

NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

Easter has always been a time to celebrate new life, new beginnings. When we realize that Jesus Christ proved that he was the Son of God and that he is the Savior of all who put their trust in Him, and that proof is found in the resurrection, we look at the world differently. Many experience the new life Jesus has to give them. They experience a glimpse of the resurrection by having their human spirits come alive by the power of the Holy Spirit that comes to live inside of them when they accept and confess Christ.

Easter carries with it the promise of new beginnings. For many the Easter season is a time to make decisions to serve Jesus with renewed vigor. For others it is a season to put behind them their old ways and begin to walk in the light of our Lord who “makes all things new.”

Easter is a reminder that our wanderings in the wilderness of sin, doubt, false teaching, and false teachers will soon be over.

We look forward to what the Primates of the Anglican Communion will say and do in the Fall. We look forward to the time when the true gospel will be preached by a Church that is committed to the truth of Holy Scripture.

Easter is about new beginnings. St. Michael's has been blessed over the last almost 55 years (some of that time as St. Clements) to have had a dedicated organist like Marge Lang. Marge has been awaiting the arrival of someone who could take over the organ duties for her. At the same time it is a difficult decision to give up doing something she loved doing.

God has blessed us with a man who is an accomplished organist and is very much committed to Scripture and the

Lord Jesus. Don Bliss has agreed to become our new organist beginning on Palm Sunday. You can read more about Don elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Vestry is planning a big celebration to honor Marge and to say thank you for so many years of faithful service to her Lord and her church. Marge will continue to worship with us as a member of the choir and will be available to fill in when needed.

May the excitement that many of us feel about the new life that is abounding be experienced by each member of this parish as you rededicate yourself to the Lord and this church.

Remember, the example of the early church that “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to the fellowship (of the church) to the breaking of bread (in communion and meals together), and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). When that happened it says that everyone was filled with awe and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. May that happen with us as well.

We shall face times of persecution and threats as we seek to stand for the truth of God's Word and the teachings of that Word. When the early church faced such persecution they met together and prayed, “Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus” (Acts 4:29).

Let us go forth in this coming Easter season to the new life that awaits us in Jesus, and to new beginnings which will come our way.

LET US GROW!

Fr. Roger Grist

ASK THE RECTOR

What was God doing before He created the world?

The famous fifth-century A.D. Christian teacher Augustine had two answers to this question, one humorous and one serious. The first answer was that God was spending time preparing hell for people who ask questions like this! The serious answer was that God didn't have any time on His hands, since there was no time before time was created. Time began with creation. Before creation time did not exist. So there was not time for God to have on His hands. The world did not begin by a creation *in* time but by a creation *of* time. *But, you may think, if there was no time before time began, what was there?* The answer is, eternity. God is eternal, and the only thing prior to time was eternity.

Further, the question implies that an infinitely perfect being like God could get bored. Boredom, however, is a sign of imperfection and dissatisfaction, and God is perfectly satisfied. Thus, there is no way God could be bored, even if He had long time periods on His hands. An infinitely creative mind can always find something interesting to do. Only finite minds that run out of interesting things to do get bored.

Finally, the Christian God has three persons who are in perfect fellowship. There is no way such a being could get bored or lonely. There is not only always someone to "talk to," but someone of perfect understanding, love, and companionship. Boredom is impossible in such a being. — from *Who Made God and Answers to over 100 Other Tough Questions* by Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler.

WEBSITE IS WORKING

We are contacted regularly by people who see our website. Some come to visit our church as a result, others find helpful information. Still others contact us via e-mail after seeing our website.

There are people looking for an orthodox Episcopal/Anglican church in the greater Buffalo area. The website provides an easy way for those searching to find St. Michael's.

Speaking of searching, did you know that we have a page on our website designed for those who are seeking? They can get answers about establishing a relationship with the Lord Jesus. They are also encouraged to ask questions via e-mail.

Some have wondered if the series that was recently printed in the bulletins entitled, "Can We Trust What The Bible Teaches?" is available. The answer is yes! It is available on the website. You may obtain a hard copy by request from the church office.

NEWS SOURCES

Those who want to keep up with what is happening in this rapidly changing Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion are urged to visit the following websites:

www.virtuosityonline.org and

www.americananglican.org. These sites will give you news you won't hear via the mainstream media or Episcopal News sources. You can visit the Episcopal Church website to get their perspective by following the link on our website – www.st-michaels-buffalo.org.

MARCH VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

+Finance report showed a positive balance in February. Thanks to all who have increased and those who have maintained faithful giving to St. M's.

+New Picture directory here. Thanks to Mike Ham for donating his time and effort to finish this book. Thanks to President Gary Kadow and the Brotherhood of St. Michael's for covering the costs of this directory.

+\$700 given by the Missions and Outreach team to Gilberto Hernandez for a mission church in Puerto Rico.

+\$1500 given to help rebuild a church steeple and to help with expenses for Good Shepherd, Irving. The Vestry felt this was an excellent way to show that we are still helping to fund a part of the Diocese of Western New York with some of the funds we have redirected from the Diocese's fair share asking.

+M & O Team will look into other Diocesan causes the Vestry feels like it can support.

+AAC affiliation now official and confirmed on its website.

+Discussed new plan for Maundy Thursday Seder Dinner.

MID-WEEK PRAYER AND PRAISE

Those looking for a more intimate time of prayer and praise are encouraged to come together in the church's conference room each Thursday night at 7 p.m. We sing, pray, study Scripture, and share with one another.

On the third Thursday of each month we share communion together. Make plans to join us some Thursday.

NEW STUDY OF REVELATION CONTINUES

Many are enjoying our Sunday morning Bible study, led by Fr. Roger, of the Book of Revelation. You are welcome no matter what your level of Bible knowledge. BYOB (bring your own Bible). The class is held in the basement (undercroft). You may join in the class at any time. The class begins at 9:15 a.m. Before each class an opportunity is given to ask any questions regarding the Bible or the Church.

ROMANS BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES

Each Wednesday a service of Holy Communion and Healing is held in the Undercroft at 9:30 a.m. Following this service (about 10 a.m.) we have a verse by verse Bible study. We are continuing a study begun in March of the Book of Romans. Before each class an opportunity is given to ask any questions regarding the Bible or the Church.

All are welcome whether you have been to the class before or not.

PENCE CANS

Elizabeth Walker advises that Pence Cans will be counted shortly after Easter. If you have yours filled, please bring it to church. There are many projects which have been paid for through your small change!!

WOMEN'S GUILD

There will be a raffle of 4 baskets on Palm Sunday. Tickets are 1 for 50 cents or 3 for \$1.00. Please help the Guild by purchasing more tickets! The proceeds go to our Outreach program.

TELLING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Headmaster, Cambridge School John Seel, in "the Politics of Spirituality," (quoted in *Critique*, 2003, Issue 9, pages 14-16). Used with permission.

"Affirmations of objective truth are frequently perceived as a personal affront by contemporary seekers today. To question someone's view of reality is to question the person. It's hard for modern seekers to disconnect their identity from their ideas. And yet this is a constructive challenge for those who hold to biblical orthodoxy and unpopular categories of absolute truth. For such beliefs must be communicated in love, in the context of caring relationship or else one quickly finds that one has communicated neither truth nor love."

It is wise for us to appropriate the declaration of the Council of Constantinople:

"They who separate themselves from communion with their bishop on account of any heresy condemned by the Holy Synods of the Fathers, while he evidently proclaims the heresy publicly, and teaches it with brave front in Church - such persons, in excluding themselves from communion with their so-called bishop before Synodical cognizance, not only shall not be subject to canonical censure, but shall be deemed worthy, by the Orthodox, of becoming honor; for they condemn as teachers, not bishops but pseudo-bishops; and they do not cut up the unity of the Church by schism, but hasten to deliver her from schisms and divisions."

And many centuries later, Richard Hooker wrote, [capitalizations are Hooker's]

"Laws touching Matter of Order are changeable, but the Power of the Church; Articles concerning Doctrine not so. We read often in the Writings of

Catholic and Holy men touching matters of Doctrine. This we believe, this we hold, this the Prophets and Evangelists have declared. This the Apostles have delivered. This the Martyrs have sealed with their blood, and confessed in their Torments, to this We cleave as to the Anchor of our Souls; against this, though an Angel from Heaven should preach unto us, we would not believe. But, did we ever in any of them read touching Matters of mere Comeliness, Order and Decency, neither Commanded nor Prohibited by a Prophet, any Evangelist, and Apostle. Although the church wherein we live do ordain them to be kept, although they be never so general observed, though all the Churches in the World Command them, though Angels from Heaven should require our Subjection thereunto, I would hold him accursed that doth obey?"

ALL-NIGHT "PRAY-ERS" SOUGHT FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

At the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service an all-night Prayer Vigil will be held. The purpose of this Vigil is to respond to Christ's words in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Could you not watch with me one hour?"

We are asking that singles and couples sign up for a one hour time slot between 9 p.m. Maundy Thursday and Noon Good Friday. During your time of prayer we ask that you pray for St. Michael's and our various prayer concerns and for any other needs for which you may want to pray. This year any number of people may sign up to pray during a given hour at the side "Altar of Repose." We are asking men or couples sign up during the "wee hours of the morning" for security and protection purposes.

ST. MICHAEL'S TO CELEBRATE PASSOVER SEDER DURING HOLY WEEK- NEW FORMAT

Last month you may have read of some changes in the Pascal Dinner that we usually have on Maundy Thursday. Those changes have since been revised. The new format is outlined below.

Passover is the oldest and most important of Jewish religious festivals. Passover is based on the rituals of ancient Israel preserved primarily in Exodus 12-14, where Israelites celebrated their deliverance by God from slavery in Egypt. The festival celebrates the entire sequence of events that led to the Israelites' freedom from slavery. While thoroughly based in those historical events, the celebration encompasses much more as it becomes a vehicle to celebrate the very nature of God and His gracious work in the world. It is in this larger dimension that Jesus adopted the Passover service as a sacramental remembrance of God's new work of deliverance in the Christ, and allows Christians to celebrate this ancient festival.

The Passover meal is known as the Seder, which means "order," because the meal and service are done in a prescribed sequence. This sequence is presented in the Haggadah, "the Telling" (pronounced ha – GAD – dah) which outlines the steps of the meal as well as readings and songs for the participants. The basic elements and order have remained unchanged for centuries.

This blend of tradition and innovation conforms to the purpose of the celebration: to tell the story of God's actions in history in a way that brings it out of the past and makes it a present reality for everyone in the community as if they personally are part of the story. The Passover appeals to all of the senses

and involves everyone to tell the story of God. It represents the very best of communal liturgy.

This year, St. Michael's will be holding a Seder dinner on Maundy Thursday, Thursday, April 8 at 6 p.m.. The dinner will be in conjunction with Holy Eucharist and will conclude with the stripping of the altar, as is traditional on Maundy Thursday. Vestry members, as leaders of the church, will act as table hosts for the dinner. The Vestry members will be responsible for setting up the tables, providing the items for the Seder celebration (place settings, candles, salt water, bitter herbs, etc.) and the beverages.

Charles David will be our master chef preparing our lamb (purportedly the best lamb around), the pita bread, and gravy. Norma Fox and members of the Women's Guild will prepare the mashed potatoes, veggies, and salad.

Christine Clerc has organized this Seder meal to be a worship experience. You will experience an actual Seder meal and participate in a dramatic retelling of the Passover meal.

To participate in the Seder, you will need to:

- 1. Be in the Parish Hall by 6 p.m. sharp.**
- 2. If you have not yet signed up, there may have been some cancellations. Call Christine Clerc to find out if there are any openings at 893-3813.**

Those of you who have participated in the Christian Seder before know that it is a poignant way to remember the Passion of our Lord by sharing in the ceremony of what was His last meal.

Those who haven't attended a Seder will find your appreciation for the Old Testament Passover, the Holy Eucharist and the Passion of Christ enhanced.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Fr. Roger at the church, or Christine Clerc.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES ANNOUNCED

Our Holy Week and Easter services for 2004 bring to a conclusion our 40-day observance of Lent. Holy Week is a commemoration of the passion of Jesus as he suffered and died for our sins. It culminates on Easter Sunday with the festival celebration of the Resurrection of the Christ.

Some of you have already seen the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. Come join us as we relive those events leading up to and including the death, burial, and resurrection of the Pascal Lamb.

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, April 4 with a procession of the Palms through the church at the 8 and 10:30 services.

Tenebrae, a service of lights and shadows, will be held on Wednesday, April 7 and a later time than normal (7:30 p.m.).

Maundy Thursday, April 8, features a special Christian Seder meal at 6 p.m. (see related article in this edition) followed by the Maundy Thursday service and concluding with the powerful stripping of the Altar and beginning of our all-night Prayer Vigil.

Good Friday, April 9, features two services at Noon and 7 p.m. This year we will receive communion from the reserved Sacrament along with the traditional Good Friday Liturgy and Stations of the Cross.

Easter Sunday, April 11, features two services at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. These services will be designed to touch our visitors and guests with the power of the Resurrection of Jesus. The choir will be singing at both services. An Easter Egg hunt for the children will be held after the 10:30 a.m. service.

Holy Week and Easter are great times to bring people not regularly attending a church or those with no church affiliation.

GAY MARRIAGE?

If you are interested in reading an article entitled "Why Gay Marriage Would Be Harmful," go to the following website. <http://www.virtuosityonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=412>

WELCOME OUR NEW ORGANIST

We are delighted to welcome to St. Michael's our new organist, Don Bliss. Don is currently playing for a new mission church in East Aurora at 8 a.m. on Sundays. He has agreed to venture from there to here for our 10:30 a.m. services.

Don has years of experience in various churches as organist and choir director. Most recently he played organ at St. Matthias in East Aurora. Don is thoroughly orthodox in his beliefs and is looking forward to helping us worship God.

Ronna Bulera will continue to be our Choir director and will work with Don to, we pray, lift us up in the presence of God on Sunday mornings.

Marge Lang, our organist for more than 54 years, will continue to be available as a substitute organist.

We will be having a celebration of Marge's service as organist. Look for the announcement coming soon.

ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Our next meeting will be Wed., April 28th at 5:30 p.m.

VESTRY

We meet Tues., April 13th at 7 p.m.

WORSHIP TEAM

We meet Tues., April 20th at 7 p.m.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1 Christian Emerson	18 Mark Emerson
4 Paul Onan	20 Virginia Bradley
4 April Infantino	22 James Gibson
7 Carol Bulera	22 Janet Casagrande
9 Elizabeth Crofts	28 Jerry Broome
13 Marjorie Blarr	29 Keith Szen
15 Suham Dabit	

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

4/23 – Faye & Norman Hambridge
4/30 – Elizabeth and George Crofts

WOMEN’S GUILD

Note that our meeting in April will be on the second Wednesday, the 14th. That is because some of us will be helping Norma Fox on the first Wednesday prepare items for the Paschal Dinner to be held Maundy Thursday.

We do need to have a meeting because we are again having a Roast Beef Sandwich Luncheon on May 5th and we must make plans for that affair. Auntie’s Attic Treasurers will be auctioned and that’s always fun! Tickets for the Luncheon will be \$5.00 and the Raffle Tickets 10 for \$1.00. We need paid reservations for the Luncheon by April 30th. Come and join us for a pleasant day.

UNITED THANK OFFERING

We have so many blessing for which we are thankful! For the Spring sunshine, recovery from illness, our food and shelter – we are indeed blessed. For healthy, happy children who will have a chance for a good education. These are the things we take for granted, but our Thank Offering supplies some of these needs both here in the United States and for others less fortunate in countries throughout the world. Please use your Blue Box or offer your thanks by using the Blue Envelopes provided in time for the presentation May 9th, Mother’s Day.

CORRESPONDENCE

Kenwell Nursing Home sent a thank you for the Altar Flowers that were recently sent them which were much appreciated by all the residents.

“Father came today and gave Les and me our Communion and gave us a copy of St. Michael’s Directory. It’s a good job. Enjoyed seeing all my friends’ pictures in it.

Les and I are doing well. Les is much better and we are grateful for all the prayers and cards people send.

Happy Easter and God Bless,
Jane & Les Robinson”

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Remember to set your clocks **forward** one hour on Saturday night, April 3 for Daylight Savings Time.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST. MICHAEL'S "DINNER IN ITALY & EVENING ON BROADWAY"

Save The Date Saturday, May 1, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. That will be the date of the Brotherhood's - Dinner in Italy & Evening on Broadway Night.

The night will feature a five course Italian Dinner complete with Wine, Soup, Salad, Chicken Parmesan and Dessert. No dinner in Italy would be complete without song, so after our dinner we will have a "Broadway" Show upstairs in the Church starting at 7:30.

Our show will have two of Western New York's premier entertainers. Randy Kramer, Executive Director of MusicalFare Theatre Company will be on keyboard, and Ms. Debbie Pappas, who recently starred in Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical hit Song and Dance. The Show will feature a variety of music from various Broadway shows, and it will be an evening you won't soon forget.

The Dinner in Italy and Evening on Broadway is just \$15.00 per person. Tickets are "limited" to 120 people, so don't get left out, and be sure to buy your tickets early.

Tickets go on sale Sunday, March 28, 2004. To buy your tickets, see Mark Bidell, Bob DuVall or Gary Kadow. If you pay by check, please make your check payable to The Brotherhood of St. Michael.

Please note that tickets cannot be held without prior payment, due to the limited number of tickets available. Thank you.

Gary Kadow
Brotherhood of St. Michael's

THANK YOU

Thanks to Jack Bidell for the donation of paper for The Newsletter. It always helps to keep costs down in the office when office supplies are donated.

WELCOME

Please join in welcoming Edith Kurczewski to our parish family and add her name to your directory

SEDER DINNER REHEARSAL

All members of the Vestry please plan to attend a rehearsal Saturday, April 3rd at 10:30 a.m.

BIBLE: Basic Information Before Leaving Earth

NORMA'S BROCCOLI CRAB

BISQUE

1 CUP LEEK OR ONION
1 CUP MUSHROOMS
1 CUP CHOPPED BROCCOLI
(PLUS ADDITIONAL FOR GARNISH)
1 CLOVE GARLIC
¼ CUP BUTTER
¼ CUP FLOUR
½ TEASPOON THYME
1/8 TEASPOON PEPPER
3 CUPS CHICKEN BROTH
1 CUP LIGHT CREAM OR MILK
¾ CUP CHEESE, GRATED
1-6 OZ. CAN CRAB

In large pan, melt butter, cook onions, mushrooms, broccoli and garlic till tender. Cool and blend in blender. Return to pan. Add thyme, salt, pepper, with flour. Add chicken broth and cream and cook one minute more. Add cheese and crab and heat through and serve. May garnish with additional broccoli which you have steamed for one or two minutes. Serves 6-8 people.