

Dragoneer

February 2008



A THEOLOGY OF PARADES

By the time you read this the Quigley's will have experienced our first Mardi Gras. If you were in Church on the 27th you would have heard my attempt to marry faith and floats and "throws" by trying to articulate a theology of parades and to reflect on my Mardi Gras experiences thus far. These experiences have been varied but are certainly not without existential and theological merit, especially the question posed by a young and inebriated man standing with his arms raised on the darkened corner of Cadiz and Pitt streets late one night... "I don't know where I am... Can you tell me where I need to be?"

Each of us could ask the same question, could we not? Where am I? Where do I need to be? We might open the theological envelope further

and ask, "Where do you want me to be, God? What is my mission, my purpose?" I suppose it's no fluke that the very first question God poses to a lost humanity hiding in the garden is the very same: "Where are you (Genesis 3.9)?"

I'm struck by the connection between theology and parades as a question of identity. Just as parade goers strive to catch beads hurled from floats and then wear them to establish and signify an identity as Mardi Gras people, the theology of holy communion teaches us that the Eucharist signifies for us an identity we claim and strive for as believers. Standing together at the Communion rail, in the common elements of bread and wine, God hurls her holy beads at us in the form of the elements of bread and wine, the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood. As we reach out our hands to "catch"

communion we receive the grace of God's sublime parade of forgiveness, restoration and deliverance; our broken and lost identities are refashioned into new identities of mission and Godly purposes so that we may go forth "doing the work God has given us to do (BCP 366)."

At the early service on Sunday, when speaking of my first and prideful experience of being covered with beads the night before – beads that I didn't want to take off – a parishioner inquisitively asked: "Is this your first Mardi Gras?" The implication of the question, I think, was that my thrill would fade... that my gleeful Mardi Gras identity might wane. Can we ask the same of our Godly identity and our experience of Holy Communion? Has our experience of grace and forgiveness and mission waned? When we leave the communion rail, and the church, are we changed? Can we and the people around us see the divine beads that signify our new identity?

Whatever our answer to these questions may be, the season of God's asking is upon us. Lent is here and we are blessed and invited to re-awaken our waning spiritual disciplines and to renew our collective spirit, identity and mission as God's people. Please consider participating in some of the opportunities for renewal beginning with the Invitation to a Holy Lent on Ash Wednesday, in the educational opportunities described in the following pages and in the Penitential Order of Service we will observe on the Sundays during Lent.

Blessings,

Jim

CONVENTION DELEGATES

Thanks to the 2008 Delegates to Diocesan Convention. This year's convention will take place on February 29th & March 1st St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge, LA. We are blessed so many from our church are willing to give their time, resources and energy for the renewal and mission of the larger church. This year's Delegates to Convention are:

Ed Brown
Lee Crean
Jerry Howard
Lyn Crean is our Alternate

ANNUAL GIVING

The Annual Giving Campaign is now complete and the final result of our campaign appears below. Income from pledges for 2008 fell significantly short of the goals set forth by the Stewardship Committee. The budget committee recently met and prepared a revised budget to be presented to the Vestry at their February meeting. The Vestry can choose to accept the current budget proposal and operate the church with a significant deficit or ask the budget committee to continue to look for ways to reduce what is already trim operating budget in order to reduce our operating costs. The largest line items remaining in the current budget are personnel.

NEWCOMER'S BRUNCH SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH

Please join us for a brunch in honor of our new members, after the 10:30 service. ALL are welcome and encouraged to attend (we need EVERYONE to welcome our new members!). For more information or to volunteer for the event, contact Mitch Bourque @ 504-905-8522 or mbourque3@cox.net.

VESTRY NEWS

Father Jim recently and with great admiration and respect accepted the letter of resignation below. We are thankful for Lyn's work on the Vestry the last two years. Prentice Jones, who was chosen as the first Vestry alternate at the recent Annual Meeting, has been appointed to take Lyn Koppel's seat on the Vestry. Alternates appointed to the Vestry complete the terms of those they replace.

28 January 2008

Dear Jim,

I have enjoyed working with you in the very brief time you've been here and I am glad to have gotten to know you through our vestry contact. As we discussed last week, I am going to resign my seat on the vestry and allow all of the youthful energy in our new vestry members to surge forward. It is going to be an exciting time for St. George's. Your leadership, your vision for our Church, will revive and invigorate us all.

It was a wild ride, sometimes, and the hard work is going to continue, but I feel confident that St. George's will prevail to do the work it is meant to do.

*Sincerely,
Lyn Koppel*

Congratulations and Thanks...

To our new Vestry members, Mary Lou Bensabat, Prentice Jones, Leslie Martin, Mark Schreiner and Devin Tournillon. Allen Blow, Lee Crean, Scott Griffith, Susan Ingber, Les Kellum, Mary Nass and Toddy Wobbema continue their terms. The Rev'd. Canon Scott Albergate will lead a retreat for the new and continuing Vestry members on February 8th & 9th at the Solomon Episcopal Conference Center.

DRAGON CAFÉ

The story of the Dragon Café is a wonderful tale of God bringing people together in the church to help one another with the bonds of fellowship, love and charity. Since my arrival at St. George's, we have assessed every aspect of the ministry of the café and have realized that its future success and stability will require new vision and creative energy in maximizing volunteer participation and donated goods.

We are proud to announce that Stan Jahncke has accepted the position of Dragon Café Manager and has begun the hard work of re-visioning this important and principal component of St. George's outreach efforts. Exciting things are already underway and Stan will not only be accountable to but will also receive the support of a newly formed Board of Directors, currently including Steven Braid, Tom Forbes, Mike Neyrey, Lee Crean, Milton Atebara, Nell Bolton, The Rev. Peggy Walker, David Raphael and the Rev. Jim Quigley.

Many, many parishioners and friends of St. George's have contributed to the success of the Café over the last 2 ½ years. To begin to name those who have given their time, talent and energy to the Café would be futile and would, without doubt, leave someone out. That being said, however, both Judy Burkey and Deacon John Holbert deserve special mention for their hard work in regard to St. George's feeding ministry. Please keep the work of Stan and the Board of Directors in your thoughts and prayers as they work together to develop and institutionalize the ministry of the Dragon Café.

Jim

For your thoughts...

LITTLE KIDS BIG KIDS

BIGGER KIDS!

At the Annual meeting I spoke of an on-going conversation that we are engaged in with the Bishop in regard to developing a ministry to Tulane students and perhaps adopting the chaplaincy altogether. Recent developments on that front include the resignation of the priest/chaplain assigned to the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, my assignment from Bishop Jenkins to serve as interim chaplain for Tulane, and our Vestry's blessing for the work I will have to engage in order to fulfill my expanded responsibilities. My ministry began there on Sunday, January 27th with a celebration of Holy Eucharist and for the remainder of the semester I will preside at a weekly Eucharist on Sundays at 6PM, provide a stable pastoral presence and do my best to develop the chaplaincy as I am able. Soon you will hear about ways that you can support this work.

Opening up that lens a bit, I think it's interesting that our ministry is so closely linked with children and young adults. Considering the vital statistic in the annual report that shows that we have 52 children under the age of 10; that your rector serves as chaplain at St. George's School; that I am now interim chaplain for college-age students; and that Jesus beckons us to welcome children in His name, perhaps God leading St. George's to establish at least part of its identity as a place that is user-friendly to children and young adults? If that is so, how we might develop this identity as a parish? Given our limited resources and personnel how can we become a parish with a well-developed "theology of child?" What might this have to say about how we distribute our limited resources and energy? Finally, how can we further weave this broad spectrum of young people into the life of our parish and in doing so attract more children, students and young families?

LENTEN STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

As we know, Lent is a time for spiritual discipline and renewal, study, reflection and prayer. Please consider participating in the two adult education offerings listed below. Childcare will be available for both the Sunday Morning and Wednesday Evening offerings.

LENTEN SPIRITUALITY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH – SUNDAY, MARCH 9TH

A five-week introduction to Lenten Spiritual Practices, led by Deacon Lyda Hopkins

The class will meet on Sunday mornings from 9:30 – 10:15AM in the library. Each session covers a different aspect of the subject, so you may join at any time.

February 10—Introduction: Fasting, Penitence, Prayer and Almsgiving

February 17—Giving IT up versus Giving it UP: Millennium Development Goals

February 24—Lectio Divina and Ignatian Spirituality

March 2—The Anglican Rosary

March 9—Repentance and Release: The Labyrinth and the Rite of Reconciliation

SIMPLE LENTEN MEALS & A WAY OF THE CROSS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12TH

We adjusted our typical Wednesday night schedule in order to offer this 4-week meditation/presentation on Rector Quigley's Stations of the Cross, which he created as part of an honors thesis in theology while at Virginia Seminary. Each week we will study two paintings as we join Jesus on his journey to Golgotha. Choir members present will bid us farewell each night with "Go Ye Now in Peace."

Wednesday Schedule:

Simple Lenten Supper- 6:00-6:30PM

Stations of the Cross- 6:30-7:30 PM

Choir Practice- 7:30-8:30 PM

Note: we will not have Wednesday evening Eucharist - Childcare will be available



**Ash
Wednesday
Services
February 6
Noon and 7 pm**

ST. GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
4600 St. Charles Ave
New Orleans, LA 70115
Address Service Requested
Dated Material Please Deliver by