



TRINITY TIMES

MARCH 2008

Trinity Episcopal Church

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Geoffrey Brown
Clerk
Martha Nesbitt
Treasurer

Al Dorf, Bob Reid
Assistant Treasurers

Christine Gevert
Organist/Choir Director

Denise Lancto
Sunday School

Lisa Brennan, *Bookkeeper*
Jeff Silvernale, *Grounds*
Junior Wright, *Sexton*
Alexis Dorf, *Trinity Times*

FROM THE VICAR'S DESK

Some members of the Berkshire School class of 1997 gave me a gift upon their graduation. It's a simple thing; a fond token of what they had learned and how much they had enjoyed the philosophy classes I had taught: A small, plaster statue of Socrates. It's been on my bookshelf ever since. It has sentimental value as the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of being an educator. Since that was the last year that I taught at a secondary school, its meaning is maybe a tad more lustrous.



I should say it was a statue of Socrates. Like the great man himself, it is no more. Currently, it's a parcel of fragments and dust in the trash bin. At first I thought it was the cat who had knocked it to the floor, but I quickly realized that he would never have done such a thing. He has a sense of balance and propriety. The culprit turned out to be the local historical society, of whom I have rarely thought as either balanced or proper. They own the property next door that has been in a near-constant state of destruction and construction for the past eight months, where large falling trees and clumsily handled earth-moving equipment roil the ground with monotony. Items on our shelves have danced to and fro during these months, sometimes to the very edge of disaster before one of us catches it.

As I looked out the window, I saw the pile of thick trunks from familiar and venerable trees stacked like butcher's offal. According to my witness, it was when the largest and most vividly alive of the trees was felled that Socrates gave his last great jump from the bookshelf. I'm told that, since the neighboring street is Meadow Street, the historical society is clear cutting the property in order to create a meadow. Their logic makes me hope they don't own property on nearby Gal-

lows' Lane.

So, in just a few hours, it was the end of that fond gift and the end of a familiar landscape. Ah, well, as the poet once said, "Nought remains but mutability." It turned out to be a moment of grace, however, as I realized how grateful I am that Christianity liberates us from things, however sentimental they may be, and gives us instead something that is living and eternal. This is why real churches, regardless of their age, never degrade into flaccid historical societies or odd museums of liturgy.

In the seasons of Lent and Easter, we are invited to particularly experience change in its most dramatic and personal forms. We join with Jesus as he makes the transition from Nazarene carpenter to iconoclastic rabbi, through his terrible moments on the cross, to the ultimate liberation of resurrection. These two seasons join to take us through the greatest changes ever encountered by the human race. Those who were contemporary witnesses were changed in ways unimaginable before Jesus' baptism. Those whom they served found their lives marked with a grace that took them from glory to glory. Change was no longer the fearful challenge it once had been; temporal things no longer had a power greater than the Kingdom. With that knowledge, the early Christians were able to surrender a fetishistic devotion to the Temple building and the attitudes created by those in its service.

The early disciples also discerned that great change can make more visible one fixed point as a divine foundation. For them and for us, God ever present releases and receives love, directs our hearts, minds, and souls, and gives us that sense of comfort and purpose that we seek when it seems that the world, filled as it is with happenstance, foolishness, and historical societies, is changing too fast for comprehension.

During Holy Week in particular we are to engage all of our understanding in the variety of liturgies that are designed for and presented at that time. Between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday this year, we will hold

services each evening at 7pm. A more detailed schedule is to be found in the Times, on the parish website, and Vicar's weblog. It is my hope that we will find this an occasion to contemplate a renewed vision of God and Christian possibility as we celebrate the greatest change of all and see through it the one, fixed point of love that is ever present and inviting.

Father Rob

ADULT FORUMS



The Vicar's adult forums began again in early February. We are currently looking at the sociological context of the New Testament and will continue to do so through the season of Lent.

Each week a short reading assignment is given in preparation for discussion at the following meeting. All are invited to attend as they are able; no registration is required.

Scripture stands both within and without its contemporary times. Our deepest connection with our spiritual progenitors is thus dependent on our best efforts to expand our knowledge about their times and circumstances as well as our own.

PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK AT TRINITY



Palm Sunday: 8:00 am Holy Eucharist

10:30 am Blessing of the Palms, Procession, Holy Eucharist

Holy Monday: 7 pm Evening Prayer

Holy Tuesday: 7 pm Evening Prayer

Holy Wednesday: 7 pm Evening Prayer

Maundy Thursday: 7 pm- Liturgy for Maundy Thursday with Holy Eucharist and footwashing. Music: Giovanni Battista Pergolesi : *Stabat Mater* (excerpts)

Good Friday: 12 noon—3 pm The Hours with prayers and readings on the hours and meditations in between readings.

7 pm—Good Friday Liturgy.

Music: William Byrd's St. John's Passion 1605 (complete), Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* (excerpts)

Holy Saturday: 7 pm Easter Vigil. Lighting of the New Fire, Pascal Proclamation, Exultet, First Eucharist of Easter. Music: *Gloria* and *Offertory* from J. S. Bach *Mass in B Minor*.

Easter: 8 am Holy Eucharist

10:30 am Festival Holy Eucharist.

Music: *Gloria* and *Offertory* from J.S. Bach *Mass in B Minor*

11:30 am Festive coffee hour and Easter egg hunt for children

THOUGHTS FROM THE TRACTOR



In my musings last month, I noted that I am trying to develop an extrinsic faith, one that I can articulate to myself, if to no one else. It is an increasingly challenging journey! I have known for a long time that the Old Testament is full of contradictions, factual errors, inconsistencies and translations of words that do not mean to us today what they meant to the translators. I have also known that the Gospels of the New Testament are not the "let's go to the videotape" record of Jesus' life and ministry, but rather an expression of the emerging faith and yes, "spin", of the early Christian community.

So where does that leave me? Extensive reading in a number of areas reminds me that in a pre-Enlightenment age, the idea of spirits and "powers", visions and miracles were a given. Not from these folks would there be a demand for a rational, cold-eyed scientific explanation of what they could not easily understand! I have learned that I need at least a passing familiarity with the culture of first century Judaism and the dominant Roman empire in order to have a chance at fathoming what it was like to live

in Jesus' time and to understand the impact of his radical words and even more radical behavior.

In thinking about the crucifixion, I recall that the temple cult focused on sin, guilt, sacrifice, and atonement/forgiveness. There was also present in the empire a strong Hellenistic strand of myth concerning gods that die and are raised to life. Thus it comes as no surprise that Jesus' death and resurrection were interpreted as sacrifice and atonement by those who came to be called Christians.

My own 21st century understanding is different. I believe that Jesus and his band of followers were a threat to the temple, as well as the established social order and he was therefore executed by agreement of those groups. The temple bureaucracy had a vested interest in the status quo, and it is the function of temporal government, among other things, to maintain social order. Jesus' suggestion that access to God need not be mediated through a third party and his popular call for an end to the domination system that oppressed *all* people was a challenge to both bodies. And of course, the crowd played right into their hands by rejecting Jesus because he was not the Messiah they had in mind.

And Easter? Mark, the earliest Gospel, ends with an empty tomb. The other synoptics don't agree on how many angels/young men there were, and where they were located. There is disagreement on other details as well. Given that confusion, I have to focus instead on what it all meant. I think that the symbolism of the Resurrection tells us that Jesus' trust in a loving God, his teachings about love for all God's creation and his concern and compassion for the marginalized survived and overcame the limitations and endings the world tried to impose. His followers remembered, celebrated and shared that Good News.

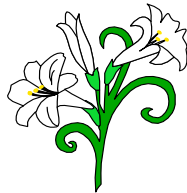
And that is what I will be celebrating this Easter.

-Alexis Dorf

EASTER FLOWERS

Each year we welcome the Resurrection of our Lord with flowers beautifying the church. Traditional Easter lilies, hyacinths and other flowers decorate the sanctuary with symbols of new life.

Parishioners who wish to contribute to the work of the altar guild at Easter are invited to make out checks to Trinity Church with *Easter flowers* on the memo line. This notation will insure that donations are credited to the altar guild.



When I cannot find the words
And when I will not;
When solitude is my only offering
And silence takes up its lodgings
In my soul;
When anger is my invocation
And breaking my benediction,

Oh God,
Hear my prayer.

from Jan L. Richardson
In Wisdom's Path

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Address correction requested

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