

St. Matthew's Online Newsletter

October 2014

A Call to Service

by Fr. Rick Wilson

"... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and

gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

This quote from Scrip-

ture is taken from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, verses 35-40. It has been long used as a reminder to the followers of Christ of the need to see in others the presence of Christ. In our baptismal vows, we commit to "seek and serve Christ in all persons" That is a pretty tall order because sometimes some people just manage to

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Service: A Response to Love

In this month's lead article, Fr. Rick calls us to service and rightly so. We have just celebrated our 50th Anniversary of blessings on the generations of parishioners of St. Matthew's. When one is blessed and receives so

many gifts of love such as we shared with each other in the celebration on Oct 5, it is only right to turn around and want to give that sort of love to others. Let us each consider the ways we use our time, talents and treasure

and not only support our church, but contribute to the wider community around us. Join an outreach that already is active, or start a new one and ask others to join you.

Respond to love with service to others.

The Online Newsletter is a production of lay ministers and the clergy. Please email all articles or photos to the editor, Julie Neff-Encinas at jneffencinas@cox.net

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A Call to Service (cont.)

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push our buttons. But it is there in the Gospel and in our baptismal commitment.

A little more than four decades ago, I started college and through that experience, I came to know the world that I thought I knew was a much grander and complicated place than I had imagined. One area that was opened up to me was that of the incredible treasures of our Christian tradition. Through a study of church leaders who came after the apostles within 150 years, I learned so much of the richness of our tradition. I recall specifically being introduced to the perspective expressed in Genesis and expounded upon by many others that we are created in the image and likeness of God.

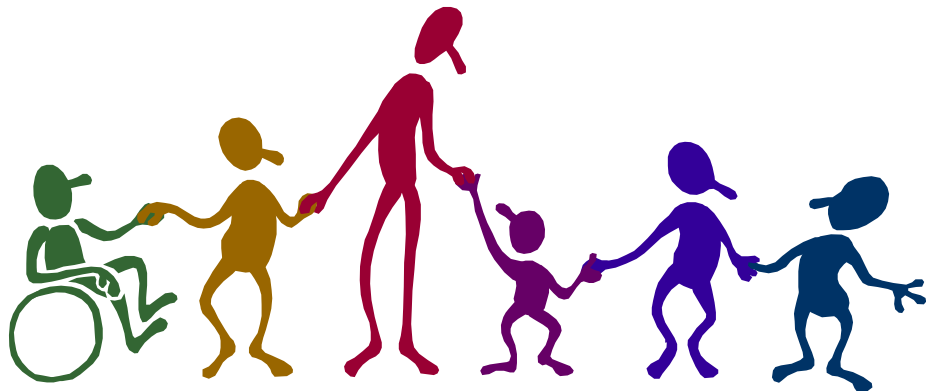
But what does it mean? Various theologians interpret this in different ways. And an analysis of those understandings would be interesting but it is beyond our scope here. Here, let us just say that it is a way of recognizing that we as humankind have a special dimension to our being which entails a definite responsibility. I recall the section from the 8th Psalm, verses 4-8:

What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and

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***What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?***

A Call to Service (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

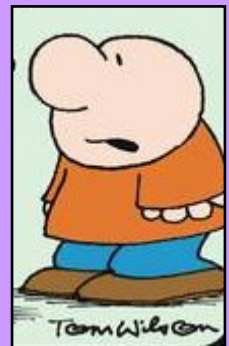
On occasion I hear the comment that as incredibly great as the expanse of the universe is and how ancient it is, how can a relatively latecomer (us as human-kind) to this reality be significant at all? I recall a cartoon character named Ziggy who in one frame of his comic strip stands on a mound of earth looking up at the starry night sky saying something to the effect of, "Wow, looking up at all that incredible expanse and beauty of space can certainly make one feel insignificant." In the next frame, he is walking down from the mound looking at the ground, saying, "And I can certainly do without that!" It is unfortunate that sometimes we can see the beauty of an incredible creation around us but not the beauty of each and every human person. Fortunately, God seems to see the beauty of all of God's creation.

I believe that in his experience, Jesus was also able to see the beauty of all creation. How it must have pained him to see what humankind had been doing, was doing and probably would continue to do to one another. Perhaps that was part of the reason he spoke to and healed the marginalized. Perhaps that is why we as his followers are also to see the beauty of each and every person, to seek and serve Christ in one another.

The Word who became flesh and dwelt among us gave us, gives us, and will give us the opportunity to treat one another as the beauty of God's creation that we all are. It is not easy since the temptation to neglect our own beauty and hence the beauty of one another can be so strong. Furthermore, we encounter others who are blind to the marvelous beings they are and cannot see the glory which is within others. In the book *The Lucifer Effect*, author Philip Zimbardo provides a study on understanding how good people turn evil.

The world of which we are a part is truly beautiful in so many ways but there is an ugliness which humankind brings to this world of beauty when we act out of sync with the understanding of the value of creation and also the special call and responsibility of humankind. To assist in decreasing this ugliness, we as

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Blessing of the Animals

On Sunday, September 28 at 2:00 pm in Matt's Place, nine dogs, two canaries, one cat, one cockatoo, and one desert tortoise and their 21 human friends gathered for the Blessing of Animals in Memory of St. Francis. The following prayer was offered for each of the non-human participants: (Name of pet), May Almighty God bless you, me and all God's creatures, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Deacon Nadine Martin led the Blessing service. Nancy Reynolds, Caroline Wolstenholme, Adam Drudge, Deborah Moorhouse, and Deacon Nadine gave reflections on the grace these holy creatures of God bring to them.

The service concluded with everyone saying the following prayer (which is one we should say frequently): Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends the animals, especially for animals that are suffering; for all that are overworked and underfed and cruelly treated, for those who have been neglected, for all wistful creatures in captivity that beat against the bars; for any that are lost or deserted or frightened; for those who have no place to live because we have paved over their homes, for all that are in pain or dying; for all that must be put to death. We entreat for those who deal with them a heart of compassion, gentle hands, and kind words; that they may share with us the blessing of the merciful. For you, O God, will save both animal and human, and great is your loving kindness. Amen.

(More photos on pages 8 & 9)



A Call to Service (cont.)

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followers of Christ are to extend ourselves for the good of others. According to Matthew's Gospel, we are to feed the hungry, give refreshment to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and take care of the sick and imprisoned.

Here at St. Matthew's, we as a people of God address some of these needs. Through the various ministries of our Service Commission, the following is done:

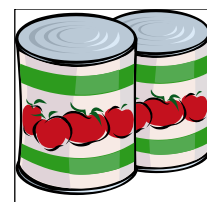
Collect food for the food bank distribution at New Spirit Lutheran Church (Joseph Evans transports the food items);

Provide meals once a month for clients of Primavera Works, a program of the Primavera Foundation (Cheryl Browne coordinates this ministry);

Collect clothing for residents in care centers who have an insufficient amount of clothing (Beth Coffman coordinates this ministry);



Collect toiletries for Emerge!, a domestic violence shelter; and aluminum tabs for Ronald McDonald House, an overnight facility for patients' families; and cell phones for victims of domestic violence (Dona Schoening delivers these items to their respective agencies);



Preparation of clothing and school items for children living in poverty in Mexico (Dawn Stoner coordinates this Shoebox Ministry);

A meal preparation and serving for clients of Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (Matty's Men provides this outreach);

Selling of Just Coffee, a Fair Trade product for Mexican Coffee growers (Eddie Montano coordinates this program).



Also, we have parishioners who participate in fundraisers of various nonprofit groups which provide services and programs for the betterment of the community. Among these parishioners are:

Judy Kowalick participates in the National Alliance on Mental Illness annual Walk-a-thon;

Jim Thompson is walking this year in the Zero Prostate Cancer's Run/Walk on October 11;

Fr. Frank Bergen will be making strides at the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation's AIDSWALK this October 12, raising money for this agency's programs and services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

This year, parishioner Karen Reynolds encouraged Deacon Ruth Brown to join her in a special ministry called Kairos Outside which is somewhat like the Cursillo program. Kairos Outside is a retreat for women who have loved ones in prison or have been incarcerated themselves. It is a way to extend the Gospel message to a

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Senior Warden Ramblings by Carol Walker

The first Sunday of November we will be celebrating All Saints' Day. All Christian believers are Saints and remembered on All Saints' Day whether past or present. Are you curious as to the origination of All Saints' Day? It is normally on November 1st, the day after Halloween. Halloween comes from All Hallows' Eve, with the emphasis on spirits, goblins, witches, etc. that were believed to be especially active just before All Saints' Day to hinder the prayer for the dead that would be offered the next day. The practice of trick or treating dates back to the Middle Ages when poor people would go door to door begging food in exchange for their prayers for the dead. In fact, when I was a child I would go door to door saying, "Help the poor". That was a common saying where I grew up. Today, most all those little beggars say "trick or treat".



The first All Saints' Day occurred on May 13, 609 C.E. when Pope Boniface IV accepted the Pantheon in Rome. The Pope dedicated that day as a "holiday" to honor the Blessed Virgin and all the Martyrs. Over time, it was expanded to include honoring of all the saints. The idea of a church festival or holiday ended in 1770 but is celebrated by many churches on the first Sunday of November. November first was considered the end of summer and among other things, it was also a time when the souls of those who had died were believed to return to visit their homes.

In some cultures, it is popular for Christians to celebrate All Saints' or All Souls' Day by creating a shrine in their homes using the favorite things of their loved ones. Families often go to the cemetery and have picnics near the graves of loved ones to celebrate their lives. Families also spruce up the graves of their loved ones. Some people go to church to light candles for a loved one who died the previous year.

Christians who celebrate All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day do so in the belief that there is a prayerful spiritual bond between those in heaven and the living. We honor all the saints, known and unknown with prayers and singing.

Here, in Tucson, it is the custom to have an All Souls' Procession, about 2 miles long, with performers, artists, altars, etc. to celebrate and mourn the lives of loved ones who have died in the past. At the end of the parade, participants place their hopes, wishes, and offerings for those who have passed into a large urn to burn. This will be the 25th year for the annual event which will take place on November 9th.

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth; Grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may always be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves to be surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whom all our intercessions are acceptable through the Spirit, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen BCP

Library Corner

Greetings from Librarians Judith and Irene,

Our library is open and waiting for you to come and browse through our wonderful books. New titles are arriving all of the time. We have a large selection of interesting and thought-provoking religious titles, an extensive reference library, selective secular titles, varied audio/visual selections, religious fiction, and, last but not least, our anemic selection of children's books needs your help. If you have any children's books with religious content, we would appreciate them, as our children's section is small.

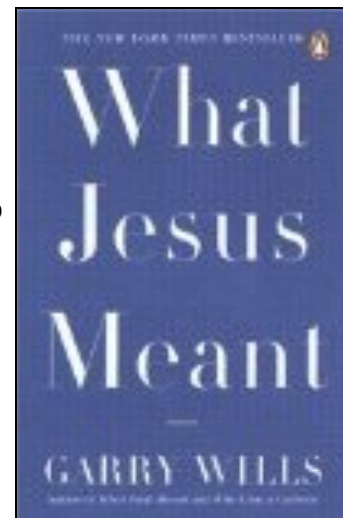
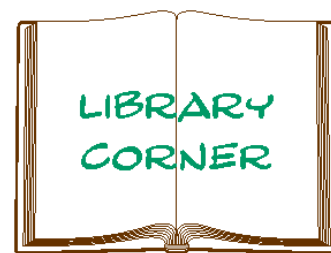
Each month we are pleased to provide a review of a book you might like to read. This month's selection is *What Jesus Meant* By Garry Wills.

"Garry Wills brings his signature brand of erudite, unorthodox thinking to his latest book of revelations. . . A tour de force and a profound show of faith." (O, the Oprah Magazine)

In what are billed "culture wars," people on the political right and the political left cite Jesus as endorsing their views. But in this *New York Times*-bestselling masterpiece, Garry Wills argues that Jesus subscribed to no political program. He was far more radical than that. In a fresh reading of the gospels, Wills explores the meaning of the "reign of heaven" Jesus not only promised for the future but brought with him into this life. It is only by dodges and evasions that people misrepresent what Jesus plainly had to say against power, the wealthy, and religion itself. But Wills is just as critical of those who would make Jesus a mere ethical teacher, ignoring or playing down his divinity. An illuminating analysis for believers and nonbelievers alike, *What Jesus Meant* is a brilliant addition to our national conversation on religion.

So, please come and browse our St Matthew's Library and check out a book to entertain and enrich your life.

See you there!



A Call to Service (cont.)

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population who is hurting.

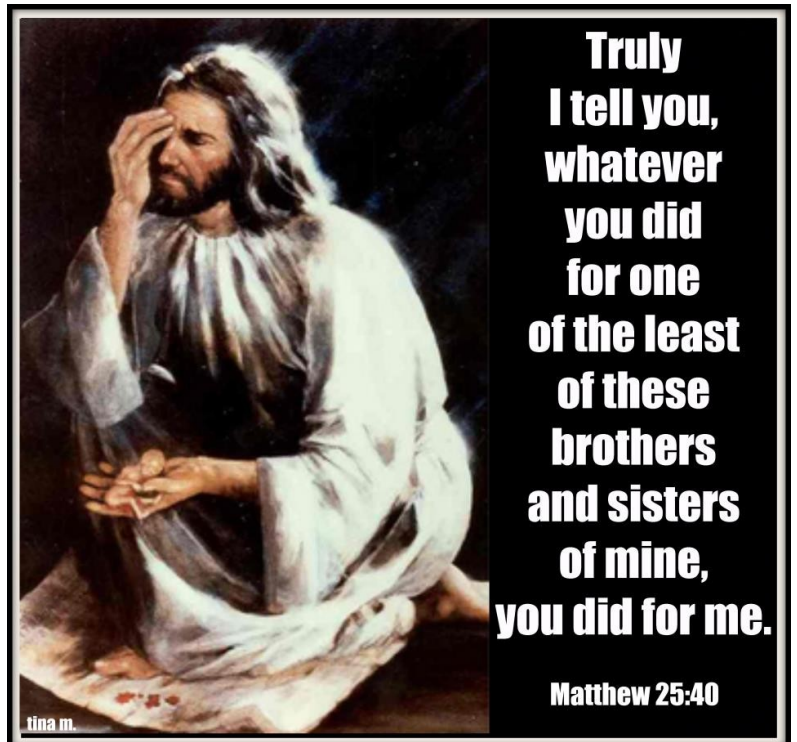
I am completing the process to become a volunteer once a month with the Pima Council on Aging in the personal budgeting program. I will work with someone who needs assistance in addressing their finances. Sometimes as we age, the intricacies of bill paying can be problematic. The program I am becoming a part of helps those who are finding handling their finances too difficult.

And I am sure that there are others who are doing things throughout our community. Each of the actions listed above exist to improve the human condition of many who are experiencing some of the frustrating challenges of living in a beautiful world that also has its difficulties. To extend ourselves for the good of others is what we are called to do.



If you are not actively involved in some level of extending yourself for the good of others, I would encourage you to think about taking on some responsibility to do that. I would recommend that you consider some activity which has a meaning for you. Often, we resonate well with a need that somehow has been an experience in our own families or among our friends. I know of people who have walked the Susan B. Komen Walk for a Cure because of their own breast cancer or that of a loved one. The frightening number of 1 out of 7 women in the United States is the statistic I am aware of regarding this severe illness.

We may believe that what we do will be too little in the grand scheme of things but that isn't true. Every effort we make to act on assisting another or others to live a more enriching life is a significant advancement for them and for the community in general. Our faith does not keep us closed in on ourselves but opens us up to knowing that all is of value to God. As we extend ourselves, just maybe we can see more and more the Christ in others we are to seek and serve. *"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."*



**Truly
I tell you,
whatever
you did
for one
of the least
of these
brothers
and sisters
of mine,
you did for me.**

Matthew 25:40

Blessing of the Animals (cont.)



Blessing of the Animals (cont.)



50th Anniversary Celebration—Part I

Sunday, October 5 was a magnificent day for St Matthew's! There were many activities on the docket and every single one of them went off beautifully providing our entire community times to be quiet, to worship, to state and renew our vows as Christians and Episcopalians, to listen, to ask questions, to share, to support, to laugh, to eat, to sing, to dance, and to have lots of fun! While there were photos taken, in the interest of getting this newsletter out as soon as possible, we'll wait and include them next month.

In the meantime, I'd very much appreciate input from parishioners on what the celebration meant to you. What parts did you enjoy the most and why? What memories remain most vividly? Who did something that touched you? You may email me at jneffencinas@cox.net, text me at 440-4194 or write it down and hand it to me or Ernesto. I'll select some of the input to include with the photos next month.

Who We Are

Episcopal Church of St. Matthew

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We're on the Web!

stmatthew.azdiocese.org



Like us on Facebook!

Everybody needs a home.

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We seek to be an assembly of people who are fully devoted to serving God; a people who are grounded, loving, welcoming, respectful and affirming; forever seeking to grow in the ways of Jesus in everything we do.

We are with God's help, an inclusive people of God, reverent in our worship, radical in our hospitality, and devoted to growing in the Spirit of Jesus, to boldly yet humbly love and serve our neighbors.

Opportunities for Involvement

Worship

Sundays

8:00 am

Meditative Eucharist

10:30 am

Choral Eucharist

5:00 pm (First Sunday)

Praise Eucharist

Tuesdays

10:00 am

Morning Prayer

Wednesdays

6:00 pm

Evening Prayer

Thursdays

10:00 am

Healing Eucharist

Saturdays

5:30 pm

Celtic Liturgy

Quarterly on a selected

Saturday

4:00 pm

Alternative Family Service

Fellowship

Sundays

After each liturgy

Coffee Hour

Tuesdays

2:15 pm

Yoga

2nd/4th Wednesdays

10:00 am

Knit/Crochet Group

1st Saturday

9:30 am

Matty's Angels

3rd Saturday

7:30 am

Matty's Men Breakfast

8:30 am

Matty's Men Meeting

Growth

Sundays

9:15 am

Adult Education

10:30 am

Sunday School

Tuesdays

7:00 pm

Bible Study

Wednesdays

7:00 pm

Cursillo Reunion Group

7:00 pm

Study Group

Thursdays

2:00 pm

Bible Study

7:00 pm

Choir Practice (on hiatus)

2nd/4th Saturdays

10:00 am

Dream Analysis Class