

Saints Alive! + June 2007

All Saints Episcopal Parish, San Leandro, California, 510-569-7020

Green, Growing Season

Rector's Letter

It's Way Past Time To Reclaim Terms

One of the things I've learned over the years is how much heavy baggage words like "Christian" and "disciple" carry. Many of the people whom I'd like to help find a vibrant faith in Jesus hear these words, and the first image that comes to mind is not Thomas Merton's thoughtful writings, St. Teresa's passionate love for God, or St. Francis' compassion.

Rather, it's Pat Robertson making scary pronouncements about assassination of foreign leaders, the followers of Fred Phelps choosing funerals as the time to savage families of loved ones who have died from AIDS, or protesters screaming at young women approaching abortion clinics around the country. It's men and women unwilling or unable to see complexity in life's issues but aggressive and smart enough to be politically organized (and thus really frightening).

Given that those images are the first to come up, no wonder so many otherwise thoughtful, kind people—people searching for God—hear the word "Christian" and immediately have a powerfully negative, almost allergic reaction. It's not until later, if at all, that they think of the many thoughtful, compassionate people who have called themselves Christians, the brilliant theologians and philosophers and those who have sacrificed so much (and still do) to create a more compassionate, loving world.

The same is true for the words "disciple" and "discipline." I've recently begun teaching that the purpose of the church is "to make disciples." This isn't my own creation, of course. It's simply what Matthew tells us Jesus commanded and promised. ("Go and make disciples of all nations . . . and I will be with you always." Matt 28:19–20) But do people ever get nervous when I use that phrase!

Again, I think it's because many of us associate a certain set of characteristics or a certain kind of person—certainly not one they want to be—with the term "disciple" (or especially "disciple of Jesus Christ"). I've seen this happen. I have experienced it myself.

This is unfortunate and unnecessary. Those of us who would immediately say "Of course" to the idea that to learn a new language or musical instrument (or any skill, for that matter) requires discipline suddenly freeze up when the idea surfaces of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. "No thanks," we say in the first case. "I don't want to be like them." And because we freeze up, we deny ourselves important resources for improving our lives. It's even true that our natural resistance to following Jesus' teachings can use this objection as camouflage.

The evidence of countless people over the centuries—people in every imaginable spiritual and/or religious path—tells us that all spiritual growth involves discipline. If we're unwilling to practice prayer, study, service, and worship, we're simply not going to have much of a relationship with God—however we understand God.

If we allow others to define what these words mean for us, or allow subconscious resistance to throw up a smoke screen, we will be spiritually poorer as a result. And we forget that the great figures that do inspire us—the Martin Luther Kings or Gandhis of the world, for instance—had powerful, lifelong disciplines of spiritual practice.

The outcome of our automatic rejection of the word “disciple” is bad for the individual, and it’s bad for the church. It keeps people who would really benefit from regular—yes, disciplined—Christian practices from taking advantage of language that is powerful, meaningful, and helpful for creating the kind of vibrant faith that the word “discipline” implies. But it’s also unhealthy for the church. If thoughtful, kind, tolerant, flexible and open people are unwilling to take on these disciplines, who will be left?

Fr. Rob Droste
robdroste@sbcglobal.net



Coffee Hour

We all enjoy a cup of coffee and a bite to eat while we visit after the 10 o’clock service on Sunday mornings. Of course, this requires someone to bring the goodies and make the coffee, and too often the same person is filling in because no one else has signed up to act as a host/hostess. If you have been scared off because a few people enjoy providing lavish spreads, please don’t feel that this is necessary—something very simple, such as cookies to go with the coffee, is all that is expected. If you’ve never hosted a coffee hour, ask a friend or any vestry member to share the Sunday with you. You can find the coffee hour sign-up sheet on the counter in the narthex or by the coffee table on Sunday mornings. Please plan to share this important ministry.

Jeanne

Online Registration

We now have online registration for all our events, starting with the Living Peace Workshop!

All you need to do is go to www.saintsalive.net, click on the event, and you will find an icon (picture) there; you click on that and fill in the necessary information and enter your charge number and information requested, and you will be signed up for the event! It’s simple and safe!

We now are moving forward with online registration; a new web page will be published soon.
GOD IS GOOD!

Follow this link and you can check it out—but more importantly, sign up and don’t be left out!
<http://saintsalive.net/LivingPeaceWorkshop.htm>

Peace to you all,
John Trubina
jtrubina@comcast.net

Sharing Our
Spiritual Journeys
Nicola Peck

Father Rob has challenged the Vestry members to share their faith, so I will try. I grew up in the Anglican church in England attending church with my family. At boarding school and nursing school, our lives were intertwined with mandatory religion class and prayers, but nothing about spirituality was mentioned.

After coming to the U.S.A. with my girlfriend, church attendance was not a priority. When Brian and I talked of getting married, we attended the

Inquirers classes at the Cathedral, and were subsequently married there (in a very small wedding in the Chapel of Grace).

Church again fell by the wayside, for a couple of years till we started a family. We attended St. Christopher's till we moved to Oakland, and then were at St. Cuthbert's; in both I worked in the Altar Guild.

We moved to All Saints in 1978, as Fr. Saunders had met Brian at the Rotary club and wanted to know why we were not attending All Saints! At that time the children all started at Redwood Christian School and I returned to nursing. I found the Altar Guild was a place I could serve with my unpredictable working hours. I did not have much of a spiritual life, but felt my work was my way to act on my faith.

In 2000 I was feeling very dry spiritually, so decided to try some other denominations and ended up at Fairhaven Bible Chapel. It was a great move, very refreshing—meeting wonderful Christians, excellent Bible classes. I worked with the three-year-olds; we had 17 one Sunday! I came to a much deeper faith, the whole Communion service came alive, the words I had heard for years had real meaning.

At the encouragement of Nancy Churchill, I visited All Saints. Fr. Rob's words, "Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome here at All Saints" were wonderfully welcoming. I returned to All Saints in 2005, as I had a bit of a problem with the lack of inclusiveness at Fairhaven and I also really missed the Episcopal liturgy. The warm welcome I received from everyone I knew, and the wonderful Spirit here, were factors in the decision to return.

I am honored to be on the Vestry and to find out how God wants me to serve here. I'm in awe of the talents of the other Vestry members.

Mark Your Calendars

Social Ministry Calendar items have a .

Get out your calendar, pick up your pencil, make some notes, and then—most importantly—join in the many social ministry events coming up!

Social Ministry Team



Saturday, June 2—First Saturday Soup Stop (next date: July 7)

Help feed the homeless in the All Saints parish hall!

When: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Contact: allsaintsepiscopal911@earthlink.net

Sunday, June 3—Southern Alameda County Pulpit Swap

Father Mark Spaulding, rector of Holy Cross in Castro Valley, will be our preacher for both services; Amma Linda will preside. Father Rob will be at Holy Cross.



Saturday, June 9—Living Peace Workshop

Be the change you seek.

When: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Where: All Saints

Information and registration: <http://saintsalive.net/LivingPeaceWorkshop.htm>

Contact Church office: 510.569.7020

Sunday, June 10—Education Recognition Sunday

Join us as we observe the completion of another school year. We'll recognize the hard work of our Education for Ministry team, as well as our Godly Play program.

Contact: Fr. Rob, robdroste@sbcglobal.net



Sunday, June 10—April Showers Interfaith Choir Festival

Beautiful music, benefit for April Showers!

When: 4:00 p.m.

Where: Bethel Presbyterian Church, 14375 Bancroft

Sunday, June 17—Father's Day Joint 9 a.m. Service and Celebration Brunch

In May, we celebrated moms; now it's time to celebrate the dads in our lives! We'll have a joint service, Rite I with music, and brunch.

Brunch sign-up: Narthex

Brunch contact: Church office: 510.569.7020 let us know if you can volunteer to help



Sunday, June 24—Gay Pride Parade

10:30 a.m.: Walk with Bishop Marc, Market and Davis Streets in San Francisco

4:00 p.m.: Worship with Bishop Marc, St. John the Evangelist, 1661 15th Street, San Francisco

Information: www.oasiscalifornia.org/

Tuesday, June 26—Renewal Team

The team will meet at Rob and Karla's home to have communion, talk about what Jesus is up to in our lives and the life of the parish, and continue our daily prayers for each other and for a continued spirit of renewal at All Saints. All are welcome; please see Father Rob if you're interested.



Sunday, July 15—AIDS Walk

Enjoy the walk, raise some money, stop a killer.

When: 10:30 a.m.; walkers sign in at 9:00 a.m.

Where: Golden Gate Park (starts at east end)

Information: www.aidswalk.net/sanfran/

Contact: Church office: 510.569.7020

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*Submit news items for the July 2007 issue to church office: allsaintsepiscopal911@earthlink.net; deadline is **June 25**.*

For changes to the parish database (names, phone numbers, addresses, or e-mail addresses), please e-mail John Trubina at jtrubina@comcast.net. To get information on All Saints' people and programs, please visit us on the Internet at <http://www.saintsalive.net>.