



The Road to Damascus

February 2013



Thursday Evening Supper Conversations

Our popular Thursday evening supper and conversation series resumes on February 21, continuing for five weeks, through March 21. A simple soup and bread supper at 6:00 p.m. is followed by a discussion. The first three sessions will be held at the homes of :

February 21 – Natalie Boyce (298-3443). A conversation about community and connections, with Fr. Tom's experiences in the Philippines.

February 28 – Linda Day (298-3797). Viewing of the film, *Kingdom of Heaven*, followed by discussion.

March 7 – Vaunie & Bill Gaulty (232-4694). What does a Pope mean for us?

Locations for March 14 and 21 will be announced in the weekly updates and bulletins.

Lent and Holy Week Worship
See page 2 for details.

Youth Group

Will meet at 9:45 a.m. on March 9 at the Lee Food Pantry.

Also in this edition:

2. Special Lenten concert
3. Fr. Tom reflects on weddings
6. Report from Seminarian Jane Tillman

Annual Meeting Elects Vestry, Accepts Budget, Seeks Outreach Ideas

The annual meeting of St. Paul's Church reelected Senior Warden Carl Sprague, Junior Warden Vaunie Gaulty, Treasurer Jennifer Carmichael, and Clerk Tracy Johnson. The number of three-year Vestry terms was increased from three positions to six. John Davies, Kendra McLeod, Donna Touponce, and Linda Day were elected to the Vestry. Continuing members are Bill Vogt and Natalie Boyce.



Members of the St. Paul's Vestry following the Annual Meeting (left to right): Kendra McLeod, Linda Day, Jennifer Carmichael, Carl Sprague, Natalie Boyce, John Davies, Fr. Tom, and Vaunie Gaulty. Absent from the photo were Donna Touponce, Tracy Johnson and Bill Vogt.

The Annual Meeting also reviewed the Vestry's budget of \$135,018, which is slightly lower than the 2012 budget and includes a significant reduction in the amount of money drawn from investments.

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Lenten Worship Schedule

Sundays	8 & 10 a.m.	Rite I Eucharist (Feb. 24 – March 17)
Tuesdays	5:00 p.m.	Stations of the Cross
Fridays	8:30 a.m.	Intercessory Prayers
Saturdays	5:30 p.m.	Evensong

Holy Week Services

March 24, Palm Sunday: 8 and 10:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist

March 28, Maundy Thursday: 7 p.m. Ecumenical Service at First Congregational Church

March 29, Good Friday: Noon. Joint Ecumenical Service at St. Paul's

March 30, Easter Eve: 8 p.m. The Great Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter at St. Paul's

March 31, Easter Day: 8 and 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist



St. Paul's celebrated Shrove Tuesday with the Thomas Bray Beef and Beer supper.



Recently baptized Ryleigh Elizabeth Fillio with her parents, Matt and Danielle, and Fr. Tom.

A Special Lenten Concert at St. Paul's

One of the great privileges of my time in the Holy Land was walking the Way of the Cross in a silent Jerusalem at 5:00 a.m. On Sunday, March 10, 2013, the Berkshire Concert Choir will offer a program of Lenten music featuring Franz Liszt's setting of the *Via Crucis* (Way of the Cross) for chorus, soloists and a spectacular piano part. Other works will include the *Crucifixus* from Bach's Mass in b minor. A personal footnote: Liszt was my Great-great-grandfather's mentor and Godfather to my Great-grandfather, so it is particularly moving for me to be singing in this musical offering. Suggested contribution will be \$10.

– Tom

Annual Meeting (continued)

The Annual Meeting also heard a call to engage in more intentional outreach. Bishop Doug Fisher has called on parishes to respond to a reduction in the annual Diocesan assessment by developing new efforts. These do not need to be major programs. Rather, they represent an opportunity for fresh thinking on the role St. Paul's can take in bettering our community locally and in the wider world. A parish survey will seek ideas. Other highlights included:

- Reports from the many committees who play such a vital role in parish life in the broad categories of worship, community, and administration.
- An update on stewardship.
- A vote of thanks to the Rev. Noreen Suriner and the Rev. Mark Hatch for their excellent ministry during Fr. Tom's sabbatical.
- A vote of appreciation to Fr. Tom for incorporating the many lessons of his sabbatical into our worship and parish life.
- Gratitude to Good Shepherd for funding Vacation Bible School in 2012 and 2013.

A full package of Annual Reports is available: stpaulsstockbridge@gmail.com or 413.298.4913.

From the Rector

The recent Gospel story of Jesus' first miracle, at a wedding at Cana in Galilee, was particularly meaningful for me, providing an opportunity to reflect on a number of sabbatical experiences. I'd been looking forward to doing this this past June, when I sat in the chapel of the Franciscan church in the town of Cana and began to understand the setting of this miracle. Then I couldn't preach on it in January because I was out of commission having my surgery.



That was an experience that I am glad I'll never have to repeat. But the prayers and support given to both Marthe and to me, the completely successful outcome and some extra time for reflection have left me filled with gratitude.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom +".

As I said in church on February 3rd, a key moment in the Epiphany revelation of Jesus is this first miracle, at a wedding in the town of Cana in his home district of Galilee. This is a very down-to-earth miracle, a moment in which Jesus does something out of the ordinary in the midst of ordinary life.

I think that a wedding is the ideal place for this first and unique miracle of Jesus to occur. Every wedding is a miracle. A wedding is the celebration of a commitment to an extraordinary change in life, a change which has a profound effect on individuals, on families, and on community. The traditions we have inherited include two separate commitments, although they are often combined in one church service: a civil contract and a commitment before God and God's people. In both, the two people getting married are the ones who make something happen. On the religious side, a priest declares God's blessing. But the priest does not *give* that blessing. The commitment by two people of the fullness of their being to this change in their lives, a change which affects us all, is what causes both the couple and the congregation to receive God's blessing, a blessing which flows from the sacramental act which they have initiated.

On sabbatical last summer, I had three experiences which gave me new glimpses of how weddings mark changes in our lives, individually and as community.

The first was in the Mountain Province of the Philippines. This is where my parents met and married, and where my life began. I was invited to take part in a wedding held there in the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin in the town of Sagada.



The wedding itself was on a grand scale. The Altar area was buried in flowers. The young couple were radiant. The church was packed with people from the town, the area, and from way down in Manila, including the Seminary choir, plus occasional wandering animals and birds. Seventeen bishops, priests and deacons led the Eucharist, which was entirely sung, with much incense.

After two and a half hours of worship, we all went down into the adjoining barrio for a feast. I realized that the cow I had seen being led down the path the day before had provided just one part of the bounty. Many hundreds of people – perhaps a thousand altogether – were fed in house after house in this feast, to which the entire town was invited. And I was given my new gold stole from the Easter School Weaving Room to wear at the wedding and to keep as a reminder of how deeply the body of Christ is bound together in all times and places.

In each wedding liturgy, we pray to God that “the bonds of our common humanity, by which all your children are united one to another, and the living to the dead, may be so transformed by your grace, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.” I experienced a little bit of that in Sagada. At that wedding, and also in Baguio and Manila, I met many clergy who are children and grandchildren of the first indigenous clergy. We hope now to form a real network between them and we who are the children and grandchildren of the missionary clergy who worked with and mentored their parents and grandparents.



From the Philippines, I flew to Spain. I saw weddings in Madrid, with magnificent baroque music, and in the astonishing cathedral built within in the vast mosque in Granada. Then, when I arrived in Sevilla on a Saturday afternoon, I heard singing coming from Iglesia Santa Cruz. Slipping into the back, I found that a wedding had just begun – in French oddly enough. I joined the throng, and was thrilled to be there. Twenty-four hours later, I had experienced worship there in French, Russian and Spanish, and participated in the music of the last service including experiencing for the first time the magnificent *trompetas reales*, royal trumpets which fan out immediately above the head of the organist.

More wonderfully, the organists of that church, Jesus Justo Estebaran and his brother Angel, with their extended family swept me into their family for those two days. On Sunday afternoon they took me out for a long, extravagant dinner. And Jesus Justo was beside himself with excitement when he discovered that we have here at St. Paul's an 1880's Roosevelt tracker pipe organ of exactly the vintage of the one he is helping to restore in Quito, Ecuador. We have shared notes on your respective projects and promised to keep in touch as we go forward.

From Spain, I flew to Israel for my course at St. George's College, following in the footsteps of Jesus. In due course, we came to Cana in Galilee. We sat in a courtyard chapel of the Franciscan church there. And there our leader, Fr. Kamal Farrah, put us into the story of Jesus' first miracle.

“On the third day of Jesus' ministry,” John tells us “there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and Jesus' mother was there.” We see right away that Mary is a “first line” relative. She is not a guest but an integral part of this event.

Jesus is there, naturally, as her son – a “second line” relative, so he is a guest. Not so obviously, his disciples are there also, which is John's way of reporting to us that Jesus is already significant figure whose entourage is automatically included.

Now we find Jesus and his disciples gathered with the other male guests at the wedding, separately from the women whose own party is going in another space altogether. Both groups are engaged in the essential business of being in community. This marriage, like all marriages, is reweaving the fabric of society in small but important ways.

Suddenly there is an interruption. Mary comes in and speaks to Jesus. And Jesus responds to her in Syriac Aramaic. This is one of the languages Fr. Kamal (right) speaks, a language still spoken today by people in the Holy Land and in this country. “Woman,” he says, “what is that between you and me?” Or, “Oh, Mom, what’s the crisis that has brought you barging in here?”

The crisis is that the wine has run out, there is no shop open to buy more, and Nazareth is too far away to run home and get more. The whole fabric of this carefully planned, life changing celebration is at risk.



Jesus seems hesitant, reluctant. But Mary isn’t. At this moment, she seems to know where Jesus is heading more clearly than he does himself. Mary doesn’t argue with Jesus. She simply turns to the servants and says, “Do whatever he tells you.”

And Jesus acts. He has the servants take up the very ordinary water set aside for the washing of hands, later for cleaning up of plates, and serve that. The ordinary becomes extraordinary.

And we hear the steward nudge the bridegroom and say, no doubt with a grin, “Everyone else serves the good wine first, and then brings out the inferior wine when they can’t tell the difference. But you have kept the best for last.”

In marriage, two people take the ordinary stuff of their lives, and with joy and pain, and miraculously, they make something new. In our common humanity, at our best, we take the stuff of our lives and with joy and struggle, and miraculously, the kingdom of God begins to dawn among us.

At Cana of Galilee, Jesus did this, the first of his signs, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. They began to see that unrealized gifts are all around us, waiting to be transformed by God’s love. They began to see that unrealized gifts are within each of us, waiting to be transformed by God’s love. It is in our lives that the miracles of God continue to happen.

God is working through each of us, bringing new life to us, to our church, to our community, to our world. Miracles are happening every day in the ordinary stuff of our lives and our world, through large and small miracles of love. Thanks be to God, who calls us into partnership in the renewal of all creation.

Off to the Monastery: A Report from seminarian Jane Tillman

Taking time to relax can often be a challenge in our busy lives. For me, there is often a list of things I feel I can never get to the end of, so it is hard to figure out where to take a break. Recently I was to go out of town on business, but at the last minute the trip was cancelled. Much to my delight I was able to go to the Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, N.Y. for a few days. Holy Cross is a monastery for Episcopal monks in the Benedictine tradition. About 12 monks (or brothers) live in West Park with additional brothers in their Priors in California, Canada, and Africa. The monastery in West Park sits on the west bank of the Hudson River, and the view is simply spectacular.

I arrived on Halloween, at the tail end of Hurricane Sandy where miraculously after so much damage just to the south, the monastery had been spared. While they had planned to have full house there were only two other guests when I arrived. Life at the monastery consists of worship five times a day, starting at 7 am with Matins or Morning Prayer, Holy Eucharist at 9 am, Diurnum at noon, Vespers at 5 pm and Compline at 8:10 pm. The monks all file into the beautiful chapel, and candles are lit, incense burned, and the monks from their book of worship, The Holy Cross Breviary, chant the Psalms and other prayers of the day. The sound of disciplined, quiet, singing and chanting by the brothers is mesmerizing.



Now my good fortune included arriving just as the Feast of All Saints was to begin. The chance to be at the monastery for a Feast Day is a special treat. The worship is generally more celebratory – beautiful vestments are worn by the priests, hymns are sung with the organ accompanying the congregation, and an atmosphere of celebration can be experienced. Not only that, the kitchen staff cooks up special meals when there is a feast day. The body and spirit are meant to delight in the festivities of the day which are a definite change from other days which are more austere. Settling into monastery life for almost four days was spiritually refreshing and helped me realize that there is a different pace of life and focus that is possible when I slow down and rest in God's peace. The rhythm of life at the monastery revolves totally around the worship schedule which changes the experience of time throughout the entire day. In between worship there is time to sleep, read, walk, and sit in the common room to work on a puzzle or use the library. The brothers are available for spiritual direction if appointments are arranged in advance. For some periods of time the Great Silence is observed, and there is no talking at all. Usually this begins at the end of Compline and lasts until the end of the Holy Eucharist the next morning. That means eating breakfast together in silence. I left Holy Cross feeling deeply grateful for the ministry of hospitality, which is the focus of the brothers, and for the chance to share time, meals, and stories with other travelers on the walk of faith. You can check out their website to learn more about Holy Cross www.holycrossmonastery.com.