

Pastor's Corner – Prairie Messenger Article – January 29, 2012

"Prophets manifest in unlikely places, and challenge us"

From Jan. 18 Prairie Messenger - "Liturgy and Life" by Anne Strachan

"My cousin James and I encounter the kid wearing the black hooded sweatshirt when he taps on the car window, as we're about to pull away from our parking spot close to the hostel. He wants a ride to Safeway, a distance of a number of blocks. My first reaction is to mumble to James, 'I don't really want him in the back seat of my car.' James responds, 'Oh, you don't?' Suddenly I feel ungenerous in my fear of this stranger. And grudgingly I allow the teenaged kid to enter the enclave of the warm car."

"His face appears angular and pale to my sideways vision, and there is a scar or birthmark. Afterward, I remember his thin sweatshirt, suitable for a much warmer day. I realize how cold I am in spite of my wool scarf thick coat and heavy hood. In contrast, he is ill equipped to ward of the wind sweeping in from the icy lake.

"In the car headed to Safeway, I say, 'It's cold.' The kid says, 'Yeah, I wouldn't want to sleep outside,' as though he often bunkers down in the street. His expression is inscrutable. For all I know, he bummed this ride to meet with his drug dealer. Or perhaps he's a drug dealer. I give my head a shake to dispel that scary thought.

"We pull up to the intersection beside Safeway, and he says, 'It's another couple of blocks.' I decide he's lucky I allowed him in the car at all. I feel pushed to the edge of my comfort level and I will not go further. Employing my best mother-of-teenager's voice, I firmly suggest he hop out, now.

"As the young stranger opens the car door and gets one leg out, I blurt, 'I'm sorry if I seem suspicious. I don't know you at all . . .' The excuse peters out and sounds feeble to my ears. I feel frustrated and embarrassed, at an impossible distance from this nameless, unknown person. I feel helpless, and about as Christian as the imagined drug dealer.'

"Suddenly, the kid turns back. He swiftly leans in. He grips my shoulder for one intense moment. Then he's gone."

Prophets manifest in unlikely places. Messengers from God - rich, poor, marginal or mainstream - challenge us and, when we are receptive, expand our comfort zones.

"O that today you would listen to his voice! Do not harden your hearts . . ." But it isn't always easy to discern God's voice in our own hearts, let alone to appreciate holiness in the heart of a questionable stranger who emerges from a harsh and hostile world.

St. Mark writes: "They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority . . ." Jesus then expands this authority to heal a man convulsed by an "unclean spirit." Often, we label and marginalize certain people as "unclean." But all of us - married, single, secure or living a questionable life on the street - are a mixture of dark and light, turmoil and peace. Can we push through our fear to listen to God's voice? Will we then respond - with love and trust - to God's healing touch?

Paul's message can sometimes seem judgmental, contradicting ideas of an inclusive, open - hearted God: "The unmarried woman and the virgin are concerned about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is concerned about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband." He says the same about men; according to Paul, married folk inevitably succumb to "divided interests."

Worldly concerns, holiness and scandal coexist in all walks of life. Does Paul suggest that in order to be close to God, we must consecrate ourselves to a life of virginity and contemplation in a controlled "safe" environment? Even in contemplative life, "unhindered devotion" to the Lord - developing compassion for family, friends and strangers - is daunting. Perhaps, like all of us, Paul struggles in his journey to understand the myriad questions and concerns of his time and place.

Thomas Merton says: "Clean, unselfish love does not live on what it gets but on what it gives. It increases by pouring itself out for others . . ." Can we pour ourselves out with unselfish love for those unexpected and sometimes frightening prophets and messengers - married, single, gay, straight, virginal or otherwise - in our midst? To begin, we might put aside our fear; we might even invite them into the car as we travel through this challenging, complex world.

"In the face of my reluctant, halfhearted, blundering Christianity, this stranger touched . . . no, gripped . . . my shoulder. In that deliberate gesture, he assured me that I'm not so bad. He understood my fear and forgave me for it. This marginal stranger forgives me. He blesses me" (Strachan, America Magazine, Sept. 22, 2008).

Saanich Peninsula Parish

A ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN COVENANT WITH ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
Box 2116, Sidney, BC, V8L 3S6

Parish Office: 250-656-7433, email: ssparish@shaw.ca, fax 250-483-1597

Web site: www.spparish.com, Rectory: 250-652-1990

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:00 - 4:30 pm, or by appointment.

PASTOR: Father Rolf Hasenack, O.P. **PARISH COORDINATOR:** Gary Koett

PASTORAL COUNCIL: Paul Ledet, Jr. (Chair)



EUCCHARIST AT ST. ELIZABETH'S

10030 Third Street, Sidney
Saturdays at 5 pm, Sundays at 10:30 am.
Daily on Tuesdays (8:30 am), Wednesdays and
Thursdays (9 am), and First Fridays (9 am).

RECONCILIATION AT ST. ELIZABETH'S

Saturdays 4 - 4:30pm

EUCCHARIST AT

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

7742 West Saanich Road, Saanichton
Sundays at 8:30 am

Last Friday at Saanich Peninsula Hospital at 11 am
Remaining Fridays at 9 am in a private home
(see "This Week in Our Parish" inside bulletin)



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME JANUARY 29, 2012

**Deut 18:15-20 1 Cor 7:17, 32-35
Mark 1:21-28**

VISITING EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY

If you know of someone who is house-bound or in a nursing home/hospital and would like a visit from the Pastor or the Visitation Team, please call the office at 250-656-7433.

MISSION STATEMENT

*Let us be open
accepting individuals
sensitive to change
and willing to take
Courses untraditional,
unknown to us.
Let us live as
examples of God's love.*

NEW TO THE PARISH? WELCOME!

Please fill out the information below so we can get to know you. Pick up one of the blue information pamphlets next to the bulletins in the foyer so you can get to know us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

Need Pre-Authorized Debit package? Yes ___ No ___

Need donation envelopes? Yes ___ No ___

IN OUR PARISH

COLLECTIONS:

January 1 collection: \$ 5,080
January 8 collection: \$ 4,842
January 15 collection: \$ 2,620
January 22 collection: \$ 2,928

Monthly Target: Approx. \$ 23,000

We offer condolences to the families and pray for the repose of the souls of:

- Grace Mary Hawkins
- Mary Marguerite Thelma Watson
- Jessie Dale Danielle Richter
- Beverly Henderson

SPECIAL MASS - WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

A special mass and anointing of the sick will be held on **Fri. Feb. 10 at 11 am** at St. Elizabeth's. You are encouraged to bring a sick relative or friend. Coffee and tea will be provided afterwards.

RE-GIFT YOUR BOOKLET

If you have the booklet "Understanding the Revised Mass Text" which you picked up from the church, and you no longer need it, please bring it back to the parish so that others may read it. We have had many requests from parishioners for these booklets, and have run out of copies.

PASTOR'S CORNER RE REVISED MASS

Since last spring, eight weeks of the "Pastor's Corner" were devoted to helping us to better understand and prepare for the recent revisions to the mass (text & music). Copies of these issues of the Pastor's Corner are available in the foyer.

2011 DIOCESAN APPEAL - THANK YOU

This gives notice of the closing of the second year of the Diocesan Appeal 'Journey of Hearts and Hands'. Many thanks to the 135 donors who generously gave \$43,350 towards our goal of \$50,000. On behalf of the Appeal Committee (Fr. Rolf, Freddie, Derek, Jim, Linda, Mark and Norm) - have a Holy and Happy 2012, from Freddie.

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

MONDAY, JAN. 30

1:00pm Faith Reflection Group
1:00pm Memory Plus

TUESDAY, JAN. 31

8:30am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
9:00am Eucharistic Adoration
11:30am Friendly Hours
11:30am Blood Pressure Clinic

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 1

9:00am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
10:00am Taiji Qijong
7:00pm Parish Council

THURSDAY, FEB. 2

9:00am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
11:30am Friendly Hours
2:00pm Prayer Group
6:00pm Taiji Qijong

FRIDAY, FEB. 3

9:00am Mass at St. Elizabeth's

SATURDAY, FEB. 4

4 - 4:30pm Reconciliation
5:00pm Mass at St. Elizabeth's

SUNDAY, FEB. 5

8:30pm Mass at Our Lady of Assumption
9:45am Children's Religious Education
10:30am Mass at St. Elizabeth's

For the latest schedule, please check the online Parish Calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/sppcal>.

PARISH RETREAT: MAR. 4 - 7

A parish retreat with Fr. Tony Gonsalves, OFM will be held on Mar. 4 - 7. The theme, *What is our identity?*, will help us discover God at work within us, as individuals, as a community, and the role we can play alongside issues of the world of today.

PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY - FREE 8 x 10

Your free 8" x 10" photos are available for pick up at the back of the church. If you were expecting a free photo and it isn't at the back of the church, please contact Linda MacGowan at 250-655-0713.

PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY UPDATE

The Parish Photo Directory will be available later in the spring. Thank you to all who participated in this important parish project.

IN OUR DIOCESE

RELATIONSHIPS IN A SEXUAL CULTURE: FEB. 3

You are invited to hear master communicator, Brad Henning make a presentation, "Relationships in a Sexual Culture" on Thu. Feb. 2, 7 - 9 pm at Christian Reformed Church, 661 Agnes St, Victoria. Free admission. (Brad will also be speaking to St. Andrew's High School students on this topic.)

D & P SHARE LENT WORKSHOP: FEB. 4

Development and Peace is holding a Share Lent Workshop at St. Joseph the Worker Hall on Sat. Feb. 4 at 9:30 am. This is an opportunity to find out more about the Catholic organization of Development and Peace focusing on Social & **Ecological** Justice. Everyone welcome. You are encouraged to attend to prepare for Lent. For more information call Jocelyn at 250-474-3989.

HOW DO WE PRAY?: FEB. 7

On Tue. Feb. 7, 7 pm at St. Patrick's Church, Fr. John Hibbard will give a one hour presentation: "How do we pray? Liturgical & Devotional Prayer over the Centuries". To register call St. Patrick's at 250-592-7391, or email parishsecretary@telus.net.

HEALING THE CHURCH - LESSONS FROM THE CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS: FEB. 24 & 25

Fri. Feb. 24, 7 - 9 pm & Sat. Feb. 25, 10 am - 3 pm (please bring a bag lunch) at St. Joseph the Worker Parish, 753 Burnside Rd. Sister Nuala Kenny (professor of bioethics, Dalhousie University) will give a talk on "Healing the Church: Lessons from the Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis". Sr. Nuala is a member of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops committee on Clergy Sexual Abuse. To register call 250-479-7413 or email sjtwoffice@shaw.ca.

PASTORAL CARE VOLUNTEER TRAINING: FEB. 17 - MAR. 30

If you would like to volunteer and develop / improve skills for visiting residents of long term care facilities to bring them spiritual comfort and care, you are invited to attend a course of seven 2-hour sessions taught by experts in the field. Fridays, Feb. 17 to Mar. 30, 9:30 to 11:30 am at the Church of the Cross, 3787 Cedar Hill Rd. **The \$20 registration fee will be covered by the parish.** For more info call Arthur Menu at 250-370-5733 To register contact the parish office at 250-656-7433.

GETTING TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ISLAM

Four evening sessions on Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15 and 29, 7 pm at St. Patrick's Parish, 2060 Haultain St.:

- Feb. 1: *Historical Prospective of Islam*
- Feb. 8: *The Four Pillars of Islam*
- Feb. 15: *Living in a Majority Moslem Country*
- Feb. 29: *Challenges of Christians to Live with Moslems*

Presented by Fr. Tony Gonsalves O.F.M. Fr. Tony has worked extensively in Moslem countries, and he has a great depth of knowledge to share with us. Everybody welcome!

GENERAL

BURSARY OPPORTUNITY

The Catholic Health Assoc. of BC is awarding two \$250 bursaries to two 2012 high school students. Students are asked to submit a 500 word essay that demonstrates an awareness and understanding of the significance of Spirituality in Health Care. Deadline: Mar. 9. For more info see poster in the foyer, or www.chabc.bc.ca under "upcoming events".

"JOURNEY OF THE UNIVERSE" SERIES: FEB. 1 - 29

"The Emergence of Universe, Earth, Life and Humans", with Gertie Jocksch, SC DMin. A series of interviews in conjunction with the "Journey of the Universe" film. Wednesdays, Feb. 1 to 29, 7 - 9 pm at First Metropolitan United Church, 932 Balmoral Rd. \$70 for all five sessions (drop in \$15).