
THE MESSENGER

Winter 2007

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

December/January

ADVENT REFLCTIONS

REV. KATHARINE BLACK, PRIEST IN CHARGE



Dear Bowdoin Street Friends, Welcome to the season of Advent. Long observed as a season of penitence and sorrow, it is now celebrated as a season of preparation, work, and deep joyful expectation. Correspondingly, many churches now use the blue of Our Lady, instead of the more somber, however royal, purple. Much of the difference of point of view stems from an appreciation of Advent as a companionable time with Mary waiting for the child to come. We watch with Mary as she struggles to understand the mystery happening to her, and as she takes her wearying trip to Bethlehem, and labors to give birth. As we watch her, watch with her and over her, we consider the difficulties she faced and endured.

Somehow the earlier focus of Advent, on sin, guilt, and forgiveness seems less central than work and preparation. The more we attempt the path of Our Lady, the clearer and more pressing the weary work of preparation becomes. We understand, though, that the energy of the work is not inward, but outward to the Child's coming to us. We choose

to do anything we can to help that Child be born, born in us, live in us, and live in the world.

It may well be that in that process, we may acknowledge our (and perhaps even bewail our manifold) sins (and wickedness.) We may see more clearly the complexity of Mary's acceptance of God's work in her. Her generosity and its risks to her and her family may open our eyes to her gracious giving. When we notice how far we fall short of that taking in of God's life into our lives, we notice our shortcomings, our missing the mark, and our sins. Obsessing over our sins won't help Jesus use our hands and feet, hearts and minds, intellect and intentions. Such obsessing may so fill our time and energy that we never have to engage in any work we could do for Christ, or

that Christ could do through us.

In Advent, then, our effort is to do what we can do now, to help make our selves, our lives, our world (our souls and bodies) more ready and able to receive Christ. We consider what Mary did to insure the safe delivery of Jesus into the world. What tasks can we do to make ourselves more ready, and the place to which he comes, more ready? We need to make ourselves awake and alert to notice both his coming and his arrival. If we're exhausted from work, wrapping, or Christmas details, we can miss his coming. If our hands and hearts are so full of our own lists, we may have no hands to serve those Christ demands we serve: the poor, the hungry, the lonely, the sorrowing, the needy, and the fragile. We may have no footsteps left



to get to where Christ needs us to be working. We may have no stamina left to bring Jesus to a waiting world.

please see *Priest* on page 6

PRESS ONWARD, LOOK UPWARD

COREY SPENCE, MESSENGER EDITOR



The other day I voiced my frustration about the state of the Anglican Communion with Rev. Katharine. I told her that I was sick of people around the world blaming gay people like me for trying to split the Communion. I told her that I was angry so many people around the world want to restrict God's table to people who have passed some sort of theological purity test.

In response, she reminded me to pause and breathe. The world doesn't change as fast as we want it to. It was a moment of clarity that I needed to hear.

This has been a difficult fall for so many people. In my own life, the husband and I have been dealing with many difficult issues, not the least of which is the fallout from the first holiday we spent with my family. I have had many friends at Saint John's, Old South, Arlington Street Church, and Chorus who have friends and loved ones that have passed away. Work has been really difficult with many added responsibilities because some staff members have departed.

I was starting to let this overwhelm me and take over my life. I was starting to go through the motions and wonder if it was all worth it. I thought that I should just let it all go and withdraw into myself.

The Boston Gay Men's Chorus concerts last weekend began

bringing me back from my malaise. One of the pieces we performed is called, "Prayer of the Children." Kurt Bestor wrote the song. In an article about the piece, Maurine Jensen Proctor writes:

"Bestor served as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Serbia during the 1970s. This song was written years later when the Yugoslav wars broke out in the early 1990s as a tribute to the country's children. Meridian Magazine described it this way:

Later when war broke out, and Yugoslavia splintered into warring factions with Serbs, Croats and Bosnians hating and butchering each other, Kurt's heart was aching. What came to him—haunted him—were the faces of the children he had known. "Those children didn't hate anybody," he said. "They didn't care about who owned the land, or who had the power or the money. These are adult neuroses. They just wanted to have a mom and dad and a place to play."

There is a phrase in the song that continues to resonate with me. "Can you feel the hearts of the children aching for home, for something of their very own. Reaching hands with nothing to hold onto but hope for a better day." Reuben, our director, when we were rehearsing the song asked us to imagine what it would be like to really have

nothing there for our hands to grasp.

I found that I couldn't really imagine it fully. Even at the worst moments in my life, I have had friends and family around. And most importantly, I have had the Holy Spirit there.

In 1871, Sarah Doudney wrote the hymn, "The Master Has Called Us." The second stanza has been my theme song to help me get through a lot of what I have had to deal with this fall:

"The Master hath called us;
the road may be dreary
And dangers and sorrows
are strewn on the track;
But God's Holy Spirit shall comfort the weary;
We follow the Savior and cannot turn back;
The Master hath called us,
though doubt and temptation
May compass our journey, we cheerfully sing:
"Press onward, look upward,"
through much tribulation;
The children of Zion must follow the King."

I am grateful that I have a family here at Saint John's that is with me though the road may get dreary and the way difficult. The Holy Spirit has called together an amazing group of people to this place. Every time I walk into Saint John's I am comforted by the assurance that by pressing onward and looking upward, we as a congregation can thrive. ✚

WILL I SEE YOU IN CHURCH NEXT SUNDAY?

REV. KATHRYN PICCARD

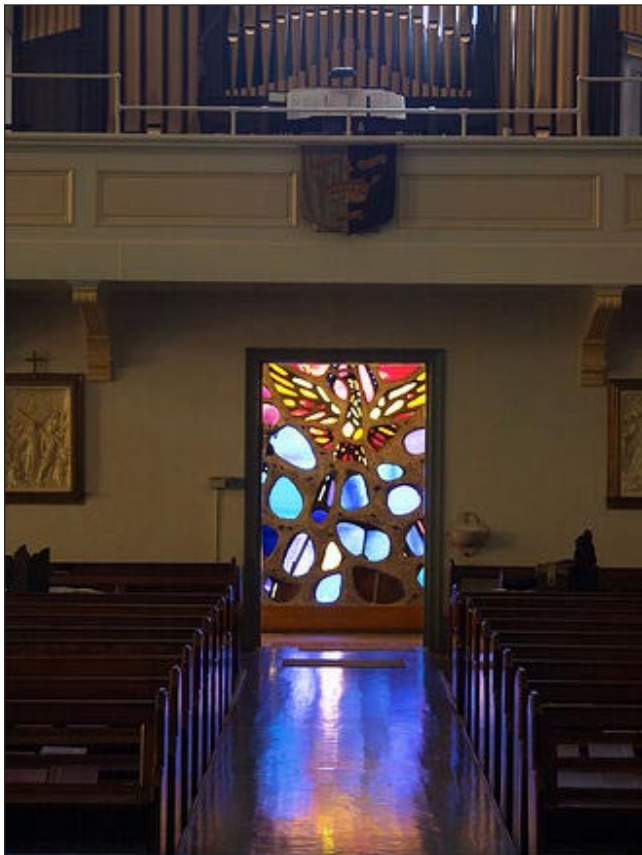
In this parish a few of us are present every Sunday, others are present three Sundays out of four, others about half the Sundays, while others come just occasionally. I'm glad for every person who comes, every time, including visitors. Yet I also worry about those whose attendance is less predictable. Priests are sometimes reluctant to address this topic because we are apt to be seen as self-serving: maybe you wonder if a priest is just saying, "We should all go to Church every Sunday" in order for that priest to get an ego boost and a salary boost, as if people come to hear us preach. However, since I am a priest on disability retirement, not paid by St. John's, that is not an immediate issue for me.

The experience of the Church through the ages is that it is healthy when it maintains its worship foundation (public worship and private prayer), education and mission, and that weekly attendance is virtually essential for this. Attendance every Sunday requires self-discipline from us as members when we set our priorities and make our schedules through the week. I believe that weekly

worship is a minimum to anchor us in a community of mutual worship and care, to feed and strengthen us spiritually, to teach us through the Bible and proclamation and to equip us for our ministries. Perhaps

other individuals get out of our presence, what we give, even when we are not aware of giving. There is also value in what the group, the Church, gets out of being together and celebrating the Eucharist together. These aspects do not exhaust the value of Sunday Mass attendance. Each one of us who is not there each Sunday is missing out on both giving and receiving, and our parish itself is depleted in its potential life, strength and witness. Also, when more of us are present visitors are more likely to find people they feel comfortable with. This is another reason that you are needed. You really are needed. Besides, the music sounds better!

Have you been filling your schedule so full each week that you need to take a "mental health" day every Sunday, or several times a month? Some of us find it hard to get up and get going Sunday mornings in time to get to Church. Maybe we're too tired, or too anxious about all the things we still have to get done before the weekend is over. Something in our schedule has gotta give—



you will tell me of a dozen ways weekly worship functions that I have neglected to mention in this article. Part of the value of Sunday Mass attendance is what it does for us, that is, what we get out of it as individuals. As individuals we do have different needs and experiences. Another part of its value is what

Please see *Will I See You* on page 7

CONCERTS @ SAINT JOHN'S

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS, 5:30 PM

DECEMBER 19

Neighborhood
Christmas Carol Sing

DECEMBER 26

Jeffrey Mills (organ)
Noëls by d'Aquin and Guilmant



JANUARY 2

Sarah Powell (soprano)
and Andrew Ryker (baritone)
Songs by Weill, Bowles,
and Blitzstein

JANUARY 9

Ana Maria Ugarte (mezzo)
and Brian Landry (tenor)
Italian Duets: Verdi to Verismo

JANUARY 16

Brian Landry (tenor)
Tenor Hits: Donizetti, Verdi,
Puccini, and Verismo

JANUARY 23

Steven Serpa (countertenor), with
Thea Lobo (mezzo) and
Jeffrey Mills (organ)
Music of Philip Glass and others

JANUARY 30

Harvard Chamber Singers

A BAPTISM!



On January 13th, our recent parishioner Leoule Goshu has asked to be baptized. It's a significant moment in the life of a parish when an adult both chooses to be baptized and join us. We are hoping that the younger communicants will provide Coffee Hour for Leoule,

but more important help to welcome him into the community. Long standing members also need to be here to support him in this decision and new life and share their knowledge and experience both of being a Christian and of Bowdoin Street. He brings us energy,

enthusiasm, and excitement at finding our church—and like David Bresnahan—stories from work in New Orleans doing Katrina relief. Please put this date on your calendar and let's all be here to welcome him into the church and to celebrate the making of a new Christian.

CHORAL MUSIC FOR THE SEASON

JEFFREY MILLS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

The choir will be singing some new repertoire as well as a few familiar pieces over the next several weeks. Advent will bring anthems by Charles Wood, Herbert Howells, Everett Titcomb, John Goss, Healey Willan, Hans Leo Hassler, and Francesco Guerrero. On Christmas Eve, the choir will sing two movements from Vivaldi's Gloria and Buxtehude's Das neugeborne Kindelein as part of the prelude to the Mass. The music will begin at 7 pm and the



Mass at 7:30. The anthems that evening will be by William Mathias and Tomas Luis da Victoria. Other Christmas choral music will be by Mendelssohn and Andrew Carter. The season of Epiphany will bring a variety of choral music, as well. Stay tuned!

Priest from page 1

Shoulds, oughts, and tasks, won't help us prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives. Perhaps a good night's sleep, an afternoon nap, tea with a friend, reading poetry, listening to a whole piece of favorite music, dozing gently in a sunny armchair, will open our well-defended selves to a glimpse of the coming Savior. That image may set us to serving a NAI dinner, signing a pledge here, filling out a Time/Talent sheet, and eagerly joining with others to feel the growth here of a new spirit of mission. Christ's coming may enliven our hearts, impel us to bring friends here, to share the Good News. His coming may fling us down to ask for forgiveness or energize us to leap for joy. Advent could cause some of each, some of both, because it is in that both/each of sin/joy, fear/hope, terror/sweetness, that we encounter the mystery and enormity of the Incarnation and fear and long to draw closer. Christ comes to us anyhow, anywhere, any time,, every time, always, and everywhere. That's the melding of fear and promise for us. Jesus comes to us to be with us now and always. Right where we are. Right now. Right here. ✚

COFFEE HOUR

Coffee Hour is a joyful time, and we delight in visiting with each other. When the schedule is made up, people have been gracious, helpful, and willing to volunteer. There are several parts of "doing" Coffee Hour. The tasks are 1) acquiring goodies, 2) setting up, 3) serving and seeing that all is going along, and 4) cleaning up. When you tell Jane Struss (who makes the schedule) that you'd like to participate, you could say that you can make the coffee just before church, and you could take that on as a regular task. What you don't have to do, in "doing" coffee hour is to pay for it all necessarily. There is a tiny fund to help out, so if you'd like to provide coffee hour, you can either donate what you bring or quietly give the receipts to Pat Madden or to Rev. Black, and you'll be re-

imbursed. We try to make caff and decaff coffee, and some well-brewed tea, and some fruit juice, some sweets, and something savory, whether veggies or cheese and crackers. Our goal is to have something to sustain ourselves for long enough to enjoy each other's company. Cut up apples or oranges, veggies and hummus, as well as the sugary treats mix to make a nice spread. If you bake, that's terrific, but if you don't, you can still bring something we'll all take pleasure in sharing. Do take a turn; do remember to help in the clean up. Do offer your famous Christmas cookies. Do be the good person who starts the coffee regularly. Be in touch with Jane and we will all continue to enjoy every Sundays generous variety. **THANK YOU TO EACH PERSON THAT HELPS OUT!✚**



Will I See You from page 3

and Church may be it. I may want attending Church to be habit forming, but some of us experience skipping Church as habit forming. Will it actually be better for us to skip Church when we are very anxious about looming deadlines? What if that happens nearly every Sunday? What's going to help us get to Church every Sunday if we haven't managed to do it yet on our own? Let me revise that question: Who's going to help us? Let's go back to the responses we make whenever we renew our baptismal vows several times a year. Remember how we said that we would keep the vows "with God's help?" If you are having trouble getting to Church every Sunday, re-read those pages in the Book of Common Prayer, 292-4, and ask for help. And don't quit after asking once; remember Jesus' parable about the persistent widow? Persist! Ask for help and ask again. God doesn't give up on us and we must not give up on God.

The early Church found Sunday attendance at Mass to be so important that in some times and places if anybody was absent for three Sundays in a row they

were functionally excommunicated! Our parish has an Anglo-Catholic heritage, though not all of us consider ourselves Anglo-Catholic. The Anglo-Catholic movement has been clear that there is a basic obligation to attend not just a worship service on Sundays, (as our canon



law says) but specifically to attend Mass on Sundays. Those Episcopalians who emphasize our reformed heritage, and who may even think of themselves as Protestant, may be pleased that the Episcopal Church has not defined "missing Church on Sunday" as a sin. Do you know what

our national canon law "Of the Due Celebration of Sundays" says?

"All persons shall celebrate and keep the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday,

by regular participation in the public worship of the Church, by hearing the Word of God read and taught,

and by other acts of devotion and works of charity,

using all godly and sober conversation." (Canon II.1)

Are you going to tell me that you have such an active social life that you may be out until all hours Saturday night, and that you usually "have" to sleep in Sunday morning? You can still get to Sunday Mass by going to another parish for a 6 p.m. Mass on those Sundays—but it means that you have to leave a block of time in your schedule free to do so. We have choices. It is far more important, I believe, for us to be faithful in our Church attendance somewhere every Sunday than for us to be in our own parish only some Sundays. Besides, visiting other parishes can build relationships in the Boston Harbor Deanery. Of course, if you are traveling you may be able to visit a parish in another deanery, too.

When should you stay at home Sunday morning and not come to a worship service? Please stay home when you are sick and contagious. Also, please stay home when it would be detrimental to your recovery from surgery or an illness because you need more rest before resuming activities. You may have another good reason to stay home, as our canon law recognizes. Otherwise, please come to Church every Sunday! ✚

DIOCESAN CONVENTION

MARGERY BUCKINGHAM

The 222nd Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts was held Nov. 2-3, 2007, in Fitchburg. Several members of St. John's attended including: Rev. Katherine Black, Katherine Kane, Jeffrey Seamans and Margery Buckingham.

The theme of the convention was "partnership". Instead of a traditional address, Bishop Shaw offered three meditations during the course of the convention that provided prayerful reflection, encouragement and challenge around the theme of "Holy Partners in a Heavenly Calling," taken from Hebrews 3:1. Throughout the two days, convention-goers learned, through presentations, videos and discussion, about local, national and global mission partnerships.

Following is a summary of the resolutions taken up at convention:

**RESOLUTION URGING THE
DEFEAT OF ANY LEGISLATION
ALLOWING FOR THE
EXPANSION OF GAMBLING
IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS.**

Resolved, that the 222nd Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts go on record in opposition to any further expansion of gambling in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts including any legislation that would legalize slot machines, casino

style table games, or any other form of class three gambling.

**RESOLUTION ON A NEW
GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE
FOR BERNARD MIZEKI,
CATECHIST AND MARTYR.**

Resolved, that the 222nd Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts submit a resolution to the 76th General Convention to change the designation in the Church Calendar for Bernard Mizeki (June 18th) to read "Zimbabwe" rather than "Rhodesia," and be it further

Resolved, that the 222nd Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts submit a resolution to the 76th General Convention to instruct Church Publishing Company to change the designation in Lesser Feast and Fasts and any other publication under their control for Bernard Mizeki to read "Zimbabwe" rather than "Rhodesia."

**RESOLUTION FOR THE
ADOPTION OF THE
COVENANT ON MUTUAL
INTERDEPENDENCE IN
MISSION.**

The resolution was not adopted; the convention voted instead to recommit the resolution to the Congregational Development and Support Committee.

Resolved, that the Covenant for mutual interdependence in mission, attached hereto, reflects the mind and commitment of this 222nd Convention

of the Diocese of Massachusetts.

**RESOLUTION TO DEVELOP
A SPANISH LANGUAGE
ANTIRACISM TRAINING
PROGRAM FOR THE DIOCESE
OF MASSACHUSETTS.**

Resolved, that the 222nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts endorse the development of a Spanish Language Antiracism Training Program.

**RESOLUTION ON THE UNITED
STATES MILITARY.**

The resolution was amended, as follows, but was not finally adopted. Convention voted instead to recommit this resolution to the Peace and Justice Committee.

Resolved, the 222nd Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts encourage members of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts to engage in a comprehensive analysis and discussion of the current U.S. military system; that they engage in dialogue and debate about the morality of methods used by military recruiters, especially in impoverished neighborhoods; that they consider the moral, ethical, theological, and legal ramifications of Christian involvement in war and work toward the various things they believe God is calling them to do as a result of this analysis and dialogue. ✠

A REVIEW OF A BARGAIN WITH GOD

NED CARLETON

Rev. Katharine, at her vestry interview October of last year, intrigued me by saying that as a girl she'd read a novel about Saint John's. It is *A Bargain With God* by Thomas Savage, published in 1953. Unable to find a copy in local bookstores, I eventually discovered the Malden Public Library has it readily available to Bostonians through interlibrary loan.

Bargain describes a half-year in the life of Saint Mark's, which is clearly Saint John's. The reader is told the church is on Bowdoin Street and, at one point, that "Mr. Titcomb" has been its music director for the last thirty years. That would place the action about 1940, since he was music director 1910 – 1960. But elsewhere events are placed as early as 1934 and as late as 1950. There are references to TVs and antibiotics, but also to coal smoke, a persistent motif. Surely the fumes of coal smoke had dispersed from around Beacon Hill by 1950? It seems truest to the spirit of the novel to place it in the Depression. Setting the scene, the author on page 2 sketches a background of urban desolation:

"behind Saint Mark's was the real Hill, dark, recessed doors, steep, shallow stairways mounting beyond to narrow dark halls that led

to broken doors, to rooms where the poor lived..."

though of course, in the immediate vicinity of Saint John's that's true now. "It is on Bowdoin Street [not Louisberg Square] that the sirens sound" writes our author, completing his sketch; that hasn't changed.

The moral center of *Bargain* is Father Ferris, 40 years priest at Saint Mark's, elderly, a failure in his own eyes. His principle preoccupation is scraping together enough money week by week to keep his church going, despite its balky plumbing, singed wiring, and (as we come to realize) imminent collapse. (The ceiling at Saint John's did fall around 1950). In this labor he is assisted by an electrician and a plumber—a parishioner (Mr. Teagarden) and his friend—who contribute their services free of charge. There is something to be said for having working-class congregants. Fr. Ferris' sense of person failure does not much extend to misgivings about declining numbers. I winced in reviewing through his eyes his records of mass attendance—"forty-two, fifty-one. And on weekdays the number was often two. He wondered if the Bishop, going over these figures, guessed that the two meant Father Ferris and Our Lord."

Gentle, clerical humor, of which this is an example, is a principal merit of *Bargain*. I found it delightful. Although there is a plot, which I will not reveal, the best touches in this novel are the little things. Fr. Ferris has a Roman Catholic colleague, Fr. Casey, whose church (presumably Saint Joseph's) is nearby. They both ring the Angelus at 6:00 pm, but Fr. Ferris delays his by a minute—"Long ago they had decided that at the holy moment there should be no strike of bells." Another thing they both do is hear confessions. The availability of both padres, we are told, has led some of Fr. Ferris's flock to go to Fr. Casey about their serious transgressions, confessing only venial sins to Fr. Ferris. But Mr. Teagarden puts a stop to that. "They had great confidence in Mr. Teagarden, for having been a sailor, and tattooed, he knew all sins. 'I think,' he said 'We owe a lot to Fr. Ferris. I think he deserves our sins.'"✠

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN EARTHEN VESSELS

THE MOST REV. KATHARINE JEFFORTS SCHORI, PRESIDING BISHOP

Proper 25, Year C

Jeremiah 14:(1-6)7-10, 19-22

Psalm 84

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Luke 18:9-14

Sermon preached at Christ Church, Dearborn, Michigan (Executive Council)

October 28th, 2007

The Executive Council is meeting in a hotel not too far away, and usually when we meet in hotels we're not the only group there. When we met in Chicago last year there was a convention of North American Roman Catholic nuns. This time it's a missionary Baptist gathering. I was walking through the convention center yesterday morning, and some of the doors to the meeting rooms were open. One group was hearing about family ministry, and from another room came a booming voice talking about prayer. He said, with the wonderful cadence of the best of Baptist preaching, "fasting and prayer go together like red beans and rice."

And of course, he's right. Fasting is enriched and made meaningful through prayer, and prayer becomes deeper when it's connected to some kind of fasting. And the combination of beans and rice is significant—in order to get a complete protein, you

have to eat them together—either one alone is incomplete, and a healthy diet needs both. The same is true for prayer and fasting.



But the more I thought about that image, the richer it became. There's a wonderful irony in comparing fasting to eating. Particularly when you think about the emotional aura around red beans and rice—it's not just survival food, it's the kind of comfort food you bring out for a feast, like those great and abundant images of the heavenly banquet. In a deeply real sense, we can't know the gift of either fasting or feasting without the other—the feast

that comes at the end of Lent is a greater joy when we've really fasted. The daily evening feast in the month of Ramadan is spiced by the discipline of fasting through the sunlit hours. Prayer is deepened through fasting, both the prayer of desire and hunger, and the prayer of gratitude at being filled.

Yet I am also struck by how we might often hear words like that about red beans and rice. And maybe around here we'd have to say, prayer and fasting is like a latte and biscotti. And then I can hear some voices saying, "well! That can't possibly be right! When you fast you certainly shouldn't be thinking about eating...!" and then maybe comes the

subtle reminder that we can't ever get it right—or we can't ever get it completely clean and pure—even when we try.

We are human beings, and, as the Orthodox say, we're human beings trying to become divine. We are the image of God in earthen vessels. And as long as we don't forget that mixed reality, we're going to do just fine. That's what both Jeremiah's rant and Jesus' parable are all about. When we assume either that we've already got it all right,

or if we forget that we are bearers of the divine image, we've missed the point. The folks Jeremiah is chiding think that all they have to do is get their liturgy right, that the rest of the week doesn't really count.

The parable is even more direct. You know, the Pharisee starts off just fine, "God, I thank you." If he'd stopped right there, we wouldn't tell this story told about him. It's the next part that's problematic, when he has to pump himself up by judging the people around him as greedy, or vow-breakers, or unjust or—worst of worst—enemy collaborators. The enemy collaborator—and that's the biggest problem with being a tax collector in that society—he comes to the temple, and he has the chutzpah to address God, but not in a way that judges himself in relation to anyone else. And his behavior is judged appropriate—he gets to go home to dinner without any spiritual indigestion.

It is the tax collector's hunger, along with his prayer, that sets him right. The first pray-er isn't hungry, he's already full. He hasn't the capacity to enjoy the feast that is set before him.

It's a lot like that old story about the disciple who goes off seeking a guru. When he finally meets him, the guru offers him a cup of tea. The disciple holds out a cup, and the teacher starts pouring tea, and keeps pouring and pouring. Finally the student asks, "why don't you stop? There's tea all over the floor." The teacher responds, "well, you

are like the cup—you are too full to receive any more. Come back when you have room."

There's a connection in this parable to what comes immediately afterward—the part we didn't read this morning. Jesus is inundated with children, and when the disciples complain, he says, "let the children come. If you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, you have to learn to be like a child." Children can be judgmental and competitive, but they also know when they're hungry—and they are far less able or willing than adults to squelch or hide that hunger.

How would the response have been different if the Pharisee had prayed, "thank you God. I really don't like myself very well, even though I try to live right." The prayer that he did pray wasn't very honest. And perhaps that's a place where those children who just left can help to lead us.

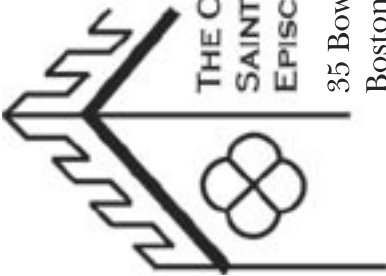
Help us, Lord, to be honest enough to claim the image of God in which we are made, and help us also to be honest enough to acknowledge our hunger to see you more clearly through that image. Help us get out of our own way when we forget that the image we bear is neither more nor less than the image in our neighbors, and that you love us all equally—as best beloved. Help us to enjoy the great feast that comes in seeing you in the diversity of images all around us. Remind us that we need both beans and rice.

Maybe that image seems most poignant right now because of the fires in southern California. When I spoke to people in the Diocese of San Diego there on Friday, I heard that the fire department from Tijuana had come to their aid, but had not been recognized in the media or in public expressions of gratitude. All of the California and Nevada fire departments had been thanked, but not the one from Mexico. They asked that we as a church might offer some public recognition for their cross-border service. I also heard that people and congregations in New Orleans, who have received help in the last couple of years from others, are already sending funds and offers of assistance to those who are suffering another kind of displacement. The feast of red beans and rice is being made real, even in the midst of tragedy.

That feast is the dream that was behind the demonstrations yesterday. Our hunger for a world that can remember and recognize the image of God in all our brothers and sisters is the only thing that will eventually bring us to the feast.

I remember visiting a parishioner in a nursing home several years ago, who wore a t-shirt that said, "Jesus loves you, but I'm his favorite." My sisters and brothers, we're all Jesus' favorite—all we have to do is recognize it. And there will be great joy and feasting when we do.✠

©2006 The Episcopal Church



**THE CHURCH OF
SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST
EPISCOPAL**

35 Bowdoin Street
Boston, MA 02114
Voice 617-227-5242 • Fax 617-227-5243
office@stjohnsbowdoinst.org
www.stjohnsbowdoinst.org