

ST. MICHAEL'S SWORD...A PUBLICATION OF

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

4000 Lees Summit Rd, Independence, MO

816 373-5333



MARCH 1 THROUGH APRIL 15, 2010

Thoughts From the Vicar.....

The Holy Ordinary

I recently read an article entitled, "The holy ordinary", and it reminded me that we often miss the holiness in our lives because we are so focused on the routine around us and so we miss the divine presence of God. We are so busy that we can't see the holiness in the activities and people around us. We simply miss what is right in front of us.

Take for example the activities of getting food prepared and ready to eat. In the midst of those tasks of opening packages, heating items, and preparing food for ourselves and our families, we fail to see the abundance of what we have and we miss a chance to see the holiness of the moment. Seeing the holiness around us does not take extra time, it takes being attentive to what we are doing rather than being distracted by what we need to do next. For example, if we really focused on putting the salad ingredients together, we might see the glorious green colors of the lettuce and marvel at the red juiciness of the tomatoes and realize that God's creation is a wonderful mysterious gift which gives us life. When we focus on what we are doing, it lets us experience the holy within that ordinary moment. It is an intentional attentiveness to God in the midst of all the busyness of our lives.

God does not take us out of the ordinary, God comes to us in the midst of what we ordinarily experience. Jesus came into the midst of this world not to lift us out of the world, but to show us the holiness within it. It takes practice to let the ordinary activities of our lives point us to the holy, but that is what Christ invites us to do. Everyday of his earthly life, Jesus pointed to the Divine and the holiness of life. Jesus enjoyed a good party when he went to the wedding in Cana and he enjoyed good food with friends at meals in Bethany. Jesus shows us that it is possible to live in this world and to see the holiness of God in every aspect of our lives. Jesus was very aware of God's presence in the moment because he focused his attention on that moment and was not distracted by what might happen next.

Routines and rituals like worship, daily prayer practices and all the activities of our lives are designed to help us make a connection with each other and with God. We have to allow ourselves to focus on the moment and not to be worrying about the next thing we need to do. Let worship transport you to an encounter with God. Let prayer give you that connection with the holy that strengthens you for the next task of the day. Let your everyday activities become a portal to the holy - when you brush your teeth, focus on just that task and marvel at the (con't) miracle of God's creation. Let each moment of the day refocus your attention on the holy in the midst of the ordinary.

In this season of Lent, try to practice attentiveness to the ordinary tasks and to appreciate the holy that you find there. When we let our minds slow down and focus on the task at hand, we begin to see the extra-ordinary and holy things around us. Gifts from God to help us connect with the Divine. Live as if the world will end tomorrow, but also live as if the world will never end. Live as if the present is paradise, but don't neglect to clean up the kitchen. Take every opportunity to rediscover the holy which is all around us.

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From the Deacon.....

We Need Each Other

I came across a very interesting article in the issue of National Geographic magazine for January, 2010. It was about the life and habitat of a small reef fish known as the clownfish. This small creature was popularized by the 2003 Academy Award winning Pixar animated feature, "Finding Nemo." Those with children, grandchildren or young at heart most likely have seen this film. This small clown fish finds protection from predators by living among the poison tentacles of a host anemone on the coral reefs. Clownfish never venture more than a few yards from the protection of their host anemone. Out of the thousand species of anemone, only ten are home to the twenty-nine species of clown fish. Clownfish look like butterflies flitting about as they go in and out of a flowering plant and forage for food on the ocean floor. The exact reason why clownfish are not killed by the anemone is not fully known. It is thought that a layer of mucus affords protection to the clownfish. The clownfish is also known as the anemonefish because, without the anemone, clownfish could not survive.

As the clownfish needs the anemone, so we Christians need each other, the church community. Without the church community our families and our faith suffer. We dart about our various tasks, like the clownfish, living our lives giving little thought to how protective the community is. When a job is lost, or a loved one falls ill or dies, or some other difficult situation of life arises, the church community is available to give spiritual and emotional support. This support that we find in each other in the church community is very much like the safety that the tiny clownfish finds with the anemone. As this article comes out, we are in the midst of Lent, and these thoughts are particularly relevant when we think of our weakness and dependency on God. We are indeed fragile and do need each other. We, the community at St. Michael's Church, are here for you. Some have ventured far away, like a little lost Nemo in a dangerous world. If you have been away for a time, come home again to find the fellowship you need to grow your faith and direct your life. God's Peace,
Deacon Larry

Consider for your United Way giving.... I was not aware that I could designate my contribution to United Campaign at work to the St. Michael's Food Pantry. When I discovered that others at St. Michaels were doing so, I arranged to have my contributions directed to St. Michaels. Even if you have already submitted a form for 2010, you can redirect your contributions for this year to St. Michaels. Unlike the situation with many charities that have high administrative costs, every penny of your donation goes directly to those in need. Please contact me or Mother Pat for information on getting that done. This will help continue the important community service work that St. Michael's does. Contact Larry McEnroe (816)478-4888 or Mother Pat. Contributed by Larry McEnroe...

Plan on attending.....

Holy Week services, March 29 to March 31 - 6:30 PM worship each night. Lenten series concludes with final session on Wed March 31.

Maundy Thursday, April 1 - 6:30 PM worship with foot washing, final communion, and stripping of the Altar.

Good Friday, April 2 - noon Stations of the Cross & 6:30 pm Good Friday Liturgy and Veneration of the Cross (No Eucharist on this day)

Holy Saturday, April 3 - 9 AM Holy Saturday Liturgy & 7:30 PM Beginning of

Easter Vigil. 9 PM until the dawn prayer vigil for those who sign up. (No Eucharist on this day)

Easter Sunday 6:30 AM Sunrise service Holy Eucharist with incense (outside weather permitting) & 10:30 AM with

Easter Egg Hunt for the children following worship.

FAMILY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays:

Barbara Wright	03/01
Trina Rogers	03/02
Margie Gray	03/07
Grant Prettejohn	03/08
Teri Adams	03/12
Ashley Wright	03/12
Sandra Byers	03/15
Karen Linares Wilds	03/17
Marybeth Allen	03/18
Ethan Trowbridge	03/18
Genesis Trowbridge	03/18
Marc Rogers	03/21
Joseph Hogan	03/23
Sheri Williams	03/25
Laura Cearley	03/27
Anthony Amador	03/29
Jamie Russell-Wright	03/29
William Hayden	04/03
Mathew Onka	04/04
Stacey Long	04/07
Camille Onka	04/05
Jim Swaney	04/10
Zachary Zoltek	04/12
Gina Crawford	04/13
Delaney Russell	04/13

Anniversaries

Sandra & Ronald Byers	04/17
Rachel & Jim Swaney	04/29

Baptisms:

Shaun Bentley	03/xx
Jewel Cox	03/xx
Hazelann Barkie-Cox	03/08
Joe Harrison	03/13
Sheri Williams	03/28
Donna Meyer	04/xx
Rick Cox	04/xx
Vicky Anderson	04/xx

Staci Brown	04/01
Debbie Van Pelt–Mc Enroe	04/02
Nikole Hayden	04/06
Marcus Manning	04/10
Bob Napier	04/12
Sarah Crawford	04/14
Trish Doran	04/15

Top Ten Ways to Make a Difference in the World

Lots of people want to make a difference in the world. But how does someone make a difference? Does it have to be a big one? Big differences change the world; little ones fuel the big ones. What would happen if the fuel ran out? Here are the top ten ways to keep the fuel going:

- 10. Think before you act.** What you do affects others. When you think first, you are more likely to do the right thing and every one benefits.
- 9. Encourage.** Encourage people and set a precedent for them to encourage others. One day you, too, may need encouragement.
- 8. Help others.** Helping leaves a good impression on those you help. In turn, they are likely to follow your example and help others.
- 7. Be honest.** A world without trust is a world without faith.
- 6. Respect others.** Respect demonstrates value and good manners. This will promote their also respecting others.
- 5. Be kind.** Kindness encourages others and offers hope.
- 4. Be patient.** Tolerance goes a long way and is usually greatly appreciated.
- 3. Care about things.** If you care about things your actions will reflect that care.
- 2. Be an example.** Tell and show others how to make the difference.

1. Love others. Why else would anyone do anything to make a difference for the better?

Ready to make a difference? Set your sights and goals and...GO!

By NOISEmaker whateverwheneverforever

Ever wonder who does all the “behind the scenes” work at St. Michael’s? How do the colors on the alter get changed, the “gifts” appear at the alter or a dozen other little things that have to be done happen? It’s the Alter Guild of St. Michael’s. These ladies work tirelessly to help to make our church run smoothly. So the next time you see these ladies, make sure to let them know how much they are appreciated! So, kudos to Genie Kuske, Ann Prettejohn, Aneta Ireland and Mary Beth Allen, our unsung heroes! If you are interested in joining them, just talk to any of them, they will welcome you with open arms.

A Childs view.....

When a mother saw a thunderstorm forming in mid-afternoon, she worried about her seven-year-old daughter who would be walking the three blocks from school to home. Deciding to meet her, the mother saw her daughter walking nonchalantly along, stopping to smile whenever lightning flashed. Seeing her mother, the little girl ran to her, explaining happily, "All the way home, God's been taking my picture!"



"If you will fill out your temperature preference card and drop it in the offering plate, we will average them, and adjust the thermostat accordingly."

Reflections on the catastrophic earthquake of 12 January (condensed from a letter from Monsignor Jean Zache Duracin, Bishop of the Episcopal church of Haiti)

“Hard pressed but firm in the faith.” The humanitarian assistance which has been announced for this catastrophe is also historic. The quake has been a hard blow in a country of more than 10 million souls. Residents have lost everything, their house, and their former lives. The capital has been transformed into a huge refugee camp. They desperately need water, food and medication.

“I was almost buried under the roofing of Bishop’s House,” Monsignor Duracin, Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Haiti, told us. “I was two seconds away from the entry door, and I was just able, thanks to the help of the Most High, to escape with my life. My wife who was inside the house is still in the ZANMI Health Centre, with injuries to her legs which were crushed in the debris of the house. We had just time to drag her from the rubble. Two of my children miraculously got out of the collapsed house. Holy Trinity Cathedral succumbed to this earthquake, magnitude 7.3 on the Richter scale, which has devastated our country: the roof of Saint Cecilia Hall, the only stadium in Haiti, has practically come down on the stage where concerts are held regularly... most of our churches are destroyed; a number of our schools are piles of rock.

St Peter’s College, where I have set up a makeshift tent with my family among about 3000 refugees during the day and many more at night, is fragile, because there is no water or food. Hygiene conditions are precarious with so many young children, nearly 200 children, and the presence of handicapped children from St Vincent school, which sustained irreparable damage, has complicated the life they had developed in an appropriate environment on Paul 6 Street. A large part of the capital has been completely destroyed. The National Palace has partly collapsed. Several Ministry buildings, Parliament, churches, hospitals, hotels, schools and several universities have been destroyed, the University of the Episcopal Church of Haiti among them. The scene before our eyes is truly sad.

“I hold out the arms of the diocese to the thousands without shelter, and I offer my prayers,” says the Bishop of the Diocese of Haiti. “Haiti already had serious difficulties before the earthquake with an extremely poor population, so after the earthquake it will be difficult for us to pull through alone.

“International media are speaking of between 150,000 and 200,000 dead. There would be 250,000 wounded and a million without shelter, over half of whom are in Port-au-Prince, the capital.

“The course of THE HISTORY OF HAITI has changed.

“I want to say **THANK YOU** to all who have extended a helping hand to us. What is more, I would like to think that we are at the beginning of a long partnership. I invite you to accompany us in helping our Haitian brothers and sisters.

[From the website of the [Diocese of Haiti](#): Translation Ted Witham tssf 23 Jan. 200

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Episcopal Relief & Development is the international relief and development agency of the Episcopal Church of the United States, guided by the Episcopal Church's principles of compassion, dignity and generosity as we work to heal a hurting world. Episcopal Relief & Development reached more than two million people in over 40 countries last year. Rather than

impose one size fits all solutions, Episcopal Relief & Development supports local, long-term initiatives that address poverty, hunger, disease, economic development and disaster response where the need is greatest. Our partnership with the worldwide Church creates opportunities to serve communities in some of the most remote areas of the world, as well as in urban environments where extreme poverty persists. (Mission Statement)

Items to save for Vacation Bible School

Even though Vacation Bible School is several months away, start saving your shoe boxes (we will need between 35 and 40). Also, save the tubes that come with wrapping paper and the tubes from plastic wrap and aluminum foil. These will be used for craft projects. When you bring them to the church mark them for Donna Meyer, Nikki Hayden or Mother Pat. Thanks in advance.

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What is your Ministry?

What is your ministry, do you have one or two, or are you looking to take on something new? If you visit our website, they are listed, with a description of what each one entails. Just a small sampling, Acolytes , adult and children, Altar Guild, Ushers, Choir, Children’s Chapel, Bread Delivers, Prayer Team, and the list goes on and on. If you haven’t looked at our website lately, do so. There’s lots of information, and links to everything from an online Bookstore to information from around the Diocese. Take a few minutes and find to out what’s happening, it may surprise you.

PRAYER FOR THE SEARCH OF OUR NEW BISHOP:

We give you thanks, gracious God, for your goodness in bestowing upon the Church the gift of the Episcopate and its heritage in this Diocese. Grant that in our search for the 8th Bishop of West Missouri, we may be open to your will, receptive of your guidance, and ready in obedience. May the Holy Spirit illumine our hearts and minds as we live into the vision that is before us. Let this occasion of change be a time to build trust and increase understanding, that Christ’s love may be made known between and among us, that your will may be done; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

God didn't promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without rain, but He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the way.
Anonymous

Editors note: Deadline for the next Newsletter will be April 05, 2010. Please email your contributions to donnaraemeyer@att.net before that date.

