



Taste and

See...



VOL. 5 No. 1

ISSN 2561-6684 (print)

SPRING 2022

ISSN 2561-6692 (online)

Hold Fast

Jane Jones

According to the Hebrew calendar, this is the decade of the voice. I don't know about you, but my voice feels like screaming, "STOP!!" What a couple years this has been, with masks, vaccines, isolation, etc. We need this plague to stop!

I know there are things that I have learnt about myself during this

time, some good, some bad. I've also been given the gift of space and time to focus on embracing the former and dealing with the latter!

I'm thankful for Zoom and the technology that allows us see faces and communicate, but I am also missing the hugs and the closeness, even companionable silence - the "face to face" - that only comes with personal contact.

When I was asking the Lord for a word for this year, He said to me, "Hold Fast" (Heb. 10:23): "Let us seize and hold tightly (Hold

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Taste and See... is the quarterly publication of



Anglican Renewal Ministries
Canada

Subscriptions:

\$15 / year individual, \$30 / year group (4 copies to one address), \$10 / year digital

HOLD FAST, continued

fast) the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is reliable *and* trustworthy *and* faithful [to His word].”

Amid the swirl and confusion of daily life and streaming news, it is easy to lose our way, to forget what the Lord has said to us about ourselves, our nation, and our future. We lose sight of His word when we are tossed about by the controversies that swirl around us and bombard us from every angle.

To *hold fast* means to bear down, stay the course. It is a nautical term. Sailors would have it tattooed on their knuckles to remind them that they could get through any storm if they held fast, both physically and mentally.

Physically, it means to bear down and fight through the storm. It means that you need to secure yourself so you can help others. If you are washed overboard, then you are no help to anyone. Survival often depends on us staying strong for others.

Mentally, it means we need to renew our mind, cast fear aside and believe that God’s promises are true and He who promised is faithful. Pray that we will not be swayed or intimidated by those who would lead us into error.

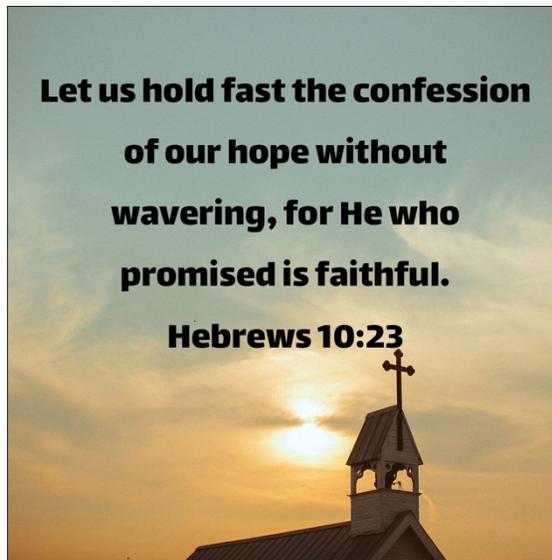
Sailors need to know their part, the role they play as a member of the crew, so the ship will find a

safe passage through the storm. The goal is to become stronger and wiser as we weather the storms that are assailing us right now.

The ship needs a seasoned navigator, one who knows how to navigate in a storm, so the ship is not capsized. Somebody once told me you hit what you are looking at. I recognised the truth of that when I tried skiing - all I could see was the trees! Remem-

**Let us hold fast the confession
of our hope without
wavering, for He who
promised is faithful.**

Hebrews 10:23



ber what happened to Peter when he began to look at the wind and the waves and not at Jesus?

God is faithful and His purpose for Canada will be fulfilled if we stay the course and keep our eyes on Him. This is my admonition to you all: “hold fast” because He who promised is faithful and we will weather this storm. I invite you to read and inwardly digest these scriptures:

Hebrews 10:23: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope with-

out wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

1 Thessalonians 5:21: “But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.”

Deuteronomy 10:20: “You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name.”

Hebrews 3:6: “but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house — whose house we are if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”

Hebrews 4:14: “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”

We all face storms, and they may have seemed particularly strong during this pandemic. The question is, how do we react? Do we run and hide, bury our heads in the sand? Or do we stand and protect those we love?

We will weather this storm and, by the grace of God, stay true to what we believe and keep ourselves aligned with the plumb line of the Word, as long as our focus remains fast on Him and His promises.

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Taste and See...

From the Editor

Alison Stortz

This winter has seemed particularly long. As I write this, Ash Wednesday is still a few weeks away, and Easter six weeks beyond that. But even in these dark, cold months there are signs of spring, signs of new life stirring (not counting the chocolate bunnies sharing space with Valentine hearts on the shelves).

ARM has been blessed with two in-person renewal events this winter, in Medicine Hat, AB, and in Dallas, TX. And so we step into this coming spring season with praise to God on our lips and a new spring in our steps. We pray that these winds of the Holy Spirit will continue to blow! If you would like ARM to lead a Holy Spirit event your area, please let us know.

In this issue, we offer a weekly meditation series that we hope will enrich your Lenten journey. This is a season of self-examination, an opportunity to deepen our faith and grow in our relationship with our Lord. May this season of repentance bring forth great fruit in all our lives!

Thanks be to God, the journey to the cross doesn't end there. Romans 8:11 reminds us that, "the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. If the same Holy Spirit lives in you, He will give life to your bodies in the same way."

As our Chair points out, we are a resurrection people. We are indeed. And that is cause for great joy! He is Risen! Alleluia!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Alison ☺

SPRING 2022

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**Volume 5 Number 1
SPRING 2022**

The quarterly magazine of
Anglican Renewal Ministries Canada

The National Church
Executive Committee has
sanctioned the use of
Anglican Renewal Ministries

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ARM Canada is a registered non-profit organization supported by tax deductible donations.
(Registration No. 0664250-47)

Editor: Alison Stortz

Subscriptions:

\$15/year individual (paper),
\$10/year individual (digital),
\$30/year group
(4 copies to one address)

Submissions for publication in

Taste and See...

may be emailed to
arm@armcanada.org

Writer's guidelines are on
our website:

www.armcanada.org

Wilderness Way: Meditations on the Ascended Life

The Very Rev. Dr. Donald P. Richmond

“If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

(John 16:24, KJV throughout)

Following Jesus from Gethsemane to Golgotha to grave is not an easy discipline. With St. Thomas we may say “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16), but, also like Thomas and most of the others, our purpose does not always match our practice. We fail. We need something, Someone, more. We need the presence and the power of the Paraclete. Following Jesus requires the wings and the winds of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship requires *dynamis!*

Week 1: (Matthew 4:1-11, and Matthew 26)

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil”

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12), Christ’s assertions about the ascended way, formally begin shortly after our Lord’s baptism, when Jesus is physically and spiritually identified as the eternally chosen Son of God for the eternal plan of God. And God is well pleased! And yet, in the passage noted above, here is God’s only Son being led (Matthew) and driven (Mark) into the wilderness. Odd though it may sound, this was God’s plan for the releasing of God’s power. It was Christ’s way. It is our way.

We will also be led into the wilderness. We too will experience desolation. Let us know therefore, as we seek to faithfully follow, that the Spirit is with us, and in us, and for us.

Sometimes geography is biography. Jesus was led *up* into the wilderness. No doubt this had everything to do with the so-called lay of the land, the geography in which this event occurred. Spiritually speaking, however, being led *up* was a biographical statement. No matter what may have been the outward circumstance – the desert waste – God’s intention was to always guide and guard Jesus along the upward path. God’s plan for us, also, is to be led *up* into the higher plan and power of God. No matter what our circumstance may be, it is always the upward way to which we are called.

There will always be times – the “then” of our existence – when we will be tempted. In his devotional classic *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas à Kempis tells us that some people are tempted earlier in their lives, others are tempted later, and a few people will experience serious temptation throughout their lives. Each person is unique, and God will orchestrate our lives according to our need and God’s glory – keeping in mind, of course, that God tempts no one but, rather, we are often led astray by the world, flesh and devil. *We must be prepared for this.* It is nothing unusual, as

James tells us in his epistle. There will always be a “then.” There will also be graced times when growth is most assured under the blistering sun of wilderness temptation.

Wilderness experiences are watershed experiences. It was for Jesus, and it is intended to be so for each of us. After our Lord’s wilderness success, Jesus formally began his ministry. Soon thereafter, Jesus began preaching, teaching and healing. And then, according to Matthew, he chose the Twelve *to be with him*. When we read and reflect upon our Lord’s wilderness experience, we can take hope. Even God in the flesh had to endure the wilderness. It was the path of Israel. It was the path of Job. It was the path of Jesus. It was the path of many great saints. It is, to the point, our own specially crafted path. Our wilderness can be profitable.

Week 2: (Matthew 5:1-12 and Matthew 27)

“Blessed are...”

The Beatitudes are a dramatic forespeaking, a practical and present poetic prophecy about the drama of Christ’s Passion. They reveal his way, and our way as those who follow him. While the Beatitudes communicate the wisdom way, they pointedly express the way of walking in that wisdom. They are not loosely linked prov-

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WILDERNESS, continued

erbs, recast in New Testament context, but *progressively present*, a pathway leading “up” into the presence and power and purpose of God. That is, they outline a step-by-step process by which blessedness is both promised and secured. This was Jesus’ way, the blessed way to which we are called and challenged.

The Beatitudes remind us of Psalms 1 and 23; Jesus Christ is “the man” who perfectly walked the way of perfection (Psalm 1), protection, provision, and pain (Psalm 23). Our blessing is in following the same person along that same path. But we must be prepared. The way of ascending is the way of descending. The upward way always leads to Gethsemane and Golgotha. And it is precisely in these places - not apart from these places - that a table is set.

The upward call always grounds us. The ascended life is entirely practical, parochial, and dependent upon the Paraclete.

There is a pronounced “now” associated with blessedness. Just as there is a “now” attached to the “day of salvation,” there is a “now” associated with walking the way of Jesus. When we simply seek to walk with Christ along this path, regardless of our circumstances or the challenges, the blessing of God is assured us. “Blessed are” is the litany that the Beatitudes proclaim. How very odd, then, that we should think

that this blessedness might be received or achieved apart from the way of the thorn. The thorn of poverty, mourning, humility and hunger is the blessed way of head, heart and hand compunction.

“theirs is...”

Followers of Jesus must always walk this way of beatitude. We have done so before, and we will tread this trail many times again. Citing a broadly Benedictine idea, we always begin again. As the Beatitudes are essential to the Chris-



tian life, we must continually live within them. To be truly transfigured will require that we perpetually return to the valley of real life. The ascended life always leads to Calvary.

But this is not the entire picture. The Beatitudes contain poignant promises punctuated by the present assurance of the “kingdom of heaven.” The Kingdom of Heaven, as a present reality, shapes and softens everything. It frames all of life for the follower of Jesus Christ. The upward path of God, this beatitudinal way that ends with persecution, has bounty

and beauty. It ends with kingdom authority and kingdom power. The Lord Jesus Christ - our resurrected and ascended Lord - reigns from a Tree (Psalm 96:10).

Week 3: (Matthew 5:3-5 and John 18)

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

Poverty of spirit is the Christian’s perpetual state. It is not a waystation, a passing phase from which, having learned its lessons,

we move onward and upward to bigger and better things. We cannot seek or find God without his illuminating assistance. We cannot save ourselves. God must initiate and act because we are too impoverished to do otherwise. A bigger and better life is to be found within the context of our pronounced and permanent poverty of spirit.

God, becoming man in Jesus Christ, knew spiritual poverty because of his self-emptying. He knew the poverty of anonymity, temptation, sorrow, misunderstanding, betrayal and denial. God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit shares our deepest impoverishments.

Poverty of spirit reaps rewards. But let’s be honest: this is not something to which we are humanly attracted. We do not aspire to be spiritually impoverished. We would much rather be self-sufficient even though, if we

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are followers of Christ, we know on some level that self-sufficiency is both insufficient and unsatisfactory. The poverty of spirit to which Jesus makes mention is an impoverishment which only God in Christ by the Holy Spirit can satisfy. To grow in this is to know God's blessing in both the here-and-now and in the there-and-then.

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

True impoverishment of spirit naturally results in mourning. And, importantly, this kind of sorrow and mourning are without regret. In mourning, we become far more human and far more real. Embracing who we really are actualizes the true sorrow by which comfort becomes available. Jesus wept, and from this he worked resurrection miracles.

As we examine life, the current state of the world and its inhabitants, we should mourn. When we see injustice and violence, we should mourn. When we even begin to understand how far we have fallen from God's intention, and our own human flourishing, we should mourn. And while praying for his immanent return is at all times proper, mourning our own current condition is also appropriate.

Comfort comes in walking the way of the Cross, and not away from it. We all experience hardship, heartache, disappointment and discouragement. But, along

with this, followers of Jesus must take up their cross. This means that, in some small way and in spite of our Lord's finished work, every Christian shares in the burden and the blessing of redemption. As Scripture tells us, we fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Col. 1:24). Consequently, the comfort of God is a present reality and a future promise.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

It is profitable to think about how humility and the inheritance of the earth intersect. The word “humility” derives from *humus*, which means “earth.” A reasonable interpretation, therefore, is that humility is most often to be found in owning the dust of the humanity from which we were created. God is mindful that we are dust, and wisdom suggests that we must do the same. The incarnation, life, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ is the identification and glorification of our humanity. Humility, dust, is essential to humanity.

Meekness is not weakness. Meekness means that with Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can ascend by descending into those painful places where the fruits of the Spirit are most capably planted and fertilized. The Rule of Saint Benedict elucidates upon twelve steps of humility as a means of moving upward with God by systematically applying practical disciplines. Meekness is a discipline which leads to the de-

velopment of a loving disposition. But it is not easy to achieve such a disposition. Growth is absolutely needed, but we need an abundance of grace to arrive at this soul-disposition. We need the Holy Spirit empowering us to live holy lives.

Week 4: (Matthew 5:6-8 and John 19)

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

The process is simple, but the product is not so easily arrived at: poverty of spirit leads to mourning, true mourning leads to humility and meekness which, together, produce a hunger and thirst for righteousness. A hunger and thirst for righteousness is an indication that the Holy Spirit is alive within us. If we have no desire for holiness, we have cause to question the state of our souls. The Holy Spirit elicits holy hungers! For what and for whom are we hungering and thirsting?

An appetite for holiness means that we not only recognize our own shortcomings, our sins, but also recognize and mourn over the lost state of those around us. We thirst for truth, justice and righteousness, where Christ not only rules in our hearts but also reigns over all the world in grace and mercy and peace.

Sainthood is not reserved for the exceptional Christian; it is an expression of the normal Christian life. Every Christian in some way

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recognizes this calling and this challenge. But we sometimes pursue perfection in our own way, according to our own will. Eve sought to be like God, but her own impulses and passions led her to the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:4-6). Like Eve, whether we are Christians or non-Christians, we want to be like God. How this is achieved or received, however, makes all the difference.

“God’s calling is God’s enabling,” as one of my old Professors was wont to say. There is the promise of filling attached to the hunger and thirst we all experience. Do we have this hunger for holiness? Are we striving to be what God called us to be: saints? What he has begun, he will also fulfill. It is God’s work, by and in and through the Holy Spirit.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

The careful reader will notice that I have skipped verse 7. Fear not, this is deliberate. To appreciate the implications of verse 7, we must first consider verses 6 and 8. There is a progress here, one broadly paralleling our Lord’s ascension up Mount Calvary. Holy Spirit people naturally hunger and thirst for righteousness. But *how* do we move from the hunger for holiness (v6) to the fulfillment of that hunger (v8)? How do we see God?

Purity requires sifting. No matter how much we have progressed in our faith, our attitudes and actions are not always as pure as we would like them to be. There is within us, in some ways, a mixture of sinner and saint. But God is not content to leave us in this state. Change is required. We see this in the story of Job. Chapters 1 and 2 emphasize that Job was a righteous man, but in spite of this, further purification was required. Finally, nearing the end of his ordeal, *Job sees God* and changes both his perspective and



his position (Job 42:5). Even Jesus, who was entirely perfect, had to affirm that it was God’s will, not his own, that he most wanted to be done (Luke 22:42). Golgotha was a sifting. We all experience our own Golgotha.

The *seeing of God* entirely reorients our disposition. When we truly see God, we begin to see everything and everyone differently. Far from being puritanical, true purity is, like Christ, humble and gentle in head, heart and hands.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they

shall obtain mercy.”

It seems odd that, while speaking about righteousness and purity, our Lord should place mercy squarely in the middle. We hunger, it seems to us, and we eventually receive and achieve purity. But such an idea is far too abstract. We need a practical means by which to move from “point A” to “point B.” Mercy is the chief means by which the Christian moves from an appetite for righteousness to the satisfaction of that appetite in purity of heart. Mercy softens any hard edge that can be associated with righteousness or purity. What does righteousness look like? What does purity look like? Mercy!

Mercy is a most inconvenient discipline of discipleship. It is very difficult to extend real charity or real mercy. Letting love be truly “genuine,” as says the Apostle (Rom. 12:9), is hard work. It is inconvenient in regard to family and friends, and especially inconvenient when it comes to our enemies. Jesus had experience with each of these – family, friends and enemies – during his final days on this earth. His family openly and mockingly challenged his messianic claims. His friends argued over who was the greatest. His closest friends denied or deserted him. Mercy is most inconvenient, but it is most necessary if we take discipleship seriously. The Calvary way is the merciful way.

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Week 5: (Matthew 5:9-12 and Luke 22)

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

Making peace is a costly Christian responsibility. I am reminded of many who, while seeking peace and reconciliation, lost their lives. Peacemaking, most especially as an extension of mercy, is painful. But, as well, peacemaking was and is the way of Jesus and his disciples. Children of God must at all times seek peace and pursue it, having our feet shod with the preparation of the good news of peace (Eph. 6:15). Such peace is a gift of God, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit. It is a graced gift. We need much grace as we walk the way of the cross.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Having ascended from poverty to peacemaking, we might be inclined to think that our radical reorientation would be celebrated. It isn't! On the contrary, the reward for following the blessed way is persecution. We, therefore, follow the path because Jesus himself has walked it, and he has called us to do the same. We follow it because, regardless of the persecution, it is the better and blessed way.

This is emphasized by the bracketing of the entire text around the

idea of “theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven” (emphasis mine). There is a numinous *now-ness* attached to this ascended path. There will also be persecution. When we arrive at the summit of our ascended struggles, we will be welcomed by the cross of Calvary.

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...” (Luke 23:34)

And here we are, at the highest point of earth and cosmos - the Cross of Christ - where the ascended life is the descended life. And here, once again, we return to the foundations of abject poverty, merciful purity and promised persecution.

These words of forgiveness are exceptionally hard to fathom. Those who historically crucified our Lord did not know what they were doing? Really?! The idea is almost impossible to believe. But it is believable because we, also, crucified Christ. How many times has each of us done something without realizing the full implications of our actions - for good or for ill? The fact is that we know and we do not know the implications of our actions. But, regardless of this, we absolutely know our need for mercy, for forgiveness.

Week 6: (Luke 23)

“Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

We are all thieves of divinity. With our original forebears we have reached out and taken from

the “tree” that which was not, *in this way*, rightfully ours. In the text cited above, this arrogance is reversed because redemption is freely and fully offered. An analysis of the first sin, the original sin, suggests that being “like God” is not only God’s intention but also our (often subconscious) motivation. God wants us to be like him, but, unlike Adam and Eve, on his terms and according to his plan, not our own.

Being with Jesus is what conforms us into his image and likeness. When Peter and John were confronted by the Council for proclaiming Jesus, it was noted that they had been with Jesus. They were changed because they were with him. The repentant thief on Calvary was with Jesus only briefly, but God’s mercy welcomed him into Eternity. God freely gives, and wants to give, his presence, power and promises to those who humbly ask.

“Woman, behold thy son...” (John 19:26)

Although many truths might be derived from this exchange, and regardless of Mary’s exclusive and exalted position in salvation history, our Lord was quite pedestrian in his concerns during his final hours. His entrusting of Mary to John, and John to Mary - this reconstitution of biological family - tells us about our Lord’s priority of family, a family consisting of those gathered around the Cross of Christ. Love motivated both Mary and John. Love sustained them during these very

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dark hours. Love determined their relationship to Jesus and to each other. The Cross defines us, determines us and defends us. It is the great equalizer.

“Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished,... saith, I thirst.” (John 19:28)

Karl Barth, one of the most important theologians over the past five hundred years, once wrote that in order to continue our theological tasks we must always begin again. This perspective expresses both great humility and great insight. Jesus accomplished for God what was intended to be accomplished through his complete self-emptying. The blood and the breath were almost gone, and he thirsted. Redemption won. But, in spite of this perfect redemption, the Christian must continue by beginning again. We perpetually return to poverty, mourning and meekness.

He who was perfectly righteous, who perfectly fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, who was incarnate Love, thirsted. Refusing both the cup of the Kingdom and the numbing gall offered by his tormentors, our Lord hung suspended between heaven and earth. It was a physiological thirst of cosmic import. Yes, Christ was physically thirsty; some temporal relief was certainly needed. But so that all might be fulfilled, our

Lord denied himself temporal comforts in order to attain eternal rewards. Hungering and thirsting are part of life. They are part of Lent, emphasizing the deeper and eternal appetites which followers of Jesus are called to cultivate as we, like our Lord, often feel suspended between two worlds.

“he said, It is finished” (John 19:30)

Our Lord “received the vinegar... and gave up the ghost.” There



are many times when we believe that we have been treated unfairly. We feel that things have been taken from us, and we have been socio-psycho-pneumatically impoverished. Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, willingly drank of the world’s bitter vinegar and allowed himself to be so very diminished that he could surrender his own spirit. He gave all for God, and for us, for the joy that was set before him. There is freedom when followers of Jesus subsume life’s vinegar into the victory of God.

“he said, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46)

Having followed our Lord’s beatitudinal journey from poverty

through persecution, we have arrived at the Garden Tree of Calvary. Here there is true fruit that is freely offered. To be a follower of Jesus, to walk his Way, is to embrace a harrowing journey of sanctified suffering. It is to “step up” to our calling by perpetually “stepping down” into the person whom God has made us to be. And this is as it should be. Saint Charbel, the 19th century Maronite Monk, tells us that in order for us to be saints, we must be first be human. Beatitudinal living is the process of humanization.

Let us close with a meditation on the cross by Thomas à Kempis in The Imitation of Christ:

In the cross is salvation; in the cross is life; in the cross is protection from thine enemies; in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the cross is strength of mind; in the cross is joy of spirit; in the cross is height of virtue; in the cross is perfection of sanctity. There is no health of soul nor hope of eternal life but in the cross. Take up, therefore, thy cross and follow Jesus...

Donald P. Richmond, DD, a widely published author and illustrator, is an Anglican Priest serving in the USA.

From the ARM Chair

Rev. Canon Gene Packwood

TO EACH IS GIVEN

ARM board members Jane Jones, Daniel Joseph and I have recently returned from the *To Each is Given* conference and meetings in East Texas and the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas. We were invited to Texas by Bishop Fraser Lawton, our erstwhile Episcopal Visitor, the parishes he oversees, and Canon Carrie Headington, Episcopal Diocese of Dallas Missioner for Evangelism.

I started this piece while sitting in the airport departure lounge in Dallas, waiting and waiting as our flight is delayed: 6:25 a.m. to 10:45, then to 11:25, then 11:50. It was a bit like waiting for the Holy Spirit to show up for many of us. First, the weather seems to hold us, or Him, up (the climate in our church), then it's crew issues (shortages, we think, or

maybe the wrong people? Could it be the caterers?), then technical problems, such as pipes freezing so the (living) water can't get through. It seems we will never get off the ground.

But, every now and then, somebody gets things together and makes an extra effort to spread their wings and fly, which is what the Affiliated Parishes of North East Texas people and parishes did last weekend. Eventually, the temperature rises above freezing, there are enough crew members and, by God's grace, we take off. As I write this bit I'm in the air over Ontario, just out of Toronto on my way to Regina via Vancouver and another night in a hotel away from home.

The ways of the Holy Spirit can be convoluted, too. Things like sin, fear and disbelief create dead

ends and false trails. The trick is not to let yourself get disappointed and to keep trying; to have the courage to just give it a go once in a while. It's what these ordinary, steady, faithful Episcopalians did. Well, perhaps they are more *EXTRA*-ordinary Episcopalians, because they were willing to stretch their wings a bit and try something that was new for most of them.

They worshipped and listened and pondered and overcame fears and offered themselves in prayer and, from what I heard, some spiritual wings were unfurled to feel something of the winds of God. It was an honour and a privilege to see it and to share some moments as faces lit up and wings were spread to test some Holy Spirit breezes.

Participant Lee Spence, a member of St. Dunstan's in Mineola, sent me these words of encouragement after the event: "Saying 'thank you' for all you accomplished while in Mineola sounds so empty! You, Jane, and Daniel opened new worlds to the faithful in East Texas, adding so much to the work already begun by Bp. Lawton and Veronica. The Holy Spirit is hovering, filling us with fire for the Word, and encouraging us to continue a ministry in progress. I know my experiences of the past few days will impact my interaction with my small

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Bishop Fraser Lawton, Rev. Canon Gene Packwood, Jane Jones, and Rev. Daniel Joseph. Photo by Juan Yoelvis Benitez.

group in Alpha; I hope I can offer my brothers and sisters in Christ just a small portion of what you have given me.”

I liked it. And I’m pretty sure Jesus did, too!

LENTEN EMBER DAYS

The Lenten Ember Days will be upon us right around the time you get this issue of *Taste and See...*: March 9, 11 and 12.

I invite you to pray with us this Collect from page 142 in the *BCP*:

O God, who hast made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and didst send thy blessed Son Jesus Christ to preach peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh: Grant that all peoples of the world may feel after thee and find thee; and hasten, O Lord, the fulfillment of thy promise to pour out thy Spirit upon all flesh, through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please pray – from your heart and often – for that promised pouring to take place, especially in our church, so that our sons and our daughters shall indeed prophesy, our old dream dreams, and our young see visions (Joel 2:28).

Please pray also for an increased desire in God’s people to “feel after thee and find thee” – that there will be more opportunities

to do what we were invited to do in Texas.

LENTEN STUDIES

We hope the weekly meditations in this issue will encourage you on your Lenten journey this year.

Please also visit the ARM website, where you will find more Lenten resources, including *Leaning into Lent*, a series of six brief videos in which ARM Board members reflect on the six ways by which we are charged to observe a Holy Lent:

- Self-examination
- Repentance
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Almsgiving
- Reading and meditating on the Word of God.

EASTER JOY

Lest that all seems a bit like hard work, Alison, our editor, is keen to include a little Easter joy in here somewhere, even though we’re a couple of months away. Fair enough, we are a resurrection people, after all.

So I looked ahead and came across The Collect of the Day for The Great Vigil of Easter from page 329 in the *BAS*:

Eternal Giver of life and light, this holy night shines with the radiance of the risen Christ. Renew your Church with the

Spirit given to us in baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth, and shine as a light in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, now and for ever.

Since we get to reaffirm our Baptismal vows during the Vigil, “Renew your Church with the Spirit given to us in baptism” seems to me to be a significant line and dear to our ARM Canada hearts.

The fact is, we baptized ones are all Holy Spirit-filled people, by definition and because whoever presided at our baptisms prayed that we would be filled with that Spirit (which was our message to the dear Saints in East Texas). All we have to do is release it. Some of us have, some of us have yet to do so. Not necessarily because we’re bad or resisting it. Some of us have just never been taught, have been fearful, or never had the opportunity.

ARM Canada exists to help activate and release “the Spirit given to us in baptism” so the church is renewed, the Gifts of the Spirit are operating freely as the Spirit wills for the common good, the Fruits of Spirit abound, and the Church is built up.

Gene+

The Holy Spirit and You

Lynne Windjack

Sometimes you need chocolate, a cup of coffee, or a long walk. And sometimes you need more! Our small Cursillo Group felt a yearning for the Spirit of God. We wanted to know Him, to know more about Him and about the Fruit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

So we did some reading. Then Pastor Roland Weisbrot from Victory Lutheran Church led us in an 8-week study. Then we contacted Rev. Gene Packwood to ask if ARM could help us learn. His response was an enthusiastic “Yes!”

The Holy Spirit and You was the title of the workshop held on a Friday evening and Saturday in November 2021 at Victory Lutheran Church in Medicine Hat. Our speakers included Rev. Canon Gene Packwood, Rev. Oz Lorentzen of St. Barnabas Anglican Church and Pastor Jim Bredeson of Victory Lutheran Church. The purpose of the workshop was to explore and expand our relationship with the Holy Spirit, the third person of God.

Pastor Jim celebrated a communion service on Friday evening. He reminded us that Jesus tells us to ask for what we need and it will be given, to search and we will find, to knock and the door will be opened (Matt. 7:7). So we did, singing, “Veni, Sancte Spiritus.”

Saturday morning, Rev. Oz led us

through group discussion and personal reflection questions focused first on the Spirit as Love, then on what blocks or hinders the Holy Spirit, and finally, the reason the Spirit was sent: “The Holy Spirit comes to make Holy People!”

Rev. Gene began his presentation, “The Holy Spirit & You: To Each is Given,” with a reference to *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*. To put that into context, Elizabeth (pregnant with John) felt her baby leap in her womb when Mary (pregnant with Jesus) visited her, as if John had already begun pointing the way to salvation à la Ed McMahon: “Heeeere’s Jesus!” And that, according to Gene, is our job, too. The Holy Spirit in us should point everyone to Jesus.

If you know Gene, then you may also know his lovely wife and partner, Judy. Before we concluded our morning session, Judy shared prophetic words with some of the people gathered.

Given the COVID-19 protocols around serving food, each person brought his/her own lunch, and we thank Victory Lutheran Church for the coffee and water they provided.

In the afternoon session, Gene spoke about the gift of prophecy, which is meant to comfort, encourage and strengthen, then suggested that we try it. He divided us into 2 groups. Group 1 stood facing the wall, then a member of group 2 stood behind each mem-

ber of group 1. Gene directed group 2 to ask God to show us how He has gifted this person for ministry, what He specifically likes about this person, and finally, to fill our hearts with love for this person. Then listen. And listen some more.

When we were ready to share our message, Gene suggested we might begin with, “Does the word ___ mean anything to you?” or “I think the Lord may be saying something like this....” After sharing with our partners, we traded places and prayed again. And the Spirit spoke! Many of us received words or messages of encouragement and affirmation to share with our partners.

After a short break, we met as a whole group to share some of our earlier experiences. There were some great examples of the Spirit working in us!

We concluded the afternoon with prayer and ministry time. One could visit Rev. Oz and Judy or Pastor Jim and Rev. Gene for a personal time of prayer.

Thank you, Gene and Judy, Oz and Jim, for sharing your time and talents with us. Plans are already underway for a second session on the other Gifts of the Spirit. Until that time, we will practise what we have learned: “Speak Lord, your servant is listening” (1Sam. 3:9).

Lynne Windjack attends St. Barnabas Anglican Church in Medicine Hat, AB.

Episcopal Visitor: Archbishop Gregory Kerr-Wilson

I am delighted to be able to serve the ministry of ARM as its new Episcopal Visitor. As a lifelong Anglican who has been a part of many congregations and communities in our Church, I have ex-



perienced a wide range of what we used to call “churchmanship”: from traditional choral music to contemporary praise choruses, from BCP and BAS formal liturgies to prayer and praise services, from an evangelical call to give my life to Jesus to baptism in the Holy Spirit to formation in an Anglo-Catholic seminary.

When asked how I “identify,” I usually say that I am an evangelical, charismatic, Anglican catholic with liberal and conservative tendencies. Whatever the context or the labels, I have always been convinced that being centred in the person and work of Jesus and welcomingly open to the moving and power of the Holy Spirit are essential to the life and witness of

the Church if it is to be renewed and effective from one generation to the next.

ARM has played an important role in raising this up before the Church and I am pleased to be able to support this good work. I look forward to seeing what our Lord has in store in the coming years.

Peace and grace to you all.

+Greg

The Most Rev'd Gregory Kerr-Wilson is Archbishop of Calgary and Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land.

Stir Up Your Faith!

A word from our friends at The Anglican Planet

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Photo by Rob Robotham

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In Christ,
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Editor-in-Chief, *TAP*

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Pentecost in the Pentateuch: Bezalel

Rev. Canon Gene Packwood

Last time we looked at the story of Joseph, who Pharaoh described as a man, “in whom is the Spirit of God” (Gen.41:38). Next, we’ll turn our attention to a man called Bezalel and another Spirit-filled endeavour, this time in Exodus, the second book in the Pentateuch.

Bezalel is not as well known as Joseph but, we are told, The Lord called him specifically by name and filled him with “the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.” The Lord also inspired Bezalel to teach and filled him, “with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver — by any sort of artisan or skilled designer.” (Ex. 35:31-35)

Bezalel was a Spirit-filled artisan and God empowered him to build and beautify the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant and all the furnishings of the Tabernacle using the gifts, skills, services and activities God had bestowed and activated in him. These gifts were bestowed on Bezalel and the people of the time through the “same Spirit” that God made manifest for the common good and to build up the church in 1 Corinthians 12 through 14.

The tent of meeting project began with Moses’ call to the congregation of the people of Israel for supplies. Moses entreated “whoever is of a generous heart” and whose spirit moved them to bring all the needed materials, including precious metals, colored yarns and fine twined linen spun and woven by skillful women, animal hides, acacia wood, oil, spices and precious stones (Ex. 35:5-29).

Their hearts were so well-stirred and their spirits so well-moved that they brought so much that Moses had to ask them to stop. What they had given was “sufficient to all the work, and more.” (Ex. 36:5-7) What a great problem!

I can’t remember ever seeing Bezalel mentioned in writings or discussions about charismatic Gifts of the Spirit; however, it is clear that the ability, intelligence, knowledge of every kind of craft, and the capacity to devise artistic designs he received were indeed such gifts. They were empowered and apportioned just as the gifts like faith, prophecy, tongues and the rest were, as the Spirit willed, in 1 Corinthians Chapter 12.

That being the case, here are some things we can we learn about how the Holy Spirit works from Bezalel’s touch of Pentecost in the Pentateuch.

When the Holy Spirit is at work among God’s people:

- There will always be *more* and in abundance. Generosity will abound. What The LORD needed for the tent of meeting was provided, “and more!” And as that spirit of abundance grows, a cycle of generosity will develop. As we offer and use our gifts to help build the Kingdom, “how

(Continued on page 15)



PENTATEUCH, continued

much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13)

- Hearts are stirred because "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5), and because God has "given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." (2Cor. 1:22)
- Ability, intelligence, knowledge and skill abound, not only with regard to artistic design, embroidery and weaving, and other fine work, but also in relationships and administration and discernment. In teaching and preaching, pastoral care, leadership and encouragement and kindness. When God's people use their spirit-filled abilities, everything gets better.
- There is beauty, artistry, artisanship. A usually unsung example of this kind of Spirit-filled ministry can be seen in our Altar Guilds: the banners and frontals, the vestments and flowers. Just as Bezalel was filled with the Spirit for those things, so are they. Earlier in Exodus, in the LORD's specifications for the priests' garments, we read that they were to be holy and "for glory and beauty," and made by "all

the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill" (Ex. 28:2-3). Altar Guilds do what they do "for glory and beauty!"

- Most of all, the generosity, stirred hearts, ability, intelligence, knowledge, skill and beauty is so the Father is glorified through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. We know it worked in Moses' and Bezalel's day because, when they were finished, "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle!" (Ex. 40:34)

May the Glory of the LORD fill all of our churches, palpably and unmistakably, too!

Amen.

Gene+

Gene Packwood blogs at [GENeralities](http://GENeralities.com) www.kiwirev.blogspot.ca and can be found on Facebook and Twitter (@kiwirev).

Look for more of this series in an upcoming issue of *Taste and See...*

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Primate	Most Rv. Linda Nicholls
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* Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province

Our Mission:

To offer times of refreshing so God's people may be empowered by the Holy Spirit through teaching, equipping and fellowship in the love of Jesus. (Acts 3:19-21)

Our Vision:

Rediscovering the Holy Spirit's refreshing presence in our lives and in the church.

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Confidential Prayer Ministry
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Prayer Conference Calls

Join in the prayer of agreement for revival in our churches! To join the monthly conference call, please contact Jane Jones, our National Prayer Coordinator, through the ARM website.

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ARM offers workshops for parishes, clergy and lay leaders as an opportunity to grow in knowledge and experience of the Holy Spirit, and receive personal prayer. Topics:

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Prophecy

Prayer

Intimacy with God

Healing

Family Ministries

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Magazine

Taste and See... is published quarterly. It offers interesting and enlightening articles on personal renewal in the Holy Spirit, and a theological background for renewal issues.

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ARM Canada believes that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord and the only way to the Father; it accepts the authority of Holy Scripture and affirms that the Holy Spirit empowers authentic worship and ministry. ARM Canada seeks to contribute towards spiritual renewal among Christians both personally and corporately, and to be of service to the Anglican Church.

ARM Canada believes that God has sent his Holy Spirit to the Church to enable the ministry and Christ-centered witness of his people as revealed in the New Testament. ARM Canada encourages its supporters to become involved in all aspects of church life at the parish, diocesan and national levels.

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