

About

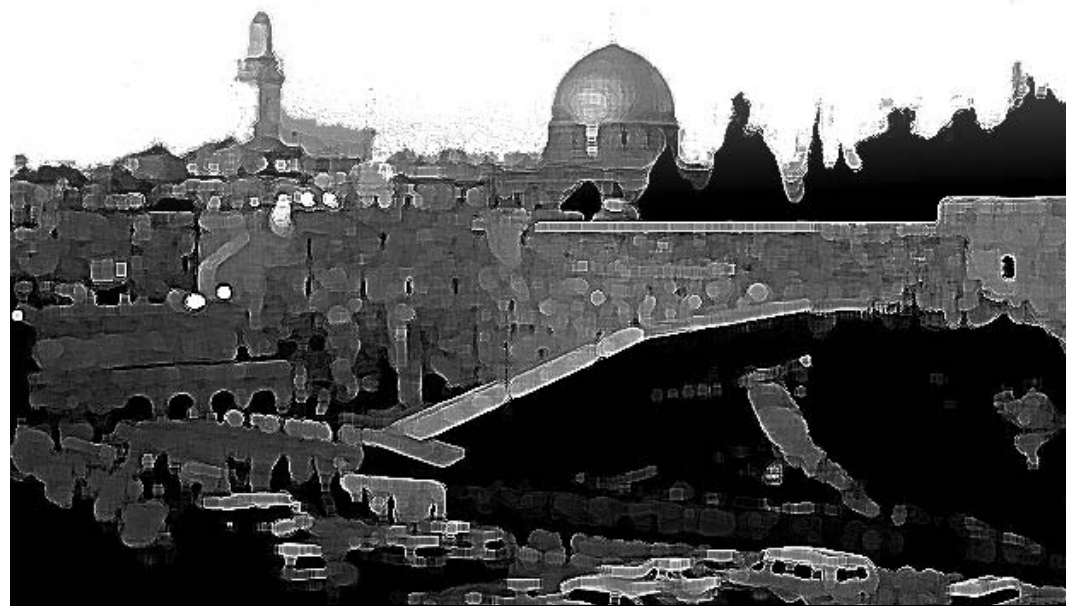
Episcorific

Heya! you're holding the ninth issue of *Episcorific*, a zine for and by the young adults of the Episcopal Church. The big idea? Young adults are not big church-goers generally. Our lives are hectic and often unstable. We are at the mercy of the education system, budding careers, frequent moves and our own indecisiveness. We are justifiably self-involved as we try to make our place in this world, define the bounds of our lives. But for many of us the church is an important site for that self-creation, a place of expanding the me-box to let God in. So, this is just another attempt at bringing the few, the brave, the young adults of the Episcopal Church into closer communion. Read. Listen. Think. Pray. And when you're ready, lend your own voice to the babble. Let's share our lives of faith.



episcorific.org

When the days drew
near for him to be
taken up, he set
his face to go to
Jerusalem



Episcorific

Journey to Jerusalem
Lent 2010

resurrecting hope

easter 2010

How have you experienced the grace and joy of the resurrection in your own life?

How have you seen it manifested in the world around you?

This Easter we're asking you to examine the unexpected places new life has come into your messy, transitional, figuring-it-out, young adult life.

Read. Listen. Think. Pray.

And when you're ready, lend your own voice to the babble. Let's share our lives of faith.

Submissions due March 22

A big thank you to all those who contributed to this issue, to those who helped spread the word and especially to you for reading. We hope you'll find food for thought and conversation.

Feedback for the authors can be sent to episcorifc@gmail.com. Let's keep the conversation going.

Episcorific is a publication for and by young adults, who may or may not otherwise be affiliated with the Episcopal Church. All opinions expressed in Episcorific are the opinions of the writers themselves and are in no way meant to speak on behalf of the official body of the Episcopal Church. The works belong to the authors and artists and you should ask their permission to reprint them outside of Episcorific. Just in case you were wondering,

The Episcorific editorial board consists of Ross Heinsohn, Kathleen Jaco, Eileen O'Brien, Jeremiah Sierra & Jason Sierra.



Resources

for you and for me

episcopalchurch.org / young adults

“We’re here for you.” No really. The Episcopal Church Center Office for Young Adult and Campus Ministry is a great resource for Diocesan Young Adult Missioners, Parish Young Adult Ministers and Young Adults seeking guidance or looking for community.

The website is being relaunched sometime soon but check it out in the meantime. You’ll find event listings, diocesan contact info and some food for thought.

Contact the Reverend Douglas Fenton, Program Officer (dfenton@episcopalchurch.org) or Episcorific’s own Jason Sierra, the Associate Program Officer (jsierra@episcopalchurch.org) for more information.

episcopalchurch.org / plse

The Pastoral Leadership Search Effort or P(u)LSE is a discernment ministry for young adults in the Episcopal Church. And it’s not just about getting a collar. Find your way, find your calling. PLSE can hook you up with a mentor, help you find a ministry that fits you or offer you resources for reflection. Contact the reverend Miguelina Espinal for more information at mespinal@episcopalchurch.org.

iamepiscopalian.org

This is such a cool project! 90 second videos about why we are Episcopalians and what it means. Make a video! Post it.

episcopalcommons.org / broadcast

Check out Broadcast, a newsletter for Young Adults, Students, YA Ministers & Chaplains with stories from around the country about what has worked, what hasn’t and what possibilities are out there.

plug in. keep in touch.

a note from the editor(s)

Walking in the street after it has snowed I feel miles away from everyone else. The snow makes that lonely creaking, crunching sound and the cold air seems to stretch out in front of me. It’s just me and my thoughts. Well, me and my thoughts and my gloves and scarf and hat and coat and all the other stuff I now have to carry around with me.

This summer I moved from Texas to New York, and before I had gotten used to riding the subway it was winter. Winter, it turns out, requires preparation. You have to buy things: a coat and scarves and hats and gloves. You have to learn to layer: t-shirt, collared shirt, sweater. You have to master the art of tying your scarf so your neck doesn’t freeze. You have to watch where you step after it snows so your that you don’t slip on the streets, which quickly become muddy, concrete slip-and-slides.

And, if you’re like me, you have to get used to being by yourself. During the first significant snow a friend invited me out to play pool. I don’t have any boots, so I set out in my tennis shoes and wool socks into the blowing snow. I got about twenty yards with the snow soaking into my shoes and soaking my jeans and decided to head home. Maybe I can’t handle the winter, or maybe it’s New York, which can be a lonely place, but I’ve spent a lot of time this winter alone with my thoughts.

During this wintry season of Lent we are forced into ourselves. We turn down the lights, stop saying Alleluia so much, make ourselves a little less comfortable by giving up chocolate or television, try to bring some spiritual discipline into our lives. All of this is a method of turning down the noise, getting away from the crowds, so we can journey deeper into our hearts and the heart of God. During Jesus’ ministry, as he traveled toward Jerusalem and eventually Golgatha, he would take the time to be alone, to wrestle with the devil or pray to the Father. The reflections and the art in this issue of Episcorific were born out of each author and artist’s own solitary struggle with Jesus’ journey as captured in the Book of Luke.

Whether you live in Texas or somewhere with a long cold winter, Lent is your muffled, snow covered street. Just you and God. Still, walking out in the street your footprints are not the only ones. There are others who have walked there before you, patting down the snow, providing a path, and footprints traveling beside you on your journey.

—Jeremiah Sierra

This Lent we're pruning back
the design and steadily,
disciplinedly, intentionally
walking through Lent
from that moment
in Luke 9 where Jesus sets
his face toward Jerusalem
to his eventual death
upon a hill outside the city.

We invite you
to join us this lent on our

**journey
to jerusalem**

give up giving up

You know that question that you always ask yourself on Shrove Tuesday: What am I going to give up for Lent this year? Alcohol or television or chocolate? Chocolate again? Your Lenten disciplines sometimes sound a little more like you're rehashing all those New Year's resolutions you didn't keep (I'm going to exercise, eat right, and finally learn Spanish!) and you know you're going to cheat and eat chocolate on Sundays anyway. So here are some fresh ideas for your Lenten Discipline:

Pray

Prayers for Individuals and Families on page 136 of your prayer book: short, sweet, easy way to pray.

Eat

Eat only fruits and nuts, eat local, eat organic, whatever. Just think about what you are eating, it's a gift from God after all.

Love

Write letters to all those people you haven't talked to. Try a letter a week.

Unplug

from the television, from the internet, from your phone and your ipod and your computer. Give your brain and your soul some peace and quiet to let in God.

Remember

that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

lent what's it all about?

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

- ✦ From the Anglo-Saxon “lencten” meaning “spring”, and the Germanic root for long because in the spring the days visibly lengthen.
- ✦ Lent originated as an intense 40 day period of fasting and prayer for catechumens preparing for baptism at the Easter Vigil, echoing Jesus’ 40 day fast in the desert.
- ✦ We skip Sundays when we count the forty days, because Sundays commemorate the Resurrection.
- ✦ The three traditional practices traditionally taken up during Lent are prayer (justice towards God), fasting (justice towards self), and almsgiving (justice towards neighbour). Today, some give up a vice, take on something that will bring them closer to God, or give time/money to charitable purposes or organizations.
- ✦ Statues, crosses, and in England even paintings in the church are veiled in purple, the season’s liturgical color.
- ✦ Some churches offer Stations of the Cross services on Fridays during Lent—particularly on Good Friday. The Stations of the Cross are a series of 14 pictures or sculptures depicting scenes from the final hours of Jesus’ life, beginning with his condemnation to death and ending at the tomb where he is laid.
- ✦ The Lenten semi-fast—in which only particular foods are given up-- may have originated for practical reasons during the era of subsistence agriculture as food stored away in the previous autumn was running out or had to be used before it went bad in store, and little or no new food-crop was expected soon.

The 70 Disciples
Return Rejoicing
Luke 10:1-23

There is Need of
Only One Thing
Luke 10: 38-42

Consider the Ravens
Luke 12: 13-34

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
the City that Kills
the Prophets
Luke 13: 22-35

Dining with Sinners
Luke 14: 1-24

The Lost Parables
Luke 15

Justice and Wealth
Luke 16

Zaccheus and Talents
Luke 19: 1-28

Entering Jerusalem
Luke 19: 29-48

Springing Traps,
then No More
Questions
Luke 20:1-39

Caring for the Powerless
Luke 20: 45 – 21:4

Apocalypse Soon
Luke 21:5-38

The Passover Meal
Luke 22:7-28

Washing Their Feet
John 13

In the Garden
Luke 22:39-54

Peter
Luke 22: 54-62

Pilate
Luke 23: 1-25

Jesus, Remember Me
Luke 23: 32-43

The Centurion
Luke 23:44-49

There is need of only one thing

Luke 10:38-42

The Cross of Christ is the most recognizable Christian symbol. It is the visible and outward reminder that Jesus redeemed our sin and atoned for our punishment. During this season of Lent, remember the gifts Jesus gave us by giving himself upon the cross. Wear it with honor, humbleness, and grace.

Libby Spede



Conrado Tapado



The Centurion

Luke 23:44-49

And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing; and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost. And when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed with him from Galilee, stood afar off, seeing these things.

These verses describe the death of Christ upon the cross. With his last breath, he didn't whisper, but cried with a loud voice commends His spirit to His Father. This was the last action of Jesus before his body expired. His voice did not waver or falter. His voice was absolute in His faith. Jesus was not defeated, but triumphed and gave up his spirit knowing that the battle was won.

The centurion is a soldier standing by, watching the death of Jesus, and is struck by his actions and last words. Depending on the translation used, the centurion said, "Certainly this was a righteous man," or "Certainly this was man was innocent." Even the centurion knew the magnitude of this solemn moment. The centurion is not just a soldier, but a leader in the Roman army. Imagine watching the scene from his eyes. Although it is day, a darkness has overcome the land. Jesus is hung on a cross between thieves. There is a crowd witnessing the spectacle and in a distance are Jesus' followers. Jesus commits His spirit to God Father with his last breath before suffocating under his own weight. The centurion knew what he witnessed was divine. He realizes an innocent person died under the command of the Roman Empire he serves.

You can sense the silent moment following Jesus' last breath. For me, this moment is reflected during communion. When I travel to visit friends I usually go to church with them and communion is not always a part of the regular services. I usually don't feel fulfilled after those services as if something is missing. During communion there comes a time during the service when the host wafer is broken in half. You can hear the snap. It is this moment during communion when I think of the death of Jesus, of his body breaking. It is a bittersweet sensation. With the death of Christ also comes redemption; the body of Christ nourishes our own bodies and heals our brokenness. The body and blood of Jesus Christ become one with ourselves and gives us the greatest gift of all – himself.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the City that Kills the Prophets

Luke 13:22-35

"Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"
(Luke 13: 23)

The passage doesn't say who asks this question. It could be a close friend of Jesus' or just someone he's passing on the street. It also doesn't say what the person's intentions are. Personally, I find it likely that this person really wanted to ask, "Lord, will I be saved? Will those that I care for be saved?" If I found myself face to face with Jesus I would want to know if those around me that I cared for were saved, and if not - how to work to see that they become saved. In turn I would also want to know about my own salvation, and make sure that I have done what I could to insure that I will be welcomed into the kingdom. It is only of our human nature to want to know that we are saved, that we are safe, and are taken care of.

As we go through life, we make every effort to insure that we are safe while on earth and that we are taken care of. Should we not put in this effort when it comes to our salvation also? In fact it is that effort that Jesus asks for. "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door" (Luke 13: 24). He doesn't want us to only make some effort or to partially try to make sure we are saved. Jesus tells us that we must make EVERY effort to get into the door or to enter into the kingdom and insure salvation. It might not be easy, and we might not get it right all the time, but Jesus never said it was going to be easy and he does not ask us to get everything right all the time. What he does ask of us is that we try, just try. Try with all that we have. Try to do what we are called to do and that it will be enough to get us in the door.

When we were kids, we would get a report card and take it home. Our parents would care about the grades that we received. However, God as our parent does not always care about the grade that we receive but more about that little "E" in the comments section that shows that we put forth our best effort into passing. We are not going to get everything right which means the effort counts for that much more. I do not want to half-ass my way through life to find at the end - Jesus will stand there and not let me in because he does not know me.

Should we assume that only a few will put in the effort to be saved and enter that narrow door? Jesus doesn't tell us a number that will be saved, or that only these certain people will be saved and those won't be. "People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God." (Luke 13: 29) People will come from all over and every direction and they will be saved, God is not going to look at where you came from or who you were. He will

look at who you are now and how hard you are trying to do His will and follow his calling. Personally, I am thankful that God will be looking at how hard I am trying to get into his kingdom. I know that I don't always have the right answer or do the right thing but I have hope because I am always trying. I put forth the effort that is needed to be saved. Putting the effort in is not a hard thing to do, just try your hardest and then keep trying. I believe that God will look at our efforts and will let us walk through that narrow door and into the feast in his magnificent kingdom.

Dustin Barrows

Jesus, Remember Me

Luke 23:32-43

Dorian



Lydian



Both settings are intended to be sung over a D drone. An easy way to get this is to tune a guitar to - D A D D A D - in other words, all the strings either D or A. You can then strum the guitar and sing the settings over it. You can also hold a D on an organ, either with a person holding it or putting a pencil in the key or pedal. Or you can google "tanpura mp3" and download their D sa-pa mp3 file which has a nice recording of two tanpuras giving a great D drone. There are a million other ways to do this, but those are the simplest.

For the Dorian tune, you can play the following progression over the D drone if you have instruments - Dm Gm Dm A. For the Lydian setting, you can play the following progression over the d drone - D E D E. This can be done in many ways. You could have the organ holding a d drone and the piano or guitar playing the progression, for instance.

At the end of the day, there are three main categories of options:

1. Just sing it a capella
 2. Have a drone, either a real instrument or recording, and sing on top of that
 3. Use both a drone and instruments to create the chord progressions while singing
- All three each have their own unique quality.

Jack Barben



Dining with Sinners

Luke 14:1-24

I use my time during Lent to remind myself of the love God gives me and the things I need to do in my life to show God the glory. I remind myself of the things I do all year that keep me from my close relationship with God. I give up or take on something to remind myself of the sacrifices that I must make in order to remember how important that relationship is. Because I wrote this reflection, I think I will give up denying my faith. I will talk about my faith with someone every day of Lent. It will strengthen my resolve in the face of fear and be my prayer that I never be tested!

Lauren Woody

Emily Post and the Naughty Pharisee *or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Turn to God*

I admit, although context of this story has to do with a dinner party, we're not going to learn much about which fork to use... please excuse me for name-dropping, Emily Post. Neither is there much in the way of madmen involved in a darkly comedic cold-war nuclear standoff. If you haven't stopped reading yet... let me explain.

Now it might make sense to begin the story at the beginning, but I'm skipping to the middle- no worries, we'll get to the beginning.

In the middle of Jesus' teaching one of the guests stands up and says, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" This is akin to one of the worst conversational non-sequiturs of all time, but oddly it's key to understanding what's going on. After hearing this, Jesus starts another story, seemingly even more unrelated. (Ok, now back to the beginning.)

Jesus is on his way to the party with some lawyers and Pharisees. Just like the coyote and the roadrunner, they always have an ACME product in store for Jesus. So they run into a man with an illness. Jesus sees the need, makes a move to heal the man, but also sees the trap. It's a Catch-22. Worse than that, it's a Catch-22 on the Sabbath. A healing would be considered a breach of the law, ignoring the man would make Jesus seem unmerciful. So he asks if it's lawful to heal on the Sabbath, but they just keep their mouths shut. Later at the party, Jesus watches the guests scramble for the good seats. When human behavior is under the scrutiny of God made flesh, it's not really a fair fight. I imagine Jesus putting the pieces of the day's earlier episodes together with the scene unfolding in front of him.

Their cold execution of the law's requirement rather than an exercise in compassion bleeding into selfish clamoring for personal importance and position must have been fueling a fire inside Jesus. At first Jesus appeals to self-interest. "If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on the Sabbath day?" Then Jesus appeals to propriety and morality. Wouldn't at least a little humility be in your interest here? Let the others go ahead so you can look good when the boss comes in and tells you to move up. Jesus looks around and remembers the sick man again. Where are all the people who really need a good meal? He cuts to the chase and offers a suggestion. Why not invite some folks like we saw earlier? They can't pay you back, but you'll receive a blessing for your charity and compassion.



So here's where you and I and everyone we know open our collectively huge mouths in the story. This big dummy, the one who after hearing Jesus' promise, "You will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous," gets excited. We are so compulsively engaged in looking for blessing, in church life, even in "continuing in the breaking of bread and the prayers" that we miss the opportunity Jesus gives us for repentance. So we blurt out, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Much like I'm guilty of blurting out right before I go to the Lord's table. There is an immeasurable danger in this. We are effectively mad scientists and generals gripped with private macabre obsessions that seem perfectly logical to us while the world is on the brink of destruction, outside and inside the pews.

So Jesus gives us what we want. Ok folks, wanna hear a story about a party? There were lots of invitations, but equally many excuses. Legitimate concerns, really. It all makes sense from that isolated point of view. Jesus calls us into a wider arena. The host in his story invites people he knows will come, "the crippled, the blind, and the lame." These are desperate people who are desperate for a party, desperate for a community. The invited in his story feel entitled and comfortable, happy to be together but separate, each embroiled in his or her private cover-up scandal.

This is a story of repentance. Or, really it's a non-example of what it looks like to be simultaneously hell-bent on keeping the status quo while being willfully ignorant of the hand of merciful repentance you unwittingly invited as your guest. Jesus knew well the way of repentance, though he was without sin. Even passing through town, invited as a guest to a party with prominent people, he was aware of his journey turning toward the will of the Father. On his way to Jerusalem, no doubt, Jesus saw some of the same guests from this party. They were still unrepentant, only now instead of jockeying for position and ignoring the need in the world around them, they were hurling bloodthirsty accusations. "For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner." We have a unique opportunity to taste a really good dinner, if we don't maniacally self-detonate first. During this Lenten season, may we all be aware of our journey of repentance; that we might turn to God before our bombs fall.

Charles McClain



Peter

Luke 22:54-62

If I were a character in the Bible I would be Simon Peter. Most of my existence has been spent trying to be enough of this and not too much of that. I am always just on the outside fringe of normalcy. Simon was that man in the Bible for me. He spoke his mind at every turn and was often the odd man out in his band of brothers. He was the forgiven sinner and was often creating mischief everywhere he went.

Even from a very young age I noticed that Peter and I had a lot in common. I never felt noble, gentle, or devoted enough to be one of the other apostles. I have always struggled with my understanding of Jesus and his relationship to me. Every time I read about Peter's denial of Jesus I am immediately very present with where I am as a Christian. I am there by the fire, cold and scared, unsure of what the future holds for me.

If someone put a gun to my head and asked me point blank if I was one hundred percent sure of Jesus' relationship with God, I am not sure I could answer with a clear yes or no. Everything seems so gray where my faith is concerned. I have a different opinion every day, sometimes with every conversation, of my faith. I feel somewhat justified in these feelings given my human nature and the fact that I have never been personally told by God that Jesus is His Son. I have never met Jesus on the road. I have only listened to what the Holy Spirit says to me and I have used what I know and believe to help me decide where my faith lays.

When Peter denies Jesus I am reminded of a few things. Peter and Jesus were friends. Peter was the first to recognize Jesus as Lord. Peter often spoke for the apostles and was deeply trusted by Jesus. If Peter lost his resolve in the face of danger, then I am still worthy of God's love like Peter. When God recognizes that Peter will deny him, and forgives him before the act occurs, I am reminded of the extraordinary understanding and love that God has for his people. I am reminded that I am forgiven as well.

I think in the face of danger our resolve weakens which is why the death of Jesus is so magnificent to me. "He stretched out his arms upon the cross and offered himself in obedience to your will a perfect sacrifice for the world." He did not try to find the easy or least painful way out. He understood the nature of humanity and sacrificed himself anyway. God knew the intentions of Peter's heart were not strong enough to defeat the fear and Peter was still worthy of God's love.

In the Garden

Luke 22:39-54

"But this is your hour—when darkness reigns."

When You drew away from us, we knew;
and wept, and lay down.

The sunless sky gave up no answers.
Our mouths were wetted with Your blood,
but we knew now only the taste of ashes.

Our lips formed empty prayers.
Forgive us, Lord, for our faith was weak:
without You, we were as nothing.
Without Your breath, our ribs were clay
and our hearts were clay and our spirits —

Judas came, leading a crowd of men,
who seized You, and led You away.
Our swords You refused.
Even now, we still cannot believe
that You will be taken from us, as You told us,
When You gathered us around the table.

Forgive us, Lord, for our faith is weak.

Erin Bartuska



The Lost Parables

Luke 15



Rachel Pollak

How many of you have ever experienced being lost before? I'm not talking about having come out of the wrong exit of the subway and gotten turned around, or maybe having taken the wrong turn while driving to the mall. Those experiences can be stressful, but ultimately, you know that you'll get out of the situation, you'll find your way to your destination, and you'll be okay. What I'm talking about is the full-on experience of being lost and really having no idea where you are and having no way of finding your way back home. I have luckily never had that happen to me before, but even just thinking it, I feel chills. What runs through my mind are a series of emotions, ranging from fear and anger to confusion, but the main emotion that hits me is loneliness. Can you imagine actually finding yourself in a place where you have no idea where you are, no idea where to go, and have no people to turn to for help? What a terribly lonely and isolating experience!

When reading the "Lost Parables," the stories of the lost sheep, lost son, and lost coin, in Luke, chapter 15, I was struck by that same constellation of emotions, and once again with that same feeling of loneliness. What would it be like to be that sheep who got separated from his flock and was lost in the wilderness? How lonely and terrified that animal must have felt! And ditto goes for the lost and prodigal son. Penniless, in a foreign country, and abandoned by all of his "friends," he probably felt as if he had no hope and no future. Even the parable of the lost coin

is filled with a feeling of melancholy and loneliness to me. The image of that one coin lying by itself in the middle of a dusty floor, perhaps hidden by other items strewn around, is just as distressing.

More recently, I have started to realize that getting lost can be easier than I ever imagined. It can happen as result of a series of small choices in life that gradually lead to feelings of isolation from God. What is even more sinister about this is that you can become lost without even knowing it. Step by step, you can embark on a path that leads you farther and farther from God, and not realize the emptiness 'til much later on.

As a young adult, often juggling a multitude of different responsibilities, ranging from school, work, family, personal, and church, it is easy to fill my schedule with activities. I have an online calendar that is color coded by types of engagement, and I start to get anxious when there are empty spaces. Consequently, I try to fill every waking moment with something active to do. If I'm not doing something work or school-related, I am spending time with my friends or family. Even my Sundays, somewhat misnamed as Sabbath days, are filled with various church related meetings and activities. I fool myself into thinking that because I am busy, I am fulfilled. However, where is God in all of this? Sadly, He often takes a backseat in my schedule, and I find that I spend little to no quality time with Him. As I truly believe that we are creatures who are made to worship God, inevitably I start to notice how lost I am, but it is often hard to figure out how to find Him again.

Fortunately, just because we lose our way from God, that does not mean that He has lost sight of us. The parables do not stop with the experience of being lost. To be perfectly honest, with arguably the exception of the story of the lost son, there is very little emphasis on the actual lost person, animal or object, in any of the "lost" parables. Instead, what is emphasized is the extraordinary lengths that the person who lost the sheep, coin, or son, goes to, to find or welcome the lost back. During this Lenten season, I find that it is important to consider what the experience of being lost from God, and ultimately found by God is like. What a wonderful time to spend reflecting on the incredible grace of God who, like the shepherd, goes into the wilderness to find that one lost sheep, like the woman, sweeps the whole house to find that one lost coin, and like the father, welcomes the lost son back with open and nonjudgmental arms!

Jonathan Lam



feet. It's mystical; it's a tangible Christ." In addition to the foot care ministry he began, Brother Ron has also worked on programs and facilities to meet the needs of the community he serves. While living at the St. Matthew's Shelter at the Community Kitchen he noticed that though many were successful while living together, once they were away from the community their success plummeted. He asked a man one day why, after he had successfully gone through a program and found a house, he had ended up back at the shelter. "A home is not four walls and a ceiling," the man replied. Seeing a need for intentional community, Brother Ron founded The House of All Souls through a federal grant and assistance from seminarians at the nearby University of the South in Sewanee, TN. "The idea is to give them a home, not a house." He and eight other men will live together, supporting and loving one another as Christ has called us to do.

I asked Brother Ron where he sees himself in the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. He reflects a moment before responding, "I guess I'd be the servant that gets the water." Truly a servant to the Servant: "I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him" (John 13:16). Despite the brouhaha in the Anglican Communion, he says he is proud to be part of a church that is facing issues of social justice head on. "We've held on to the thurible too long. We need fresh air and I think young adults will bring that." His message to us? "Have great hope!" he declares. "And remember that people are messy, and that's okay."

Kathleen Jaco



Ron's car was in the backseat—but the passengers in the other vehicle were not injured. Ron lay 30 feet from the car when the first police arrived on the scene. "How did you get out?" the officer asked. Ron recalled a vision of a woman saying, "Lie still, don't go anywhere." Noting that the air bag had deployed, and the seatbelt was still buckled, the officer looked at him and said, "God wants you to do something with your life."

He realized that God wanted his life to change. After researching Episcopal monasteries he went to stay with the Brothers of St. John in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He spent his days meditating and praying, talking with the brothers, and began discerning his call.

One day as he was walking from the monastery to a bookstore, he noticed people walking around something on the sidewalk, avoiding it. As he got closer he saw that it was a young man, shirtless, shoeless, bloody from a beating, eating out of the trash. When the man raised his head and their eyes met, something happened. "The world stopped, and I realized why I had been born, why I had survived that wreck, why I had been led to that place. Christ was eating out of the trash, and I was pried open."

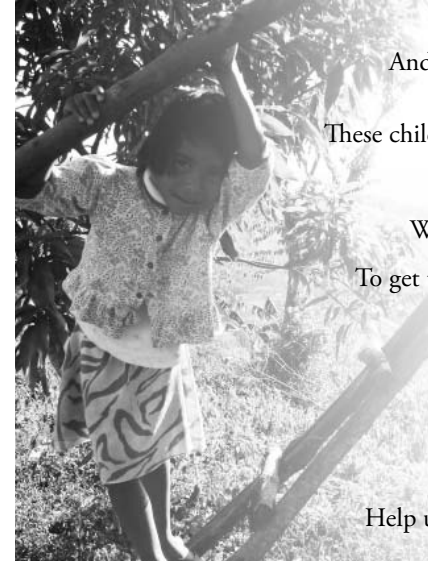


He talked with the brothers at the monastery about his newfound calling. The battered feet of the man he met that day, Robert, became an icon for what he believes has been lost in America. "We have forgotten how to be poor. We have to have it all or we feel like we have nothing," he mourns. Like Peter in the foot-washing story, having just our feet washed is not enough. "We've lost touch with what is holy. We've lost touch with the poor." He discerned that his calling is to be with those like Robert and he was sent to the Brothers of St. Gregory, who live their vows out in the world.

The last eight years have seen daily transformation in his life and the lives around him. He relates it to that moment in the Eucharist when the bread snaps; the breaking of all of us with the body of Christ. "The same thing happens when I wash

Justice and Wealth

Luke 16



I, too, dress in the latest fashions

And my culture encourages me to spend my life
in 'conspicuous consumption'

These children don't even get the scraps from my table

Because they live isolated in rural Nicaragua

Where I stayed with their family for four days

To get to them I crawled under a barbed wire fence

Carrying food in my pack

Because all they had was corn

And eggs.

Jesus, if these children are Lazarus

Help us to bridge the chasm between us and them
in this lifetime.

Sarah Taylor



Entering Jerusalem

Luke 19: 29-48

The work of the eyes is done.

Go now and do the heart-work on the images imprisoned within you.

—Rilke

Palm Sunday is my least favorite Sunday of all. The bi-polarity of it makes me anxious in ways I can't even articulate, and the deep solemnity that emanates from it, permeates the whole of Holy Week and leaves me in a state of what I can only describe as a profound mix of sadness and awe and emptiness.

We go from standing in the parking lot, shouting “Hosannas”, waving our palm fronds, and welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem, to standing up in the nave, shouting “Crucify Him!”, and leaving the church in silence. It's the liturgical equivalent of a really bad case of whiplash. Two thousand years on, and it still makes me slightly ill, ever year. I can't imagine what it must have been like to actually have been there.

The walk to Jerusalem must have been a difficult one for Jesus and His friends. I imagine they took a route they'd walked a hundred times, probably stopping at the same places they always stopped, walking with the same friends they'd walked with for the last two years. I imagine that they were by turn excited, nervous, afraid, thrilled, terrified, and resolute. I also imagine them as hopelessly naïve... they wouldn't know what hit them until Friday morning rolled around, and the sky turned black, and everything changed, only not the way they thought it was going to.

I'm left wondering what Jesus thought about all this: the long walk, the incredible and joyous reception at the gates, cleaning out the Temple, Passover with His nearest and dearest, and a horrible betrayal. Because I believe in the duality of the nature of Jesus, I have to concede that He must have known what was happening, and at the same time, was shocked to His core that this was the way things would have to play out.

To know that one must lose in order to win...the cost and the pain of that is so very high. Who but God could feel the weight of it without being crushed? Who but a God who loves us, who does more for us that we could ask or imagine, would be willing to be crushed, so that we could be made whole, again? Who but a God who loves us would be willing to hold all the hate and meanness and brokenness and death in this world, so that we could truly know love, kindness, wholeness, and life? Even the people closest to Jesus, who had been with Him, seen the Transfigu-

Washing Their Feet

John 13

Have Great Hope

*Having loved his own who were in the world,
he now showed them the full extent of his love.*

John 13:1b

We have journeyed with Jesus to the holy city of Jerusalem, celebrated his triumphant entry, and eaten a Passover meal in an upper room. Before we depart for those few hours in Gethsemane, Jesus shows us his love by becoming our servant: “...he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him” (John 13:4-5).

He explains that he is setting an example “that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:15). We observe this act in our Maundy Thursday liturgy—one of the most beautiful services in the prayer book. As we wash the feet of our brothers and sisters, we recall the words of our Lord: “Peace is my last gift to you, my own peace I now leave with you; peace which the world cannot give, I give to you” (BCP 275).

It was the “peace which the world cannot give” that Brother Ron Fender sought in 2002 when he arrived with a bucket and a rag at the Community Kitchen in Chattanooga, TN. Since then he has served as advocate, care giver, and friend to those who are homeless. A jovial man in his mid-50's, his warm presence envelops you when you shake his hand and his laugh lifts your spirits with all its lightness and love. Born in Asheville, North Carolina, Ron grew up in a Primitive Mountain Baptist Church. His early life reflects in some ways what I see in my peers today: he inherited a rustic traditional life and a theology of suffering and condemnation, and after a period of discernment fell in love with the Episcopal Church in college. He expressed how wonderful it was to be a part of a church that was quiet and prayerful, where the message of God's love and acceptance was preached. “It was joyful to discover a whole new world,” he beams. “I didn't want a God that fit in a box.”

Throughout his 20's and 30's, Ron directed plays around the country for a living and felt that as the child of a poor mountain community, his responsibility was to prosper. He achieved wealth and acclaim, living the good life—with all of the trappings that go with it.

His life changed, however, in his early 40's when a car accident put him in the hospital for several days. Both cars in the head-on collision were totaled—the engine of

The idea of a failed Jesus may bother Christians, but it is just at this point that Jesus' real salvific role can become apparent. Looking, for instance, at the horror going on in Haiti right now, seeing so many lives lost, so many stories that will never be told or remembered in this world, I realize just how profound the idea of God-In-Christ really is. The scandal of Jesus is the salvation of mankind. It is proof that even at our lowest, when all of life seems empty and loss, God is still with us. Jesus did not know, could not have known, the full breadth and meaning of what it was He was doing. His promises to His disciples betray a more limited goal, one that was not fulfilled. But in that unfulfilled dream, in Jesus not-knowing, we see the most profound meaning of His Divinity: the salvation of all that we have, of all that we are, and the sharing of God in our own lives at the point when they seem the most lost and void of meaning. Jesus can only truly be the God of our lives when we finally face what it meant for Him to be a man in this world.

Joshua Orsak

ration, witnessed miracle after miracle couldn't believe it, couldn't hold it, couldn't bear to look this full in the face...and no wonder...we are not God.

We are invited each Ash Wednesday, to practice a Holy Lent. May the holiness of the journey to Jerusalem, the confusion and hurt of that week, and the starkness of the borrowed tomb remind you that even betrayal and death never have the last word, even as you feel the sadness and weight of Good Friday. Sunday is coming...

Love,

Sister Sally



Caring for the Powerless

Luke 20: 45 – 21:4

I've been thinking about Lent 2010 for a long time. This is not a season that snuck up on me this year. The main reason is that I'm part of a team that is developing "Cries of Anguish, Stories of Hope: A Lenten study on the Worldwide Struggle to end Violence Against Women." (You can check out the study <http://women.overcomingviolence.org>).

When I told some of my friends at Church here about this project, one quipped that "you've found a way to make Lent even more depressing." Lent is depressing, but it's depressing because our world is depressing. Lent is the time when we focus on the sins of this world. Lent is a time to understand our own complicity to these problems. Lent is a time where we look for Jesus' love despite these problems. We look all the problems square in the eye and say "you cannot win."

During my research and planning for this project I have learned about atrocities all over the world. Human trafficking is the most profitable black market industry in the world – with estimations going as high as \$32 billion a year with over 27 million people currently enslaved. On average in South Africa a woman is raped every 26 seconds. In India there are 21 women of the Dalit Caste ("untouchables") are raped each week. In the UK, the police estimate that 95% of rapes are never even reported. In the US, it is estimated that between 2 and 4 million women are assaulted every year by their partners. I did this research – I found all this information, yet the image that I see when I close my eyes is a girl in a pink shirt playing in the dirt in front of her hut in the Democratic Republic of Congo while you can hear her father saying that she will have to be a prostitute because no man will want to marry someone who is tainted. She was raped while gathering firewood. Her attacker, while jailed for a few months, will go free. I see her face and her tears every time I close my eyes to think about violence against women. Hers is the story that I cannot forget.

Yet, as much as these stories are appalling what I am struggling with is my own place in the picture. What am I doing to contribute to or bring an end to violence against women? Am I ever complicit? I know I have thought, or even said that perhaps a woman could have done something to avoid being raped. As if she brought it on herself. I have believed that only "weak" women stay with abusers. If women were stronger they would just leave him. I have looked the other way when I see a girl being harassed on the street. I have failed to speak out when a man talks to me inappropriately in a bar, hoping he'll just go away. My work to eliminate violence against women is a drop in the bucket. What am I doing in this depressing situation? Where is God in this?

I have the privilege, at St. Lydia's to be of service to others in a very direct and visceral way. I don't have to join the welcoming committee, the food drive, or any of those things. I can help with dinner. That's it. I can help my friends sustain themselves, physically and spiritually, for the week ahead. We all play a part in serving and being served, from hauling the tables upstairs to peeling oranges for a salad. Though there may be a lead cook, without someone to haul those tables or set out the flatware, we are going to be out of luck to get to that meal, folks. And Jesus really had it nailed there; we are all of us, in being of service and serving each other, equals.

Jessica Breiman

Reclaiming A Scandalous Christianity

Christians have gone to great lengths to emphasize Jesus' rejection of the Old Testament conception of Messiah. Jesus, we are told, disavowed political and military power, and instead sought a Kingdom more universal, and more spiritual, than the one the Jews of His day sought. Thus Christians tend to see Jesus' mission as a success. Jesus did indeed usher in a Kingdom spiritual and 'catholic'. It is just at this point that, I fear, we lose the full force of the Gospel message. The Gospel, we are told by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:23 is a 'stumbling block' and 'foolishness'. Indeed, early Christianity was considered scandalous by most people. But where is there any scandal in a fully successful Jesus?

Luckily, we are part of a tradition that allows us to utilize source-critical tools in studying the Bible, and one of the values of this kind of approach is it can allow us to re-discover the scandal of the gospels. Because the real scandal is that by the yardstick of Jesus and His disciples, Jesus life ended in failure. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the conversations surrounding the Last Supper. Here we see a fully Jewish Jesus with a fully Jewish mission which He is trying to fulfill. At this paradigmatically Jewish event, the Passover meal, Jesus proclaims a paradigmatically Jewish image of The Kingdom of God. In Luke 22:29-30, the disciples are promised a place of real political authority in a worldwide Kingdom centered in Israel. To be sure, Jesus disclaims political and military authority for himself, and rejects the idea that the Kingdom of God will be brought about by the political machinations of mankind, believing that God alone will come to 'make things right'. However, the substance of that 'made right' Kingdom is a fulfillment of the hopes and wishes of the Jewish people: a universal kingdom of peace and justice, centered in Israel herself. Ultimately Jesus' obedience to God was an attempt to fulfill scripture in such a way to ensure that this kind of Kingdom would indeed come to pass. But it is clear that God did NOT come and upend the fortunes of Israel, or supplant the Roman Kingdom with a Universal Jewish Empire. Is it any wonder that some of Jesus' last words are a cry of confusion and abandonment?

The Passover Meal

Luke 22:7-28

“Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who serves? But I am among you as one who serves.”

Luke 22: 26-27

I can't pretend to be a girl who knows her Bible. My father was an atheist Jew. My mother was raised agnostic, but turned Unitarian after I left for college. I came to the Christian-based community of St. Lydia's hesitantly, one small step at a time, sometimes months in between those steps, until they became like a slow, drunken shuffle, which eventually gave way to a more even stride, from one Sunday confidently into another. St. Lydia's is not your typical church; every Sunday, we meet to share and prepare a meal together, and say an ancient liturgical prayer together. But all this is to say that every Sunday, the passages we read from the Bible are new to me.

I'm primarily, in my life, a writer, but one cannot be a writer without being a reader as well, and when I read the passage from Luke that I was asked to write about, the Last Supper (Luke 22: 7-28), I didn't know where to start. So I started where we start with St. Lydia's: close reading. We read it aloud, following the text closely. Then we close our eyes and listen to the text, and sometimes read it yet a third time with emphatic silences between the sentences. Then we single out the words, phrases, and passages that rang true to us that night, the ones that sang to us above the others.

So I looked at this text. And I looked again. And I wrote some things down. And I looked again. When I started with what was directly in the text, it was just about a dinner. A dinner like the one we share at St. Lydia's, a dinner shared with friends and close advisors, a Motley Crue of apostles. They “reclined” at the table to enjoy a moment together; after all, it was only hours later that Jesus found himself crucified.

Despite the impending crucifixion, Christ's friends argued amongst themselves. They boasted and disputed which one of them was the best. But Jesus silenced them. And it was this passage, where Jesus shushes his friends and tells them the deal, posited in a few modestly beautiful questions, when I really started to pay attention. The vocabulary is simple and there is nothing special in the phrasing. But the essence of his speech struck me as particularly relevant to my adoption of St. Lydia's as my spiritual home.

Lent is the time that the Church sets aside for us to remember and focus on these tragedies. We do this, not because God is absent in all of this, but because these tragedies are precisely where God is. God's love for people extends beyond the worst that can possibly happen. Jesus came into the world to give people the ability to live in hope despite our tragic circumstances. Despite all the facts that I listed above, God is here with us. God is giving us hope to face the terrible situations and make something better out of them.

If we lived in a rosy, perfect world we wouldn't need Lent. If the only problems in our lives are who will organize the Parish Pot luck next week or where we'll go on vacation next summer we would not need Lent. Lent is a time for us to look around us and look around the world at the serious problems. A time for us to understand the problems. A time for us to immerse ourselves in the problems. We have Lent to be depressed about the world.

Luckily, for us and the world, Lent is not the end, but only the beginning. We have Easter to live out the rest of the year. When we truly understand and relate to the seriously depressing situations in the world we can rejoice even more loudly that Jesus conquers all. Jesus is Lord.

Maryann Philbrook



Apocalypse Soon

Luke 21:5-38

What do we make of apocalyptic stories when, throughout the 2,000 years of Christian history, the end of the world has been seen as eminent and yet it never happens? Some will say that we just have to wait a little longer and we'll see that it's coming after all. Perhaps. In the meantime, I think there is wisdom to be found in apocalyptic stories that is not necessarily tied to the church's traditional interpretations. After all, whether the end of the world comes today, tomorrow, 100 years from now, or perhaps never, we all experience apocalypse in our lives. It's part of the human condition. Everything falls down, everything crumbles, everything dies.

This reading from Luke speaks of wars, natural disaster, famine, and plagues. The death and destruction these wreak are terrible. Some are avoidable and some are not. Wars are within the control of humans. Famine, in today's world of abundance, is now largely a matter of human injustice and inefficiency—not being able to get the food to the right people, without oppressive structures getting in the way. Natural disasters, though, we can't control. Nor are they "acts of God." They are just part of the planet's life cycle. Some of them are exacerbated by human activity, but some are not. We can't stop all natural disasters, and unless—or perhaps until—we build the perfect world, we can't really stop all of the human-caused or influenced disasters and injustices either. That doesn't mean we should be fatalistic. We should strive for the good. But, in the face of death and destruction, how do we continue to live our lives? Sometimes all we have is hope. For just as death and destruction surely come, new life and new creation also surely come.

I commend to you a book called *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, by Rabbi Harold Kushner. Kushner saw his son suffer a terrible illness for years and eventually die before adolescence. The book is his attempt at an answer to the question of human suffering, the question of a grieving father. In it, Kushner says that if no one died, the world would become stagnant. Eventually people would stop having children because there wouldn't be room for them. Death is a natural function of all life. Without it, there would be no new life. It doesn't make death any easier, but this promise of new life can give us hope if we let it.

But we so often do not want to embrace our hope. Instead we wallow in our darkest impulses. Grief at death and destruction is natural, so that's not what I mean. I mean fear, hate, anger, bitterness. Looking back at the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, we had a time of mourning and national goodwill and unity. Did we embrace that hope and use that goodwill to a greater purpose, or did we embrace vengeance, anger, and reciprocal destruction? I'm not saying the war in Afghanistan wasn't a just war. But I am suggesting that perhaps we entered into the conflict

with the wrong mindset. There was an attitude of vengeance rather than justice on the part of many. In moving from national unity and goodwill to national vengeance, were we led astray, just as the gospel speaks of those who will say they have the solution, saying "I am he," but actually deceive us? As a warning that might seem strange from someone studying to become a priest, don't be too quick to trust anyone who claims to have knowledge of God's plans. Just as the Crusaders of the Middle Ages claimed to have God on their side, those after 9/11 and those even today who call for an American, or a Christian, crusade against the Islamic world, claim to have God on their side. But they would deceive us.

Let us beware of ever claiming that God is on our side. Instead, let us be on the side of God. And God's side is one of love and hope. When we see death and destruction, let us act from the knowledge that good does come of the bad, and that it often happens through the emotional tenderness people feel after a personal loss or a large-scale tragedy. In such times, we have a tendency to want to huddle together and seek comfort from one another. If only we stayed there. But we also have a tendency to want to lash out, blame, and hurt. When wrongs are committed, they must be punished, but let us seek true justice—setting things right—because we want to make sure more wrongs are not committed, not because we want revenge. The Christian story gives us strength to persevere, to turn from our dark impulses and look for hope because ours is a story of hope when everything seemed to fall apart. Jesus was crucified, his closest followers denied ever knowing him, and all seemed to be lost. But then Easter came. Jesus was resurrected, given new life. And like Jesus we too can seek to build new life out of death and destruction. In the wake of war, let us, as a nation, seek a lasting peace by strengthening our campaign for the hearts and minds of the world by truly being a beacon of hope, bringing light to others through collaborative efforts to solve global problems. So that no more famines happen, let us seek to prevent hunger by working for more sustainable agricultural practices and more just economic systems. As we participate as co-creators of God's reign on earth in these acts of love and justice, we create new life out of death, a new world out of apocalypse.

Chase Danford

