



February 6, Lent 4 2016 Thoughts from your Minister

Dear Paracletian Family and Friends,

Several days have passed, I have taken extra time to write to you. I am at the stage of life where my outer life is becoming more limited, while my inner life seems to expand and deepen. On the weekend of February 26th I led a vestry retreat, I wrote it around the sermons of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, and his book CRAZY CHRISTIANS. The theme is The Jesus Movement and our call to Galilee. Sacred Scripture tells us when the women went to the tomb, an angel told them “Jesus is not here he has gone on to Galilee”. We must go to Galilee to find Jesus. We are called to the Gospel Life in the world, in whatever part of Galilee we live in.

Following Jesus is a movement with many facets and spiritual expressions. It is our Mission to advance the Gospel of Jesus, as He taught us. We accept this by getting excited. fired up, roll up our sleeves, open our hearts and prepare through prayer, study and hard work to advance the Gospel Life.

Our call as Paracletians is to live everyday in the world. We are called to stand with the broken in body, mind and spirit, advocates for them. We can do this work because we too are broken people who are redeemed. We must avoid the situation of trying to be people who wear halos - holy guys, all signs of Sanitized Christianity. That mentality will kill your soul, our community, and the church. Always be real, be who you are.

Recall when we wrote a new Rule of Life for the Order. It took all of us three years, times of prayer, discussion, disagreement, compromise and finally agreement on the Rule we now profess. One sheet of paper, our way life on both sides of it. Someone asked me, how come it is so simple, I answered” we can fold it up, put it our pockets while we take someone to the ER, stand on a food line, or hold them while their heart is breaking, the Rule is always with us”! The Rule is made up quotes from Sacred Scripture applied to our daily lives.

We must remember our way of living Religious Life developed mid twentieth century in The Episcopal Church. Under the canons of the church we are a Christian Community, we are Apostolic's. In no way are we monastics. We are called to live everyday life in Galilee. We are single, married, partnered, parents, grandparents, including all expressions of sexual identity. We are laborers, management. cooks, medical workers, government workers, and could even be a politician! We are teachers and students, parish workers, retired, police and firemen. Whatever we are called to do, anywhere we are we bring Religious Life.

There is a new movement developing called the New Monasticism, it is NOT us. We can learn from it, just as we can learn from older forms of Religious Life. As Community we have been talking about change, growth and public persona. There is a sense we must go beyond who we are, that is a call from the Spirit of God. The Spirit is bold and radical, we must be as well. We are a part of the Church that is on the move, new growth, new ways of being and living the Gospel, this is at the heart of the message from Bishop Curry. We have to be willing to dream the Dream of God, and take action. We must do this by living within our Ethos and the canons of The Episcopal Church. As Community our gifts are many, over the months leading up to our Annual Meeting (June 12-16 in Shoreline, WA) and beyond we must share our stories, ministries, concerns, and dreams with each other, all of us, that is how the Spirit of God moves and we all have a role to play.

Before I close I want to share an overview on how we are living the Gospel in Galilee:

Br. Carle: many years as a union leader, assuring fairness for both labor and management.also he is a church historian for the Diocese of Olympia. Member of the Cathedral Parish.

Sr. "C.J." Chambers: always taking care of the neglected, at times taking people off of the street, or getting medical help for folks, also serving on the Diocesan Altar Guild. Member of the Cathedral Parish.

Sr. Ann : a prayer presence at Trinity Parish Gainesville, FL. working in active ecumenical outreach and a prayer bead ministry.

Sr. Suzanne: Hospital Chaplain, and doing parish work at Mt. Olive Lutheran in Lake Havasu, AZ.

Br. Mavin: Active parish ministry at Trinity Parish, Seattle as well as creating a sense of Community in low income housing.

Br. Timothy: works food bank and feeding programs, and has been called "the heart" of St. Michael and all Angels Parish in Yakima, WA.

Sr. Barrie: Also at St. Michael and all Angels, Yakima WA - she is a prayer presence and building Paracletian Community in Eastern Washington.

Br. Richard: retired Deacon (Diocese of Olympia) and a spiritual presence in retired housing.

Br. Douglas: a college instructor, an active witness of Gospel Life and Guardian of the Community in Western Washington.

Br. John : Pastoral Associate at St. Dunstan's Shoreline, WA, active in Bereavement work, and healing ministry. Minister of the Order of the Community of the Paraclete.

Associate - Novice Judy: Active in ministry to the deaf as well as at Christ Church, Seattle.

Associate: Anna Maria - retired priest, always a prayer presence, and a listening ear.

There are numerous Companions, Friends, and Associates who carry on the spirit of the Order in their every day lives, we are fortunate for their love and dedication.

These are very brief outlines of who we are and what we do, our first mission is to BE, then to DO. We are willing, loving Christians called to share in this life together.

Remember the lesson from our Formation Program: picture a glass, it is you filled with yourself. Formation helps you empty the glass of your stuff, you then stand empty and wait for the Grace of God to fill you. When the grace overflows, that is the stuff of ministry until you are emptied again; you then return and wait on God to re-fill you.

Francis of Assisi was once asked “where is your cloister?” he replied, “the world is my cloister”

May the following weeks of Lent lead each of us to Holy Week and Resurrection and a blessed Journey with Our Lord.

Pray for me, I do for you, I carry each of you in my heart.

Your bro. John, O.C.P.