

ST. WILFRID'S CLARION

Pastor Michael D. Archer

Christ's Love in the Darkest of Places

A question asked on the recent General Ordination Exam seems extremely timely in the wake of the recent shootings in Northern Illinois and Oxnard, California. The question asked how as a pastor you would respond to parents whose daughter, their only child, was killed in the Virginia Tech shootings. One year later they are still grieving and asking extremely difficult questions about God's role in all of this.

The following excerpt from my three-page response is submitted in hopes that it will remind us that especially in tragedy, God ministers to us through each other... and challenges us to commit more fully to being ministers of God's love and grace to all people.

"The senseless killing of a woman so young, full of life, and teeming with potential seems counter to everything the Creator God who is pure Love embodies. The weary clichéd expressions often conveyed by well-meaning, caring people just can't provide the comfort these parents are seeking... No depth of reasoned pastoral counsel will suffice. The answers must come from the Spirit alone... answers that are possibly even beyond expression.

The most obvious theological question this situation raises is simply, why? Why does evil exist in the world? Why did it have to reach this precious family? Why would the only child of loving Christian parents be taken so rudely from their home? Why should the world be deprived of a life so full of potential?

To the question of why evil exists in the world, St. Augustine eventually reasoned that evil is not a thing, a physical presence, but an absence of good. Evil exists only where good is rejected. The God who created humankind for eternal fellowship did not want the fellowship of robots, but of free moral agents with the capacity to choose to live in relationship with Love or
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Christ's Love in the Darkest of Places

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not. That free-will opens the door for Good to be ignored, for darkness to creep temporarily over what God created as good, and for those who choose to live in light to be confronted with the void of God's absence in the choices of those who reject Love.

Though at times it feels as though the conflict of good vs. evil is of epic proportion, out of control and that the void of God's absence will never be filled, the struggle merely provides another opportunity for Light to shine, for the Good of creation to demonstrate that what *is not* cannot overcome what *is*... "light shined in the darkness," John wrote, "but the darkness has not overcome it."

I would invite these grieving parents to walk back with me to that funeral service *filled* with students and parents, community leaders and educators, a community experiencing loss *together*. The *entire community* rallied around them, grieving with them. Hugs and tears, yes, some of those tired clichés, but good, loving, caring people wanting nothing more than to be present for them... no matter what being present would mean... maybe not saying *anything*, not offering to reason the pain away... just hearts sharing part of what it means to be fully human, deeply human... but in the desire to take away the suffering of another, the willingness to do whatever it takes to heal a broken heart, sensing for a *moment* what it might feel like to be God.

Some in the crowd, not all to be sure, but *some* asked how a life so troubled as the one responsible for these shootings could have escaped the kind of Love that was *so evident* in that stadium? *Some*, not all to be sure, but some thought of a troubled someone in their *own* life... and determined not to let *their* troubled someone escape that Love.

Many, probably most in that service committed to themselves to ask the hard questions and wrestle with the difficult answers that might lead us closer to a world where darkness cannot *avoid* the presence of light."

As we continue to wrestle with hard questions in the face of another reminder of the ever-present evil in our world, may our hearts turn more fully to the light of Christ's love and take that light one life at a time into the darkest places of our nation and our world.

In so doing, "Another only child... another gifted student... another beautiful family in another place like this might be spared this kind of tragedy. Another troubled life whose free-will has taken them to a place where God is not might see out of the corner of their heart a flicker of light in the life of someone like you... and exercise that same free-will in opening themselves to Love made flesh living among us."

Together in the Service of Christ,
Pastor Michael Archer

Fr. Lee Walker

The Prayers of the People encourage worshippers to seek common ground

In the Eucharist, the Creed is followed by prayer. At this point in the Mass, we have heard the Revelation of God in the Scriptures, shared thoughts about that Revelation in the sermon or group discussion, and affirmed our faith in that Revelation by reciting the Creed. Then comes the part where the congregation is being asked the following: "OK, you have heard the revelation and said you agree with it. Now, what are you going to DO about it?" Our response is to be Christ in the world. That means doing many things, but first among them is to begin with prayer.

As we examine the Prayers of the People, we should reflect on the idea of "common" prayer, the concept from which the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) takes its name. Here, the word "common" does mean "pedestrian" or "ordinary." It means that which is shared "in common" and which forms the basis and expression of the oneness that God nurtures among the faithful.

In the previous version of the BCP, the Prayers of the People were called "The Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church and the World." By "whole state," the Church means the Prayers of the People are meant to cover every aspect of the Church and the world, not just the concerns of one individual or congregation. To this end, the BCP requires that at every Eucharist, the Prayers of the People cover the concerns of the entire cosmic order of heaven and earth.

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The Prayers of the People encourage worshippers to seek common ground

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These concerns are listed on page 359 of the BCP. The BCP offers several versions of the Prayers of the People. These are found on pages 328-330 and pages 383-395. It's a worthwhile spiritual exercise to read these prayers and reflect on how they each express the concerns listed on page 359.

Our parish has thankfully returned to the ancient practice of encouraging the People to speak their concerns aloud during the prayers. This not a time to make "statements" of a political nature which divide the worshippers. Our differences are all too easy to see, but to discover our common ground, no matter how small, is truly worth the effort. We Christians have many appropriate forums for debate and argument, but the Mass is not among them! The Mass is a time of discovering and celebrating our unity.

But this does not mean that our prayers have to be "watered down" to a meaningless common denominator that doesn't really express anything at all. No, it means that as we come together at Mass, we are called to both speak AND listen. We are being called to set aside our personal agendas and, for at least that brief moment, to seek only our common need to discern God's will.

We are being called to seek the "common" places where we can find unity even in the most hotly debated issues. We are being called to respect those who disagree with us and to grow in our understanding of them. We are being called to identify our common links. And we are also being called to debate and argue and share at other times and places in the Christian community where those exchanges are appropriate.

The mystics of the Church are united in telling us that the ecstatic, visionary experiences they have had in prayer were times when human language was not used because it would have been insufficient in such a transcendent moment of union with God. As we walk the Holy Path by which Christ leads us, such final holy union, the holy union we call Heaven, let us both speak and listen. Let our listening lead us to hear God and the honest thoughts of our own hearts.

Peace, Father James Lee Walker +

Cheryl Kyle—Notes from Tanzania St. Wilfrid's missionaries see God's splendid creation

Where to begin? We're about to have an amazing day full of the Holy Spirit, warm hospitality, gracious and generous giving, adventure and sheer fright. As we bump along the road watching the perils of African life. I say a prayer of thanksgiving for the safe arrival of all seven travelers on the St. Wilfrid's mission trip. This is their first outing into the bush. We are on our way to a rural church 35 miles from Arusha. The Land Rover is filled with the travelers, Bp. Simon and Martha Makundi of the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro and our driver, Benedict. I follow in the diocese pickup filled with friends Tolito, Meleji and other Maasai, and three enormous bags of maize (a gift for Mama Tolito).

We alight from our vehicles at St. Thomas, but the church is empty. Didn't they get my memo? Where's the pastor? Where is everyone? My American mind races! I am told because of the rains last night church will start a little late.

*Haraka huraka haina baraka.
Hurry, hurry, has no blessings.*

An hour later we are blessed. The soft beat of the African drum sounds from the corner of the church, the women's voices rise up followed by the voices of the men. As they blend, souls are stirred. Rather than material or territorial, the spiritual community binds the African to those closest to him. By our visit we are now included in this community.

A lively auction follows the service, as chickens, fodder for the cows, sugar cane, kangas, and maize, are bid on. As we leave the church, a circle is formed as we shake hands and exchange greetings. Lunch follows in the church elder's home. We are honored guests. Little did we know how this day would unfold.

Our vehicles cross the savanna heading toward Tolito and Meleji's boma. There is no road; we share an old system of paths with people, cattle and goats. We are warmly greeted by Mama Tolito, Tolito's three wives *(continued on page 4)*

Notes from Tanzania

School/church is urgently needed

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and eight children, and Meleji, a modern, educated Maasai with one wife and two children. The maize and soccer balls are delivered. While we have tea and roasted goat, our seven-year-old traveler, Damian plays soccer with a gaggle of Maasai children in the muddy compound. Before we leave, we are embraced with beaded Maasai jewelry and shukas (cloth).

One stop before we head back to the comforts of the Moivaro Coffee Lodge. Tolito assures us we are only 4 km from the site of the primary school/church we hope to build. An hour later, we see a pulse of color. As we get closer, the pieces of this tableau change into 400 Maasai men, women and children. The spectacle is staggering in its richness. We are unprepared.

Since my visit to the site a week ago, the Maasai have staked the site for the school/church, dug trenches and moved river rock in for the foundation. The tableau erupts into song, dance, jumping, prayers, a ceremony, blessings, introductions and more goat meat. If we doubted that a school/church could be built in this remote location, we had better think again. These people want and need our gift of education. Our job is to return to Arusha, hire a contractor and a rainwater harvesting specialist, and begin and finish the project before the long rains start in late March. We feel certain, with God's help, we can do it. Benedict appears and strongly suggests we leave. He wants to return us safely to Arusha before nightfall. In Africa, daytime turns suddenly to night, as if someone turned off the sun's generator with a flip of the switch.

This time I'm in the Land Rover with the travelers, Bishop Simon, Martha, Meleji, the village chief, a pastor and the ward chancellor. We are packed. Despite advice from a village elder not to take another path home, we do because we are following the pickup. Soon both vehicles are stuck hubcap deep in mud. We are alone in the bush with only the crude elements of survival. With the remaining light we ditch the pickup, Tolito and the driver, and hire villagers to lay branches and push. Benedict gets us on our way. Martha prays loudly, and dark descends while we pick our way across the bush home. The pickup arrives much later at the diocese compound covered in mud.

The mission trip went off without a hitch. God's splendor was before us. We saw the plains of the Serengeti; wildebeest migration; and herds of zebra, giraffe, Cape

buffalo and impalas. Two lions by the side of the road groomed each other and we saw several herds of elephants. A contractor has been hired, the school/church, latrine and rainwater harvesting tank have been started. The Holy Cow project is underway. The 25 wheelchairs cleared customs and await pickup by the pilots of the Flying Medical Service.

Warmly, Cheryl Kyle

Good Friday offering to help sustain Jerusalem church

Every year on Good Friday, pilgrims from all over the world gather to walk the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. Some carry a cross, to understand better the nature of the burden that Jesus bore. Others accompany them, as witnesses, penitents or believers. By dying on the cross at Calvary, Jesus delivered us from sin and despair.

By helping maintain the Christian witness in the Holy Land, by serving all God's people there in a variety of ministries, throughout four dioceses, by proclaiming the gospel and promoting justice, peace and love, the church serves us all.

Since 1922, Episcopalians here have supported the ministries of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East through the *Good Friday Offering*. We must continue to share in this burden, and not let our brothers and sisters in Jerusalem carry the cross alone.

Holy Week service times

St. Wilfrid's announces the schedule of services for Holy Week:

Palm Sunday, March 16 - regular services and times – 7:30, 8:45 and 11 a.m

Wednesday, March 19 - Tenebrae with Fr. Lee, 7 p.m. in the chapel

Maundy Thursday, March 20 - Foot washing service, 7 p.m. in the church

Prayer Vigil following the Maundy Thursday liturgy until noon on Good Friday. Sign up for a one-hour period of prayer.

Good Friday, March 21 - Noon liturgy in the Church and 7 p.m. Taizé service in the church

Saturday, March 22 - Great Vigil of Easter including Baptism, 8 p.m. in the church

Easter Sunday, March 23 - Regular services and times

Worshippers invited to wait with Christ at 'Watch of Gethsemane'

We again invite members of the congregation to bring plants and flowers to decorate the altar of repose (in the chapel) after the Maundy Thursday service. As the Maundy Thursday service ends and the reserved Sacrament is placed on the chapel altar, participants will keep watch in the chapel until the Good Friday noon service begins. The Watch of Gethsemane is staying awake for Christ. On the night before he was arrested, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. He asked his disciples to come and pray with him. They came to the garden but soon fell asleep. He said to them, "Could you not watch with me one hour?"

This year we will again re-create the Garden of Gethsemane in the chapel. We invite you to bring plants and flowers anytime during Holy Week, before Maundy Thursday. You may retrieve them after the Good Friday services. Please contact Rev. Christy with questions.

St. Wilfrid's kids create Stations of the Cross

On Palm Sunday, please visit the Stations of the Cross, created in the courtyard by our fourth and fifth grade children, under the direction of Marcia Cray, assisted by Pat and Bob DeJong. "It's inspiring and exciting to see these young people participate in our Lord's journey with such enthusiasm," says The Rev. Christy Dorn, director of children and family ministries. "These children and their creative energy are such a blessing to our parish family, and I watch with great interest to see how they will inspire us next."

The Rev. Christy Dorn recommends books for children and families

Are you looking for a few good books to share with your family? Here are a few recommendations:

Ideas, Activities, Inspiration

Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children, by Joan Halmo (The Liturgical Press, 1989). A guide for parents, with information about liturgical seasons and holy days.

Bundles of Faith and Tons of Fun: Easy activities, prayers, and projects for children, by Patricia L. Mathson (Ave Maria Press, 2000).

Seasons of Celebrations: Prayers, plays, and projects for the church year, by Patricia L. Mathson and Katherine Coleman (Ave Maria Press, 1995).

Children & Faith Formation

Raising Faith-Filled Kids: Ordinary opportunities to nurture spirituality at home, by Tom McGrath (Loyola Press, 2000). Lots of ideas.

Gently Lead: How to teach your children about God while finding out for yourself, by Polly Berrien Berends (Crossroad Publishing, 1998).

Raising Kids Who Care: About themselves, about their world, about each other, by Kathleen O'Connell Chesto (Sheed & Ware, 1996).

Family Life

Weaving Faith and Family... When You're Hanging on by a Thread: Reflections and suggestions for your busy family, by Eileen Marx (Ave Maria Press, 1999).

For Parents

The Mystery of Children: What our kids teach us about childlike faith, by Mike Mason (WaterBrook Press, 2001).

For Kids

God's Paintbrush, by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Annette Compton (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992). Invites children to encounter God through moments in their lives, and provides questions an adult and child can explore together.

God Lives in Glass: Reflections of God through the eyes of children, by Robert J. Landy, Ed. (Skylight Paths Publ., 2001).

Water, Come Down! The Day You Were Baptized, by Walter Wangerin, Jr., and Geraldo Suzan (Augsburg Fortress, 1999). Beautifully illustrated for children ages 4-8 shows all of creation—sun, rain, cloud, and more—celebrating a child's baptism.

Adult Forum to focus on Sunday worship

Our Sunday morning worship is the central activity of our life as a parish community. Do you have questions about Sunday morning worship? Do you, as a member of the congregation, know your role in worship? Newcomers and oldtimers alike often want more information about the elements of Episcopal worship.

On April 6, our Adult Forum will focus on Sunday morning Worship: the elements of our service, what we do, and why we do it. The Rev. Christy Dorn will lead us.

When: Sunday, April 6, beginning at 10:10 a.m.
Where: Room 11
Intended for: All adults who would like more understanding about our Episcopal liturgy.

Earth Day to be celebrated April 27

Our annual Earth Day Celebration will be on Sunday, April 27. Members of the congregation have put together wonderful exhibits for our Earth Day celebrations in the past. I am sure this year we will create another spectacular event. If you have an idea for a display project or would like to participate this year, please contact me.

Andi Douglass (562) 799-2486

Celebration of Wisdom will feature published author

Have you ever wanted to write a book? Join us at the March Celebration of Wisdom meeting to hear how one woman did just that.

On March 15, the guest speaker will be Judy Alexander, a friend of Penny Bolton. Judy will share with us the delights, rewards and frustrations that go into writing, printing and marketing a book.

We will meet at 11:30 in Sacquety Hall as usual for our meal and Judy's presentation. Remember to bring books for exchange in our lending library, and items for service members overseas. When you pay for your lunch, please put a bit extra in to help Bill Hutchinson pay the postage when these packages are mailed.

Alzheimer's Association thanks St. Wilfrid's

The following letter was received from the Alzheimer's Association's Interfaith Outreach Committee.

We would like to thank the children of St. Wilfrid for their performance. We enjoyed attending your Christmas program and everyone enjoyed listening to and watching the children perform.

We would also like to thank Dave for his wonderful cooking, especially the chicken, and the ladies who participated in cooking, serving and setting up the reception. Everything was delicious.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated and we look forward to the next service on Sept. 16, 2008.

Sincerely,

Janet Herman
Alzheimer's Association, Interfaith Outreach Committee
BCIS thanks supporters

BCIS thanks supporters

On behalf of everyone involved with Beach Cities Interfaith Services, we would like to extend an enormous thank you to all our volunteers and financial and in-kind supporters for your contributions to another very successful and exciting year.

2007 was a year of steady progress for BCIS. We continued delivery of our core services, expanded a successful self-help group for a number of our clients, and continue to look for like-minded groups with which to partner in feeding the hungry in our midst.

We saw another increase in the number of families and individuals receiving food and other services during 2007. During the last 12 months more than 9,000 people, in nearly 3,400 families visited the service center.

The expanded homeless lunch program provided almost 3,000 meals during the same period. BCIS continued to serve as a distribution point for utility assistance funds, and was able to deliver approximately \$20,000 to needy families in our community. Our Christmas and Cuddle Up and Read programs continued to grow in 2007.

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BCIS thanks supporters

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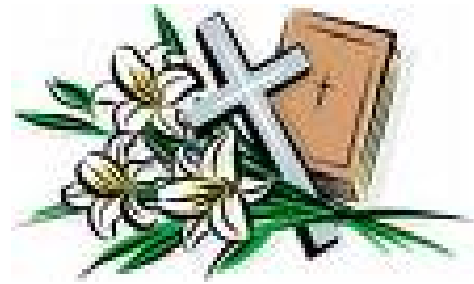
The Step Forward group allows a group of clients a social worker-facilitated supportive forum for working through a wide range of issues facing single parents and others experiencing challenging life situations. We continue to offer regular access to a social worker to provide enhanced access and referrals to appropriate social services, counseling and other forms of public and private assistance. BCIS offers homeless persons the use of a private mailbox, making it possible for them to reliably receive critical correspondence. Our pharmacy program, launched in late 2006, offers assistance with the cost of expensive but critical medications. Our discussions regarding formation of a satellite operation in San Clemente has not materialized, however, we continue to be open to a range of expansion possibilities.

Our ability to continue to operate and to expand has only been possible with the unwavering support of our dedicated volunteers and faithful financial and in-kind contributors. To each of you we offer our sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks. Consistent with our vision of creating an interfaith organization, we continue to benefit from the diversity of our supporters, and expect to be working to expand the breadth of our support base during 2008.

Robert Sjogren
rsjogren@onebox.com

Family getaway at Camp Stevens slated for May 30 through June 1

St. Wilfrid's 2008 Family Getaway will be May 30 through June 1. This weekend offers you time to break out of your usual routine, relax, focus on friends and family, and spend time at Camp Stevens. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the other St. Wilfrid's families. Fun opportunities for all ages are available. Camp Stevens has confirmed that their incredibly comfortable facilities are free from damage caused by the past year's wildfires. Sign up today as our 48 spaces fill up quickly and are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Call Stacey or Steve Witt at 714-846-5773 or e-mail us at connexial@yahoo.com to reserve your spaces.



Parish Calendar Highlights March 2008

- March 1 Eucharistic Minister workshop, 10 a.m. in the Chapel
- March 2 Confirmation Class, after 11 a.m. service in Sacquety Hall
- March 8 Brotherhood of St. Andrew, 9 a.m. in Sacquety Hall
- March 9 Confirmation Class, after 11 a.m. service in Sacquety Hall
- March 15 Wisdom Luncheon Meeting, 11:30 in Sacquety Hall
- March 16 Palm Sunday – regular service times 7:30, 8:45 and 11 a.m. Begin in Helm Park
- March 19 Tenebrae service, 7 p.m. in the Chapel
- March 20 Maundy Thursday service, 7 p.m. in the Church
- March 21 Good Friday services in the Church at Noon and Taizé Devotions 7 p.m.
- March 22 Great Vigil of Easter, 8 p.m. in the Church
- March 23 EASTER DAY services at 7:30, 8:45 and 11 a.m.
- March 30 Orange County Women's Chorus Concert, 4 p.m. in the Church

Creole Gumbo Recipe

This is the Gumbo recipe that we prepared for the St. Wilfrid's Mardi Gras Dinner at St. Wilfrid's on February 5, 2008. Traditional Southern Gumbo's are thickened with a "Roux" that is made with half oil and half white flour. In todays world most people are avoiding oils and white flour. This recipe does not use an oil and flour "Roux". Instead the Red Beans and Rice in the recipe thicken the Gumbo naturally.

Ingredients:

- 3 TBS Olive oil
- 4 Cups of cooked chicken, chopped or shredded seasoned with Creole seasoning
- 12 oz of Andouille Sausage (available at Mattern, Chapman Avenue in Orange - 714-639-3550)
Cut the Andouille length way, then cut length way again you will have 4 pieces. Turn the sausage and chop into small pieces
- 2 tsp Creole Seasoning or to taste *
- 1 and 1/2 cups of onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup combination of red and yellow bell pepper
- 4 large cloves minced fresh garlic
- 2 bay leaves
- Pinch of crushed red pepper
- 1 pound red small beans rinsed and soaked over night and drained
- 1 gallon chicken stock **
- ¼ pound long grain rice uncooked
- ½ cup chopped green onion green part only

In a heavy soup pot heat the oil, when hot add the Holy Trinity (Onions, bell pepper and celery) sprinkle with 1 tsp of Creole seasoning and sauté for about 4 - 5 minutes. Add the chicken, Andouille sausage, soaked red beans, garlic, bay leaves and pinch of crushed red pepper. Then sauté for another 2 minutes. Add 1 gallon of chicken broth and simmer for two (2) hours. Add the ¼ lbs of rice and cook for another 20 minutes uncovered. Check and adjust the seasoning. Remove from the heat and as the green onions. Ladle into bowls and serve.

- There are several kinds of Creole seasonings. Beware of Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning as it has high sodium content. An alternative is Emeril's Bayou Blast (less salt), or you can make your own Creole spice recipe which follows.

** You can make your own chicken stock. Place a 3 and ½ lbs chicken in a large soup pot with 1 gallon of water. Add one onion quartered 3 celery stocks cut into large pieces and 1 tsp Creole seasoning. Simmer over low heat until chicken falls off the bone. Remove the chicken let cool and shred or chop for Gumbo. Strain the chicken broth; add a little salt to taste and use for the Gumbo.

Creole Seasoning Recipe:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2 TBS onion powder | 1 TBS black pepper |
| 2 TBS garlic powder | 1 TBS white pepper |
| 2 TBS dried oregano | 5 TBS paprika |
| 2 TBS dried basil | 2 TBS salt |
| 1 TBS dried thyme | |

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and store in an air tight container.

ENJOY: David Shiffer, Dani and Sam Smith – the Dynamic Trio

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TIME DATED MATERIAL

Worship at St. Wilfrid's

Sundays

Holy Eucharist 7:30 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

Christian Education Hour 10:10 a.m.

Childcare 8:45 – noon

Weekdays

Morning Prayer at 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday Morning Eucharist 7:00 a.m.

About the Clarion

The Clarion is a publication of:

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