



The Bells of Saint Mary

March, 2009

With My Hand on the Plow: Being Easter People

As I write this it is only five days after our celebration of Easter, and so the idea of being Easter People is very much on my mind. It is also four days after I had surgery to repair my right knee, and that too has me reflecting upon being Easter people...in a whole different way...as we always used to say growing up in Texas...it is "similar but different".

Because my knee was way more messed up than anybody thought, my surgeon decided to do something pretty dramatic to try and help me in my future years...he decided to punch holes in my leg bone! Really. Where the cartilage was, has left the bone exposed inside my knee joint. The doctor punched holes in that bone, (small ones to be sure, but lots of them) all the way down to the bone marrow...so that it, (the marrow) would bleed up to the surface...followed by the stem cells that live in the marrow...which will now spend the next six weeks trying to replicate what was there before the injury...my cartilage! If it works...then my bones will not rub against one another and I will be in great shape for some years to come. Think about it...God has designed our bodies to be perfect in so many ways...that even when I injure myself...there is a way for my body to grow again things that are hurt...to put back to-



gether that which is broken...to be born again...born anew...to rise again...all the images all sound so much like Easter, don't they? And that's the point I am trying to make today...all of our lives are like that.

Our lives as Easter People, as People of the Resurrection, are all about putting back together that which has been broken. It lies at the heart of our ministry to others... and the ministry we engage in with one another here at church. The Jesus who delivered the promise to us last Sunday is still alive... still leading us forward into ministry. We are to be about the business of faithfulness and ministry. And we are doing that! And

the whole deal to doing ministry is not to spend our time trying to figure out *how come* but rather to focus on *for whom*.

When we spend our time in ministry focused on *for whom* we are dedicating our time and our energy...then we are walking the path that our Lord has given us to walk. In the case of St. Mary's...that path includes folks who are down on their luck, folks who are in need of a helping hand, and folks who are in need of someone to talk to and spend time with. When you look at how we approach ministry it becomes very clear. From our AA meetings to Valley Haven to our Thursday morning

circle, we are increasingly focused on others instead of ourselves. And since the essence of Christian relationships is to think of the other person before you think of yourself, our embracing of this is shaping our ministry and our impact on our community in very significant and positive ways. This is a good thing.

These are hard times we are living in right now. Many people are losing or have lost their homes. Many more have lost their jobs, and many more will before we emerge from this deep recession in our country. I am so very proud of all of you that you have remained focused on the positive and have continued to be so supportive of the less fortunate in our community and in our world. This too is the hallmark of being Easter people.

When we give, to our church through our pledge, to our community through our actions, and to the world that God has given us to be responsible for, through our support of the Save Darfur coalition and the work we are doing in Red Shirt on the Pine Ridge Reservation, we are living more fully into our status as Easter People.

As we live into the promise our Lord made from the cross and the empty tomb, that we are never alone, and that Jesus is with us

always, we will continue to see our lives blessed more richly than we can ever imagine. Never doubt that you are doing the work that our Lord has given us to do...and when you get tired, or discouraged, remember that some of us plow the field, and some of us plant the seed. Some of us water the plants, and some of us pull weeds. All of us contribute to the care and nurture of the field...and that is enough for one life. For it is the Lord who harvests the field...not us.

When you get tired, rest. Another will work for you. When you are rested, come back to the field...for someone else will need a break. There will always be lots to do, because God will continue to send us new people who need rest, and food, and encouragement and knowledge of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And that is what we are working so hard to grow in the field the Lord has given us. Know that I see each of you working...and trying your very best to care for one another...and our Lord sees you as well. And together we will continue to be Easter People...because we believe...and because we are acting like believers.

With my hand on the plow,
Fr. Michael

The Red Shirt Project

Just a little note that we will once again be assembling a group of young adults to go to the village of Red Shirt this summer. The dates this year will be July 20-August 3rd. If you are a young person who is sixteen, (or almost sixteen) contact Fr. Michael to learn more about this remarkable experience of ministry that our parish is part of. If you would like to help send a young person on a mission trip this summer...talk to Fr. Michael. Any financial help you can offer will make it possible for our kids to go.

Thanks,
Fr. Michael



US Geological Survey map.

The People of Easter

During the services of Easter Week, we have heard recited the Gospel of Matthew, which described how three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary, mother of James, and Salome, approached Christ's tomb with fragrant gums and spices to place in the body's wrappings. They found that the guards set by Pilate had gone, the seal on the entrance was broken, and the stone rolled away. Mary Magdalene ran to tell the disciples John and Peter, while the other two women found the tomb empty, except for the wrappings and an angel of the Lord, dressed in dazzling raiment. The angel told them of the Resurrection of Jesus, and that they should tell the disciples what had happened, and that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. John beat Peter in their race to the tomb, and, finding it empty except for the wrappings, realized that Jesus had risen, and then both men left. Upon her return Mary Magdalene wept. When asked by the angel why she cried, she explained her Lord was gone and she knew not where to find him for proper burial. Then she saw a man standing beside her who asked the same question and she replied, "If you know where he has been laid tell me so that I may take him away." Jesus, for that is who he was, said simply, "Mary," by which she recognized him, falling at his feet. Jesus said, "Do not take hold of me; I am not yet going away to my Father. But go to my brothers, and say to them, I go up to my Father, and to your Father, to my God and your God!" (An ancient Coptic text states that he appeared also before his mother and Martha.) This was Jesus' first appearance before his relatives and disciples, and we may call those who saw him, "The People of Easter."

Picking up the story of the women, Mary and Salome went to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what they had seen and were confronted by Jesus, who told them to find his band of brothers and tell them to go into Galilee, that they may see him there. This was the second time he was seen.

Two other followers, not identified in the gospels, were walking toward Emmaus, about seven miles distant from Jerusalem, when a stranger appeared walking beside them, and asked, "What are you telling each other that makes you so sad?". They asked him if he had heard of the events of the weekend. Jesus, not recognized by them, asked if the events matched the scriptures. In Emmaus he sat down to supper with them, as shown in the painting by Abraham Bloemaert printed in the April issue of "The Bells." When Jesus took a loaf of bread in his hands, blessed it, and gave it to them, they recognized him and he vanished.

The two followers rushed to Jerusalem to tell the disciples, who informed them that "The Lord has risen indeed and has been seen by Simon Peter," which was the fourth time he appeared after the Resurrection.

The fifth time Easter People saw Jesus was when the ten disciples and a few others were in a closed room together, and he appeared among them and asked them to examine his wounds. To show further that he was not a spirit he ate the meat from some broiled fish, and also a honeycomb. He then reminded them that he had told them while he was with them that everything written about him in the Law of Moses, by the prophets and in the psalms, must come to pass, that he had to suffer and die and rise from the dead, and that the gospel must be preached everywhere in his name. He told them to stay in Jerusalem until the Father's power came to them from on high, after which he said, "Peace be unto

you; as my Father has sent me even so I send you. May the spirit of God come upon you.” The Apostle Thomas, arriving late, said he could not believe in his identity unless he was allowed to touch the nail wounds in his hands and the wound in his side. About a week later, at another meeting, Jesus invited him to do so and thus to believe.

The seventh appearance of our Lord was while the disciples fished in the Sea of Galilee, and he asked of Simon Peter three times to feed his sheep so that Peter, who had thrice denied him on that fatal Thursday, would be called to his place among the disciples and ultimately to lead the new faith in Rome. The eighth time Jesus was seen was by a crowd on a mountain in Galilee, where he asked those present to go forth and teach the gospel. The ninth occasion was when Jesus showed himself to his close relative, James, who became a strong believer in Jesus’ divinity as a result.

Finally, his last appearance before Easter People was to all eleven disciples in Jerusalem; he led them on a walk over the Mount of Olives, gave them his blessing, and then vanished; whereupon two angels explained to the gathering that he had been sent from Heaven to Earth and had now returned to his Father in Heaven. His appearances during the forty days after his crucifixion to various individuals and groups, whom we may call the Easter People, and who testified through the gospels about the sightings, have served to lend credence of his divinity to later generations of Christians.

Bruce E. Macomber



Assets:	
Undesignated cash in bank and savings:	\$97,501
Designated cash in bank and savings:	\$21,259
Liabilities:	
Mortgage:	\$380,413

Actual vs. Budget

January—March 2009

	Jan - Mar 09	Budget
Income		
UN-DESIGNATED	78,321.08	85,016.00
Total Income	78,321.08	85,016.00
Expense		
ADMINISTRATION	58,699.43	58,077.57
Bank Charges & Penalti...	29.81	
BUILDINGS & GROUN...	20,919.00	24,205.90
CHRISTIAN FORMATI...	1,026.48	786.50
COMMUNICATIONS	1,759.75	1,817.56
MISSION SHARE FUND	5,771.01	5,771.06
OUTREACH	2,050.00	2,050.00
PASTORAL CARE	0.00	32.50
RADICAL HOSPITALITY	402.92	425.00
WORSHIP	1,616.93	1,418.87
Total Expense	92,275.33	94,584.96
Net Income	(13,954.25)	(9,568.96)

The Bat in the Belfry

As I write this, I am in the middle of March Madness. I love basketball! Of course, I love anything that involves a ball. I don't care if the ball is big or small or if it's thrown, bounced, kicked, or struck with a bat or a club. It matters not to me. I'll watch even if it means neglecting my reading and research.

I guess you could call me a fanatic. However, the word truly frightens me, especially since one of my very favorite philosophers, George Santayana, wrote such a scary description of that condition. He wrote: "Fanaticism consists in redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aims." Well, I think he could be right. My team lost in the first round, but I'm still breathlessly watching. I know next to nothing about any of the remaining teams. Still, I cannot look away. The ball bounces, the crowd roars and I can't look away. I'm a fanatic. What can I tell you?

Are you a fanatic? (I've always kind of thought that fanatics were folks who, no matter what you are talking about, whether it's painting, prunes or pole vaulting, can always bring the conversation back to their own pet viewpoint.) So, I ask you: what's your poison? What's your game? There are certainly lots of options. Politics is an open field. Religion is another. In watching basketball, I'm amazed at the many ways there are to foul an opponent. The same could be said for politics and religion. Wonder how many fouls are called in those two areas? Wonder if we've forgotten the Rules written so long ago? Wonder why we sometimes don't follow them? Wonder if we'll foul out?



Not your average bat, but then again, what's "average" about St. Mary's?

Since I really have neglected my reading during Lent, I feel it's only fair that I leave you with a favorite poem of mine. At least I can claim some literary thought during March Madness and all the basketball overload. The poem is a favorite of mine; it seems to me that it tells us how we should behave in all areas, whether it be sports, politics, religion or just day-to-day living. It was written by a gentleman named Grantland Rice. (If you don't know who he is, ask any dyed-in-the-wool sports fan!) Here is Mr. Rice's poem:

"When the one Great Scorer comes to write against your name;
He marks not that you won or lost -- but how you played the game."

Gotta run. Game's starting. Wow! I love basketball, politics and my Episcopal Church!

Blessings from Bede, your friendly basketball Bat!

From the Stewardship Committee:

As the end of the school year and summer vacation time approach, many of us will be taking vacations, spending weekends at the beach or the mountains and not attending St. Mary's services on as regular a basis. In the past this has resulted in reduced church income during the summer months. We would like to remind you to keep your pledge current this summer. It's a lot easier than trying to catch up in the fall. Thanks!



Above: Palm Sunday procession.

Below: Ray Gould and Clive Foy on Easter Sunday (photo by Heidi Holdsambeck)



May Work Party

If you are a member of Team **Mark**, it's your turn to help keep the church looking good on May 9th at 8:30 AM. Members are: Joe Gonzales (team leader), Rachel Williams (lunches), Alice and Peter Drus, Kathy Gonzales, Cory and Anne Gusland, Dan Hayes, Heidi Holdsambeck, Margie Coe, and Frank and Jane Longley.

Summer Office Hours:

It's vacation time for the Parish office. The office will be closed Fridays from May through August. Leave messages on the answering machine or write notes and leave in the box. Business will be conducted Monday – Thursday as usual.

Elizabeth

May Birthdays		
Patricia Baker	05/08	
Patricia Balcena	05/08	
Jazz Kazianka	05/08	
Raymond Down	05/09	
Stephanie Bastian	05/10	
Rob Holdsambeck	05/13	
William Cady	05/18	
Louise Hodges	05/18	
Nancy Lipsius	05/19	
Judy Linn	05/20	
Ann Glasgow	05/21	
Aubrey (Bud) Owen	05/21	
Laurie Olsson	05/22	
Michele Pittenger	05/22	
Samuel Ricci	05/24	
Maxine Smith	05/24	
Dan Hayes	05/25	
Jeanette Daley	05/27	
June Ryan	05/28	
Kimberly Smith	05/31	

The Bells of Saint Mary's

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June Issue:

My Big Fat Greek
Vacation Bible School

Raphael (of Urbino), *St. Paul Preaching in Athens*, (c. 1513-1514)
(via abcgallery.com)

May, 2009

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Sunday Eucharist

8:00 AM and 10:00AM

Church Office Hours

May - August

Mon - Thurs 10 AM - 4 PM

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