

January 2007

A Reflection from the Vicar...

*OUR GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD!*

In Advent we waited, anticipated and hopefully prepared for Jesus' coming. Now in the season of Christmas and Epiphany we encounter a time to reflect on *our worship* of God. The Magi (Wisemen) left everything and traveled for months, maybe even years, to worship and give gifts to Jesus. They gave their time and their wealth to God. The Shepherds left their herds to go and worship the baby Jesus. When the shepherds left their sheep, the sheep would have scattered and been unprotected from wolves and other predators. In essence the shepherds gave up everything they owned to go and worship God. Perhaps we think that the shepherds simply took their sheep with them, but they could not have moved rapidly with a large number of sheep so we may assume they left their flocks as scripture says and went to Bethlehem to worship the newborn king. We also read of Miriam and Simeon who worshiped all day every day in the Temple hoping for a sign of the messiah.

God demands our worship above all other things on earth or in heaven. The first commandment is this "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5) "You shall love the Lord your God, therefore, and keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances, and his commandments always." (Deuteronomy 11:1) Even the prophets had to remind the Israelites as Joshua did to "Take good care to observe the commandment and instruction that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, and to hold fast to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Joshua 22:5)

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mat 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27)

The Christmas and Epiphany seasons are a good time to assess where we are in our Christian journey. Only about one third of our St. Michael's community comes to worship on any one Sunday. Yet, no where in scripture does it tell us to take a vacation from the worship of God. The early church held worship to be the duty of every Christian. Our present Prayer Book asks, "What is the duty of all Christians?" and the answer given is "The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God." (BCP, 856) The Old Testament command is to remember the Sabbath and to keep it holy. Jesus likewise kept the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews *reminds us* to keep the day of worship (Hebrews 4:9-11).

We sing "Our God is an awesome God" and "God is Lord of Lords and King of Kings." But we don't always act like we believe it. If we believed what we say, we would be on our knees before God like the Magi and the Shepherds. But our culture tells us that church is unimportant so we believe that we can rest, sleep, watch ballgames ..... on Sunday instead of worshiping God. When you are not here each of us is diminished, because you are a necessary part of the body of Christ.

Worship is not about "feeling like it". Worship is our time to give to God praise and thanksgiving. There is no biblical reference which gives us an excuse not to worship God. Thankfully, we can come to worship Sunday after Sunday trusting in Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who allows us to boldly approach God even in our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:14-16) We are

† St. Michael's Sword †

not called to be perfect people, but we are forgiven people. Our praise and thanksgivings should flow out of our thankful hearts in worship to God. If you can't make it on Sunday, we offer midweek worship as well so please don't miss the opportunity to offer God your worship each week.

The Magi, the Shepherds, Miriam, Simeon, the early disciples of Jesus, Mary and Joseph gave their time, their wealth and their love to God. That is worship!

By now you are wondering where the title fits into this meditation. Keep reading and the title will become clear. Scripture tells us that we are not to worship idols and false gods. "You shall not bow down to them or worship them; *for I the LORD your God am a jealous God*" (Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 5:9; 6:15). See other references: Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24; Joshua 24:19; Psalm 79:5; Ezekiel 36:6, 39:25; Joel 2:18; Nahum 1:2; Zechariah 1:14,8:2)

Well, I doubt that any of us have a closet full of idols at home. But we may indeed! An idol is anything that we make more important than God. So if on Sunday we pursue our own personal goals instead of worshipping God, then have we made an idol?

The biblical definition of jealous is "*intolerant of unfaithfulness*". God is intolerant of unfaithfulness and calls us again and again into a right relationship with Him. God wants our full attention. God seeks a unique relationship with us and wants us to seek a reciprocal relationship with the same zeal and ardor. We are called to faithfulness! It is so easy during this time of Christmas and Epiphany to get caught up in the hectic schedule of parties and gift giving that we can't seem to find time for God. We forget the very reason for the season!

May you find God to be the One you *faithfully* worship with your time and your wealth during this season and throughout the coming year.

Yours in Christ, Mother Pat+

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### WEBSITES FOR HEALTHY EATING

*The Internet has many websites that provide healthy recipes, many of them tailored to diabetic, low-sodium, or heart-healthy diets.*

[www.deliciousdecisions.org](http://www.deliciousdecisions.org) *Packed with heart-healthy suggestions for all kinds of foods, sponsored by the American Heart Association*

[www.foodfit.com](http://www.foodfit.com) *Recipes and diet plans that convert "comfort food" recipes into lighter, healthier dishes*

[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com) *A valuable all-inclusive health information site. Has a health and nutrition section that provides healthy recipes.*

[www.eatbetteramerica](http://www.eatbetteramerica) *Lighten up your high-calorie dishes or check for healthier ones.*

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### HEALTHY TIPS

*How many times have you been on a trip and just too busy to have a proper lunch. With today's fast paced lifestyle it is important to follow these essential guidelines to proper nutrition*

*..When selecting meat, poultry, dry beans, and milk or milk products, make choices that are lean, low-fat, or fat-free.*

*Consume a sufficient amount of fruits and vegetables. Select from all five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables) several times a week. Consume 3 or more ounce-equivalents of whole-grain products per day. In general, at least half the grains should come from whole grains. Consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.*

*Consume less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fatty acids and less than 300 mg/day of cholesterol, and keep trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible.<sup>6</sup> Keep total fat intake between 20 to 35 percent of calories.*

From the Deacon

I have been attending church services on a regular basis for 36 years. When I was first married in 1963 I was still in college, and working part-time. Going to church was a regular practice. When my first wife and I had our children, we drifted from regular church attendance. Unfortunately, it can be an easy thing to do. Other things in life besides God become the focus. It doesn't happen suddenly. It's a gradual drifting away from one's spiritual foundations. Daily Bible reading and prayer usually are the first to fall by the wayside. Coupled with both me and my wife working and tending to two small children, it's not long before one can make the error of neglecting community worship. It takes its toll. Without the daily focus on God and the lack of the weekly support of the spiritual community, a marriage can be in serious danger. I know. Divorce happened to me almost 37 years ago. A failed marriage is a terrible way to learn a lesson, but it certainly makes a point that is not soon forgotten. After the divorce, I drove many miles to pick up my children to be sure every Sunday they were in church, and I also made it a point to spend time with them each week, to be at school events or ball games. I am saying this to you to let you know that this was my experience and that there are much easier ways to learn life lessons than the way I learned them.

I am thankful that the lesson I learned those many years ago has stuck with me. I am happy to say my children have found church to be an important part of their lives. If I had not taken them to church, they would not know about the importance of God and the church community in their lives. I am very thankful for this. It has proven to be strength in their lives when friends or loved ones have died or other hardships have occurred in their life. And we know events will happen in life where God and the church community will be called upon so it is important to always be active and connected to the Body of Christ. If children are not guided to be participants in this process of church attendance, where will they find guidance and strength when they are on their own? It has been said many times, "we are the only Bible that people see." Children look up to us for guidance and direction, and they see what we make important in our lives. Do your children see God and the church community as important in the life of your family? Each New Year presents the opportunity for us to make directional changes in our lives. May God be with you as you make choices to walk closer to God.

God's peace, Deacon Larry

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### **KEEPING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS**

*Many Christians make New Year's Resolutions to pray more, to read the Bible every day, to attend church more regularly, etc., etc. These are fantastic goals! However, these New Year's Resolutions fail just as often as the non-spiritual resolutions. Why? Because there is no power in a New Year's Resolution, resolving to start or stop doing a certain activity has no value unless you have the proper motivation for stopping or starting that activity. For example, why do you want to read the Bible every day? Is it to honor God and grow spiritually or is it because you have just heard that it is a good thing to do? Why do you want to lose weight? Is it to honor God with your body, or is it for vanity, to honor yourself?*

*Philippians 4:13 tells us, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." John 15:5 declares, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." If God is the center of your New Year's Resolution, it has chance for success - depending on your commitment to it. If it is God's will for something to be fulfilled, He will enable you to fulfill it. If a resolution is not God honoring and/or is not in agreement in God's Word - we will not receive God's help in fulfilling the resolution.*

## **EXHIBIT OF THE ORIGINAL DEAD SEA SCROLLS & ARTIFACTS**

*A once in a lifetime opportunity will be available to only six communities in the United States*

*February 8 - May 13, 2007*

The Kansas City Metro area-Union Station, 30 W. Pershing Road, was one of the six area selected in America and will host the DSS exhibit.

During excavation from 1947 to 1956 archeologists discovered in eleven caves in Qumran, Israel, nearly 1,000 separate scrolls and 15,000 fragments that predate and include early Biblical time. Most scholars believe that the Essens, a Jewish sect living in the area from 200 BCE to 68 CE, deposited these writings in the eleven caves. They provide a better understanding of what shaped the Hebrew (Old Testament) scriptures. The DSS pre-date by a millennium the Mesozoic Text (915 CE) on which today's Bible is based. Most of the discovered scrolls are in Hebrew, but some are in Aramaic and a few in are in Greek.

There has also been prepared a Distinguished Lecture Series on each Tuesday night from February 10 -May 8, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at Union Station with excellent scholars each evening.

Lecture cost is \$19.95 (\$15.95 with DSS exhibit ticket)

The ticket prices for viewing these historic original scrolls and accompanying artifacts are:  
General admission \$19.95, Groups (15 or more) \$15.95, youth groups \$10.95.

### **SIX THINGS KIDS NEED TO KNOW**

Even though classrooms are the perfect setting for role-playing, parents have an edge when it comes to teaching their children real-life money management skills and focusing on their own family's values-whether that means investing in the stock market or giving to charity. Parents should take the lead in helping kids learn the six money management skills I think every child needs to know before leaving home.

- 1. How to manage a cash allowance.** No school lecture and no computer program will teach kids how to set priorities and make spending decisions better than by having them get along on \$10 a week.
- 2. How to manage a checking account (and an ATM or debit card).** Every teenager should have an account and know how to balance it-preferably as soon as he or she gets a part-time job. (Co-sign or open a custodial account if your child is under 18 and the bank requires an adult signature)
- 3. How to save for a goal.** Nobody can be thrifty just because it's the virtuous thing to do. Kids need a reason not to spend, whether it's saving up to buy an action figure or a car. Consider matching all or part of what they put aside.
- 4. How to figure the time value of money.** That's a fancy way of saying that small amounts saved when you're young will eventually grow into big piles of money. To show kids how rich they can be, let them plug numbers into a compounding calculator.
- 5. How to get out of dept (or not)** Instead of delivering a lecture, use this eye-opening example to illustrate the pitfalls of credit. Say you put \$50 a month toward a \$2,000 balance on a credit card that charges 18% interest. It will take you 62 months to pay off the balance-and cost you \$1,077 in interest.
- 6. How to compare prices.** Start with unit pricing at the grocery store and build up to Abercrombie vs. Old Navy (which will help kids parcel out their clothing allowance).

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Thought for the month: "Now that it's all over, what did you really do yesterday that's worth mentioning?" - Coleman Cox

## CELEBRATIONS

### BIRTHDAYS FAMILY

Steven Botherton	1-04
Karen Dobson	1-04
Marcus Manning	1-08
Evan McNamara	1-09
Mike Prettejohn	1-08
Travis Prettejohn	1-10
Janet Carney	1-13
Janet Brown	1-15
Clark Anderson	1-22
Chance Parsons	1-22
Aneta Ireland	1-23
Jay Kilpatrick	1-26
Patricia Aker	1-30

### ANNIVERSARIES

William & Nicole Hayden 1-01

### BAPTISMS

Kelly Arias	1-11
J. D. Stewart	1-18
Mary Johnson	1-19
Isaiah Barclay	1-23
Flo Morris	1-30
Aeriel Stantruff	1-30
Megan Stantruff	1-30

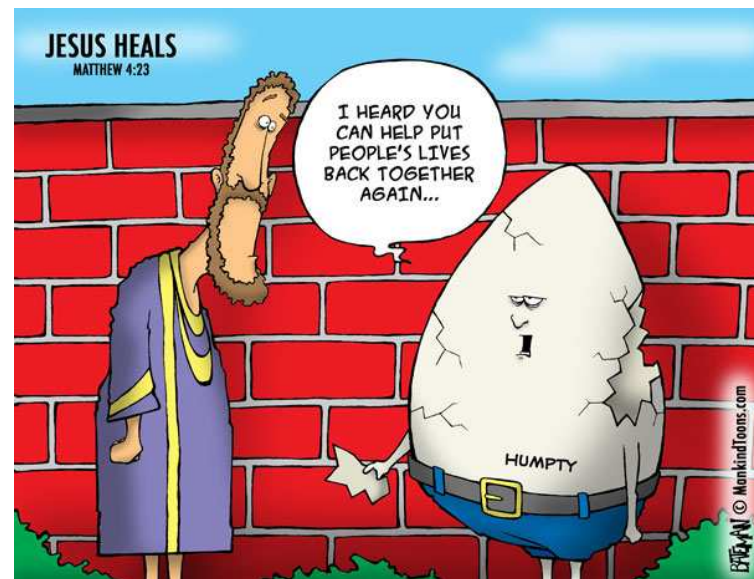
**From your editor:** It's a new year! Each group should appoint someone to write a short "update" of their activities for the month, either what you have done, or what you are planning to do. Just write a short note or paragraph, to let everyone know what's happening at St. Michaels. What a great resolution, help me to fill these pages with the "happenings" at St. Michaels. Your resolution is a double edged sword; (get the humor?) gets your news out, and makes my job easier. Send your articles to [donnaraemeyer@att.net](mailto:donnaraemeyer@att.net).

## CHRISTIAN VOCABULARY

- AMEN** - The only part of a prayer that everyone knows.
- BULLETIN** 1. Parish information, read only during the homily 2. Your receipt for attending the service.
- CHOIR** - A group of people whose singing allows the rest of the congregation to lip-sync.
- HOLY WATER** - A liquid whose chemical formula is H2OLY.
- HYMN** - A song of praise, usually sung in a key three octaves higher than that of the congregation's range.
- INCENSE** - Holy Smoke!
- MAGI** - The most famous trio to attend a baby shower.
- MANGER** - Where Mary gave birth to Jesus because Joseph wasn't covered by an HMO. 2. The Bible's way of showing us that holiday travel has always been rough.
- PEW** - A medieval torture device still found in churches.
- RELICS** - People who have been going to church for so long, they actually know when to sit, kneel, and pray.

Q: Why didn't Cain please God?

A: Because he just wasn't Able.



"God so loved the world that He did not send a committee."