

Carillon

St Barnabas Episcopal Church



Our Mission: To Share the Love of Christ / Compartir el amor de Cristo

Borrego Springs, California

May 2006

Volume 9, No.5

Reflections from the Desert

The 50 Great Days of Easter

All Christians are familiar with the 40 days of Lent. Yet, how familiar are we with another - more important - grouping of days: the 50 Great Days of Easter, the time from Easter to Pentecost?

Lent is preparation, Easter is fulfillment. Had there not been Easter, there would have been no Lent. Ironically though, the season of Lent is more familiar than the season of Easter. Easter, for most Christians, is reduced to one day. Even though the Sundays between Easter and Pentecost are celebrated, we hear hardly anything about the season.

I'm suggesting we change that by remembering. During the Easter season, the Sunday readings from the Acts of the Apostles recount internal and external struggles, growth and how the first Christian community went about trying to discern what to do. Jesus did appear to the women, to the apostles and to many others so that they would believe that He was alive and with them. According to John (20:31), the reason for the apparitions and miracles that he

presented in his writings was that "you too may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing, you may have life in His name."

**"...through believing, you
may have life in His
name."**

The first decision the followers of Jesus had to make was why/how/with whom to replace Judas as one of the Twelve so that his ministry could continue (Acts 1). Peter addressed the first community of 125 believers; they prayed and then they "cast lots," literally, rolled the dice to choose his replacement. They regarded the outcome as God's will.

Before long the first group of believers had to decide whether or not to admit Gentiles into their midst (Acts 11). And then, if they were to be admitted, address the most divisive issue of their day: whether to require circumcision of the males or follow the law of Moses relative to their baptism. Much discussion followed. In the end, this decision of the Council of Jerusalem was carried to the Gentiles of Antioch: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than

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Ah, Judas!

The Gospel of Judas was found in a burial cave in a place called Kararra, which is on the eastern side of the Nile. This Gospel was discovered by some peasants and it was sold to a dealer in Cairo. This began a really incredible 30-year journey through the world of antiquities dealers with people not really knowing what it was, and all the while it was progressively deteriorating.

Geneva, a Yale Ph.D., looked at it, and saw the word Judas, but he didn't think it was Judas Iscariot; he thought it was another Judas, Judas Thomas. That would have more or less correlated with an earlier find called the Na Kamari, which had been discovered in Egypt in 1945. But this new document was absolutely unique, and it is the only remaining testament that we know of a document that was originally written in the second century.

St. Irenaeus, who lived in the city that is now Lyon, France, wrote a condemnation of this particular document in the year 180 C.E. — so we know that the original document written in Greek was a valid document, and we can conclude that it was in currency in the early Christian world. It was part of disputes that were flaming within early Christianity at that time. Irenaeus never actually saw the work but knew from hearsay of its existence.

What has appeared now is a *Coptic copy of that Greek original document*. Greek and Coptic are written with the same essential lettering but the document had deteriorated considerably. The calligraphy was such that it was almost inevitably judged at first sight by the experts to be a genuine document. At National Geographic, as soon as they got it, they set up a filming date near Geneva, Switzerland, and filmed the document being examined.

Carbon 14 dating estimated this document to be from the year 280 C.E. give or take 60 years on either side. The papyrus was also authenticated. Tests were even done (at National Geographic) on the ink in which it was written. The results were that it corresponds with the ink that was used at the time. Then various calligraphers and philologists looked at the document, some who are among the greatest in the world, and have no doubt as to its authenticity. By the time of the final purchase, it was really a mess; practically indecipherable. The pages had been molded and blended together so that it took an incredible job of restoration to separate out the pages. There were numerous fragments that had been floating around, and all of this became a jigsaw puzzle that the experts in restoration had to solve. They worked for five years, since the middle of the year 2001 until now, getting this document back to something we can read.

“...among the greatest in the world... have no doubt as to its authenticity.”

The gospel will be made available for viewing by the public. National Geographic is mounting an exhibit that will also feature aspects of second and third century history *and the whole history of how Christianity split from Judaism and evolved into a separate and distinct religion*. At the end of the day, the Maecenas Foundation in Switzerland (the owners of the document) will be donating the document to the government of Egypt, which is where it was found, and it will eventually be housed in the Coptic museum in Cairo.

As to the question of it being included in the New Testament, that is highly unlikely. In early Christianity, there were at least 30 potential gospels floating around (a large number of these gospels were found in Nag Hamaddi, Egypt in 1947,) and there were dozens and dozens if not hundreds of original documents which were winnowed down at an early stage in the third and fourth centuries which became the New Testament and the basis of the new religion called Christianity. And again, it is highly unlikely

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The Sin of Racism: A Call to Covenant

A Pastoral Letter from the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church

March 2006
Episcopal News Service

We, the bishops of the Episcopal Church, acknowledged the painful reality of the consequences of racism in the 1994 pastoral letter “the Sin of Racism.” In that letter, we stated “the essence of racism is prejudice coupled with power. It is rooted in the sin of pride and exclusivity which assumes ‘that I and my kind are superior to others and therefore deserve special privileges.’” We issue this new pastoral on the pervasive sin that continues to plague our common life in the church and in our culture. We acknowledge our participation in this sin and we lament its corrosive effects on our lives. We repent of this sin, and ask God’s grace and forgiveness.

When Jesus entered the synagogue in his first public act of ministry (Luke 4), he read from the prophet Isaiah. The vision proclaimed is known as the desire of God, the peaceable kingdom, a society of justice and shalom, or the city set on a hill. It is an icon of what God intends for all creation – that human beings live in justice and peace with one another, that the poor are fed and housed and clothed, the ill are healed, prisoners set free, and that the whole created order is restored to right relationship. That vision is our goal and vocation as Christians.

“It is in our diversity that we discover the fullness of (God’s) image.”
page 3

The fundamental truth undergirding this vision is that all are made in the image of God. It is in our diversity that we discover the fullness of that image. If we judge one class or race or gender better than another, we violate that desire and intent of God. And when our social and cultural systems exacerbate or codify such judgments, we do violence to that which God has made. Racism is a radical affront to the good gift of God, both in the creation described in Genesis, and in the reality of the Incarnation. Jesus came among us to bring an end to that which divides us, as Paul so clearly identifies in Galatians 3:28, “in Christ there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female.”

Whenever individual or community behaviors work against God’s vision, we have promised to respond in ways that will serve to heal: “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? I will with God’s help (BCP p 305).” God has created us with skins of many colors, God has created us in thousands of tribes and languages, and none is adjudged more godly than another. It is our behavior that gives evidence of godliness, not the color of our skin.

Editor’s Note: This is the first half of the Bishops’ letter. Part two will be printed in the June *Carillon*.

**What can I
do this
month to
demonstrate
that I reject
racism?**

'The Edge of Adventure'

by Victor Levine

The Edge of Adventure is not the story of a trip to Katmandu and the scaling of K-2. Rather, it is name of a 13-week course recently offered at St Barnabas that's purpose is to help participants strengthen or find their way back to their original connection with God and thereby strengthen both the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

The leader and driving force behind the course is church-member Haddon Salt. The course, the first of several projected, was composed of 10 congregants, including Alex and Nancy, who met in one another's homes once a week for two hours. They read a chapter each week and discussed the contents of both the book and accompanying workbook.

The overall purpose of the course, as stated by authors Keith Miller and Bruce Larson, is to aid participants in establishing the level of their connection to God and help them strengthen that connection or, where necessary, find their way back to that original relationship.

The authors have provided guided readings and a plan for discussions in group. There is also a journal that each participant compiles during the 13 weeks the course runs. The journal is completely private and not shared with the group.

The real-life setting to which *The Edge of Adventure* responds is the current difficulty of the Anglican Communion which has fallen into dispute on the twin issues of ordination and sexuality. The issue had led to factional conflict between dioceses on both the local and international levels.

The question the authors of *The Edge of Adventure* pose is, how can we resolve those differences so that the Anglican Communion remains whole and all the

churches that comprise it are once again united in Christ. Nothing less than the survival of the Episcopal Church is at stake. Ultimately, the unity of the Anglican Communion hangs in the balance.

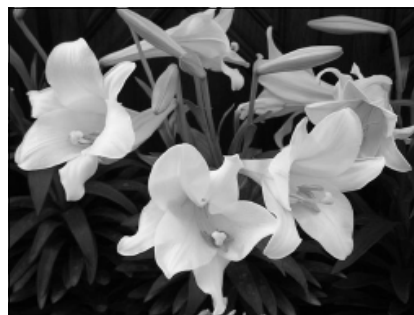
The real-life setting to which *The Edge of Adventure* responds is the current difficulty of the Anglican Communion which has fallen into dispute on the twin issues of ordination and sexuality.

The Edge of Adventure course is based on the proposition that the healing begins at home with the individual and works its way up the line so that new energy and a loving spirit of conciliation are poured into the Episcopal Church and, through it, into the world-wide Anglican Communion.

The ultimate hope of the authors is that church congregants will be able to work together in such a way as to demonstrate that a conscious and deliberate return to the first principles, as enunciated by Jesus, is the way, and perhaps the only way, the entire Anglican system can survive.

For more information, contact Haddon Salt at 767-4817 or hsalt@hughes.net.

See also St Matthew's Episcopal Church (<http://www.stmattsaustrin.org/ToWhomAmISpeaking.pdf>).



Easter lilies like these graced the church on Easter, thanks to the Altar Guild and your donations.

Lenten Activities



Top row: the Women of St. Barnabas earn \$840 from their Spring Bake Sale; Second row from left: Bob Cassidy and Dave Otis help at the Bake Sale; Tootie Hatch prepares sale items; Jean Smith prices jam; Third row from left: Joanne McLean leads the choir; extra rehearsals bring beautiful sounds forth from the choir; Victor Levine carries the cross during the Palm Sunday procession. Photos by Faye Dorsey.

From the Altar Guild

by Nancy Bye

Come and Serve

Thank you if you contributed to the fund for our Easter flowers this year. They were a little different—we added some pale pink and lavender stock and yellow ranunculus to our traditional Easter lilies at the altar. A huge pale bouquet graced the niche and those arriving at our doors were greeted by an overflowing basket of tall cut flowers including branches of pale yellow palo verde cut from our own blooming trees. A pot of blue daisies stood at each cross in the memorial garden.

Summer approaches rapidly, so we will soon resort to the flowers God bestows on us to decorate our niche. Sign up, call, write, or email if you would like us to acknowledge a birthday, anniversary, memorial or other celebration.

I recently came across a piece that Marty Phillippi wrote in the 1994 Ram Horn when she was directress of our altar guild, and called to ask her if I could excerpt it here. “The altar guild prepares and tends the places where we worship. Our work is an offering of time and many talents. Our sacristy is an efficient center for church housekeeping. We work quietly behind the scenes to prepare for each service—



Among their many gifts, members of the Altar Guild make palm crosses for the Palm Sunday services.

to put ornaments, furnishings and flowers in place and to care for them. We have designed and made vestments and linens... I feel there is a vitality and joy in serving on the guild, and if you are interested in joining us, please let me know.”

I echo her words and pray that a few of you will step up and join us. We really, really need some extra help. Thank you!

The People's Corner

by Bill Walker, The People's Warden

As People's Warden, I would like to challenge you. What can you do? Each member needs to look deep in his heart to find his part in sharing the love of Christ. It takes every member to reach out to those in need, the unchurched, the rest of the community to help, support and bring us all together.

Are you using your talent, your gifts to help others? Ask what you can do to build St Barnabas. Let me know, I am there for you. I want to hear from you.

Stewardship

by Kathleen Killman, Bill Walker, John Drum and Gary Westover

Thank You

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank all of the very generous people who participated in this year's Stewardship Campaign at St. Barnabas. We have raised \$93,250 in pledges for 2006. Our goal was \$104,000 to support our church. If anyone is interested in increasing his pledge or has not pledged yet, we would love to include you to put us over the top and make this year's drive a total success.

Sunday Worship, continued from page 2

that any apocryphal document will now be accepted in the canon of orthodox Christianity.

What this document does is to open us up to a whole world of history that we had not been able to fully appreciate before, and it gives a new and different interpretation of both Judas and his relationship to Jesus.

What was accepted as the canon of the New Testament was one thing, and there are many other documents floating around from early Christianity we can still read today. These too are documents of great interest, but are not accepted as divine revelation. The gospel of Judas, the lost gospel, will fall into that second category.

The most important point is that **all gospels are not created equal**. Some have more historical credibility than others, more claim to provide an accurate and nearly contemporary picture of the time of Jesus and his first followers. Among the various competitors, the four canonical gospels have no serious rivals. All were in place in substantially their modern form by around 100 C.E., and all describe historical settings firmly rooted in the first century. By contrast, the vast majority of Gnostic gospels, from what we know today, were composed after 150 C.E., and many as late as 250.

What we have of this “Gospel of Judas” tells us very little, if anything, about the historical Jesus or Judas. The contribution of this Gospel seems to just add a bit more to our knowledge base of both early Gnosticism and the area of sectarian Christianity in its very early days.

If you did not see the documentary on National Geographic, the Gospel text as well as four essays by scholars, can be purchased in book form: *The Gospel of Judas*, edited by Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer, and Gregor Wurst, with additional commentary by Bart D. Ehrman, published by the National Geographic Society, 2006.

This book is now available in our parish library.
Nancy+

Reflections, continued from page 1

these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.” (Acts 15: 28)

The fact that during my 37 years as a priest, no one has ever asked me about the necessity of circumcision for males as a condition for baptism illustrates for me that, being true to life, the issues which are important in our faith community keep changing. For example, at the time of the Civil War the Presiding Bishop wrote a treatise based on the Bible justifying slavery. Today in the US slavery is no longer an issue. Neither, for most in the Episcopal Church, is the ordination of women - which is not yet true for the whole Anglican Communion. In the 21st century, the issue of homosexuality could be comparable in importance to the issue of circumcision in the first century. Then there was much discussion. Much prayer. Much discernment.

Next month in Columbus Ohio, lay and clerical deputies at General Convention will also be discussing issues internal and external to the Episcopal Church. They too will strive to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit by praying, listening, discussing, and praying again. Then, instead of rolling dice, they will vote. It is by this process, that the Episcopal Church decides what, at this time, God is calling us to do.

Our prayer for those at General Convention in Columbus during the 50 Great Days of Easter is that they learn from the process used by the first Christians in allowing God to guide them into the essentials.

Sincerely,
Alex+/Nancy+



Vestry Report

by Nancy Bye

RESURRECTION!

Because of the myriad activities at St. Barnabas during the Easter season this issue is filled to the brim with exciting news. My editor has asked me to be very brief in my monthly vestry report. So let me just say that this team has come alive! Watch for a full report in the next issue of what we are doing, planning, and proposing.

Mark Your Calendar

May

10th 12 noon Women of St. Barnabas meet at at the rectory.

16th 6pm Sarah's Circle meets at Martha Mitchell's home.

16th 6pm Men's group meets.

St. Barnabas Carillon

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