



The Circuit Rider

Life in the Big Bend Episcopal Mission – June 2008

Spring in Connecticut - Clergy Leadership Project



In early May, the Vicar attended the second of four Clergy Leadership Project events at the Trinity Church Conference center in West Cornwall, Connecticut. Some 30 Episcopal clergy from all over the United States gathered to listen to speakers on cutting edge subjects which challenge us to hammer out

new ethical standards. On this occasion, Dr. Glenn McGee, Chief of the Office of Bioethics for the state of New York spoke on the future of DNA profiling as it will impact medicine and issues of privacy. In addition, Dr. Hugh O'Doherty who teaches at the the John F. Kennedy School of Government Center for Public Leadership continued his work with the group



on conflicts and adaptive challenges. Judy is honored to have been chosen for this opportunity and welcomes your questions and interest in the Clergy Leadership Project.



She will return to Connecticut in October for the third session in the series.



Anniversary Celebrations

Spring is a traditional time for Weddings. This also means that wedding anniversaries come around at this time of year. Some couples recently celebrated milestones with friends from the Big Bend Mission. Lonn and Dedie Taylor cele-



brated 20 years of marriage and Josh and Betsy Burns celebrated 40 years. The Taylors shared their celebration in the parish hall at St. Paul's on Sunday May 4th and the Burns held a gala party at the Blue Javalina. Joe and Melissa Williams and Leo and Carol Ofenstein also celebrated anniversaries in April and May. Congratulations to all.

“Carve your compliments in stone. Carve your complaints in sand.

- via Charles Garrett
Fort Gains, Florida

Farewell Lunch for Penny Noepel

Long time St. James' parishioner Penny Noepel is moving back to New England after many years in the West. A farewell luncheon was held on Sunday May 3rd in the St. James' Church parish hall. Many thanks to everyone who helped with this occasion.



Diocesan Bishop Search Update

Plans for a Diocesan Leadership Retreat were made by the Design Team at its initial meeting on May 13 and 14. Design consultant Kathy Isaacson and search/transition consultant Suzanne Foucault are assisting in the process. The Retreat will be held in Albuquerque on June 4 and 5, 2008. The Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, the Search and Transition Teams, and the Design Team will be participants. Plans for the healing and visioning process which is intended to reach throughout the Diocese will be initiated at this time. The long term process will be reflected in the work of the Search and Transition Teams. At this Retreat the Search and Transition Teams will have their initial meeting. They will receive their official charge from the Standing Committee and begin work with the consultant for their teams, Suzanne Foucault. Judy Burgess and Dede Taylor will be attending the retreat and representing the churches of the Big Bend Mission in the search process.

Last Month's Question: Who were the Sadducees?

Answer: Although it is commonly understood that the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection (that's why they were so "sad you see"), the Sadducees were one of the three main Jewish political and religious movements in the years between c.150 BCE and 70 CE. (The other movements were the Essenes and the Pharisees.) They had a conservative outlook and accepted only the written Law of Moses. Many wealthy Jews were Sadducees or sympathized with them.

This Month's Question: Who were the Essenes?



Hard Questions

One often missed pitfall of the Christian life is that our greatest gifts have the potential to become our greatest sins. We have all heard stories of gifted professional athletes who cannot handle fame and fortune and who give in to the temptations of drugs, greed, or criminal activities. What about gifted teachers who make learning easy, but then insist that their students see the world only in their way. How about politicians whose lofty goals of serving the public become perverted by the draw of power and the corruption of special interests. Some of us have seen clergy who allow themselves to be put on a pedestal by their congregation and who turn a gift for spiritual understanding and pastoral care into religious tyranny, or bitter recriminations. What about the doctor who transforms a gift for healing into a money making scheme at his patients' expense. These are only the more obvious examples. We are all vulnerable to having our greatest gifts become our greatest sins, even if not in such a high profile way.

In his book *The Enneagram - A Christian Perspective*, Richard Rohr explains through the 9 Enneagram types how our greatest gifts can become our greatest sins. (1) A gift for teaching, tolerance and patience, can lead to perfectionism and self-righteousness. (2) A gift for care, compassion, and solidarity can lead to pride and the need for flattery. (3) A gift for ambition, energy, and vision can lead to vanity and deceit. (4) A gift for creativity, naturalness, and sensitivity, can lead to depression and envy. (5) A gift for distance, sobriety, and wisdom, can lead to withdrawal and emotional stinginess. (6) A gift for fidelity, obedience, and trust can lead to cowardice, recklessness, or anxiety. (7) A gift for festiveness, joy, and celebration can lead to intemperance, scheming, and rationalization. (8) A gift for clarity, authority, and justice can lead to shamelessness, denial and revenge. (9) A gift for composure, peacefulness, and love can lead to laziness and comfort seeking. It is important for us to not only be aware of our spiritual gifts, but to see the potential temptations they offer.

- Seth

Heaven or Hell for Politicians

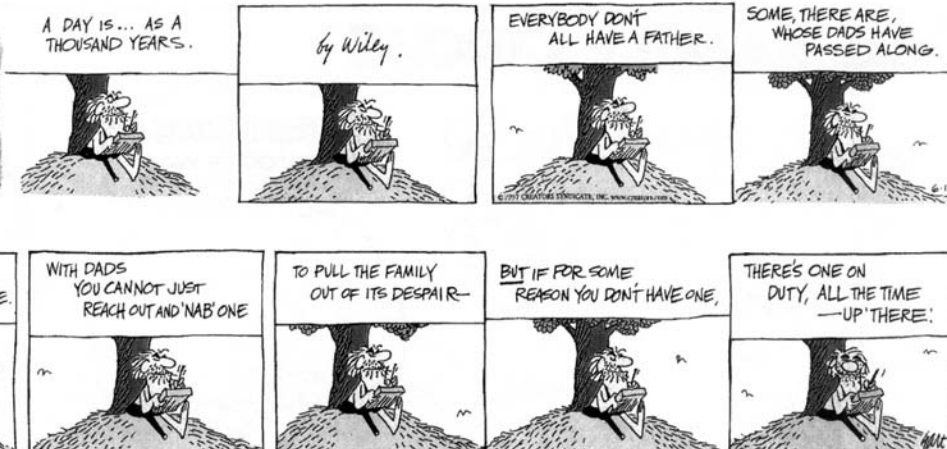
At the gates of heaven a politician learned that he would spend one day in hell and one in heaven, then choose where he would spend eternity. In hell the politician saw a golf course, all his political friends and had a great time with his host, the Devil. The next day in heaven the politician saw contented souls playing musical instruments and singing. The politician reflected and made the decision to choose hell. Back in hell he saw a barren land full of garbage, fire and smoke. When he complained to the devil about the change, the devil replied, "Yesterday we were campaigning... today you voted."

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