

## NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

In John's Gospel we read that Jesus appeared to his disciples on one occasion after the Resurrection and said, "Peace be with you." Then he did something very strange. He breathed on them. At least that is how John 20:22 puts it.

It appears that Jesus did a very strange thing until you read on. He then said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

When one contrasts this passage with Genesis 2:7 where God formed the man of the dust of the earth and then "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And the man became a living being."

Could it be that Jesus was breathing into his disciples the "spiritual breath of life?" Did he, in fact, impart the Holy Spirit to his disciples at this point causing them to be "born again of the Spirit?"

This would seem to make sense because later, before his ascension into heaven, he told them wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49). The promise of the Father is described in Acts 1:4-5. The promise of the Father is described as a baptism in the Holy Spirit.

This baptism in or with the Holy Spirit seemed to be related more to an empowering rather than an indwelling. It did not seem to be related to water baptism as this experience of the Holy Spirit occurred often apart from water baptism. This is apparent because when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost the believers who were gathered together in an upper room were then empowered to witness for Christ, to do miraculous things, and to live lives that reflected the nature of Jesus (characterized by the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22). This baptism in the Holy Spirit was also characterized by speaking in the language of the Spirit. Sometimes that

language was a known language to the hearers; sometimes it was simply a prayer language to God (the tongues of angels?). This was a further demonstration, for the benefit of the disciples, that their lives were taking a new direction under new leadership.

Many have wondered, is the baptism in the Holy Spirit an experience that we can have today?

The answer to that question is not that we can have it, we **MUST** have it. In the Bible it is not an option. We are to pray and ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit to empower us as Christian witnesses and as those who live the Christian life more effectively.

As we prepare for the celebration of the Day of Pentecost (June 8) I urge you to ask, seek and wait for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon you. When it happens you will know it. You may receive a new language in which to pray. You may receive another gift of the Spirit with which to minister to others. You may receive an overwhelming joy. You may experience a "peace that passes understanding." You may be delivered from the fear of the future, or fear of what others think. You may experience a boldness and courage for Christ that you did not have before. You may experience the Love of Jesus in a way you had not known before. These are just a few of the physical manifestations you may experience when you are first filled with the Holy Spirit. You may not feel anything initially, but over time realize something has changed within you.

Individuals and the Church as a whole were dramatically changed after the Day of Pentecost. May God change us dramatically this day of Pentecost and beyond!

LET US GROW!  
Fr. Roger

## **ASK THE RECTOR**

I want to depart from the questions that our Sunday School children have asked to respond to a question that is very appropriate in light of the Day of Pentecost coming on June 8. The question is **“Who or what is the Holy Spirit?”**

The Episcopal Church has always had a good many professing members who are rather like those disciples at Ephesus who, when asked by St. Paul, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” replied, “No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” (Acts 19:2). Of course most of us have heard the words “Holy Spirit” because we say them in the Creed and hear them throughout the service. Still, there is much confusion over the Holy Spirit.

Let us first start by saying what the Holy Spirit is NOT. The Holy Spirit is not a ghost. Some may know that the Holy Spirit was often referred to in the past as the Holy Ghost. This contributed to a misconception about the Holy Spirit that continues even today.

The Holy Spirit is not (as the Jehovah’s Witnesses say) simply an active force, kind of like wind or water. This is not to say that the Holy Spirit is not active and moving, but the Holy Spirit is much more than a “Star Wars ‘Use the Force, Luke’.”

The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as a person, but without a physical body. Words used to describe the Holy Spirit are words that show personhood or personality. For example, the Holy Spirit can be grieved, blasphemed, lied to, lead, to name a few aspects of the personality of the Spirit. The Bible also says that the Holy Spirit is not confined to space and time and thus can indwell and fill people at any time and at any place in the world simultaneously.

We are not told how the Holy Spirit can do this, but that He does it is made very clear in Scripture.

The Bible indicates that God made us as human beings with a spiritual nature housed in our bodies. This spiritual nature is given to us by God and thus by that spiritual nature it can be said we are made in the image of God because God’s nature is spirit (John 4:24). We have been given a spiritual nature with which to have a relationship with the God who is Spirit by nature. That is why we are told that we must be born again of the Spirit (John 3:3-8). In the process of being born again, we ask the Lord Jesus to save us, cleanse us and make us God’s children by adoption. He promised that to those who thus put their trust in Him He would give the Holy Spirit to live inside of them (John 14:17). The Holy Spirit would bear witness with our human spirit that we have become children of God (Romans 8: 11-16).

Because God is by nature spiritual and the Holy Spirit by definition is spiritual and is said to come from God, we can draw the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is God. Because the Holy Spirit is in some mystical way a person, we can describe the Holy Spirit as the “third Person of the Holy Trinity (or nature of God).”

The Holy Spirit is Jesus’ representative in our hearts (John 16:5-15). Jesus lives in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is said to be able to lead us, speak to us, move us, convict us, change us, and intercede for us.

What a gracious gift the Father and Jesus have given us in the Holy Spirit. Our job is to be filled with the Spirit, to not grieve the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, to pray and sing in the Spirit, and to listen to what the Spirit says to us.

Let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the Power of the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

Fr. Roger

## **PRAYER AND PRAISE CHANGE**

Our Thursday night Prayer and Praise gathering will only be held each third Thursday at 7 p.m. during the summer. Come for **Holy Communion** (June and August), contemporary music, prayer, and Bible study. Join us as we seek the Lord and His will for St. Michael's. All are welcome to join us in the church.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

June 4 – Guild Lunch & Auction

June 8- Day of Pentecost Celebration

June 14 – Men's Breakfast

June 15- Trinity Sunday Celebration

June 22- St. Michael's Picnic at Akron Falls Park

July 6- Patriotic Sunday

## **OUTSIDE SIGN BOARD MANAGER SOUGHT**

We are looking for someone who could oversee our outside message board near the corners of Burke Dr. and Huntley Dr. This would involve changing the message to advertise our special services and events. If you would be interested in this ministry, contact Fr. Roger.

## **HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE LATELY?**

Bob Weekley, our Webmaster, has been working hard to refine and improve our website which can be found at [www.st-michaels-buffalo.org](http://www.st-michaels-buffalo.org).

You will find current news and events, a calendar section, and each month's newsletter highlights. A "Virtual Tour" gives visitors to the sight the opportunity to see pictures of St. Michael's and some of our members in action.

There are links to some helpful websites and other interesting items. Check it out.

## **VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS**

The following actions were taken by the Vestry at the May meeting.

- J. Bidell reported the Fish Fries cleared \$5174. 10% goes to outreach. 10% goes to restock the kitchen. 80% goes to the church.
- Voted to send half of one quarter's diocesan assessment to the diocese
- Voted to hire an exterminator to take care of ant problem using Pence Can funds.
- Voted to re-key the church locks using Pence Can funds
- New proposed By-laws were handed out for reflection and changes.
- Church Pictorial Directory is making progress.

## **CALLING ALL MEN**

Fr. Roger is inviting all of the men of St. Michael's to a continental breakfast on Saturday, June 14 at 8:30 a.m. We will meet in the Parish Hall for a time of fellowship and planning for the start up of our new Men's Ministry meeting in the Fall.

Would you call the church office or sign-up on a blue card on Sunday so we can have an idea about how many for which to prepare breakfast?

## **SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER MINISTERS NEEDED**

We are looking for a few good Prayers. Would you be interested in being trained to pray for Fr. Roger at 7:30 a.m. in the Conference Room? We are also looking for people who would be willing to be trained to pray for people at the Chapel altar during the Communion portion of our Eucharistic services.

If you think you might like to explore one or both of these ministries, please contact Bob Weekley at 897-3722 or [rcweekley@aol.com](mailto:rcweekley@aol.com).

## **HELP WITH SONGBOOKS NEEDED**

We are in the process of updating our “green Praise book.” We will be adding new songs to the book and removing some that are seldom used.

Would you be willing to help to search out and verify copyright information for the songs in the book? We want to make sure that the songbook conforms to all of the legal copyright laws and that proper permission is attained before songs are included in the new Songbook

If you can help, would you contact Fr. Roger or Ronna Bulera (683-9904).

## **MORNING PRAYER COMING**

The Worship Team will be working on an old but new type of service for us to aid in our worship of Almighty God. The team has decided to try to have a combined Morning Prayer and Eucharist service on the fifth Sundays.

This will bring back to the memories of the days when Morning Prayer was standard fare for the Sunday morning worship time. It will be an exciting new way to worship for those unfamiliar with this Prayer Book service.

On June 29 our first Morning Prayer and Eucharist service will be held at both the 8 & 10:30 a.m. time slots. August 31 will feature ONE SERVICE only with Morning Prayer and Eucharist. There will be a brunch following the August service.

## **PARISH PICNIC – JUNE 22**

St. Michael’s Parish Picnic will be held at Akron Falls Park on June 22<sup>nd</sup> after the 10:30 a.m. service. We provide hot dogs, burgers, soft drinks, games – you provide table settings, a dish to pass and your family and friends. Sign up now for a day of fun and fellowship. Maps will be available in the back of the church for those who need them.

## **THE WOMEN’S GUILD**

Thank you to Nancy Grist and her family for hosting the May luncheon of the Guild. Her Lemon Cake was truly superb.

The Women’s Guild is having their June meeting June 4<sup>th</sup>. It will be a Roast Beef Sandwich Luncheon and Auction of Auntie’s Attic Treasures. We are inviting all the women of St. Michael’s to join us for a Fun Day. Tickets for the Luncheon are \$5.00 and Auction. Tickets are \$1.00 per strip of 10 and a bonus ticket for the door prize. See Eve David at the Gift Shop or call Lois Conliffe at 838-6119.

## **THE GIFT SHOP**

We will be closing for the summer at the end of June. If you need any gifts over the summer, please contact Eve David or Georgia Peden and they will be happy to open up the shop for you on Sundays.

## **OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**

While it is early to think of Christmas, if you are shopping and see some small items for the Shoe box gifts for children age 2-15, it will make your Christmas shopping a little easier. For further information, see Shirley Szen or stop by the Gift Shop for a list of items needed.

## **OFFERING ENVELOPES**

The Treasurers hope everyone is using your Offering Envelopes so that at income tax time when statements are printed, you will have received full credit for your tithe to God’s Work.

Also a reminder that the expenses of the Church do go on in the summer time, so it would be appreciated if you are able to keep your pledge up to date even if you are away on vacation.

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

Virginia Bradley recently received a Community Hero Award from The United Way of WNY in recognition of her outstanding Volunteer service at School 61. She was honored with a number of her peers at a special breakfast at the Buffalo Convention Center.

The Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce recently named Virginia's granddaughter Kim Griffith Student of the Month at Cleveland Hill High School. In addition to her school activities, like her grandmother, she volunteers in many organizations such as the Red Cross, Kids Voting, and her church.

## **OUR CONDOLENCES**

Our condolences go out to the families of Jean Godden, Berneice Cassin, and Irene Strauser who have gone on to God's greater glory. Their St. Michael family will miss them all.

## **BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES**

4 Jonathan Gorczyca

5 Deborah Emerson

8 Lucy Onan

8 Marie Zasowski

9 Jason Bulera

10 John Paul Gardinier

18 Richard Strain

21 June Britton

25 Scott Miller

13 Beatrice & John Bidell

22 Jean & George Baer

23 Shirley & Don Szen

23 Debbie & Florian Mendel

24 Norma & Robert Crump

**Please check the bulletin board and advise of any changes or additions.**

## **SOMEDAY IS NEVER PART OF ANY WEEK!**

Most people live on an eight-day week; not a seven-day week. They have Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Someday.

It often seems that some of the most important things in life are reserved for Someday. Someday we will visit our sick friend. Someday we will consider what gift of time and abilities we ought to make to God's work. Someday we will volunteer to sing in the choir, be an usher or serve on a church committee.

The grand tragedy of life is that Someday is never part of any week. Someday never comes! Because Someday never comes, many of the important things in our churches never get done.

The work of God must never be a Someday project. Now is the time to make your commitment to the work of Christ. What gift of time and talent will you make to see that Christ's work is done Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday during the rest of 2003? Shake the dust off that old cliché: "time is money." The stewardship of service is at least as important as checkbook stewardship.