What happens in Vegas

I know what you’re thinking. “Did he or didn’t he? When he made his single-handed road-trip to California in the summer, did Duncan visit Las Vegas?”

Well, if you believe that devout clergy should stay clear of dens of iniquity, let me pose two questions. First, have we actually met? I’m not sure anyone would call me ‘devout.’ Second, have you met Jesus? I suspect he would have been quite at home in Sin City. I’m not sure he would have donned his poker face and sat inscrutably at the high-roller tables, but, the picture we form of him in the Gospels is of a big heart which was constantly open to people. He was (and is) passionate about them, no matter what their walk of life or their moral track record. He just can’t get enough of them. If Jesus could hang out with prostitutes and tax collectors in Galilee, then I can imagine him sitting at a Vegas bar with casino owners and burlesque performers.

However, I’m not Jesus, and so I didn’t while away the evening with gambling moguls or exotic dancers. Sorry to disappoint you. But, I did visit Vegas. I mean, you have to, don’t you? When you are a desperate preacher in search of new material, you can’t turn down the opportunity of the world’s greatest sermon story factory just a few miles away.

So, I did some research, booked a hotel, and one sweltering July morning entered the furnace. And that is not a metaphor. It was hot. I once spent a day on the edge of the Sahara, while vacationing in Tunisia. That was hot. But Vegas was less tolerable. There were no cars and hotels in the Sahara. It was hot the next day too. “Oh, but it’s a dry heat” people in Pennsylvania say. So is your oven, but it still roasts the turkey. I didn’t have a turkey. But I did have a bag of apples. Beautiful, green, crisp, juicy, tart Granny Smiths. My favorite. I bought them in Anaheim the previous day before I bade farewell to my son Alex and began my long eastward journey home.

Call it absent-mindedness, call it the naiveté of a man who is unfamiliar with the desert, call it downright stupidity, but when I unloaded my car at the hotel, I only removed my overnight bag. I left the apples on the front passenger seat, in the direct sunlight.

I don’t know at what temperature apples bake, but when I returned to the car the following day to begin the next leg of my voyage through the nation, I was suddenly a young boy again in my mother’s kitchen. You see, she used to bake apples. Huge, green, sour apples she called Bramleys. She

(Continued on page 2)
would carve out the core and stuff the hole with brown sugar. She said that the sugar seeped into the apple and made the eating experience sweeter.

We would have them for dessert with vanilla ice-cream after our roast beef Sunday lunch. Those Granny Smiths on my car seat filled my nostrils with the aroma of childhood Sunday lunches. My mouth watered at the anticipation of the sour Bramley filling my mouth. You see, the bright green skin had turned brown. Seriously. I opened the plastic wrapper and bit into one. I almost burned my tongue.

I had heard stories of diners frying eggs on the pavements in Vegas, but never baking apples in their cars. You should have seen the chocolate cookies I left on the back seat.

Who would have thought that a car can become an oven? Who could have imagined that a windshield would serve as a magnifying glass, multiplying the rays of the sun? As I discarded my ruined Granny Smiths I pondered the impact of mankind upon the desert, and our God-given responsibility to steward his creation. We took a patch of uninhabitable land, threw up luxury hotels and lavish entertainment venues. We laid pipes, buried cables, and tarmacked the sand. We added to the furnace of the desert by pumping hot air into the streets from our air conditioning units, and filling those same roads with four-wheeled ovens. Billions of lightbulbs destroy the evening cool. Like, it’s not hot enough already in the desert.

The Management of Creation is the third rail of Christian stewardship teaching. Touch it and you will bake, as surely as a Granny Smith in the Vegas sun. Mention stewarding Creation and some will accuse you of being political, buying into a climate-change conspiracy that seeks to strangle economic growth. And yet, for the Christian who truly wishes to be guided by Scripture and tradition, there can be no tolerance for ‘use-it-up-and-throw-it-away,’ ‘exploit-it-for-every-dollar-you-can-make’ consumerism. Especially of God’s good gift of land, seas, rivers, skies and, yes, deserts.

“The Lord God saw all that he had made and behold it was very good.” Sorry, Lord.

Have you checked out the new nursery yet? If not go and admire the great design. Then come to the official opening on September 11.

Recent donations to our mission partners:

- $500 to the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund to help in providing essential goods to Louisiana flood victims.
- $250 to an Episcopal parish in West Virginia following the floods there in July.
- $500 for the Youth Mission Trip to Virginia.
- $1,000 to Family Promise
- $1,000 to St. Barnabas urban children’s mission, Harrisburg.

Where does this money come from? Well, each year Mt. Calvary gives 5% of our pledged income to mission. The Outreach Coordinating Committee then allocates this sum to projects throughout the year. Mt. Calvary believes in tithing. When you, the parishioner, pledge a proportion of your income to the parish, you can be sure that 5% of it will go towards the mission of God in the wider world.
Getting the Good News Out

Thanks to our Communications Committee and our webmaster Gennifer Richie, we are making great strides in making our proclamation of good news more accessible. For example, in an average month we receive 1,410 views of our Facebook page, and have now accumulated nearly 200 people who have ‘liked’ us.

Also we receive around 800 downloads on iTunes of our sermons (totaling over 18,000 downloads since we began offering audio of sermons online).

If you have friends or family in other parts of the country, these online venues are a great way for them to keep up to date with all that’s happening at Mt. Calvary.

Celebrating our Family

We rejoice with the newest members of the family of Christ, via baptism:

- Abigail Letcher, June 4
- Emerson May Baluch, June 5

They join a vast family of Christians around the world, and through the ages. Among those dear to Mt. Calvary who are celebrating the anniversaries of their baptisms this autumn and winter are:

- Scott Coulter St. Peter, 11/8/98
- Louise Morgan Gebauer, 11/8/98
- Anna Louise Bostwick, 11/8/98
- Olivia Anne Cunningham, 11/15/98
- Andrew Hillary Bitting, 10/24/99
- John Clark Miller IV, 11/14/99
- Sydney Rose Hungerford, 11/19/00
- Lee Marie Hungerford, 11/19/00
- Isabel Clear Devereaux, 10/14/01
- Matthew Charles Gurgiolo, 10/6/02
- Logan Patrick Bedard, 10/6/02
- Ellery Kate Klineyoung, 10/27/02
- McKenna Grace Klineyoung, 10/27/02
- Luke Adam Waldner, 10/27/02
- Ivy Ellen Julseth, 10/2/04
- Gennifer Renee Ball, 10/8/06

- Noah Clearly Stevenson, 10/8/06
- John Leonard Waldner, 11/19/06
- Noah Cleary Stevenson, 10/8/06
- Alex Robert Woodward, 10/23/08
- Jack Riley Stevenson, 11/30/08
- Owen Edward Trainer, 11/6/10
- Mia Camryn Stevenson, 11/7/10
- Adalyn Dorothy Sitta, 9/11/11
- Ayden Stanley Lavertue Gora, 10/16/11
- Colin Patrick Fogarty, 10/18/11
- Elena Marie Goropoulos, 11/11/11
- Samantha Christine Woods, 9/19/12
- Laurel Anne Fox, 10/7/12
- Brooks Michael Walker, 10/1/13
- Catherine Louise Johnson, 10/27/13
- Levi Boone Stevenson, 10/27/13
- Selah Rose Stevenson, 10/27/13
- Nathan Raymond Whittaker, 11/10/13
- James Quinlan, 11/17/13
- Michael Quinlan, 11/17/13
- Tomas Diaz, 9/7/14
- Zayla Gora, 10/5/14
- Rory Langan, 10/19/14
- Patrick Langan, 9/27/15
- Michael Anthony Favorito, 10/18/15
The next year is an important one in the life of Mt. Calvary, filled with wonderful opportunities to do the things that we were made for – to know God and to imitate the life of Christ. We hope to call a new full-time ordained member of staff as our Assistant Priest, we will look to develop a greater understanding of the mission God has given us, and we will do the things we always do – seeking to love God with all we have, and our neighbors as ourselves. With this magnificent future in mind we approach our New Church Year. Our overriding goal this year is to become more like Christ. Where better to go for help in that task than the Sermon on the Mount – the greatest collection of teaching about life that a human being has ever uttered. You’ll find it in Matthew, chapters 5-7. It will be our inspiration and focus this year. These revolutionary words of Jesus spell out the heart of God and the pattern of life which his followers are to aspire to. I have a challenge for you this year – grasp the heart of Christ revealed in his Sermon, and let it alter your life.

Here is a full description of opportunities to engage in spiritual formation together.

**Housegroups**

Three modules spread out over the year, each devoted to the study of one chapter of the Sermon. Meetings take place in people’s homes or in church on Wednesday nights and Thursday mornings. Registration is required. Module one: Matthew 5.

October 5/6 Verses 13-16
October 12/13 Verses 17-26
October 19/20 Verses 27-32
October 26/27 Verses 33-42

November 2/3 Verses 43-48

Module 2 (Matt 6) will be in February, and Module 3 (Matt 7) in May.

**The Welcome Course**

An exciting course for newcomers to Mt. Calvary and those who wish to brush up on the foundations of the Faith. It also serves as preparation for adults who wish to be baptized or confirmed. The course takes place on Wednesday evenings at church, and is presented by Fr. Duncan. Registration is required.

October 6 Who is God?
October 13 What does Christianity teach?
October 20 How do we worship?
October 27 What about evil?
November 3 What is our purpose?
November 10 How should we live?
November 17 What is God's plan for the world?

**Women’s Fellowship**

A warm and engaging group devoted to shared learning and growth. This year the group will be studying “Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life,” by inspiring author Richard Rohr. Meetings take place on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month in the Parlor, at 7pm. Registration is not needed.

Also, don’t miss the annual Women’s Retreat on October 29 at Siebert Park. Bishop Audrey Scanlan will be the guest presenter. This is open to all women in the parish. Sign up!

(Continued on page 5)
Men’s Breakfast
A diverse group that gathers to eat and enjoy stimulating presentations and conversations at the Cornerstone Coffeehouse each first Saturday of the month, from 7:45 to 9:00. Registration is not needed. This year the theme will be the first 12 verses of the *Sermon* – The Beatitudes.

October 1  The Be Happytudes
November 5  Blessed are the poor in spirit
December 3  Blessed are the mourn
January 7  Blessed are the meek
February 4  Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
March 4  Blessed are the merciful
April 1  Blessed are the pure in heart
May 6  Blessed are the peacemakers
June 3  Blessed are the persecuted

Marking the Seasons
The Christian Calendar provides us more chances to enrich our growth. We will make the most of them. So, on Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings in Advent and in Lent we will gather at church for some events that will help us in our glorious goal of being formed into Christ’s likeness.

Advent dates:
Nov 30/December 1
December 7/8
December 14/15
December 21/22

Lent dates:
March 8/9
March 15/16
March 22/23
March 29/30
April 5/6

Celebrating the Year
Another great gift to the Church is the Lectionary of Sunday readings, which we and most of the Christian churches follow. This year the Lectionary determines that we will read the first chapter of the *Sermon on the Mount* in all weekend services from January 29 to February 19. So we have the gift of a 4-week series of sermons on the *Sermon*. Then, on Ash Wednesday, we will return to the *Sermon*, with a segment of Matthew 6.

(Continued from page 4)
Spirituality on your phone…
there’s an app for that

Remember how all those labor-saving devices were supposed to, well, save your labor? Recall how those time-saving gadgets would shower you with precious hours each week? Yeah, right. How’s that working for you?

Well, it’s not all bad. Now the infuriating, hypnotic, life-saving device in your packet or handbag can help you in your prayer-life and your walk with Christ. Here are a few **FREE** apps for your phone that can be your helper in your prayer and meditation. Turn the tyranny of telecommunications into your servant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission St. Clare – daily office.</th>
<th>This is Morning and Evening Prayer on your phone. It gives the full text of the service for each day, with all the Bible readings, plus some biographical information about any saint whose day it happens to be. It also includes hymn music. It’s a great way to pray while pounding the treadmill, walking the store, or sitting on the bus.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pray as you Go.</td>
<td>This is a UK resource from the Jesuit community. It is one of the best aids to prayer and meditation that I know. It is all audio and so you won’t need to read. Close your eyes and spend 12 minutes with God each day. There is some helpful sacred music, a Bible reading, some short questions, and time for silent meditation. This app also gives audio guidance on the Examen, the Stations of the Cross, and (if you are more Catholic in your spirituality) the Rosary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Meditation by Christaudio.</td>
<td>This app features a 7-day crash course in Christian meditation. There is no reading involved. Just close your eyes, listen, and follow the instructions. It is less scripture-based than ‘Pray as you go,’ but will still be helpful for people who are unsure how to meditate, or who do not know whether it is a good thing for Christians to do. I couldn’t open some of the features in the index, but you may have more joy than I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centering Prayer.</td>
<td>This is a limited resource, but still quite useful. It is reading-based, not audio. There are many prayers by the father of Christian contemplative prayer, Thomas Keating. A useful resource.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This time of year is filled with imaginings of things to come as we begin another season in the life of Mt. Calvary. Here are some of mine:

A Senior Choir regrouping, refreshed from a summer break, and dedicated anew to the work of enhancing the worship services. I imagine new faces in the choir and encourage all of you to consider this ministry. Give us a test drive to see if choir membership is suited to you. If you have questions, or just want to know more about what is expected, talk with me. The choir is my favorite subject!

Pizza Club Choir – A choir that has continued to rehearse over the summer months as part of the Pizza Club activities. If you have a child suitable for Pizza Club, they are automatically a part of this group which sings at the 10am service 4-5 times annually. I imagine this choir continuing to learn how to sing as a group and how to negotiate different rhythms and recognize musical terminology.

Youth Group – What a treasury of talent we have in our junior and senior high age group. Throughout the year, you hear them blessing us with their talents: Reese Matthews, flutist, accompanying the Senior choir; other members of the Matthew’s family orchestra playing their string instruments; Matthew Gurgiolo and his guitar; and Ethan and his Dad Aaron and their beautiful rendition of “For the Beauty of the Earth,” a moment I will never forget. We have an exciting development in this group in the form of four young women who are all lovely singers and performers. Gracie Browning, Sophie and Emily Reusswig, and Lily Jordan are forming a quartet you will be hearing in the not-too-distant future.

I have wanted for some time to have a Mt. Calvary “Quartet in Residence,” and I’m happy to announce that has been put in place. They first sang at a 10am service this summer; you will be hearing more from them. Barb Kaufman, Donna Munde, Kevin Kelly, and Tim Spigelmyer comprise this group - my thanks to them for their willingness to give “above and beyond” to the music program.

We are instituting a small change in the Worship Service on the last Saturday of the month at 5pm. All aspects of the Taize style of candlelight, the traditional communion and Taize songs will be retained, but we will be adding some other contemplative types of music, such as found in the “Wonder, Love, and Praise Book” and plainsong from the hymnal. Because of this change, we will be referring to the last Saturday of the month as “Contemplative Service” rather than Taize. I am imagining a choir to help lead this singing at the service. Our wonderful singer, Helen Ann Fredrick, has been doing yeoman’s work on her own but would welcome company! Here’s the scoop: one service monthly, one rehearsal 30 minutes prior to service. Perhaps you do not have the time to devote to the Senior Choir, but would like to do some group singing. This could be ideal for you. You need not be able to sing parts to participate! Do you sing along with the radio? In the shower? You’re in! Talk with me.

I am grateful to God for this bounty of talent and dedication and for the membership so willing to participate. And, in the flurry of activity and the imaginings of the mind, help us all to remember that “In our music, God is glorified.” (Words in Episcopal 1941 hymnal)
Pizza Club

Summer Pizza Club has been thriving, with plenty of indoor and outdoor fun during our expanded 2-hour sessions. We’ve played games outside, watched movies, feasted on popcorn and pizza, and enjoyed the fellowship of old and new friends. Fall Pizza Club will resume again in September, meeting on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, from 5:30-7:00. If you have a fun hobby, craft, or activity that you would like to share with our Pizza Club friends, we would love to have you join us.

Safeguarding God’s Children Misconduct Training

It is still a Diocesan requirement that volunteers and employees participate in this training, and it is also important to protect our parish and to keep our youngest parishioners safe. The next training session will take place on Sunday, September 18, and is required of all volunteers and employees who work with children, if they have not received the training within the past three years. Child Abuse Clearances and Criminal Background Checks are also mandatory; see Melanie if you have any questions about what you need to do to fulfill these requirements.

Food Bank

Mark your calendars and join us at the Central PA Food Bank on October 3, November 7, and December 6 from 6:00 – 8:00pm. It is a productive and worthwhile two hours, as we perform whatever tasks are needed to help get bulk donations ready for distribution to families in need.

Nursery News

You may have noticed the spectacular transformation taking place in our nursery. Soon there will be two newly-renovated rooms for our youngest to enjoy while their families are in church – a toddler room where the old nursery was, and an infant room next door. Soon the new facilities will be open for business, and we can’t wait for the children to enjoy their exciting new spaces. Many thanks to the parent committee for their input and to Megan Wray for her expertise pulling their ideas together and designing two beautiful, inviting, and fun rooms.

First Communion Instruction

Parents and children who are entering first grade and above are invited to participate in First Communion Instruction on Thursday, November 3, 6:00-7:30. Father Duncan will lead the children in a special lesson that focuses on the meaning of Communion, to prepare the children to receive communion with an
understanding of this Sacrament and what it represents. The children will also prepare the communion wafers that will be served at the altar on November 6, which is when we celebrate All Saints’ Day. The children who participate in the instruction will be recognized during that service as well.

**Blessing of the Backpacks - Sunday, September 11**

Operation Backpack is an outreach project that benefits school children who do not have the means to purchase the school supplies that will give them the tools and confidence to succeed. This summer we collected backpacks and school supplies to fill them, and gave the collection to Volunteers of America, which will then forward them on for distribution in the Harrisburg area.

In addition, during the inter-generational service on September 11, bring your own school backpack to be blessed during the 10:00 service, and enjoy Rita’s Italian Ice afterwards. It’s a great way to start the new school year!

**Church School**

Mount Calvary’s church school year will begin on Sunday, September 18. Instruction is given in the format of a lectionary-based curriculum; children and adults will be learning the same thing in church, so the week’s lesson can be discussed by the family afterwards. There is a need for a few new teachers – please consider participating in this rewarding ministry, which requires a commitment of one Sunday every 3-4 weeks during the school year. Alternatively, you can volunteer as an assistant, to help ensure that we are in compliance with the Safeguarding God’s Children policy.

**Youth Group**

Led by Fr. Duncan and Melanie, this group of 5th graders and above will get together on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month beginning September 11. The meetings will be held from 5:30-7:00pm. This year we will be having devotional activities during the first meeting of the month, and service projects in the meeting later in the month. On September 25, we will make a pilgrimage to the National Cathedral in DC, and have lunch in Georgetown.

**Confirmation**

Confirmation class will begin in January and run through to the Confirmation service in the spring. Classes will be held on Wednesdays from 4:30-5:30, and are for those entering 7th grade and above who wish to be confirmed.

**Trivia**

1. What food does Ms. Melanie dislike the most?
2. Who is Father Duncan’s favorite football team?
3. What item would Mrs. Alt never be without?
4. Who in our parish played an “extra” in a movie?

**Answer Key:**
Calendar of Events

Sept 1  Re-start of the Healing Service, 10am
        Stewardship Committee, 7pm
Sept 4  Book Club: The Summer Before The War by Helen Simonson, 11am
Sept 11 Opening of the new nursery
        Blessing of the book bags, intergenerational liturgy, 10am
        Sunday School Teachers’ Meeting, 9am
        Sunday School Starts, 10am
        Ice-cream social coffee hour after the 10am service.
        Vestry, 11:45.
        Youth Group, 5:30 – 7:00
Sept 12 Youth Food Bank Outreach, 6:00 – 8:00
Sept 13 Pizza Club, 5:30 – 7:00
Sept 14 Welcome and Evangelism Committee, 6:30pm
        Women's Fellowship, 7pm
Sept 17 Habitat for Humanity work day
Sept 24 Contemplative Communion service, 5pm. See Lynn Alt’s article in this edition of Crossings.
        Chili cook-off social, 6:00-8:00
Sept 25 Youth Group Pilgrimage to the National Cathedral
Sept 27 Pizza Club, 5:30 – 7:00
Sept 28 Women's Fellowship, 7pm
Oct 1 Men's Breakfast, 7:45 at the Cornerstone coffeehouse. ‘The Be Happytudes’
Oct 2 Intergenerational liturgy for the Feast of St Francis, 10am
        Outreach Coordinating Committee, 11:45am
        Book Club: Bel Canto by Ann Patchet, 11am
Oct 3 Youth Food Bank Outreach, 6:00 – 8:00
Oct 5 Welcome Course, 6:30pm
        Evening Housegroups. Matthew 5:13-16
Oct 6 Daytime Housegroup in church, 11:00-12:00. Matthew 5:13-16
Oct 9 Vestry, 11:45.
        Youth Group Service, Gleening 2pm
Oct 11 Pizza Club, 5:30 – 7:00
        Spiritual Life Committee, 7pm
Oct 12 Welcome Course, 6:30pm
        Evening Housegroups. Matthew 5:17-26
        Women's Fellowship, 7pm
Oct 13 Daytime Housegroup in church, 11:00-12:00. Matthew 5:17-26
Oct 14-15 Diocesan Convention, Lancaster
Oct 15 Habitat for Humanity work day
Oct 19 Welcome Course, 6:30pm
        Evening Housegroups. Matthew 5:27-32
Oct 20 Daytime Housegroup in church, 11:00-12:00. Matthew 5:27-32
Oct 21-23 God’s Helping Hands work weekend
Oct 23 Celebration Sunday
        Youth Group, 5:30 – 7:00

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Calendar cont’d

(Continued from page 10)

Oct 25  Pizza Club, 5:30 – 7:00
Oct 26  Welcome Course, 6:30pm
          Evening Housegroups. Matthew 5:33-42
          Women's Fellowship, 7pm
Oct 29  Women's Retreat led by Bp Audrey, Siebert Cabin, 10-3
Oct 30  Contemplative Communion service, 5pm. See Lynn
          Alt's article in this edition of Crossings.

Nov 2   Welcome Course, 6:30pm
          Evening Housegroups. Matthew 5:43-48
Nov 3   Daytime Housegroup in church, 11-12. Matthew 5:43-48
          Children’s preparation for Holy Communion, 6-7:30pm
Nov 5   Men's Breakfast, 7:45 at the Cornerstone coffeehouse.
          ‘Blessed are Poor in Spirit’
          Gala for the Episcopal Home
Nov 6   Intergenerational liturgy for the Feast of All Saints’, 10am
          Outreach Coordinating Committee, 11:45am
          Book Club: Mrs. Miniver by Jan Struther, 11am
          Angel Tree Collection, until the 27th
Nov 8   Pizza Club, 5:30 – 7:00
Nov 9   Welcome Course, 6:30pm
          Women's Fellowship, 7pm
Nov 12  Habitat for Humanity work day
Nov 13  Vestry, 11:45
          Youth Group, 5:30 – 7:00
Nov 16  Welcome Course, 6:30pm
Nov 20-26 Family Promise mission week
Nov 22  Pizza Club, 5:30 – 7:00
Nov 23  Women's Fellowship, 7pm
Nov 24  Thanksgiving Day Service, 10am
Nov 26  Contemplative Communion service, 5pm. See Lynn
          Alt's article in this edition of Crossings.
Nov 27  Youth Group, 5:30 – 7:00
Nov 30  Advent Study Series begins
Worship Schedule:
Saturday at 5pm
Sunday at 8am & 10am
Thursday Healing at 10am