

The Eagle

The Newsletter of
St. John's of Lattingtown

Spring 2006 Issue

Letter From the Priest-in-Charge

I have spent almost 14 years of ordained ministry working with schoolchildren of all ages. One school I worked at in my last parish sang a wonderful song. Picture 150 children singing together a song with the words "Love is something if you give it away." As they sang all the school children held out their arms in an embrace spreading their hands outwards. It always used to bring a tear to my eyes. They were poor children but had so much love to share.

I have just come back from working with children in 4 schools we support as a parish through the Dominican Dream Project. Sheila Harmon and her husband Ed have been wonderful Christian ambassadors there spreading practical love and care along with others and increasingly more of our parishioners.

I am still very much digesting the experience but one thing has kept with me. Those children gave love away over and over in so many ways. They were rich in love and shared it. Jesus said we will always have the poor with us. May be that was not least because he knew God's poor are wonderful teachers about what matters and what all people ought to be about.

Holy Week and Easter show us how God gave away to the human race such incredible love through the death and resurrection of the Lord who died with arms outstretched. Love is something if you give it away...let's follow the Lord (continued page 5)

Communion for Children

...Is the title of a new course being offered as part of our Sunday School program. It will be taught by the clergy and Bonnie Bowes Tate over a period of five Sundays: April 30, May 7, May 14, May 21 and June 4 at 9:30 am. Parents of children in kindergarten through third grade are encouraged to sign up with their child(ren) and commit to the entire sequence. Children and parents completing the course will receive a Certificate of Completion as well as take part in a special 10:30 Pentecost Sunday Service on June 4. Registration forms will be available Palm Sunday and must be handed in to the office by Easter Sunday.

What is a priest? I thought you were a minister!

I am a minister! So are you!

Each Christian by virtue of her or his baptism, is a minister. Did you know that in the Catechism in the back of our prayer book, the first in the list of who are ministers are—lay persons! The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and Christ's Church in the world, each according to the roles and gifts given to them by God.

Priests have the same basic ministry—to represent Christ and Christ's Church. And we have particular roles to fulfill and particular gifts to use with which God has graced us. That means that we are still lay folk! And, as I mentioned before, we are still deacons, too. (continued page 2)



Inside this issue:

<i>Letter from the Parish Priest</i>	1
<i>Communion for Children</i>	1
<i>What is a Priest?</i>	1
<i>A Dominican Experience</i>	3
<i>Easter Schedule</i>	3
<i>Medical Ethics Committee</i>	4
<i>Financial Matters</i>	5
<i>Governance</i>	5
<i>Vestry Notes</i>	6
<i>Births, Weddings, Burials</i>	6



But priests do have certain roles, certain gifts, certain ways of being.

Some of you may have attended my ordination to the priesthood in February. When the bishop prayed the prayer of consecration, he prayed that I would “exalt God in the midst of the congregation”, “always offer spiritual sacrifices”, “boldly proclaim the gospel of salvation”, and “rightly administer the Sacraments.” He prayed for me as a pastor, teacher, and councilor and that I would live a Godly life as a healthy example to the people.

His prayer named some of the gifts that I am to use as a priest: being an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher—all these gifts to be used for the building up of Christ’s body. These charisms or gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to the Church and have been expressed in various ways and times over its history. And all of us, lay and ordained, share in these gifts in the priesthood of all believers! But, like those ministries that deacons seem particularly called to, perhaps priests are called to these ministries at a different level of intensity—to be particular models for the whole.

As priests, “job one” is to lead the people in worship! We represent Christ and Christ’s Church through the administration of the Sacraments. Those of you who have taken part in Episcopalianism 101 will remember our classes on the Sacraments. Simon+ and I as your priests, through the Spirit help to mediate God’s Grace in Christ through the Sacraments. That’s an awesome responsibility.

Priests are called to be apostles—people sent out on a mission. If you remember the first apostles were sent by Christ to preach the gospel. Leaving the comfort of what one knows and sent somewhere else is a part of what means “to be called.” Leaving home, leaving former professions, sometimes is a part of being “called”.

Prophets can be not very comfortable people to be around. They are called by God to say challenging words to their people—challenging them to live moral and spiritual lives. If your priests sometimes preach sermons that you’re not keen to hear, when we prod the Church to consider the “orphan, the widow, and the alien” as it says in the Old Testament and “the poor, the hungry, the naked, the sick and those in prison” in the New Testament—this is what we are doing. We are fulfilling the vows we took, using the gifts we have promised to share with the Church.

Evangelists are those who proclaim the gospel—the Good News—of God’s salvation through Jesus Christ. All Christians are to be evangelists through the lives they lead, but priests by gift and

by our vows are called to preach. We are called to interpret the Scriptures for this present age, to help people understand what is this good news we proclaim.

Priests are also called to be teachers. We are to guide by word and example. And as those of you

who are called to be teachers in the secular world know, part of our duty as teachers is to help those who learn think for themselves. And we as teachers are also asked to learn from you.

And priests are called to be pastors. Pastors are shepherds—they feed their folk with spiritual food and drink, they keep them together guarding and overseeing, they lead them gently and sometimes with a prod, sometimes pulling them back to safety.

We are also, as priests, called to “take our place in the councils of the Church.” That is why your priests work together with other priests in the diocese, working under the leadership of the bishops. We are to help the people see that we are all connected together, working to build up the whole Church. Each of us is in relationship with the other, the churches in relationship with each other—all connected together as the Body of Christ.

I hope that this partial “job description” will give us all a better understanding of what your priests have been invited to this place to do. How we have been called by God and by your Church to minister to the people. We love what we do! And we love this parish we serve!

Your priest,

Clare+





A Dominican Experience—by Sheila Harmon

On March 4th a group of us met at JFK with luggage bursting with materials and books for the children at the DREAM schools in the Dominican Republic. Seven of us embarked on a life altering experience.

After a site visit to four of the schools on **Monday** we realized the poverty with which the people of Cabarete and the surrounding areas live. The children are always happy to greet us even with flooded playgrounds, broken desks and overcrowded classrooms with no equipment to use during recess. They are always neatly dressed in uniforms.

On **Tuesday** we took the hour-long drive, off the main road, through the sugar cane fields to the Haitian Batey. This is one of the poorest areas in the Dominican Republic. When the DREAM Project learned that the Haitian children were unable to attend the nearby UNICEF school because they could not afford shoes and few had birth certificates we, along with a group of students in Lawrence Academy in Amherst MA, built a one room school house. This preschool has a few Montessori materials with which a Peace Corps volunteer and a DREAM volunteer use with the young children. Several Spanish picture books make up their library. Our visit to the Haitian neighborhood is inexplicable. Without seeing it first hand we would never have known the conditions that human beings can endure.

On **Wednesday** and **Thursday** we worked in the schools in Cabarete, first with about 15 younger children, then an older group. **Victoria Crosby**, poet extraordinaire, explained her love of poetry and how she became involved, followed by having the students write their own piece.



Simon led terrific discussions with the children of both age groups about his role as pastor and elicited the children's ideas of who God is and their images of him. Simon's discussions led to **Ruth Baderian's** (who has become our artist in residence, this having been her 6th trip) demonstration of her art materials, culminating in student pictures of their images of God.

Ed Esposito, ex chief of the fire department, demonstrated fire-fighting equipment. The children were thrilled to have the opportunity to have their pictures taken in the reflective coat, helmet, and oxygen mask holding the hose nozzle. **Susan Moor** discussed family life and the students' future plans leading to the creation of their individual crests. **Keri McClellan** and I played games on the floor with a mitt and ball that we brought as well as reading with the children.

Every visitor is impressed with the friendliness of the people. I always feel so sad to leave because there is so much left to do yet I come home energized by having worked with this wonderful population of incredibly loving children.

Easter Schedule

EASTER DAY

- 7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I
followed by Continental breakfast
- 9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist * Rite II
followed by Easter Egg Hunt **
- 11:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II

* There will be a nursery available for infants and toddlers at this service.

** There will be an Easter Egg Hunt in the Parish Garden for all children.

EASTERTIDE

Food for the Pilgrim Journey:

Beginning Monday 24th April this parish will have a Daily Eucharist Monday through Thursday at 9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer will precede the Eucharist at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome. Make either or both of these liturgies a part of your week whenever you can.

ASCENSION DAY

Thursday, May 25th: Ascension Day: Sung Eucharist with sermon at 8:00 p.m. Ascension Day is a Principal feast observed in the Episcopal Church (see BCP p.15). This is the service to which to bring your full United Thank Offering Mite Boxes.



Members of St. John's on Medical Ethics Committee

by Harold A. Burnham, M.D.

The Medical Board of North Shore University Hospital at Glen Cove recently invited our parishioner Dr. Harold Burnham to become the new chairman of the Medical Ethics Committee. Dr. Burnham, although retired from active family practice, has been a member of the active medical staff ever since 1969. The Medical Board felt that the combination of his medical training, active medical practice experience, with several years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, along with many years of working as an assistant medical director in nursing facilities, prepared him well for his new position. Dr. Burnham chose to bring both of our Episcopal Priests, the Reverend Clare Nesmith, and the Reverend Simon Foster, as new active committee members.



With his extensive background and a keen interest in Ethics, the Reverend Simon Foster is very well suited for being a member of the hospital's Medical Ethics Committee. He has studied Ethics in the United Kingdom as part of a degree in Social Policy Administration, at the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK, in a course on Health and Health Policy. He won Student of the year prize, and obtained qualifications in Public Sector Economics and Resource Planning. As a member of an Episcopal Ecumenical Exchange Program, he completed studies on Morality at the Gregorian Pontifical University in Rome, Italy. His extensive preparation in Ethics includes courses in Theology at both the Chichester Theological College, and the Southampton University, in the UK. Not only was Reverend Foster a Diocesan Urban Officer in England, but he also taught Ethics in many parish and educational courses in church and community settings.

Since his ordination in 1992, Simon has worked in four completely diverse parishes, where his work as a parish priest involved his handling many ethical problems. This activity gave him the opportunity to lead a Conference presentation for 300 participants on "The Church in Community Life." This fine experience helped Reverend Foster utilize his passion for developing community links, in building caring and socially responsible communities, working together with the church. An outstanding example was shown by his becoming a Conference Speaker in England on Alzheimer's disease. Reverend Foster worked as the Chaplain for his local Alzheimer's disease group for 5 years.

The Reverend Clare Nesmith's recent training at the General Theological Seminary in New York City included ethics courses and time as a hospital chaplain at a Level II Regional Trauma Center. Prior to seminary, she spent many years in medical administration, working for a physician's private practice.

At the first Medical Ethics Committee meeting on February 28th, Syed Hussain, M.D., Family Practice Program 2nd year resident physician, gave a fine presentation of the status of the State of Oregon's law which permits physicians to help alleviate pain and suffering in terminally-ill patients (known as "palliative care" and supported by the Church), and allows physician-assisted suicide to occur according to strictly controlled guidelines. The United States Supreme Court decided on January 17, 2006, to uphold this law against the challenge by Attorney General John Ashcroft, who sought to punish physicians in Oregon as criminals for relieving pain and suffering in the treatment of terminally-ill patients. The Supreme Court ruled that Attorney General Ashcroft had no authority to regulate the practice of medicine in the State of Oregon. Such practice is strictly considered to be a function of individual states, not of the federal government.

The committee members participated in an active discussion following Dr. Hussain's presentation. Because of their combined interests and experience, both of our priests contributed to a fine committee meeting, and we look forward to having worthwhile meetings with them in the future. Dr. Burnham has also requested possible participation by a member of the staff of the Netherlands Embassy on this topic at a future meeting of the Medical Ethics Committee.

Needless to say, Simon is looking forward to leading a study session on the nature of Ethics, at the next scheduled meeting of the hospital Medical Ethics Committee in May. He has already made notable use of his extensive experience in Ethics, attending to parishioners, and to others, who are in need of consolation, and spiritual support, while they are patients at the North Shore University Hospital at Glen Cove.



Letter From the Priest-in-Charge (continued)

and not least his poor and give practical love and care away. It doesn't cost money but open eyes, ears, hands and feet for where it is needed.

May God help us to be spreaders of love and care. I thank God for those who have taught me this over the years especially children, God's poor children but rich in spirit.

May Holy week be special by the best attendance at our week-day services yet and on Easter day as we celebrate the God who gives love away because He, She and It can't help themselves!

Simon+

Fellow Pilgrim with you and Parish Priest

Financial Matters

Un-audited results for the year ended Dec. 31, 2005 are not as dire as forecast at the Annual Meeting in December. Although we suffered an operating loss of nearly **\$73,000**, this is significantly better than the **\$110,000** loss we had anticipated. The "improvement" arose from a larger than anticipated inflow of giving in December. It is as yet too early to determine whether this is the beginning of an upward trend. A summary of the results is shown below:

Year End 12/31 (\$000)

	2005	2004	Budget'05
Total Income	607.6	614.3	639.2
Total Expense	680.3	611.6	634.2
Net Operating Income	(72.7)	2.7	5.0

The negative variance in operating income is largely accounted for by two factors: first, total income was down slightly, reflecting lower Special Offerings, lower Christmas and Easter offerings and lower investment income.

The over \$75,000 increase in expenses is accounted for mainly by a \$41,000 increase in giving towards our Diocesan pledge and asking and other giving, and a \$9,000 increase in utility expense due to higher than anticipated fuel costs. Absent the increase in the former, our loss would have been a more manageable \$35,000. A very modest and greatly to be desired increase in Annual and other giving could handle this nicely.

Governance

For some time the Vestry has been discussing the importance of more and easier involvement by the parish in the affairs of the Church. To further this end we embarked on a broad ranging study of our By-Laws with a view toward making the workings of the Church more transparent and the "levers of power" more accessible to the congregation.

We have completed a revision of the By-Laws which now incorporate, among others, the following improvements: Annual Meeting date shifted to May so as to be able to discuss what actually happened rather than estimates, Notice Period extended and provision for nominations broadened and enhanced, Ballots and voting procedure improved. Heretofore, the operation and election of the Vestry and Committees may have seemed a bit opaque. With these improvements we hope for more financial and other participation by the congregation. We will post the new By-Laws on our website for your perusal.

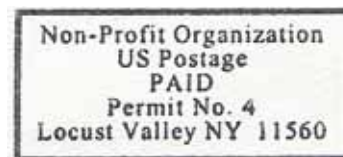
Financial Matters (continued)

On a somewhat more pessimistic note, we have been experiencing some unforeseen costs for repairs, most recently to the roof. In addition an examination of our organ reveals the need for extensive and likely expensive repairs. We are obtaining estimates from four organ builders along with their recommendations as to the best course of action.

Finally, a mixed stewardship report—in 2005 at this time 115 members had pledged \$176,213 for the ensuing year. This year, 2006, 110 members have pledged \$203,618.

These figures do not include donations prepaid for the following year which swell both the number of pledgers and their generous contributions.

Keep it up.



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If you would like to talk to the clergy about anything, need priestly ministry or would like to receive Holy Communion at home or in hospital due to sickness, please call to make an appointment.



VESTRY NOTES

As reported in the EAGLE, the Vestry met in retreat just prior to the last issue. A great deal of time was spent discussing the finances of the Church and specifically focusing on the anticipated operating deficit for the 2005 year.

BAPTISMS

Danielle Grace Jauregui
Susan Campbell Dixon

Before commenting on those discussions, this is a good time to mention that we are going to recommend moving the Annual Meeting to the spring of the year (more on that elsewhere). In December, the figures presented in the financial report are merely projections as at least a quarter of our income comes in after Thanksgiving. It is usually well into the first quarter before donations can be properly allocated to the appropriate year.

BURIALS

Merrill MacLeod Stenbeck
Edith Bouvier Beale
Ruth Jones McElwain
Doris Fauser Brisbane
Edward Church Register
Whitcraft

At the Annual Meeting, our treasurer reported that the deficit was estimated at \$110,000. At our March meeting he was able to report that the deficit was coming into focus at \$70,000.

At the Annual Meeting there was discussion on both sides of the issue as to whether Church Fair proceeds should be available for operations when the Church is facing a deficit. It was reported that the Vestry philosophically felt that they should be available and that further review was to be undertaken in January.

At the retreat it was agreed that, at the discretion of the Vestry, up to 50% of the Fair proceeds would be available for operations in the event of an operating deficit.

The vestry retreat agenda included a reflection by Simon+ on the spirituality of vestries and much of the rest of the retreat was devoted to stewardship issues/planning and a repair schedule for our physical plant.