

St. James' E-pistle

April 7, 2017

Pulpit Notes

*"Then all the disciples deserted him and fled."
- Matthew 26:56*

Brothers and Sisters:

Supposedly, "Jesus wept," is the shortest sentence in the world because it has just a subject and a verb. I suppose "Ed fled" is shorter, but as far as the bible is concerned, it just might be. "Jesus wept" is also said to be one of the saddest sentences in the bible.

I have to disagree with that one. "Then all the disciples deserted him and fled" seems a lot worse.

As we make our way through Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday this Sunday, it's good to remember that one of the themes of the week is desertion. Jesus was abandoned by virtually all who had followed him. He was left alone to face the horrors of the Roman Empire and the wrath of the Sanhedrin. Everyone around him fled while he faced the music.

I don't know if you've ever felt like that before - alone, abandoned, deserted - but I have, and it's pretty horrible. For some reason, we tend to skip over this aspect of the Passion of Christ. We focus on his trial, his beating, his walk to the cross.... his crucifixion.

But just for a moment, think about the loneliness of his situation. Exposed, vulnerable, maybe uncertain that he was even doing the right thing. How many of us question ourselves when it looks like nobody else is going along with us?

What was the purpose of pointing out that everyone abandoned Jesus when he was arrested? Why did the evangelists believe this was an important detail? My hunch is that they knew how hard it is to follow Jesus - that's it's always been hard, and it's not going to get any easier - so they wanted to let future Christians know that A) they would probably desert Christ at some point over the course of their faith journeys, but that B) Jesus would still love them and welcome them home whenever they returned.

I encourage you this Holy Week (and beyond) to stay with Jesus. Each liturgy speaks to a different aspect of his self-sacrifice. **Maundy Thursday** - when he is betrayed even as he gives them an order to love each other. The stripping of the altar adds special poignancy, leaving the entire sanctuary barren like a tomb. The **WATCH** - when Jesus asks the disciples to watch with him for even an hour, we get to respond. It is a quietly powerful time. **Good**

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Friday - Whether the Walk of the Cross or the Good Friday liturgy with the veneration of the cross, these moments make real the sacrifice Jesus made for us. **Easter Vigil** - when we remember how he lay in the tomb three days before rising and overcoming death. There may be no more beautiful yet underappreciated service in all the church year.

We are just days away from Holy Week. Even if you feel you have somehow deserted Jesus in the past, it's good to know that even the disciples did the same - yet they were able to return, confident in Jesus' abiding love. This year, know that you can do the same.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Holy Week Readers Wanted: We have several reading positions open for the various Holy Week services. Here's what we want:

Palm Sunday Passion Gospel: 2 readers. Peter, and Centurion

Good Friday Passion Gospel: 5 readers. Jesus, Policeman, Gatekeeper, Peter, Pilat

Easter Vigil: 4 readers. Creation Story, Sacrifice of Isaac, Valley of Dry Bones. Also a lay reader.

Don't Forget the WATCH: Remember to sign up for the WATCH this Sunday. The WATCH starts after the Maundy Thursday liturgy and lasts till 12 Noon on Friday. People sit in one-hour shifts to watch and wait with Jesus. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

Don't Forget the Flowers and Eggs! Bring a few flowers Easter morning for the Flowering of the Cross. And bring a couple dozen eggs if you can - hardboiled or plastic filled with candy doesn't matter. Just bring 'em and hide 'em for the Easter Egg hunt following the 10 AM Easter Day service.

Women of St. James' Invited to Grace: Grace Episcopal Church in Millbrook, NY is inviting the women of our church and others in the Dutchess County area to a special gathering and meal on **Wednesday, May 10, beginning at 6 p.m.** The speaker, Pam Mott, Canon to the Ordinary, from the Western Massachusetts diocese, will speak about "The Challenges Facing the Episcopal Church Today" and the role of women of faith in meeting those challenges. This event will give us an opportunity to meet other Episcopal Church women, learn about the issues in which we all are engaged and discuss and share ideas together.

Continuing Women of Grace's tradition of pot luck dinners, they will provide the entry and, once they have an idea of the numbers attending, will ask for your contribution of appetizers, salads, desserts or beverages.

Please respond to Patty Glancey at pglancey@ymail.com no later than **Monday, April 24th**, so we can call Grace Church with the total number of women attending from our church. Grace Church's Parish House, the site of this event, is located at 3328 Franklin Avenue, Millbrook, NY.

Good Friday Offering: During Holy Week we are being asked by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry to support the Episcopal Church's Good Friday Offering. Good Friday Special Offering envelopes are available in the pews. Please prayerfully consider supporting this important offering request. If you write a check, please make it payable to St. James' Church with "Good Friday Offering" in the memo line. Thank you.

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St. James' Episcopal Church

presents

*A Mother's Day
Tea Party*



4-course Luncheon

&

Light Entertainment

with "suffragette Margaret Lewis Norrie" at 2:15

May 13, 2017

Two Seatings

12:00 pm and 3:00 pm

\$25 per person

Reservations Required, Limited Seating

Gift items available for purchase

*celebrate with your mother, sister, daughter, or best friend
in a special way at a special place*

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April 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 8 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Morning Prayer Office Closed	4 10 AM Morning Prayer	5 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	6 10 AM Morning Prayer 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7 PM Fireside Chat	7 10 AM Morning Prayer	8
9 Palm Sunday	10 Office Closed	11	12 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	13 Maundy Thursday 11 AM Bible Study 7 PM Maundy Thursday Liturgy	14 <u>Good Friday</u> 10 AM Community Walk of Cross 7 PM Good Friday Liturgy	15 8 AM Men's Breakfast 8 PM Easter Vigil
16 <u>Easter Sunday</u>	17 Office Closed	18 7 PM Vestry	19 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	20 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	21	22

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23	24 Office Closed	25	26 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	27 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	28	29 10 AM Nursery School Tag Sale
30						

Explore the Choir! "If you have any interest at all in singing and/or playing an instrument - no matter how much experience you have - do consider participating in the St. James music ministry! You can contact St. James' Music Director Sarah Rodeo (sarodeo@vassar.edu) at any time!"

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.

Spiritual / Educational Online Resources to deepen your faith:

- Acts 8 Movement
- GrowChristians
- Episcopal Cafe (a favorite)
- The Slate Project (not affiliated with Slate magazine)
- Virtual Abbey
- Second Life Church (gives you a virtual church experience if you're into that sort of thing. Fun to look at maybe).
- Inward/Outward (daily meditations sent to your e-mail)

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- "Edge of Enclosure" (weekly lectionary-based blog post)
 - The Celtic Christian Tradition (via Facebook)
 - Anne Lamott (via Facebook)
 - Fr. Richard Rohr's blog <https://cac.org/richard-rohr/richard-rohr-ofm/>
 - Jan Richardson - <http://paintedprayerbook.com>
- Especially good for those grieving or interested in women's spirituality.

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 Palm Sunday - Cathedral Congregation of St. Savior
- 10 Prison Chaplains of the Diocese
- 11 Clergy of the Diocese
- 12 Sextons of the Diocese
- 13 Maundy Thursday - Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors of the Diocese
- 14 Good Friday - Hospice Chaplains of the Diocese
- 15 Holy Saturday - The New York Altar Guild and Congregational Altar Guilds

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:

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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.
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, Dee, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Cath Holywell (priest in the Church of England and Indaba partner who worshiped with St. James' - undergoing heart surgery), Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Charles Pardee, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), John Ross, Richard Secor, Sharon Secor (recovering from heart surgery), James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Patricia, (sister of Barbara Slegel), Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

*Please pray for the repose of the soul of Nadine,
mother of Paul Littlefield.*

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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):	Kathleen Craft, Susan McGlynn, Susan Heupler and Carol Vinall
Birthdays (this coming week):	Brian D. Rance
Acolytes:	April 9: Team 1 April 16: Team 2
Altar Guild:	April 9: TBA April 16: TBA
8 a.m. Readers:	April 9: Lucille Ogden and Sue DeLorenzo April 16: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	April 9: Regina Ardini/Mike Fenwick April 16: Wilma Tully/Bobbie Wells
Ushers:	April 9: Bill and Regina Ardini April 16: Patty Drake, Bobbie Wells
Pledge Clerks:	April 9: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass April 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	April 9: Mike, Annette, Mike and Gage Minter, Nancy Montero April 16: Carl and Jean Needy, Bud and Joan Oetjen
Coffee Hour Hosts:	April 9: Lenten Breakfast April 16: Deirdre Mae Micker, the Urban- Meads

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

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Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 26:14- 27:66

This Week's Hymns

Processional: All Glory, Laud and Honor (#154)
Sequence: Ride On, Ride On in Majesty (#156)
Offertory: "Hosanna"
Communion: There Is a Green Hill (#167)
Recessional: Alone Thou Goest Forth, O Lord (#164)

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
(April 2, 2017)

"Death After Life"

I have always felt sorry for Lazarus in today's gospel. Not because he died - that's something that we all experience. As we say at the beginning of Lent, you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Nor do I really feel sorry for Lazarus because he came back to life, though I'm sure he would have preferred not to. I have known a few people who had near death experiences, and without exception each said that they were quite content to be dead. It was being sent back to life that was the hard - and less pleasant - part. But each also said they knew they were coming back for a reason - that they had a purpose. So, while they preferred death, they chose life again to do the work of God.

Now, Lazarus was no mere near-death experience. Jesus stayed away for a few extra days to make sure that he was good and dead in order to show the glory of God - that is, the power God has over life and death, and that in the end, life wins. This is a power that Jews understood - or should have - for a long time. The reading from Ezekiel reminds us that even dried out bones are not too far gone for God. But we all need reminders, and I imagine Lazarus understood the purpose behind his resurrection and came back to life willingly.

What makes me feel sorry for him is that he has to die a second time, and if John is to be believed, it was a far less peaceful death the second time around. In the next chapter, John tells

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us that the chief priests plot to murder Lazarus because so many people were flocking to Jesus on his account. It's one thing to die of sickness with your family gathered around, but another to face murder.

I wonder if Jesus picked Lazarus for this job because Lazarus was one of his dearest friends. Sometimes, you give the worst jobs to those you love because you trust each other and will go through hard things for each other.

At any rate, Lazarus had just gotten back to life when he had to face death again - and it's that death after life that I feel sorry for.

Which makes me also wonder why so many people choose death after they come to know life. But they do.

I'm not talking about physical death. Again, that's something that awaits us all. I'm talking about the kind of death in today's epistle, when Paul says, "To set the mind on the flesh is death." That sort of death takes place even while we live and breathe. It often takes place even after we've discovered how wonderful life is and what it is to know God's love. Because none of us is ever immune from setting our minds on the flesh.

Paul says this is death because when we set our minds on the flesh rather than the spirit, we begin to lose touch with that which makes life good and worth living.

If you sit and think for a moment what makes life good, I bet your thoughts will turn to family and friends, to the joy and wonder of creation, and maybe to special talents you have that let you be creative in your own unique way. And ultimately, to the creator and lover of all these things - God.

But when we set our minds on the flesh - as Paul understands it - these things start to slip away. They get sacrificed for the goals we feel driven to achieve. People are objects to be used and abused. The earth is just a tool to be exploited. Violence is a useful means to a dubious end.

What is the flesh Paul warns about? Same as Jesus - money, power, position, vengeance. And perhaps escapism - preferring to lose yourself in something intoxicating rather than deal with the realities you face.

These things weigh on us more than we might know, and they pop up in the oddest of times and places. I spent yesterday playing in a "Coaches Against Cancer" hockey tournament, which was an all day event in which real hockey might have been secondary. But what was interesting was the amount of time we spent in the locker room together between games. A lot of the conversation was just about sports - mostly NHL teams, which wasn't all that interesting. But then I overheard three guys talking. It was a wide-ranging conversation about the nature of violence which focused on the Nazi concentration camps versus the Japanese-American internment camps, and the atomic bomb.

Maybe not what you usually think of as locker room talk, but it does show that this sort of death is never far from the surface of our minds.

Fortunately, this is a sort of death we DO have some control over, a sort of death that we can actually back away from, even though experience teaches us that this is hardly easy.

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The first step, as Paul suggests, is to refocus. He says to set our minds on the Spirit. When we are focused on the Spirit - on what God is doing in us - then we can see much more clearly what has value.

And what has value is found in the eyes of the person next to you. It's found in the sunset over the river or in the mountains or plains. It's found in the creative impulse within each of us. These are of God, and they are life.

It may not change our outside circumstances, but that has never been the most important thing. Death starts from the inside out. But so does life.

And if Lazarus teaches us anything, it's that, while there may be death after life, there is always - always - life after that. Amen.