

July–August AD 2003

Volume LXXII, Number 4

# AVE

*A Bulletin of the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin  
in the City of New York*



# AVE

CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN  
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**THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN**  
**145 West Forty-Sixth Street, New York City**

*The church is open Sunday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday  
from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and Saturday from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM.*

**WORSHIP**

**The Holy Eucharist**

On Sunday, Mass is said at 9:00 AM and 5:20 PM; Sung Mass is offered at 10:00 AM and Solemn Mass at 11:00 AM. Monday through Friday, Mass is said at 12:15 PM and 6:20 PM. On Saturday, Mass is said at 12:15 PM.

**The Daily Office**

On Sunday, Morning Prayer is said at 8:30 AM, and Evening Prayer is said at 5:00 PM. Monday through Friday, Morning Prayer is said at 8:30 AM, the Noonday Office at 12:00 noon, and Evening Prayer at 6:00 PM. On Saturday, the Noonday Office is said at 12:00 noon and Evening Prayer at 5:00 PM.

**The Reconciliation of Penitents**

Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 11:30 AM to 12:00 noon and from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, and by appointment at other times.

**DIRECTORY**

The parish office is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM.  
Telephone: 212-869-5830 Facsimile: 212-869-7039  
Worldwide Website: [www.stmvirgin.org](http://www.stmvirgin.org) E-mail: [info@stmvirgin.org](mailto:info@stmvirgin.org)

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The Reverend Stephen Gerth, *rector*,  
The Reverend Matthew Weiler & The Reverend John Beddingfield, *curates*,  
The Reverend James Ross Smith, *assistant*,  
The Reverend Rosemari G. Sullivan, *assisting priest*,  
The Reverend Canon Edgar F. Wells, *rector emeritus*.

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**A Bulletin of**  
**THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN**  
**New York City**

Volume LXXII, Number 4

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July 1, 2003

Dear Friends in Christ,

This is a very special edition of AVE to commemorate a very special Holy Week at Saint Mary's. The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, was with us as celebrant and preacher on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Eve. The Reverend Louis Weil, James F. Hodges Professor of Liturgics at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, was with us for all of the Easter Triduum and preached at the noontime liturgy on Good Friday. This issue of AVE contains all of the sermons from these liturgies.

It truly is an extraordinary privilege to be associated with this parish church. It is unique in so many wonderful ways. Among the reasons it is so wonderful is the fellowship of prayer that supports this witness to Jesus Christ in the middle of New York City. As always, I thank you for your prayers and your gifts that sustain this ministry.

Yours faithfully,

*Stephen Gerth*

**Let Him Wash Our Feet**

Without force, without threat, without judgment, without blame

*But by the way of nourishment and strength  
Thou creep'st into my breast,  
Making thy way my rest  
And thy small quantities [morsel of bread and sip of wine] my length . . .*

observes the 17th-century priest-poet George Herbert in a poem entitled "The Holy Communion." He continues:

*One thy grace, which with those elements comes,  
Knoweth the ready way,  
And bath the privie key  
Op'ning the soul's most subtle rooms . . .*

**T**HE EUCHARIST is many things. Above all, it is a manifestation of Christ's desire to draw close and to unlock with his own secret key those "most subtle rooms" within us, where our desires resist and confute Christ's desire to make a home in us, in all of us, in every last part of our being.

"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," Jesus said to his disciples in the account of the Last Supper recorded in the Gospel of Luke. It is with the same eager longing that Christ is present every time we break the bread and share the cup.

The Eucharist therefore is more than a ritual, a cultic act: it is a gesture of mercy; an act of love; an expression of unbounded compassion. It is a sacrifice because the love that breaks free from the ordered pattern and narrative of the Passover seder is a self-giving, self-emptying love. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread . . ." What is revealed in this gesture of taking, breaking, and giving along with the shocking words, "This is my body," is the love of a fully human heart at the point of breaking, knowing that the hour of leaving his small band of friends, who have so intimately shared his life and his work, is close at hand. Jesus looks with grieving affection at each of the faces turned toward him as they sit at table in the upper room.

There is impetuous Peter; James and John, known as Sons of Thunder because of their fiery dispositions; and Judas, poor Judas, with his rigid and unbending notions of God's reign and how Jesus ought to bring it about. And then there are the others, including the



Photo by Alice V. Manning

*"Unless I wash you, you have no share with me . . ."*

disciple whom Jesus loved, each with his own story, struggles, desires, weaknesses, and fragile and all too human loves. There Jesus stands, knowing each one of them better than they know themselves. Can he trust them to carry on? But that's not the point—he deeply loves them just as they are, his friends, the friends of his heart. He takes the bread, he blesses the cup: "This is my body given for you. . . . This is my blood shed for you."

God acts, the Spirit acts, Christ acts: bread is blessed, broken, and shared in order to establish an enduring bond of fellowship and communion between Jesus and his friends, and not only between Jesus and his friends, but between him and all humankind and the whole creation.

It is with this in mind that Irenaeus, one of the Fathers of the early Church, pondering the meaning of the Eucharist, observed that receiving the Eucharist "week by week . . . we become part of Christ's body and blood, unified one with another in him. Moreover, God in the beginning fashioned all blood, flesh, and bones from the dust of the earth. Thus in sharing Christ's body and blood, made from bread and wine which are the fruits of the earth, we are brought into harmony with the whole of God's creation. In that simple act of receiving the Eucharist, we participate in reconciling God with God's world."

The Eucharist is not, therefore, "for solace only," as one of our Eucharistic prayers proclaims, but has to do with God's ongoing project of reconciliation: building up, making whole, breaking down walls of hostility, antagonism, and fear, and overcoming the various expedencies that keep the deeper demands of reconciliation at bay.

The Eucharist is Christ's act of utter realism in the face of all the untruths, half-truths, and chauvinisms that work against the far-reaching reordering of relationships to one another and the world around us which is required of all of us personally, ecclesially, globally if we are truly to participate in Christ's work of drawing all things to himself.

This means recognizing Christ's real presence beyond the altar and the act of receiving communion, or locked away reverently in a tabernacle or aumbry. It means recognizing the

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Photo by Alice V. Manning

*Approaching the altar on Maundy Thursday*

real presence of Christ as mercy, compassion, courage, communion, and reconciliation in the midst of all the forces that work against that presence or deny its validity.

The Eucharist is therefore an act of daring and of hopeful inauguration: the way things are is not the way they need to be. To have what one might call a Eucharistic mind is to be possessed of an alternative and counter-cultural consciousness.

*Only thy grace, which with those elements  
comes,  
Knoweth the ready way,  
And bath the privie key  
Op'ning the soul's most subtle rooms . . .*

The grace of the Eucharist is nothing less than Christ's desire and eager longing reordering our own desires and making them one with his. The Eucharist involves the opening up of those interior spaces which we, through shame or fear, have closed off and declared out of bounds to the one who makes all things new. Christ's desire, as it embraces and transforms the structures of our own desiring, breaks through the layers of estrangement—often estrangement from our deepest and truest selves—and fashions us into men and women of communion.

This is, I think, what Paul means when he speaks about the renewal of our minds and having the mind of Christ: not just new ways of thinking, but new ways of desiring for ourselves, for others, and for our world. "Outside God, everything is narrow," observes St. John of the Cross: it is Christ who delivers us from narrowness and sets us down in the open space of his own desire that all things be drawn together in the fierce embrace of his deathless love.

"You will never wash my feet," cries Peter in protest as Jesus kneels before him with basin and towel.

"Unless I wash you, you have no share with me," Jesus replies. You must submit to my serving you; you must yield to my yearning to love you. Only in this way can we be one; only in this way can I make my home in you; only in this way can you find your home—your true self—in me.

It is the love of Christ that refashions us, frees us, and makes us whole. It is the love of Christ that opens our eyes to the world and makes us co-workers with Christ—those who, imbued with Christ's own longing and desire, take our place in God's continuing project of reconciling all things to God's own self in Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit—the Holy Spirit whose unique work is to pour the love of God, Christ's own desire, into

our hearts. "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet . . . you also should do as I have done to you."

The Eucharist is Christ's way of loving and serving us, of drawing us out of ourselves into the ambit of his own love and deep desire for us and for all creation, so that we might embody and express, in all that we are and have yet to become, something of what we know to be real and true for the healing and freeing of others. And this is only possible because we have allowed Christ to love us and, with Peter, have let him wash our feet.

Amen.

—Frank T. Griswold

## The Last-Minute Friend

"IT IS FINISHED," cries Jesus from the cross. It is accomplished; it is done. A cry of despair? No, of victory! Because what is finished is not his life but the work given to him by the Father, given to him not as a burden—though there had been moments of intense struggle and temptation to lay it aside—but given to him out of love in order that the Father's work might become Jesus' own heart's desire.

"You are my beloved one in whom I rejoice and take pleasure," God says to Jesus as he is baptized by John in the Jordan. In response Jesus opens himself in loving availability to the drawing of the Father's love. And it is from the mutuality of that love shared between Father and Son, in the communion of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus' life and ministry unfold, leading him to the cross, and, through the cross, into the open space of resurrection.

Near the beginning of John's gospel, Jesus declares: "My food"—my heart's desire, my deepest joy—"is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to accomplish"—to complete, to finish—"his work." The verb used here for "complete" is the same verb Jesus uses when he cries from the cross, "It is finished." And near the end of that gospel, just before he is arrested, Jesus addresses the Father, saying, "Father, I have glorified you on earth by finishing"—by completing—"the work you have given me to do." The whole gospel, then, including Jesus' death on the cross, is an account of the work shared by the Father and the Son in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

And what is that work?—a work we too are drawn into when Jesus addresses his close followers no longer as servants but as friends, saying, "We must work the works of the one who sent me."

What is the work of the Father that Jesus makes intimately his own, shares with his friends, and completes upon the cross? The



Photo by Alice V. Manning

*Placing the Blessed Sacrament on the Altar of Repose*

answer for me became clear three days after the events of 9/11, on the feast of the Holy Cross, when, after presiding at the Eucharist in the Chapel of the Seaman's Church Institute, close by Ground Zero—the Institute having become a major respite and supply station for rescue workers and volunteers—I made my way to the site of the World Trade Center. Returning, I noticed that the gate in the iron fence surrounding St. Paul's Chapel was ajar. We stopped our pickup truck and, finding that the door was open, we entered. All was silent. Everything was in place and looked as it should, except for a fine grey dust which lay everywhere like a blanket. As I stood there, trying to let the experiences and sights of the morning settle within me, I looked toward the altar, and my eyes came to rest upon the brass crucifix that stood above it. Suddenly a phrase from the gospel I had just proclaimed at the Eucharist came to me: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people"—all things—"to myself." In that moment I knew with the full force of my being that the tiny brass arms of the figure on the crucifix could contain in their embrace all the horror and destruction and grief and rage occasioned by what had happened just one block away. I knew too that those same arms could embrace and hold me as well, as I stood there overwhelmed by it all and wondering, What does the Presiding Bishop do and say at a time like this?

The work of God—God's project, the *missio Dei*, Jesus' work accomplished on that cross—is the work of reconciliation: "Upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed . . . through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. [He] shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities."

And what is righteousness but a right ordering of the various patterns of relationships that constitute our lives and make us who we are? Here it is important to keep in mind that there is no such thing as a free-standing individual. We are all products of webs of relationship beginning with our birth. "In Christ," Paul tells us, "God was reconciling the world to himself." That is, in Christ the distorted and disordered patterns of relationships, the fears, the suspicions, the envies, the narcissistic neediness which leads to a yearning to possess not

just things, but a self of our own creation—all of these patterns, which are so much a part of us that we hardly notice them, are reordered over time according to God's imagination and loving desire.

This process of reordering does not occur, however, without a great deal of pain and a profound sense of loss—or, in gospel terms, a losing of oneself that becomes the narrow door through which we pass in order to find ourselves no longer self-constructed but, through the dynamic of reconciliation, made new and whole

and free—free with what Paul tantalizingly calls "the glorious liberty of the Children of God."

As the patterns of relationship which constitute our lives are healed and made whole we become, in Christ, agents of healing and making whole in the lives of others: we are able to see clearly, speak truth, and recognize the compulsive patterns and subtle entrapments that proffer happiness and fulfillment at the loss of our true selves—the selves of God's deep desiring and ever-creative love. Thus it is that Paul, having proclaimed that, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, goes on to say that the consequence of that reconciling act is that we have been given, as the Church and as limbs and members of Christ's risen body, the ministry and ongoing work of reconciliation.

**T**HE LANGUAGE of sacrifice which is used by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews to describe the reconciling work of Christ may jar and unsettle us, but it seeks to convey a profound truth: that all separation and distance, often the fruit of self-directed hostility, have been overcome in the person of Christ, the Great High Priest who draws all things to himself—including the disordered aspects of our lives—transforming them and transfiguring them in the fiercely gentle flame of his deathless love.

Transformation does not mean that all that is dark or difficult within us is taken away, but rather that it is taken into Christ, who says to us, as he said to Paul when the apostle prayed to be delivered of his shame-producing thorn in the flesh, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." It is often in our weaknesses—when we feel least competent and in control, when our own fragilities and ambiguities are most to the fore—that Christ can be most fully present and work his work of reconciliation in us and through us. And it is in such moments that we know with every fiber of our being that the grace of Christ is sufficient and that the courage, mercy, love, forgiveness, and truth that flow through us are not self-generated but are indeed the power and presence of Christ inhabiting and indwelling our weaknesses and turning them into strengths: strengths and capacities that catch us quite by surprise and pass all understanding.

If the cross is the great sign of God's work of reconciling the world to God's own self in Christ, and if, through baptism, we are taken into that act of reconciliation and made bearers of the reality of reconciliation to others, what is our relationship to the cross other than as grateful recipients of its power to reconcile? Jesus himself gives us the answer: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it." In other words, being reconciled within and between ourselves and becoming signs of reconciliation in the world around us obliges us to embrace the cross as it presents itself at the heart of our existence through multiple instances of dying and rising; losing and finding, mediated by the concrete and immediate demands and circumstances of our lives.

For Jesus, the cross was not some sort of religious abstraction dropped out of the sky, but a decision to be made that came directly out of the givenness of his life. He could have escaped from the garden and avoided arrest. Instead he faced into what seemed to be unfolding as he prayed, in the fullness of his humanity, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done." We find ourselves in similar situa-

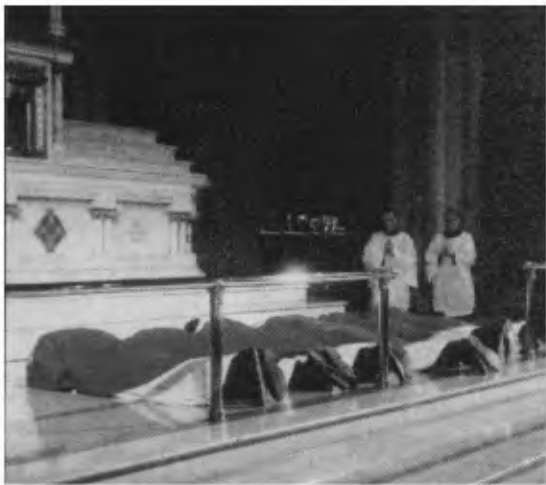


Photo by Alice V. Manning

*The parish clergy prostrate before the altar on Good Friday*

tions, in which the demands, the decisions that confront us seem to require our very life, if not physically then emotionally, and in terms of our perceived capabilities to deal with or endure that which confronts us. And yet it is by not running away and heading for the safety of the hills of Galilee that the very thing that threatens to undo us can become, paradoxically, a means of growth, discovery, and expansion—to be sure, not without pain and great cost. At such moments we know in the depths of our being—beyond words or explanations—that the cross is not about death but about life and reconciliation. “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. In truth, in very truth I tell you, a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies; but if it does, it bears a rich harvest.” As we allow Christ to draw us into the force field of his reconciling and reordering love—a love which gives us the courage to embrace the cross in our own lives—we become part of that rich harvest.

On May 21, 1996, an Algerian terrorist group, the GIA, beheaded seven French Trappist monks who, having made Jesus’ prayer in the garden their own, decided—against all advice—to remain at their abbey in the Atlas Mountains alongside their Muslim neighbors with whom they had established deep bonds of affection and mutual support. Their fidelity led them to stay put in spite of all dangers.

Five days after their assassination, on May 26, the feast of Pentecost, the last testament of one of the slaughtered monks, Père Christian, was opened and read. It was dated January 1, 1994, two and a half years before his kidnapping and murder. It reads in part:

If it should happen one day—and it could be today—that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to engulf all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, and my family to remember that my life was given to God and to this country. I ask them to accept the fact that the One Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure. I would ask them to pray for me: for how could I be found worthy of such an offering? I ask them to associate this death with so many other equally violent ones which are forgotten through indifference or anonymity. My life has no more value than any other.

I would like, when the time comes, to have a moment of spiritual clarity which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God and of my fellow human beings, and at the same time forgive with all my heart the one who will strike me down.

Obviously, my death will appear to confirm those who hastily judged me naïve or idealistic: “Let him tell us now what he thinks of it!” But these persons should know that finally my most avid curiosity will be set free. This is what I shall be able to do, please God: immerse my gaze in that of the Father to contemplate with him His children of Islam just as he sees them, all shining with the glory of Christ, the fruit of His Passion, filled with the Gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion and restore the likeness, playing with the differences.

And also you, my last-minute friend, who will not have known what you were doing: Yes, I want this “Thank you” and this “A Dieu” to be for you, too, because in God’s face I see yours. May we meet again as happy thieves in Paradise, if it please God, the Father of us both.

This is the witness of one of our contemporaries: a man who allowed the work of God’s reconciling love to inhabit the whole of his being. Was he perfect? No. Those who knew him could tell you of his thorns. And yet as the cross took root in his life, he denied himself by refusing to act out of fear rather than love, a love that had been formed in him by Christ and extended even to his “last-minute friend”—his assassin. Truly this French monk, about whom none of us would ever have heard had it not been for the circumstances of his death, was and continues to be, by virtue of his remarkable testament, a minister of reconciliation—particularly between Abraham’s Christian and Muslim children.

Christ’s work, God’s work, has been done: It is finished, it is accomplished. Yes, but it remains to be lived out in us and among us for the sake of the world. Père Christian is but one witness. What about you? What about me?

“We glory in your cross, O Lord, for by it you have brought joy and reconciliation to the world.” And through it you have made us ministers of reconciliation. May we be fruitful to this work, this calling.

Amen.

—FTG

## ‘Awake, O Sleeper, and Rise from the Dead’

CHRIST IS RISEN from the dead, trampling down death by death, and giving life to those in the tomb.” These words, sung over and over again, are woven into the liturgy of the Eastern Church whereby its members keep vigil and celebrate the great feast of the Resurrection. They occur also in our Book of Common Prayer as one of the anthems to be sung as the body is borne from the church in the Rite of Christian Burial. “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and giving life to those in the tomb.”

In addition to this anthem, our Eastern Christian brothers and sisters celebrate the Paschal feast with an icon of the risen Christ standing victorious upon the trampled-down gates of Hell, below which in a black abyss, as though floating, are to be seen an assortment of locks and keys and lengths of chain—all symbols of bondage and imprisonment. To the right and left of the abyss are oblong stone tombs, and from them, being raised by Christ’s firm grasp upon their wrists, are Adam and Eve, our symbolic progenitors, who represent us—and the whole human race. This is no friendly handshake, but an insistent and uncompromising grasp. Christ appears to be pulling, indeed yanking, Adam and Eve out of the narrow and constrict-



Photo by Alice V. Manning

*“Behold the wood of the Cross, whereon was hung the world’s salvation”*

ing space of their tombs, in which they have been held fast in darkness and death. In their contained, iconic way, Adam and Eve look puzzled and unsure. Is this open space, this new reality of resurrection, to their liking? To be sure, their confining tombs offered little hope or joy, but at least they were familiar. They afforded to Adam and Eve the comfort of old sorrows, the sadness at their loss of Paradise, and the security of their guilt and shame.

As I ponder the icon and let it, as a form of pictorial Scripture, address me, I am put in mind of a verse from a poem by George Herbert, in which the tension between remaining in the tomb of our own sadness and self-preoccupation and being pulled into the reality of resurrection is wonderfully and succinctly set forth:

*Arise sad heart; if thou dost not withstand {resist},  
Christ's resurrection thine may be:  
Do not by hanging down break from the hand  
Which, as it riseth, raiseth thee . . .*

Here it is again. The sure and insistent grasp: the grasp of an unrelenting love—the love of the risen Christ, which, in the words of Paul, urges us on and will not settle for less-than-life, the tomb-life in which bondage to old habits, old fears, old angers provides us with its own dark security.

As the trampling-down Christ stands grasping the wrists of Adam and Eve, I hear him speak not only to Adam and Eve but to us as well in the words of an ancient Easter homily: “Awake O sleeper, and rise from the dead and Christ will give you light . . . out of love



Photo by Alice v. Manning

*The new fire at the Great Vigil*

for you and your descendants I now, by my own authority, command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held as prisoners in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place”—this state, this mode of being—“for you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated. . . . Rise, let us leave this place . . . the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.”

But are we ready to rise? Are we ready to leave the place of our unfreedom: ready to relinquish those patterns of life, those ways of perceiving, those resentments and sorrows that keep our hearts weighted down in an all-pervasive bitterness that seeks to keep Christ's love at bay? Have we so shut ourselves away in our little self-constructed worlds that resurrection confronts us not as good news, but as threat? Are we afraid? Afraid that if we allow the risen One to have his way with us, if we let resurrection loose in our lives, we will lose control and find that demands are being made on us that take us beyond the comfort of our self-perceived competencies? Do we know intuitively that the all-consuming fire of God's love, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, will spare no part of us as it purifies and transfigures and makes us new and whole? Whole not according to our own desires, but according to the yearning of the Father and of the Son, who draw us with bands of love into the intimacy of their own life through the subtle and sometimes not so subtle motions and movements of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit, whose eternal work is to bring into being a universe in which all people and all things are reconciled to one another is an all-pervading dynamic of communion—a gift our fragile and broken world so desperately needs.

**I**N A FEW MINUTES we will renew and reaffirm our baptismal identification with Christ—that is, our personal and corporate availability to the One who, out of his love for us, grasps our wrists and draws us from death into the wild and untamed realm of resurrection.

“Do you not know,” asks Paul, “that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

To walk in newness of life is not to walk alone. Nor is it simply to allow Christ to be a companion, a point of external reference and inspiration. It is to allow Christ, in the words of another poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, to “easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us.”

To walk in newness of life is to give room to the address of Christ to Adam and Eve as he draws them out of their tombs: “For you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated.” And why can we not be separated? Because, as Paul declares, “Nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

It is through the love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit that the risen Christ indwells us while, at the same time, drawing us firmly by the power of that love into a reordering of our own loves and desires—a reordering that leads, over time, to a transformation of consciousness and a new way of seeing and perceiving not only others and the world around us, but ourselves as well.

This process of Christ being formed in us begins in baptism, and is deepened, extended, and matured through the Eucharist, in which, through the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup, Christ declares over and over again, no matter how we feel or what state of estrangement we may be in, “You are in me and I am in you . . . and we cannot be separated.”



Photo by Alice V. Manning

*Bishop Griswold in the pulpit on the Easter Vigil*

No matter what, we cannot be separated. And though at times we may feel that God is absent, we are always in Christ and Christ in us. What often accounts for a sense of absence is our own distance from our true yet imperfect self—which is the self that Christ so deeply loves and desires to draw into resurrection reality.

Being baptized into Christ's death involves dying to the false and inauthentic selves we construct out of the tangle of our own distorted and disordered desires. Resurrection, therefore, is an experience of reconciliation, of coming home to ourselves, not as we know ourselves, but as God in Christ knows us, and deeply and passionately and enduringly loves us, with all our limitations and various thorns in the flesh. What is required of us is our trust in the strange and frequently paradoxical ways in which

resurrection overtakes us and lays claim to our lives.

And here I find it instructive that the angel's opening words to the women at the tomb on that first Easter Day were, "Do not be afraid."

Resurrection, through an outworking of unbounded love—the same love that raised Jesus from the dead—can be a fearsome thing because it is not about minor adjustments, but about a radical reordering of our lives according to God's desire and imagination. How does this radical reordering take place?

It is largely through the events and turnings of our lives—the choices, the decisions, the struggles, the relationships, the successes and failures—that we are grasped and drawn into resurrection. Nothing is ever tangential or irrelevant when it comes to Christ's way with us. The one who used mud and spittle, as well as bread and wine, to reveal his liberating and lifegiving love can use anything, literally anything or anyone or any set of circumstances no matter how strange or bizarre or seemingly inappropriate, to say: Awake, arise. Out of love for you I command you to come forth . . . let us leave this place—this patterning of life, this old sorrow, this seemingly unbreakable compulsion, this consuming anger, this immobilizing fear, this constricting relationship. Let us leave this place. The banquet is ready. Let us keep the feast, for I am risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and giving life to those in the tomb.

May we indeed awake, arise, and, not breaking from the firm grasp of the ever-eastering Christ, be drawn forth from darkness to light, death to life, bondage to freedom.

Amen.

—FTG

## Not Requiem but Celebration

*"How terrible is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."  
(Genesis 28:17)*

**I**N ONE OF his later poems, "The Cave of Nakedness" (1963), W. H. Auden wrote a phrase which struck me powerfully the first time I read it. It has remained with me ever since. The poet speaks of "the waist of the night": and I must immediately ask you, what did you hear when I said the word "waist"? *W-a-i-s-t*—or *w-a-s-t-e*?

In the poem, Auden wrote "w-a-i-s-t," but the word carries with it a deliberate ambivalence: he is speaking of the middle of the night, as our waist is the middle of our bodies. But he is also evoking the waste, the desolation, and the despair which many of us encounter in the middle of our lives. Waste at the waist.

Auden's phrase offers us a marvelous insight into the meaning of Good Friday. Surely the wastefulness of this day is evident to all: the cruel extinction of a human life. The wastefulness of this act is evident whenever it occurs, but this is made all the more obvious in the execution of Jesus.

We need to be clear about our liturgy on Good Friday: it is not a Requiem for Jesus. It is not a Requiem but a celebration of God's victory over death even in the context of the utter destructiveness of humanity. It is not a Requiem because Jesus is alive. As the great hymn of Venantius Fortunatus (Hymnal 162) affirms: "God is reigning from the tree."

In this liturgy there is the promise of God's victory in the Resurrection: at the Veneration of the Cross, we hear the antiphon, "We venerate your Cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify your holy Resurrection, for by virtue of the Cross, joy has come to the whole world."

It is a mistake, I believe, to think of Good Friday as a sad liturgy placed between the two joyful celebrations of Maundy Thursday and the Easter Vigil. Solemn? Yes! But not sad. The Good Friday rite is rooted in the Paschal Mystery. The liturgical celebrations of these three days—the Paschal Triduum—form a unity which begins with the liturgy of Maundy Thursday and moves forward to its summit in the Easter Vigil and the Masses of Easter Day, and then passes into a meditative conclusion in the Vespers of Easter evening. In a sense, these rites form one liturgy, which extends over three days.

Each Sunday, week after week, the Mass places us once again within the Paschal Mystery of our Lord, his death and resurrection. But in these three sacred days, the Church asks us to attend to that Mystery with a special intensity.

I must speak as a liturgist for a moment. The Triduum links us to the Church in Jerusalem in the fourth century. It was there that these rites took their classic shape. I believe that we can learn much about the depth of meaning in these rites by looking back to the Jerusalem Church at that time. For Christians of the fourth century, Good Friday was not concerned only with the death of Jesus, nor Sunday only with his resurrection. The three days as a unity commemorated the Passover of the Lord from death to life. The giving of



Communion on Good Friday with the Sacred Elements consecrated on Maundy Thursday embodied the powerful link between the Eucharist as instituted by Jesus and his self-offering in the crucifixion. The mid-point in these liturgies was in the expectant stillness of Holy Saturday, a time of silence and confident hope as the Church awaited the proclamation of God's victory over death at the Easter Vigil.

Down through the centuries, Christ saves us through "the activity of the Body of which he is the head." That is the Church. "He does this in his word that calls us to union with him in that Body." That is the Church. And so he reconciles us "to one another and to the Father by his saving grace—and that is liturgy."<sup>1</sup>

St. Augustine reminds us that a house of God, such as we are gathered in here today, is a type of embodied symbol for us as the People of God, and it is the gate of our salvation. He wrote:

May every Christian be devoured with zeal for the house of God, that house of God of which each Christian is a member. For no house is more truly our home than the one where we gain eternal life.<sup>2</sup>

And so this house is the place where we as a people of faith enter into the great signs in which that faith is embodied. In the Triduum, all those signs come together to form an awesome mosaic.

In this liturgy of Good Friday, the focus within the mosaic is upon the Cross. Golgotha is terrible. Yet in our liturgy, it is at the same time wonderful and glorious—because with the Cross of Jesus, God penetrates our wasted world at its waist—right at the center—and there the Cross plants the seed of transformed life: the place at which, as the deacon sings at the Easter Vigil, the "blessed iniquity of Adam" is reversed and redemption is gained.

How terrible—and wondrous—is this place: it is none other than—for us—the gate of heaven.  
—Louis Weil



Photo by Alice V. Manning

Father Weil in the pulpit at the 12:30 liturgy on Good Friday

1. Robert Taft, "Liturgy as Theology," in *Worship* (1982), p. 114.  
2. St. Augustine, Homilies on the Gospel of St. John, Tractatus X.



## THE CALENDAR FOR JULY



1 Tu	Weekday	
2 W	Weekday	
3 Th	Weekday	
4 F	Independence Day	<i>Abstinence</i>
	<i>Federal holiday schedule: One Mass only, at 12:15 PM</i>	
5 Sa	Of Our Lady	
<b>6 Su</b>	<b>THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</b>	
	SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM	
7 M	Weekday	
8 Tu	Weekday	
9 W	Weekday	
10 Th	Weekday	
11 F	Benedict of Nursia, <i>Abbot</i>	<i>Abstinence</i>
12 Sa	Of Our Lady	
<b>13 Su</b>	<b>THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</b>	
	SOLEMN PONTIFICAL MASS 11:00 AM	
	<i>The Right Reverend C. Christopher Epting, Ecumenical Officer of the Episcopal Church, Celebrant &amp; Preacher</i>	
14 M	Weekday	
15 Tu	Bonaventure, <i>Bishop</i>	
16 W	Weekday	
17 Th	William White, <i>Bishop</i>	
18 F	Weekday	<i>Abstinence</i>
19 Sa	Of Our Lady	
<b>20 Su</b>	<b>THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</b>	
	SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM	
21 M	Weekday	
	<b>Eve of Saint Mary Magdalene 6:00 PM</b>	
<b>22 Tu</b>	<b>SAINT MARY MAGDALENE</b>	
23 W	Weekday	
24 Th	Thomas à Kempis, <i>Priest</i>	
	<b>Eve of Saint James's Day 6:00 PM</b>	
<b>25 F</b>	<b>SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE</b>	<i>Abstinence</i>
26 Sa	The Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary	
<b>27 Su</b>	<b>THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</b>	
	SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM	
28 M	Weekday	
29 Tu	Mary and Martha of Bethany	
30 W	William Wilberforce, <i>Abolitionist</i>	
31 Th	Ignatius of Loyola, <i>Priest</i>	



# THE CALENDAR FOR AUGUST



- 1 F Joseph of Arimathaea
- 2 Sa Of Our Lady *Abstinence*
  
- 3 SU THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
- 4 M John Vianney, Priest
- 5 Tu Weekday  
**Eve of the Transfiguration 6:00 PM**
- 6 W THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD**  
SUNG MASS 6:00 PM
- 7 Th John Mason Neale, *Priest*
- 8 F Dominic, *Priest and Friar*
- 9 Sa Of Our Lady *Abstinence*
  
- 10 SU THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
- 11 M Clare, *Abbess*
- 12 Tu Weekday
- 13 W Jeremy Taylor, *Bishop*
- 14 Th Jonathan Myrick Daniels, *Seminarian*  
**Eve of the Assumption 6:00 PM**
- 15 F THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY** *No Abstinence*  
ORGAN RECITAL 5:30  
PROCESSION & SOLEMN PONTIFICAL MASS 6:00 PM  
*The Right Reverend Andrew St. John, Interim Rector, the Church of the Holy Trinity,  
New York City, Celebrant & Preacher*  
Mass ordinary: *Cantus Missæ (Messe in Es-dur, Op. 109)*, Josef Gabriel  
Rheinberger (1839–1901)  
Motets: *Ave Maria*, Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)  
*Ave maris stella*, Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)
- 16 Sa Of Our Lady
  
- 17 SU THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
- 18 M William DuBose, *Priest*
- 19 Tu Weekday
- 20 W Bernard of Clairvaux, *Abbot*
- 21 Th Weekday
- 22 F Weekday  
**Eve of Saint Bartholomew's Day 6:00 PM** *Abstinence*
- 23 SA SAINT BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE**
  
- 24 SU THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
- 25 M Weekday

- 26 Tu Weekday
- 27 W Weekday
- 28 Th Augustine of Hippo, *Bishop*
- 29 F Beheading of Saint John the Baptist *Abstinence*
- 30 Sa Of Our Lady

**31 SU THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM



*Cover photo: At the Easter Vigil, the sacrament of Confirmation, in the glory of blossom*

*This page: The beginning of Holy Week: scenes from the Palm Sunday procession*

Photos by Alice V. Manning

