steps toward equality of all people.

At this time the Feast of Absalom Jones is widely observed in the Episcopal Church. Many dioceses use the occasion to bring persons of all races together to worship, to address racism, and to participate in a variety of gatherings. At a time when racism still is found within the church and its members, the life of Absalom Jones stands as a witness to us who are concerned about the well being of all people. “Set us free, heavenly Father,” the collect for this feast implores, “from every bond of prejudice and fear.” To that we can add only a simple “Amen.”

At a time when racism still is found within the church and its members, the life of Absalom Jones stands as a witness to us who are concerned about the well being of all people.



Absalom Jones

Unusual Meeting of Primates

There seems to be more interest than usual in the meeting of Anglican primates, March 2-9 at Kanuga, the conference center near Black Mountain, N.C. This gathering will be unusual because it was only a year ago when the primates met in Portugal. At that time, because of concern over some current issues facing Anglicans, the primates decided to meet this year rather than to wait until 2002.

Archbishops and presiding bishops of each of the 38 provinces of the Anglican Communion will be present at Kanuga. Like the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, the primates' meeting has no canonical weight, but it does provide the various leaders with an opportunity to discuss important matters in an atmosphere of collegial loyalty.

This meeting is attracting greater interest because it is expected that issues concerning sexuality will be on the agenda. The willingness of some bishops of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, among others, to ordain non-celibate homosexual persons and to sanction the blessing of same-sex relationships is a major concern to many of the primates. We hope Anglicans everywhere will pray for the primates as they gather soon at Kanuga. May their time together be worthwhile and productive.

The Congregational Leadership Crisis

By Richard Kew

My parents tried to teach me that actions have consequences. If I touched a hot stove I would get burned, and if I poked and shoved my little brother, I would receive retribution. Despite the fact that many of us learned such lessons early in our lives, a very human part of us persists in thinking and planning as if actions do not have consequences. Churches and institutions function no differently than individuals.

One of the best things to come out of the General Convention was a resolution that committed the church to working toward doubling its size by 2020. This 20/20 resolution was one of the few potentially visionary things that convention did. While working on the final editing of a new book, I have been going over statistics and circumstances that face us. As a result, I am beginning to realize that the 20/20 target is an even bigger uphill task than I had anticipated because the church has failed to factor in the consequence of earlier actions.

The task before us is not only to enable those parishes that already exist to survive and to grow, but it also must include planting a significant number of new congregations. There are something in excess of 7,000 Episcopal congregations in the U.S., almost all of which are going to need to be overhauled in such a manner that they become mission-driven rather than maintenance-oriented. If we are to reach our goals, we will need to put in place somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 new congregations.

If this is to happen, a primary need will be leadership — lay and ordained. What we require right now is hundreds more missionary pastors and many fewer professional clergy of the traditional kind. The reason is simple: missionaries plant churches, and missionary pastors have the skills to facilitate turnaround in congregations that are bumping along but not going anywhere. Research suggests that we could lose 40-50 percent of congregations during the next quarter century unless we begin to function radically differently.

However, here is where consequences kick in: For 30 years the Episcopal Church has been tracking a course that is designed to scale down leadership. The results are nothing short of lamentable.

We are looking at a rapid reduction in the active clergy force of the Episcopal Church. On a visit to the Church Pension Fund I got the following rough statistics: the fund has 8,000 dependents (retired clergy, widows, etc.), there are 7,700 priests in active ministry, and 2,000 who are not on church payrolls of any kind, and probably never will be again. The plan that enables clergy to retire at 55 after 30 years service is beginning to thin the ranks of the gray-heads among us, but meanwhile we are ordaining people at the median age of 47. We will lose 60-75 percent of our present clergy in the next 15-20 years to retirement. By the way, at 55 it was “nice” (but disheartening) to learn that I am still under

the median age of Episcopal clergy.

The Commission on Ministry system is designed to screen out rather than recruit in. I do not think most of our older leaders realize what a bottleneck Commissions on Ministry are. They need to retool themselves from being passive to being active recruiters of different kinds of leaders. Then even if we were to recruit vigorously, we would not have the room in the seminaries to take them. While many seminaries reported larger classes entering 2000, the numbers are certainly not big enough to take up the slack that is fast coming down the road.

Commissions on Ministry are set up to screen out precisely the candidates we need. As a member of a commission as well as an observer of the way they function around the country, I think it fair to say that they have turned into a filtering system that makes it difficult to impossible for the entrepreneurs, self-starters, and creative “trouble-makers” who have the gifts to be missionary pastors to get through the process. Then even if they do get through, when they reach seminary they will be formed as traditional professional clergy. Worse still, they will probably be indoctrinated with ideas that preclude growth and expansion.

For 30 years the Episcopal Church has been tracking a course that is designed to scale down leadership.

“small is beautiful” movement is alive and well in the Episcopal Church, and although there is nothing wrong with smallness, especially in sparsely populated areas, determining to stay small guarantees neither quality nor reflects obedience to our gospel mandates.

So here is the challenge and the consequences: We have 7,000+ churches that need leadership and in many cases turning around. We are likely to see as many as 5,000 of our existing parish clergy leave active ministry during the next two decades. They will not only have to be replaced, but we will need an additional 2,000-4,000 lay and ordained leaders to be church planters — and at a time when the whole future of the Episcopal Church is in jeopardy due to fragmentation and division.

We may dream about doubling the size of the church and bringing men, women and children into Christ's kingdom in new and exciting ways. But if we do not address this leadership quagmire that we have created by decisions made a generation or more ago, then we cannot expect this talk about growth to be anything but more hot air. □

The Rev. Richard Kew is convener of the U.S. Anglican Congress to be held in 2002, and is a member of the 20/20 Task Force to frame plans to double the size of the Episcopal Church by 2020. He lives in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

No Cheap Grace

The editorial on baptism [TLC, Jan. 7] states: "It is also the foundation of our membership in the church and our participation in the church." What about the growing trend (here in the West Coast dioceses and elsewhere) of inviting all persons — including those not baptized — who wish for whatever reasons to come to communion? Is this another pathetic attempt at "inclusiveness" which ignores the basic initiatory significance of holy baptism and the serious preparation required for receiving communion with repentance and faith?

Yes, the church does want to include everyone, but there is no such thing as cheap grace. The intention and commitment which the baptismal liturgy clearly requires is a call and invitation to all persons who wish to come. Clergy who violate Title 1.17.7 which states that no unbaptized person is eligible to receive communion are denigrating both baptism and communion. This is one more example of trying to undermine the received tradition and practice of the church by "doing whatever feels right" and hoping enough others will follow the trend until the church accepts the revision.

*(The Rev.) Richard C. Tumilty
Grass Valley, Calif.*

Bring Them On!

In response to Bishop Frade's remark about Cursillo [TLC, Jan. 7], it seems to me the same mentality that would lead a herd of bulls is the same type that would drive a boat to Cuba and pick up refugees. Instead of putting down Cursillistas, I would think that a forward-looking bishop would use that energy created by Cursillo and put it to good use in his diocese.

I know Bishop Frade comes from a background of a diocese that was full of Cursillistas and the Diocese of Louisiana has prospered by having a number of dedicated priests who started in Cursillo. I for one have contributed 34 dedicated years to my church in Covington, because making my Cursillo in 1976 made me want to serve and I have. Bring on the bulls and I will help lead them!

*Kenneth J. Nolan
Covington, La.*

Bishop Frade made the remark while speaking positively about Cursillo to members of his diocese. Ed.

Worth Repeating

I have but two words to say about Robert Mace, Jr.'s Viewpoint article, "Hysteria Rising" [TLC, Jan. 14]. Hear! Hear!

*Robert Hancock
Richmond, Va.*

Source Needed

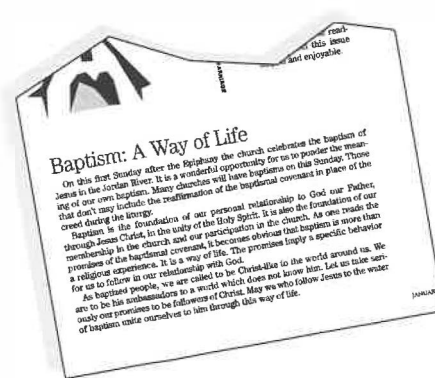
Regarding the Rev. Douglas A. Puckett's letter [TLC, Dec. 24], I just love it when a man declares what doesn't demean women. I would like to know what his source(s) of information are and upon what evidence he bases this statement.

*(The Rev.) Mary E. Becker
Baltimore, Md.*

Dealing With Guilt

I wonder how many readers noticed the small sign as part of the title of the Viewpoint article, "General Convention's Silence on Abortion" [TLC, Dec. 3]. The sign read "Abortion gives birth to a lifetime of guilt, remorse and regret!"

Dean Cavanaugh's article clearly stated the irony of the church's support for children, but it's unwillingness to speak against abortion which ends the life of an innocent unborn baby. But the sign raised an issue that was addressed at General Convention concerning abortion's other victims. NOEL (the National Organization of Episcopalians for Life) sponsored Resolution D083 that was adopted titled "Ministry to Men and Women Suffering from Post-Abortion Stress." This resolution recognized the need to deal with the guilt, remorse and regret that is often felt by those of us who have had abortions and called for



This is one more example of trying to undermine tradition by "doing whatever feels right" and hoping enough others will follow the trend until the church accepts the revision.

the church to develop post-abortion ministry support.

During the hearings at General Convention, some questioned the validity of post-abortion stress. But as someone who counsels men and women after abortions, as well as my own experience, many of us feel great guilt and it has had a major effect on our lives, behavior and relationships.

I think if the church began to really listen to the pain felt by men and women after an abortion, we would see that the concept of supporting a woman's right or choice of abortion to deal with an unplanned pregnancy is as absurd as supporting amputation for a broken arm.

*Georgette Forney
Executive Director, NOEL
Sewickley, Pa.*

The Best Response

I want to chime in on the abortion debate. There will always be abortions. No one or entity can stop them. The best we can do is to find a way to accommodate pastorally those who want abortions, those who oppose and those who are pro-abortion. (I

think the politically correct "pro-choice" clouds the issue.)

I agree with the late Rt. Rev. George West Barrett, retired Bishop of Rochester [TLC, Dec. 24]. He was

It is not at all clear what qualifies as "essential" and the Episcopal Church seems to glory in sheer diversity.

head of Planned Parenthood in Santa Barbara, Calif., after he left the employ of the church. A great quote attributed to him is: "Compulsory pregnancy is obscene and mandatory motherhood is a badge of slavery."

The statements by the General Conventions on the issue seem to have pastoral concern. I summarize, "It is better not to have one, but we love you if you do."

*(The Rev.) Robert Warren Cromey
Trinity Church
San Francisco, Calif.*

Glorious Diversity

I am writing partly in response to the article by the Rev. Stephen Miles [TLC, Dec. 10]. Fr. Miles writes, "In the church I attended as a child and young adult, people were fond of say-

ing, 'Our church lets us make up our own minds.'" This was the church of the '50s, according to him.

That is not my recollection. I was prepared for confirmation at the time

and we used one of the standard texts. I remember clearly that the Episcopal Church was said to glory in the motto "In essentials: unity; in non-essentials: liberty; in all things: charity." I was taught that the Episcopal Church believed in what was identified by the Vincentian Canon as: "That faith which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all." Never mind that there is nothing that qualifies for inclusion in the Vincentian Canon — there was a will to realize the canon. That put limits to making up one's own mind; or rather, it gave direction to the mind's struggle for the truth.

Now, of course, it is not at all clear what qualifies as "essential" and the Episcopal Church seems to glory in sheer diversity. Although there are no official limits to the diversity permitted, I suspect that racism and sexism (for example) are not included in the glorious diversity, although by what principle they are excluded is unclear. Certainly, non-theism seems to be an option. It is no good to say that there are only a few non-theist Anglicans. The fact that the few who do exist are so ostentatiously at home within Anglicanism is enough.

Let me be clear about this: I don't desire a move to oust the non-theist Anglicans. The very fact that they exist within Anglicanism is the problem. Like many things that ought to be done or thought or that ought not to be done or thought, there should be no rule requiring or forbidding things like non-theism. They should be simply unthinkable; as unthinkable as a Muslim believing in the Trinity or an Orthodox Jew accepting Jesus as Messiah.

*(The Rev.) Joseph P. Frary
Farmington, Maine*

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Appointments

The Rev. **Roger Bower** is rector of St. Luke's, 2 S Main St., Mechanicville, NY 12118, and rector of Zion, 232 Main St., Hudson Falls, NY 12839.

The Rev. **Paul Cooper** is deacon at St. Christopher's, PO Box 253, Warrendale, PA 15086.

The Rev. **Donald Fishburne** is rector of St. Michael and All Angels, 2304 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957.

The Rev. **Andrew Hammersley** is rector of St. Paul's, 414 E Broad St., Westfield, NJ 07090.

The Rev. **Robert Haskell** is priest-in-charge of St. James, 305 Main St., Oneonta, NY 13820.

The Rev. **Mark Harris** is executive director of the Global Episcopal Mission Network, PO Box 246 Federal Station, Newark, DE 19715.

The Rev. **Helen M. Jenner** is deacon at St. Bartholomew's, 1079 Ridge Dr., Clayton, NC 27520.

The Rev. **Amy Jobs** is assistant at Holy Communion, 4645 Walnut Grove Rd., Memphis, TN 38117.

The Rev. **George Klee** is assistant at St. George's, PO Box 38447, Germantown, TN 38088.

The Rev. **Julia McPartlin** is rector of St. James, 172 Ottawa St., Lake George, NY 12845.

The Rev. **Moni McIntyre** is rector of Holy Cross, 7505 Kelly St., Pittsburgh, PA 15208.

Ordinations

Deacons

East Tennessee – Allan Hunter Cole, St. Andrew's PO Box 4368, Maryville, TN 37802.

Lexington – Nancy Turner, Christ Church Cathedral, 166 Market St., Lexington, KY 40507.

Pittsburgh – Dallam Ferneyhough, St. Luke's, Market & 3rd St., Georgetown, PA 15043.

Quincy – Joel J. Grigg; C. Clark Hubbard; Mark W. Lewis.

West Tennessee – Sherry Lynn Coulter, Lawson Van Doren, Marianne Rockett Williams.

Priests

Albany – Lorrie Lyon, St. Stephen's, 1935 The Plaza, Schenectady, NY 12309.

Los Angeles – Eduardo Bresciani, Nancy Brown, Mary Haddad, Catherine Hillquist, Anna Olson, Richard Swanson, Ruth Tomlinson, Pam Tyler, Robert Two Bulls, Karen Ann Wojahn.

Northwestern Pennsylvania – Carol E. Carlson; Sean W. Rose, St. John's, 513 12th St., Franklin, PA 16323.

Pittsburgh – John Fierro, St. Paul's 130 W Main St., Monongahela, PA 15063.

Quincy – Jason A. Catania, St. George's, 30 N Ferry St., Schenectady, NY 12305.

Retirements

The Rev. **Jesse F. Anderson, Jr.**, as rector of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, Philadelphia, PA.

The Rev. **Gordon Chastain**, as rector of All Saints', Indianapolis, IN.

The Rev. **John R. Claypool**, as rector of St. Luke's, Birmingham, AL.

The Rev. **G. Randolph Usher**, as rector of Christ Church, Chippewa Falls, and vicar of St. Simeon, Chippewa Falls, WI.

Deaths

The Rev. **Robert B. Bowles, Jr.** died Dec. 12 after a long illness. He was 70.

Fr. Bowles grew up in Dallas and following his ordination to the priesthood in 1965, he returned as an associate to the Church of the Incarnation, the parish in which he grew up. He remained there until 1975 and is remembered for starting *Olé*, one of the first youth outreach efforts to Hispanics in the country. Fr. Bowles was also rector of St. George's in Texas City for 20 years until his retirement in 1995. In retirement, he remained active as a part-time assistant at St. Michael and All Angels in Dallas. Prior to his ordination, Fr. Bowles worked for seven years as a lawyer and also served in the Army, where he was assigned to the C.I.A. in Austria during the Cold War. He is survived by his wife, Karolyn, and two children, Robert Brigham and Kelsey Skiba.

The Rev. **Henry Lewis Ewan**, 95, died Dec. 12 at a San Luis Obispo, CA, hospital.

Fr. Ewan was born in Lewiston, Ill. and graduated from Nashotah House. He was ordained deacon in 1929 and priest in 1930. He served as curate at St. Stephen's, Providence, RI, until 1931. Later that year he became rector of Gethsemane, Marion, and St. Paul's, Gas City, IN. In 1939 he became rector of St. Jude's, Tiskilwa, and vicar of St. John's, Henry, IL. He was rector of St. Luke's, Billings, MT, 1942-47, rector of St. Barnabas, Omaha, NE, 1947-49, rector of St. James', Paso Robles, CA, 1949-51, rector of Transfiguration, in Arcadia, CA, 1951-62. From 1962 until his retirement in 1972, Fr. Ewan was chaplain of the Episcopal Retirement Home in Alhambra, CA. After retirement, he served for 11 years at All Saints', Pasadena, where he was in charge of pastoral calling. Fr. Ewan is survived by his wife, Imogene, three children, Mary Frances Loucks, James H.L. Ewan and John Robert Ewan, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Alice Charlotte Miller.

Next week...

**John Henry Newman:
Two Centuries Later**

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TENS Annual Conference—Stewardship: Living Our Covenant with God, May 4-5, 2001, Vancouver, BC. Content includes Annual, Planned & Capitol Giving. Underwriters include Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of New Westminster, Episcopal Church Stewardship Office, the Episcopal Church Foundation and Holliman Associates. \$205US/\$310CAN. For details call (800) 699-2669. E-mail: Tens@tens.org or visit ><http://tens.org>

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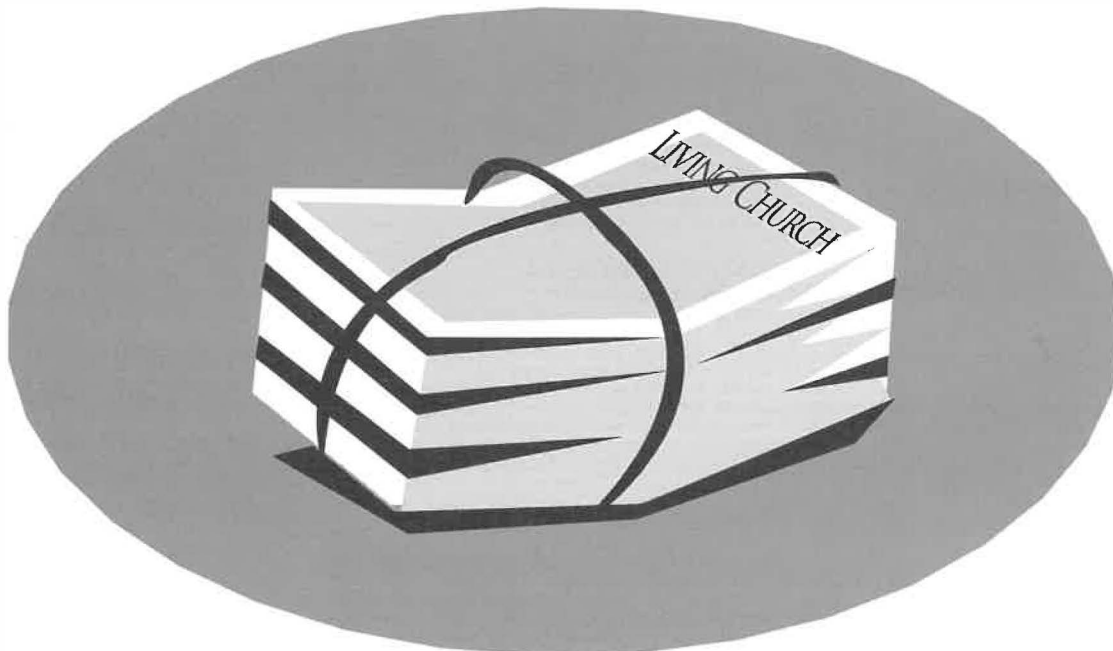
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