

# The Good News

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October 17, 2007

## From Our Bishop

Editor: On Sunday, October 14, Bishop Gayle Harris visited St. Mary's. The following article is adapted from her sermon.

*All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voices, let us sing Alleluia  
Bright burning brother sun with golden beams  
Pale silver sister moon that gently gleams  
Mother earth with flowers, fruits  
Winds, clouds, stars, waters, fire  
All that lives, that grows, walks,  
Swims, crawls or flies...*

Three weeks ago, on a brilliant, beautiful day with a cloudless azure sky, I entered a 13<sup>th</sup> century church in Assisi, filled with scores of people. Yet it was quiet, except for footsteps. The further I walked in the church, the darker and quieter it seemed. It was more spirit filled, more alive within.

I continued downstairs to the crypt. There in the center of the candle-lit crypt, raised about the floor on solid rock, and surrounded with iron lacing, was the tomb of Francesco Bernadone.

Millions of hands have touched through the lacing, and so I also touched the rock underneath his sarcophagus. There were pictures and tokens of thanksgiving and pleading. Holiness seemed touchable. It was unlike other religious sites, devoid of tackiness and gilding, camera flashes and souvenirs. There was only rough and rugged rock, plain marble and wooden seats—nothing to distract, obscure, or dazzle. There were no guides, nor voices, nothing in the way of being touched by the hold.

**I was drawn closer to God by Francesco's life. Because of his life, we know God is active in this world.**

Born of a prosperous family in 1182, Francesco was a bold, brave soldier seeking military glory. In campaigns around him, he saw comrades become injured and die. He also encountered beggars, lepers and other outcasts. As today, those outcasts included those who served in the armed forces in our name, in danger, were injured or died. Outcasts included innocent suffering civilians, oppressed, homeless and the poor. Today's leprosy is AIDS.

Francesco's family friends were confused when compassion took hold of his heart, causing him to turn in his sword and armor, renounce all material wealth, relinquish his possessions and enter a life of humble service, devoted to Lady Poverty and proclaiming God's love to every living thing and serving those he previously walked by. We call him St. Francis of Assisi and celebrate his feast day

**He suffered physically during his last years but conquered all with boundless joy. For this, he received the blessing of the stigmata, the marks of Jesus' wound in side, hands and feet. Too often story of St. Francis of Assisi is reduced to images of nature lover or tree hugger. Statues of St. Francis dot the globe in yards, gardens, parks--consigned to a humble but gentle and warming to our hearts.**

As The Reverend Sam Potero has written of St. Francis: “Yet while he ‘continues to attract and fascinate, most of us remain apprehensive, preferring Francis on a benign perch in the quiet corner of the garden, a companion to the flora and fauna.”

St. Francis represents an audacious and outrageous challenge: he preaches the gospel not in words, but in images too bold to dismiss, and a life that was itself a parable. That is why we both revere and fear him. He speaks truth by living truth. In St. Francis, as in Jesus, the gospel was made flesh and dwelt among us an incarnation impossible to ignore, so tangible and physical it compels a response. In an increasingly material world, it is the most powerful way—perhaps the only way—to communicate truth. It is not that we wish any intentional evil; it is simply that we are confused and dazzled by our own brilliance, literally stupefied by ourselves.

**To live and honor St. Francis is not a rebuke of our gifts; it does not expect us to drop all and run away.**

Today’s Franciscan monks—both those Roman Catholic and those of the Episcopal Church—and our celebration of St. Francis with the blessing of our animal companions, are constant reminders through the ages that we are not hostages to creation, but the blessed recipients of its bounty, and stewards of its riches. St. Francis and those who follow his way, preach by living as though the gospel were a reality. They live as though the kingdom of God, the victory of Christ over the world as real as the closing Dow Jones average and the morning commute. They are an icon of vocation for every Christian, searching us and compelling us to see what we might be, and live it.

### *Upcoming Events*

#### **Coffee and Connections, following the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, October 28**

The Vestry of St. Mary's Parish invites you to join us for *Coffee and Connections* immediately following the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday October 28. This will be an opportunity to sit down with your fellow parishioners, enjoy a light brunch, and participate in a facilitated discussion about the people, programs and place that represent St. Mary's to each of us. Come with ideas and a wish list or just come to listen in good company to conversations and updates about the emerging future at St. Mary's. Childcare will be provided for those with small children who wish to attend. The Middle School Class has kindly offered to assist with this event!

#### **Please Book Sittings for 2007 Photo Directory on Wednesday and Thursday, November 7 and 8**

A photographer from Olan Mills will be at St. Mary’s from 3:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on November 7 and to take photos for the church directory. For those of you who have not been involved previously, this directory is completed once every five years, and provides a very useful resource—especially for newcomers—to connect names and faces. It also comprises a wonderful pictorial history of our congregation. It is great fun to capture the children in the parish as they mature.

We thank the individuals and families, who have already scheduled their appointments, and will be calling the remaining parishioners in an effort to achieve close to 100 percent participation. Since there are few remaining slots available, we are attempting to schedule an additional day with Olan Mills.

Multiple poses will be shot. You will have an opportunity to select the pose for inclusion in the directory. Each individual or family group who is photographed is entitled to a free 8 x 10 photo and a copy of the directory. You may also purchase additional photos which will be delivered in time for Christmas.

The directory includes activity pages comprising candid photos of church activities, including the church picnic, newcomers' barbecue, Women of St. Mary's outings, and mission trips to El Salvador and Katrina-ravaged sites. Please submit photos to Beverly Hurney.

Please contact Judy Haycock at 508-359-4413 or [hayjudy@verizon.net](mailto:hayjudy@verizon.net); Andrea Gordon at 781-237-6668 or [the\\_Gordons@comcast.net](mailto:the_Gordons@comcast.net); or Beverly Hurney at 617-332-7412 or [bjhurney@rcn.com](mailto:bjhurney@rcn.com) with questions.

### **Church Women United Spiritual Life Day, Friday, October 26 at 10:00 a.m. at St. Mary's**

CWU is sponsoring a forum on "What it Means to be Spiritual" led by Peter Chase and our Rabbi-in-residence Ron Weiss. A light lunch will follow. Please plan on attending and bringing at least one friend. This event should foster an interesting conversation about the similarities between, and shared spirituality of Judaism and Christianity. Please contact Elisabeth Comer at 781-772-2220 or [ewcomer@veizon.net](mailto:ewcomer@veizon.net) to sign up or with questions.

CWU is a racially, culturally, theologically inclusive Christian women's movement, celebrating unity in diversity and working for a world of peace and justice. Founded in 1941, CWU is:

- a movement representing Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and other Christian women;
- organized into more than 1,200 local and state units working for peace and justice in the United States and Puerto Rico; supported by constituents in state and local units and denominational women's organizations; and
- recognized as a non-governmental organization by the United Nations.

### ***Foods'n Fancies Bazaar on Saturday, November 17, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.***

We invite everyone in the parish to take part in our annual church fair, as volunteers and customers. Partake of handmade crafts, delicious home-baked foods, the Vermont cheddar cheese wheel, an array of white-elephant items, festive plant terrariums, raffles and the Silent Auction. Enjoy a homemade soup and sandwich lunch in the Chapter Room.

*Foods'n Fancies* has earned such a reputation for wonderful buys that it attracts return visits from friends of St. Mary's and former congregants who have moved away. Use this opportunity to do your Christmas shopping early. Invite your friends and neighbors to attend. And remember, all proceeds support our outreach ministries and countless in-need.

### **Silent Auction**

Search your attic, basement, jewelry box and closets for antique jewelry; furniture; paintings; prints; glassware; silver, gold and pewter items including dishware and unusual objects of value; rugs in good condition and rare books. The Silent Auction runs throughout the bazaar.

For more information on Foods'n Fancies or the Silent Auction, contact Lynn Farnell at 617-969-4659 or [mpfarnell@mac.com](mailto:mpfarnell@mac.com) or Mav Tornesello at 617-823-8300 or [Mavtorn@aol.com](mailto:Mavtorn@aol.com).

### ***Acts of Faith and Unsung Heroes***

Editor: In the tradition of St. Francis, the following article by Tracy J. Sukraw is adapted from the recent Diocese newsletter.

### **Ugandan Partners Share Stories of Hope and Need**

During their recent visit to the Diocese of Massachusetts, the Rt. Rev. Zebedee Masereka, retired bishop of Kasese in western Uganda, and his wife, Stella, brought greetings and thanks to the Diocese for its ongoing support of their AIDS-relief foundation. And they left their audiences with a gentle message of challenge to consider how, together with others, we might do even more.

At an October 3 chapel service at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston, Bishop Masereka explained that when he retired as Kasese's second bishop, he left behind matters of church administration in order to focus his efforts on serving the poor and the sick in his rural district. "These are God's children, and when they are suffering, I am suffering, and I felt called to try to do something about it," he said. An HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of more than 15 percent has orphaned thousands of children in an area where community life is already torn by recent civil war.

Masereka founded the Bishop Masereka Christian Foundation in 2001. It provides school fees for orphaned and vulnerable children, and recently opened a medical center to provide health care to an under-served rural population.

Through the foundation, the Diocese's Jubilee Ministry currently pays the school fees for 500 children. Hundreds more are still in need of sponsors. More funds will allow for expansion of the orphan education program, further development of the medical clinic and training for a Ugandan priest in medical school. "We are finding that there is always more that we need to do. We do not want to leave any of the children stranded along the way, and so we are here to ask for your continued prayers and your continued support," Bishop Masereka said.

While in the diocese, the Maserekas worshiped and met with groups at St. Peter's Church in Weston, Christ Church in Waltham (including its Ugandan Anglican community) and the Alewife Deanery at Christ Church in Cambridge. They also had the opportunity to meet with medical resource people at Children's Hospital in Boston.

To learn more about the Bishop Masereka Christian Foundation and the Diocese of Massachusetts' additional AIDS-relief projects in Kenya and Tanzania, visit: <http://diomass.org/diomass/index.cfm?objectid=68158826-F1FF-A620-9542CD22EBCCCC6F>.

--Tracy J. Sukraw

### *Ex Gratia*

"Baseball teaches us, or has taught most of us, how to deal with failure. We learn at a very young age that failure is the norm in baseball and, precisely because we have failed, we hold in high regard those who fail less often—those who hit safely in one out of three chances and become star players. *I also find it fascinating that baseball, alone in sport, considers errors to be part of the game, part of its rigorous truth.*"

—Fay Vincent

### *The "Ask-It" Basket:*

**Q: What is the significance of the stigmata referred to in Bishop Harris' sermon?**

A: The term for the bodily marks, sores, or sensations of pain in locations corresponding to the crucifixion wounds of Jesus originates from the line at the end of St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians where he states, "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus," with "marks" in Latin rendered as "stigmata."

The causes of stigmata are the subject of considerable debate. Some contend that they are miraculous, while others argue they are hoaxes or can be explained medically. Stigmata are primarily associated with the Roman Catholic faith.

Please note our new email addresses: St. Mary's: [office@st-marys-episcopal.org](mailto:office@st-marys-episcopal.org)  
Peter Chase: [peter@st-marys-episcopal.org](mailto:peter@st-marys-episcopal.org)