

THE WEEKLY WORD

EPIPHANY PARISH OF SEATTLE . OCTOBER 17, 2011

When the Suffering Hits

Dear Epiphany,

Four times a week, I ride my exercise bike five miles. It is far from my favorite thing to do. So I wrote on a yellow post-it note next to my exercise bike: "Suffering is not worth it unless you know what you're suffering for, and if you know what you're suffering for, then suffering isn't suffering, it is joy." Does saying it really make it so?

Here is a story I've borrowed from Brian McLaren used in his book *Finding Our Way Again*. It is a story corroborated by Nikos Kazantzakis in his book *God's Pauper* (I strongly recommend both books incidentally). The vignette is a scene where St. Francis answers his brother's question, "What is perfect joy?"

What is perfect joy? A messenger comes and says that all the masters of Paris [who] have entered the Order, write, "not true joy." Likewise that all the prelates beyond the Alps, archbishops and bishops; likewise the King of France and the King of England ([who] have entered the Order): write, "not true joy." Likewise, that my friars went among the infidels and converted them all to the faith; likewise that I have from God this grace, that I make the sick healthy and work many miracles: I say to you that in all these things it is not true joy.

But what is true joy? I return from Perugia and in the dead of night I come here and it is wintertime, muddy and what is more, so frigid, that icicles have congealed at the edge of my tunic and they always pierce my shins, and blood comes forth from such wounds. And entirely (covered) with mud and in the cold and ice, I come to the gate, and after I knock for a long time and call, there comes a friar and he asks: "Who is it?" I respond: "Friar Francis." And he says: "Go away; it is not a decent hour for going about; you will not enter." And again he would respond to my insistence: "Go away; you are a simpleton and an idiot; you do not measure up to us; we are so many and such men, that we are not in need of you!" And I stand again at the gate and I say: "For the love of God take me in this night." And he would respond: "I will not." I say to you that if I will have had patience and

continued...

will not have been upset, that in this is true joy and true virtue and soundness of soul.

Does this sound like perfect joy to you? I've run this story by a few folks and I get different responses. The range is as varied as the person's ability to identify and access the suffering in his/her own life. Two things about suffering are universal: Everyone suffers and suffering has a bottom. The question is what do you find when you hit the bottom? When Francis hit the bottom, he hoped to find patience and peace and equanimity of the soul. What Francis hoped to find was that the peace and patience of the good times were not event specific, but rather a reflection of the health and wholeness of his soul. In other words, if the soul is whole and healthy, then it is whole and healthy irrespective of the circumstances experienced in life. Suffering is the agent that best measures the health of our soul.

When people hit the bottom, they often end up in church, even if they had rejected things pertaining to God in the past. Their souls are in pain and they have this sense that church is the place to seek balm for the soul. When their suffering persists they often end up in my office. For this I am grateful. We pray together and I listen to their story. I help as I can, but mostly I can do nothing other than be present. For the reality is that people are where they are when things fall apart. Francis did not find the joy of his circumstances that winter evening at the gates of Perugia by accident, or because he was naturally good-natured. He found perfect joy because he had dedicated his life to the soundness of his soul.

The first step to a life in pursuit of a healthy soul is having a working definition for the soul itself. I define it as the composite of the essence of a being. The soul is our biology and history, context and character, aptitude and community, and anything else that makes us who we are all rolled up into one. The soul is the sum total of our being. "And the power of the soul," as Swiss theologian Hans Urs Von Balthasar writes, "comes from the soul being good at what the soul is good at."

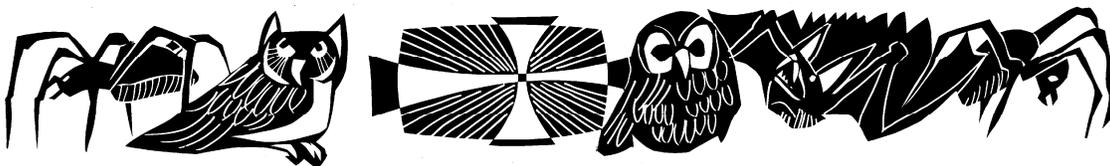
And so, to attend to the health of the soul begins by setting the soul as foundational. This means setting the soul as the crucible for the mind and the body and the community of ones life. When we set community first or our mind first or our body first, then when the suffering hits, there is no hope of joy. When we set the activities of

our community, mind and body in the vessel of our soul, even suffering can become a balm.

How, you might ask? It must require more than words on a post-it note beside an exercise bike. Well, actually, not really. Care for the soul is a matter of context and priority. To consider my daily workout as a means of preserving my body as the source to mitigate future suffering is as absurd as it is common. If the reasoning goes, I am in better shape then I will live longer and have a better constitution and a more joy filled life. True, good health makes one feel better, but it is, as you healthy folks know, not an inoculation against suffering. If the body is the crucible, there is no lasting joy. If the body is tended to as one aspect of caring for the entire being, then it is indeed profitable to ride that silly exercise bike. I ride for the sake of my soul. It is the same reason I study and serve in the community. These are not actions to make me well rounded. They are not disciplines for the sake of long life, or to avoid suffering, their point simply is to magnify the soul.

In a magnificent soul, true joy is found. Church is the one place made for this mission--not the soccer pitch or the college lecture auditorium or the boardroom. Yes, these are all places to enliven the soul, yet none are balm that will soothe suffering when it comes. So consider your soul. How goes it with your soul?

Doyt+



HALLOWEEN GIVING FOR YWCA KIDS

Help our neighborhood friends celebrate the season. Epiphany will be collecting **pumpkins, carving sets, costumes, candy** and anything else Halloween for children in the YWCA's shelter housing including the East Cherry apartments in our neighborhood. Please bring your donations to church by **Sunday October 23**. We will have tents set up on campus on Sundays and during the week and you can always drop items off at the church office as well.

Questions? Contact Sherilyn Peterson 206.322.2831
or speterson@perkinscoie.com **Thank you!**



EVENING PRAYER

The Feast Day of Saint Luke the Evangelist Tuesday, October 18, 6-6:30 pm in the Chapel

A 30-minute service celebrating **the Feast Day of Saint Luke the Evangelist** with prayers, readings, silence, and hymns.

Luke was a Gentile, a physician, and one of Paul's fellow missionaries in the early spread of Christianity through the Roman World...He had apparently not known Jesus, but was clearly much inspired by hearing about him from those who had known him.

(from Lesser Feasts and Fasts . 2006)

From Lack to Black:

Transforming Financial Chaos into Financial Serenity

Date: Friday, October 21 **Time:** 7:00-9:00 pm **Location:** Great Hall

Is your life unmanageable because of increasing debt and over-spending? Do you feel like you'll never get ahead financially for yourself and your family? Would you like to hear life experiences of strength and hope leading to financial recovery?

Join us for a lively introduction to the 12 Step Fellowship of Debtor's Anonymous. Learn from our success stories how you can begin to take control of your financial well-being.

+ This is an outside event free to Epiphany parishioners +

EVENSONG—ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

Sunday, November 6, 5:00–6:00 pm in the Church

Evensong is the most particularly Anglican service in all of Christian Worship. It is sung regularly in many cathedrals and parish churches throughout this country, and daily in many places in England. The choir traditionally offers certain portions while the congregation joins in the hymns and prayers. Join us at Epiphany Parish on All Saints' Sunday, November 6th from 5:00-6:00 pm for this service of rare and mystical beauty. Epiphany Choir will sing music of prominent English and American Composers. *-Tom Foster*

The Final Hurrah!!!



On October 21st, the Epiphany Agros Amigos will board a redeye flight to head to Belen, Guatemala for what will be our final visit.

What started out as a three year commitment evolved into a six year journey that has been an amazing experience for us. Little did we realize the impact the inhabitants of 24 homes in a remote area of Guatemala would have on us. We have watched these homes and families become a village, watched them work towards the goal of land ownership, discover the importance of education, empower the women of the community, celebrate good harvests and see a future where none existed. Amazing!

But Belen has not been the only recipient of change. I think I can speak for the team, when I say we had no idea of the impact these trips would have on us. Who knew we would become so attached to these hard working people in a remote part of Central America? Who knew how close the team members would become and how much fun it would be? Over the course of six years we have seen so many changes in both us and the village. Two examples have made a lasting impression on me. One is a man who had recently paid off his land and the joy you heard when he stated in simple words that he loved being a farmer. Now he had his own piece of land. The other was the proud glow on the faces of a husband and wife as they shared the updates on their sons, one a teacher in another village, another training to be a chef and two more still in school. Parents the world over want their children to be successful.

The team members will be commissioned during the services on October 16th. Please come and send us off with your prayers.

Blessings.....Ann Beck



Women of Epiphany

Please join us

Saturday November 5th, 2011

for a Half Day Retreat

9 a.m. to Noon

in the Christie House Library

Reverend Susan Dean facilitating

Who do you say that I am?

Reflections on who is God to us
and who are we to God?

Due to Reverend Susan Dean's warm presence and skill in facilitating the 2010 Epiphany Women's Retreat, many requested that we have her with us again. Thus she has been asked to return so that women who were unable to attend the weekend retreat could have the experience of working with her here. Rev. Susan Dean modestly describes herself as "a priest in our diocese whose ministries include building the Underhill House of Prayer, spiritual direction, and presiding and preaching at churches when the parish clergy are unavailable." She and her husband, David, attend St. Luke's in Renton.

Additional retreat details:

Tea with light lunch follows program at noon

Childcare provided

Please RSVP to Julia or Karen by Nov 1

\$10 registration donation

Sponsored by Epiphany Women's Retreats

Questions? Please contact Julia Putnam juliasp1@comcast.net or

Karen Michaelsen kmicha@gmail.com

Fall Children & Youth Formation

<i>Class/Age Group</i>	<i>Location</i>
9:00–12:30pm	
Childcare (Ages 0-4)	Nursery (below the Chapel, next to the Choir Rm)
9:15-10:15 am	
Activities (Ages 5-10)	The Meeting Place (New preschool classrooms)
Road to Rome (Grades 5-6)	Lower Floor Classroom Christie House
Rite-13 (Grades 6-8)	Lower Floor Christie House
10:30 -11:15 am	
Godly Play (PreK-Grade 4)	Various Rooms, Check signs on campus
5:00-7:00 pm	
Youth Community (Grades 6-12)	Varies from Week to Week

Fall Christian Formation Hour | 9:15–10:15 a.m.

	<i>Class One</i>	<i>Class Two</i>	<i>Class Three</i>
10/23	Lord's Prayer — <i>Discussion</i>	Sacred Space	Marriage
10/30	Christian Mystics	Sacred Space	
11/6	Christian Mystics	Sacred Space	All Saints Day
11/13	Christian Mystics	Godly Play	
11/20	Jesus' Mission	Book of Ruth	Advent Wkshp
11/27	Jesus' Mission	Book of Ruth	Advent Season
12/4	Jesus' Mission	Book of Ruth	
12/11	Who Is Jesus?— <i>Lecture</i>		
12/18	Who is Jesus?— <i>Discussion</i>	Breakfast at Sally's	

+TEC—*This Sunday*

FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

How Everything We Need to Know About How to Live in Relation to God is Available in Four Sentences

Presenter: The Reverend Doyt L. Conn Jr.

Sundays: 10/23 (Q&A/Discussion)

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Location: Great Hall

Why doesn't God start The Lord's Prayer with "I"? Where is Heaven? Who's holy? Where does God live and what does that have to do with my U.S. Senator? Does forgiveness really work? Why does Jesus bring it up? Am I led into temptation or do I choose to go there, and how am I "delivered" from evil? What is "evil" anyway, and how does it work?

Jesus teaches this prayer because his disciples ask him how to pray. It is our world's most widely known prayer—the first prayer children learn and the last one uttered before death; Alzheimer's patients remember it; it reflects the cry of a mother, the lament of the condemned, and the acknowledgement and acquiescence of both seekers and followers of Christ. The Lord's Prayer tells us everything we need to know about the kingdom of God and how to live in divine relationship with God. By the end of this course we will,

- + Break it down, call out the assumptions and implications embedded in The Lord's Prayer
- + Learn to recite the Lord's Prayer with new feeling and understanding
- + Be able to share what we now know about the prayer with a friend in pain or with joy

Week Two: Question and Answer Period. Please look in scripture for support or refutation of the issues raised for you by The Lord's Prayer. Bring your questions to class or email them ahead of time to Doyt at dconn@epiphanyparish.org.

ALL ARE WELCOME | NO RSVP OR REGISTRATION REQUIRED

+TEC—This Sunday

DECODING THE MYSTERY OF CHURCH ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Moving the Furniture: Creating Sacred Space

Presenter: The Reverend Kate Wesch

Sundays: 10/23, 10/30, and 11/06

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Location: TBD



Have you ever felt like you were worshipping in the back of a train car-- with the priest so far away and high up behind the altar it seems a million miles away? Could you do without a gate or hard, immovable pews, and dim lighting? The aesthetic experience of church is inextricably linked to our understanding of what is happening. If the physicality of our worship space were to accurately reflect the intent behind our actions, the liturgy truly becomes what it is meant to be – “the work of the people.”

By the end of this course we will,

- + Explore the theology of worship in the physical context of Epiphany
- + Develop an informed opinion of what is necessary to “do church” effectively
- + Play with ideas of what we could change to enhance the worship experience

Week One: The Who, What, Where, Why, When of Sunday Mornings

Week Two: Sacraments and Tripping over the Furniture

Week Three: The Next Century of Worship at Epiphany: Time for a Remodel?

ALL ARE WELCOME | NO RSVP OR REGISTRATION REQUIRED

+TEC—*This Sunday*

WHAT MAKES MARRIAGE WORK?

I Mean Really Thrive!

Presenter: Carmen Hoffman, MS, LMFT

Sundays: 10/23—Last class of a 4-part series

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Location: Library

What makes marriage work? I mean really thrive! Based on multi-decade couple research by John Gottman, PhD., University of Washington, this class shares the basics of establishing and maintaining life-long love. This class is for all couples at every state of partnership. The first three class sessions reviewed Gottman's "secrets" of sustaining vibrant marriages and the behaviors that destroy any relationship. **This week—an additional class session for couples raising children rounds out this series.**

This is certain to be a source of practical information, inspiration and lively discussion. The class is led by Carmen Hoffman, licensed marriage and family therapist with an office on the Epiphany campus.

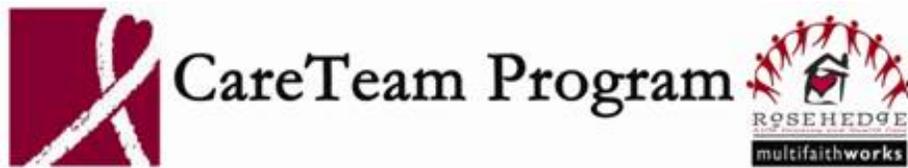
ALL ARE WELCOME | NO RSVP OR REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Safeguarding God's Children Trainings Offered Monthly

Epiphany Parish is offering trainings on **Tuesday October 18th, November 15th, and December 13th**. All trainings are scheduled from 6:00-9:00pm and will be held either in the Christie House Library or the Fireplace Room. Participants are encouraged to bring their dinner. Coffee and light refreshments will be provided.

For more information on this program or to sign up for one of the trainings, please contact:

Ben Linder at blinder@epiphanyseattle.org or call the parish office at 206-324-2573.



Be of service to someone with HIV/AIDS

As a boy, “James” was kidnapped and forced into the rebel army during the Sudanese civil war; the boy soldiers were plied with drugs, which led to his HIV infection. “Anna” is a young Ethiopian woman whose fiancé gave her the virus and then dumped her.

“Jacob” was a Native American who died of liver cancer complicated by AIDS after a lifetime of alcoholism and hard knocks.

“Michael” is a nurse who became infected years ago from a needle prick while at work. “Natalie” is a troubled young transgendered woman who has been a homeless drug abuser since she was 14 and left the religious cult where her parents were members; before coming to Rosehedge Multifaith Works, she lived in a dumpster.

These are just a few of the people I’ve met by spending a few hours each month on a Rosehedge Multifaith Works Care Team. Care Teams are groups of 4-7 volunteers who do what any friend might for people isolated by HIV/AIDS—listen over a cup of coffee, help with simple household tasks, give a ride to doctor appointments, share a meal, celebrate birthdays and holidays, or visit in the hospital. Think you might be interested in joining a Care Team? Let’s talk—contact Holly at brausboone@msn.com.

The next Rosehedge Multifaith Works CareTeam Training is Saturday, October 22nd.

For more information about the training, contact cherie@rosehedge.org, call 206 324-1520 ext.229, or visit <http://www.rosehedge.org/rosehedge-multifaith-works-careteams/> to learn more about programs or to download an application.

Thanks!

Doris Day Parking

When I drive downtown I am always on the lookout for Doris Day Parking. These are spaces that open up miraculously in front of the building to which you are headed, as they do for Doris in her movies—she is forever finding that spot seconds before her meeting with Rock at the U.N. In a similar vein, at least once weekly, I pray to God to help me find my car keys. And at least once a month I'm good for, "please God, don't let the door be locked" when I hear it shut behind me as I'm heading down to the garden.

The point of prayer, says Dallas Willard, is to ask, because it rights the world. "Our Father who art in heaven" situates us, acknowledges that there is a Father who is not us and that there is a heaven which is not earth. Not that heaven is far. We hear over and again at Epiphany that "the Kingdom of Heaven is here, near, and all around us." Dallas Willard says "heaven" would be more accurately translated as "atmosphere" or, perhaps, "the air we breathe."

Meister Eckhart says that if the only prayer we ever say is "thank you" it will be enough. That gets at it from the opposite direction. People who pray like that already have at least one foot in the Kingdom of God. Few of us live that way. I need the daily reminder—"Oh, right, you're the God in Heaven; I'm the wolf cub in the earth-den with the beginnings of an aspiration."

Teresa of Avila is particularly wonderful to read because she demonstrates the art of living in multiple kingdoms simultaneously. In the midst of a knotty explication of the different stages of prayer (written for her Inquisitors), she'll add, "Oh, those silly Sisters—they know that watering the tomatoes in the sun will burn them." We can just see her sitting at a desk pushed up against a window looking down into a walled garden as she writes.

Teresa equated prayer with love, at one level a conversation that did not require words. All that was needed was the will to love. No matter how great the turmoil of one's thoughts or afflictions, a will set on God can plumb a pool of peace.

When I was a six, I had an artless relationship with Jesus who was sometimes mixed in my mind with my Guardian Angel. I was untroubled by this. I checked in with him/they from time to time during the day, but when we talked was mostly at night, after my bath, after my

prayers, after my mother had turned out the light and shut the door. I'd lie silent as a plank, listening to her steps recede. Then I'd sit up and get to work. One side of my bed was up against a wall; I'd line my stuffed animals along the length of it. Then I'd lie back down as far away from the wall as I could get without tipping out. This left a space in the middle that I'd pat down for Jesus, my Guardian Angel or, come to think of it, Doris Day, had she had a mind to park there. And we would go over events. I thought of this recently when talking to a friend, decidedly atheist, who said, "the best thing about being single is that you can sleep diagonal across the bed."

"In the Kingdom of Heaven relationship is primary, and everything else is derivative," we are taught at Epiphany. This is instruction for optimal living on earth even as it acquaints us with the geography of the spirit. The first relationship to get right is our relationship with God: imagine Christ as both a kind of communications satellite as well as the armor of light we take with us into every choice.

But we're also taught that we are created by God for reasons passing understanding just as we are. Each chink and crook is more groove than flaw. For each of us there is a purpose. Sometimes we have to enter into relationship with our hair unwashed and wearing one brown sock. If we accept that about ourselves, then it would be at best a little churlish to hold back the same love for others who are also loved by God just as they are. It might even be that they need a reminder about their own personal hygiene or that they're the ones with whom we're supposed to swap socks. Teresa says it's okay to want to be loved back. But it's hard to remember any of this when you've had a bad day or someone's asking too much or either you or the other is just dim, distracted, or otherwise not getting it.

Prayer reminds us. Not because of what we're asking for, but because we're doing it. We are asking, and that is an activity that suggests a supplicant and a dispenser; a recipient and a giver. We know which one we are. We practice. Prayer is a discipline designed to pull our minds through centuries of evolution in a heartbeat. And when we experience that communion, when the door swings open and that right space is revealed, we can take that clarity with us into the whole day.

Barbara Cairns



Prayer Shawls Available

The folks of the "ATTG" (better known as the AMAZING Threads Together Group) have been busy! The prayer shawl container is overflowing with a variety of beautifully knitted shawls. If you know of someone who in need of a shawl, please selection one. The labeled container is located in the hallway closet in the Christie House. (It is the container on the right side.) Please let me know who has received a shawl - so that I can document it.

Many Thanks!

Trish Wallis Stone

twallisstone@yahoo.com or 206.930.6132 (mobile)



PARISH PRAYER LIST

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHOSE BIRTHDAYS FALL BETWEEN OCTOBER 16—OCTOBER 22: Kate Griffin, Noli Hall, Sarah McKinney, Katherine Misel, Amy Williamson, Peggy Wilton, Matt Barnes, Tristan Howie, Lujean Day, and Kimbrough Street.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE ON OUR CYCLE OF PRAYER: Barbara Ryhter; Allison & Ned, Evelyn, Audrey, Olivia, Ian, and Peter Sanders; Anne Sander; Stephen Sander; and Dana Sanders. We pray for Bishop Rickel and the diocesan staff.

YOUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR CONTINUED HEALING AND STRENGTH FOR THOSE IN OUR PARISH WHO ARE ILL OR GRIEVING: Paul, Bette Sprague, Beth Briggs, Coralie Swanson, Connie Gaines, Barbara Ward, Barbara Himmelman, David Morris, Rosemary Callison, Kay Schack, Paula Rueder, Kim Moon, Tracy Bernard, Claudia Rey, Rev. Dorian McGlannan, Randy, Lauren Oriel, Marcelle, Linda Withington, Sylvia, Johnny Saulsbury, Dominic Macri, Debbie Jones, Veronica, Ashle, Jen, Robert Barnes, Ruth Ingham, Laura, Lou, Ashley Baca, Bob Bergman, Ellen, Louise Grimes, David Grimes, Kat Walesby, Piper Simmons, Cameron, Sally Gold, Cristina Scalzo, Sue, Jim Veeneman, Doreen Gibbs, David Nees, Tony Haffner, Elena Jenkins, Bill, Kim, Austin, Jeff, Jackson Fitzgerald, Maggie, Tritia Ryhter, Jane, Virginia Griffith, Sherry Taylor, Sara & Leo Blandford, Kory, Carin Barnes, Brandi Jones, the Slovers, Perry, Morgan Brinley, Charlotte Hutton, Alice, Pamela Potter, the family of Charles and Genelle Phillips, Helen Wisdom, Holly Gomez, Sid Malbon, the Cary family, Kevin, Rita, Gregg Waddell, Andy, P.J., Tom Pelphrey, Ginger Ackerley, Jamie, Kathy, and the Brings family.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED: Samantha Brings.