



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

515 Franklin Avenue • River Forest, Illinois 60305 • 708-366-7730

March 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It's that time of year again. To help us with this year's Lenten journey, we will return to the 'Companions for the Journey' series of meditation guides on Christian spirituality published by St. Mary's Press (Winona, MN). More specifically, we will review one of a number in the series, *Praying with Francis of Assisi*, by Joseph M. Stoutzenberger and John D. Bohrer. It also happens to be in our library downstairs, along with *Praying with Thomas Aquinas*. Check'em out!

At the time, Joseph Stoutzenberger was an instructor in religious studies at Manor College and the author of several widely-acclaimed textbooks. John Bohrer was a pastor of an inner-city parish serving the poor in Camden, New Jersey.

The book is not a biography about Francis, although a brief history of his life is included. Mainly, the book is a way of praying with him. Each of the fifteen meditations invites the reader into the story of Francis and his thoughts and feelings about important life-themes. Also included are suggested ways for the reader to reflect on and pray about their own life in light of what they have learned from this holy person.

Most of us are familiar with garden statues of St. Francis, surrounded by birds and flowers. They reflect but one facet of a complex individual whose reflection on the Gospel led him to renounce family position and wealth in order to share the passion of Jesus with the poor.

Francis was born in 1182. According to one story, when his mother realized that her time had come, a stranger suggested that she go to a nearby stable. Thus, Francis was born amidst animals like his Lord.

Despite this humble beginning, Francis was born into a wealthy merchant family of Assisi. Francis was a nickname (he had been baptized John) given by his father, after the country (France) which he thought symbolized the qualities of style, romance and 'the good life'.

In his youth, he led a lifestyle which his father's money allowed. He enjoyed singing, dancing and merrymaking with his many friends. Being cultured, well-mannered and companionable, he was well-liked by the townspeople. The boisterous life changed when Francis went to war.

Assisi went to war with a neighboring, independent state, Perugia. Given his position, Francis enlisted as a knight. He saw little action, being captured and imprisoned early in the fight. Because of his father's position and wealth, he was treated differentially.

Released from prison, he returned to his old ways for a time. But more and more, he found himself lost in thought, meditating on his life. He set out on another military campaign only to exchange armor with a poorly clad knight and returned to Assisi without engaging the enemy. His friends thought he was in love. Francis agreed, but knew that the lady was not the standard type, but rather the 'Lady Poverty'.

His generosity towards the poor brought him into conflict with his father. In the famous confrontation, he stripped himself naked, renounced his father's possessions and declared himself a son of God (on his death bed, he expressed regret for rejecting his father).

Not surprisingly, his actions ran counter to the spirit of the age. Nevertheless, he gained many followers who not only restored many churches but breathed life into a Church grown rich and complacent. Also, he and his followers lived among the people they served, not apart from them as was the earlier custom.

In 1210 Pope Innocent III confirmed the simple Rule for the Order of Friars Minor, a name Francis chose to emphasize his desire to be numbered among the 'least' of God's servants. But Francis was not an organization man. By 1221 he had lost control of the rapidly growing order since his ideal of strict and absolute poverty proved too difficult for the order to maintain. His final years (he died in 1226) were spent in much suffering of body and spirit, but he never lost his sense of joy.

The authors are up-front about their book: Francis is not for everyone; even many of the saints would be uncomfortable with him. Yet he touches many people: appealing to the heart, he lived a life afire, finding God in the concrete stories in the Gospels.

The book contains suggestions for its use: carving out intentional time and space; opening oneself to the power of prayer; previewing each meditation; reading the meditation; and, reflecting on the meditation (various ways are given). There is no 'right way' to pray and/or meditate (even the Lord's Prayer is only a starting point, albeit the best one); there is only what is comfortable for each person. And what is comfortable usually changes over time as we grow along our journey (hence the importance of remaining open).

There are 15 meditations. They begin and end with prayer. There are readings and reflections, as well as questions intended to provoke thought. Some contain pictures or drawings as an additional avenue into contemplation. It is a short book, but one well worth the look.

On a personal note, although I never knew St. Francis, I spend time at one of his order's outposts: San Damiano Retreat Center, outside San Francisco. The friars provide generous hospitality and a nice facility.

As you have noticed by now, we have made several changes to the liturgical make-up of our services for Lent. In addition to the color purple, the free-standing table has been removed to the vestry room and we are celebrating East-facing (priest's back to congregation) for the Eucharistic prayer. Two of the pries-dieu have returned to the sanctuary. We also removed the office lights (six shorter candles) and changed the wine to a deeper color and heavier taste, a nice Merlot.

Peace be with you,
Fr. Pete +

AROUND AND ABOUT CHRIST CHURCH

Neither rain, nor snow ... yes, we've had a good bit of snow recently. Never fear: the Christ Church snow crew is out and about. Fr. Pete returned from his recent surgery to his shovel to assist crew chief Seth, who has had to deal with the white stuff either on his own, or with guest shoveler Art McQueen, during Fr. Pete's recovery. Fortunately, there were few storms during that time. Thank you, Art, for stepping up and stepping into the breach.

A Rose by any other Name

Yes. The results are in. You may have already guessed that the winning name for our newsletter (as determined by election at our Annual Meeting at the end of January) is The Christ Church Buzz! Despite the plethora of names submitted, The Christ Church Buzz won without a runoff. It was a landslide! Hail to the champion!!!

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting on the last Sunday of January was a rather routine affair, other than, of course, the buzz over The Buzz. After nine years of service, Don Moravec rotated off of the vestry. He received a standing 'o' for work in serving four? different rectors. He still cooked his casseroles for the meeting, and they were their usual hit.

Seth Flanders was elected Senior Warden, moving up from the Junior Warden position. Debbie Schaubel was elected Junior Warden, moving up from her 3-year seat on the vestry.

Rotating off were Jon Gilbert, who will remain chancellor, Bill Chambers and Rich Millett, who will remain treasurer. Bill re-upped, having finished his 'completing term' hitch. David Lopez and Art McQueen were elected for full terms. And, Jill McReynolds was elected to complete Debbie Schaubel's term (one more year).

Ginny & Frank Swaba and Mary Slusser were elected delegates to the 2010 Diocesan Convention. Seth Flanders, Maureen Puleo and Rich Thomphsen were elected alternates.

Fr. Pete thanked one-and-all for their service - those rotating off and those newly elected. Copies of the 'annual statement' are still available for those who never received one - call Julie.

SHROVE-A-LICIOUS PANCAKE SUPPER...Pat Millett

Tuesday, February 16th was a cold, snowy day, but, down in our very own warm undercroft, the aroma of pancakes and sausages, hot off the griddle, filled the air and warmed our hearts.

Our chefs, Bill Schaubel, Don Moravec, Rich Thomphsen, Patti Wright, Pat Millett and able assistants, Al Moreno and Debbie Schaubel cooked up pancakes and sausages to perfection.

Twenty-one of our Christ Church family enjoyed the wonderful faire. Fresh fruit and of course, the finishing touch, packze, pronounced "poonch-key" (which are the fruit filled bismarcks) completed our Shrove supper.

Thanks to all who set up, cooked, served, cleaned up, and supported this effort. It was a great time together which everyone enjoyed.

Notes from the Christ Church Library...Kristin Flanders

On the new arrivals shelf are two books which may seem to be diametrically opposed to each other, but yet have much in common. The first is *The Practice of Prayer* by Margaret Guenther. She touches on all aspects of prayer and speaks of prayer as conversation and delves into the historical aspects of prayer. But the chapter that resonated with me was entitled "Finding God in the Ordinary: Your kitchen will teach you everything". She says, "Go to your kitchen, and your kitchen will teach you everything...you will find all the spiritual challenge and promise you can manage." And you will have to read the book (or at least this chapter) to find out just how she arrives at this conclusion.

With Jan Karon's *Mitford Cookbook and Kitchen Reader* we finally have the recipes for all of the food (and more) that she mentions in her Mitford series. Along with recipes are extended explanatory notes that are just as satisfying to read as her novels. Who will be the first to try the recipe for Fr. Tim's favorite orange marmalade cake? After all "it's the unblest food that makes you fat."

Also, please check out the books labeled "Devotional Literature" if you're looking for Lenten reading...you're sure to find a book that will inspire you here!

Lent 2010 - Evensong, Pot Luck Supper, Program

On Friday, March 12 at 6:30 p.m., Fr. Pete will present another Bible Study - the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Sign-up sheets for the edibles will be available on the table in the narthex.

Lent 2010 - Pence Cans

This year we will again use Pence cans as a daily devotional to help us journey through the season and to reflect on God's many blessings in our lives while accumulating alms to bless others. Please pick up a can and fill it up and return it on Easter Sunday.

Fun Raisers Rummage Sale This Spring May 8....Ginny Swaba

Reminder: We are still accepting your gently used clothing and other items in good saleable condition. Please save all plastic bags and newspapers for the day of the sale. Your donations are tax deductible. To request a letter, please list the items along with their estimated value and email/send to the office. Please don't bring your "rummage" to church until after March 20th due to the lasagna dinner.

The Oak Park Food Pantry

All non-perishable foods are always needed and can be brought to church on Sundays. We all shop: just buy one extra item a week. The following items are in constant need: canned soups and vegetables, cake mixes, crackers, cereal, baby foods. Special thanks to everyone for remembering the needs of the needy.

Helping out St. Leonard's House

Please remember to keep bringing coffee, flip-flops, toiletries, and miscellaneous paper goods. The need is ongoing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oak Park Deanery Quiet Day, Saturday, March 6 beginning at 9:30 a.m. at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 203 S. Kensington Ave., La Grange. Main Speaker: The Reverend Terri Stanford; Topic: "Dispositions and Danger: Our Baptismal Calling." For information and reservations call Kate Letarte at 708-579-3787. Open to anyone who would like to come.

Bible Study during Lent will meet on the following Wednesdays: March 3, 17, and 24.

Evensong, Pot Luck Supper, Program, Friday, March 12th at 6:30 p.m. Main speaker, Fr. Pete will present another Bible Study - 1 Corinthians. Please see sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex.

UTO Spring Ingathering at Christ Church, Sunday, March 14th at both services.

Italian Lasagna Dinner, Saturday, March 20th at 6:00 p.m. - See Flyer.

Vestry Meeting on Sunday, March 21st after the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist.

FORWARD DAY-BY-DAY for **February/March/April** are available in regular and large print on the table in the Narthex.

Birthdays and Anniversary in March

4	Fr. Pete	10	Judith Tracy	19	Richard Millett
7	Bill Schaubel	17	Paul Small	24	Jill & Michael McReynolds

DATES TO REMEMBER IN APRIL

Holy Week and Easter Services:

Maundy Thursday	7:00 p.m.	Eucharist (followed by stripping of the Altar and Agape Meal in the Vestry room).
Good Friday	12 noon	Stations of the Cross
	7:30 p.m.	Eucharist (from reserved Sacrament)
Easter Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Choral Eucharist (Followed by Easter Egg Hunt)

Noon Eucharist - Wednesdays (except Holy Week).

People to remember in our daily prayers

Ethel Edwards, Marie Platek, Jean Small, Judith Tracy, Ellen Tracy, Dick Joseph, Isabelle Rinal, James Swaba, Jerry, Ed, Elizabeth, Betsy Bradley, Dean Ferris, Ed Downs, Elaine Carroll, Kay McMannamon, Suzanne Davis, Chris Fogle, Sally Sprandel, Nick, Ross, Holly, Isabella, Jeannette, Wendy, Matt, Gina, Crista, Tatiana, Keith, Janet, Daniel, Iris, thomas, Helen, Clayton Shuck, John Landem.

We also pray for those serving in our armed forces especially, Joseph Sowka, Kent McQueen III, Charles McQueen, Zachary Bokum, Andrew Nissen, Jonathan Felix and Tracy Engleson.

**MARCH SCHEDULE FOR WORSHIP MINISTERS, ALTAR GUILD,
COFFEE HOUR HOSTS:**

		7:30	10:00
7	Altar Guild		K. Flanders/M. Gilbert
	Acolyte	A. McQueen	M. Slusser
	Chalice	A. McQueen	N. DiCiocco
	Lectors	A. McQueen	G. Swaba/P. Wright
	Usher	P. Kowal	F. Swaba
	Counter		F. Swaba
	Coffee Hour		K. & S. Flanders
14	Altar Guild		P. Wright/P. Millett
	Acolyte	A. McQueen	M. Elliott
	Chalice	A. McQueen	D. Schaubel
	Lectors	A. McQueen	K. Benson/ P. Millett
	Usher	R. Lietz	D. DiCiocco
	Counter		R. Millett
	Coffee Hour		UTO - M. Puleo/A. Allen
21	Altar Guild		M. Slusser
	Acolyte	M. Brundage	N. McReynolds
	Chalice	A. McQueen	G. Swaba
	Lectors	A. McQueen	D. Schaubel/J. McReynolds
	Usher	P. Kowal	R. Thomphsen
	Counter		D. Moravec
	Coffee Hour		E. & D. Moravec
28 (Palm Sunday)	Altar Guild		M. Puleo
	Acolyte	A. McQueen	M. Elliott
	Chalice	A. McQueen	P. Millett
	Lectors	A. McQueen	P. Small/M. Lopez
	Usher	R. Lietz	P. Small
	Counter		A. Moreno
	Coffee Hour		G. Swaba/ N. DiCiocco

**If you are unable to serve on your day, please switch with someone and
call the office before Friday at 708-366-7730**