



"We have our inheritance"
From T.S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday*

CHRISTIAN AND ANGLICAN: Growing in Communion with Christ

DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON LENTEN STUDY 2010

*A Study for Ash Wednesday and each subsequent week of Lent
Built upon the Gospels appointed for the coming Sunday*

Prepared by Members of the Spiritual Development Team of Diocesan Council

TO THE PRESENTERS: A Bit of a Rationale

We're up against it!

As Bishop Salmon said to the clergy in October it is difficult not to be sad about the Church in 2010. We are diminished from what we were! And it won't hurt to think about that. It seems that each one of us, and each priest, has one or more explanations of why we are diminished, but a little comparing of the reasons will convince anyone that the reasons are complex and not limited to the Anglican Church. Some of the topics will come up in the study: but we should begin on Ash Wednesday by thinking about that most Christian of words: Tradition. Once you've said it many people stop listening, and, frankly, many Christians use it to simply stop discussion: anything that is part of tradition needs to go! That is a problem for society as a whole, but it is especially a problem for Anglicanism. Hopefully by the time the study is over we will have a better appreciation for the fundamental value that the Tradition of Faith has in a society, especially one that is changing as rapidly as ours is apparently doing.

Anglicanism, let's be honest, is English Christianity

Anglicanism was originally a national expression of the Christian faith, the *ecclesia anglicana*, the English Church. Faith in Christ, which is what Christianity is, therefore for the English was the fundamental aspect of English identity, something which bound the present to the past and bound all people together, handed on from generation to generation: it was a Common Tradition. We are no longer simply English, though in Canada at least the English language is one of the most important things we have in common. Nor is Anglican Christianity any longer simply English: it has grown into a world-wide family of churches, and in many places the Anglican tradition helped preserve the local languages and traditions and bring them into the wider practice of the church. But this including of local traditions, baptizing them as it were, is also very Anglican. It was recommended to the first Archbishop of Canterbury (Augustine) in 597 A.D. by the then Pope (Gregory the Great), and much of what Anglicans have inherited is an inclusion of other traditions. What we experience in our day and time is just an extension of this.



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Anglicanism is a Common Tradition

We are used to the expression Common Prayer, as in the Book of . . . , and perhaps haven’t thought of what ‘common’ means. It does not in this case mean ordinary and certainly not cheap. It means Together: Prayer Together. As we will see in the study over the weeks ahead the faith itself, as it is found in Scripture and Sacrament, grows itself out of a Common Tradition, the Tradition of the Jews and the early Christians. To understand and experience faith in God in this way is therefore to grow more deeply into the Spirit of the Bible and in love and unity with one another: there is no other way of being Anglican, as in fact there is no other way of being Christian. What makes Anglicanism different from other Christian ways is that the Common Tradition is much more predominant. Other churches can sometimes address Christians primarily as individuals and increasingly, these days, as consumer-minded individuals who themselves pick and choose, and come and go in response to their own judgments. Often suggestion that what the individual thinks and feels most deeply is God’s will for them. This is, frankly, challenging for Anglicans. The Tradition, which means literally that things are handed down to us, is part of the Common Life we share. We share the faith with those who were Christian before us. And the tradition, or the traditions if you like, give(s) us a way of doing things together. If we had to start all over again each time we got together we would never actually get together: there would be no ‘we’. The problem often is that we don’t actually understand what the Tradition is, and are overwhelmed with what seems like ‘new’ when is actually isn’t. For instance, the Eucharist in the BAS is actually very much in the Common Prayer tradition even though there are distinct differences from the Common Prayer Book. Whenever there are problems between the traditions it is certainly better to begin by identifying what is in Common, and then begin to name what seems different. There are other aspects of the Anglican Common Tradition which will come out in the study. It is a literary tradition: there is an emphasis on reading and speaking in common. It is aesthetic: the buildings and the music are in themselves works of art. It is liturgical. Every occasion for Common Worship is constructed according to an overall scheme which follows Seasons of the Church year and covers all the major doctrines of the Christian faith. And this liturgy is Common not only to the local group worshipping and growing together: it is common to the church throughout the world: we can with confidence expect to feel somewhat at home wherever we travel. And finally the Anglican Tradition is reasonable. The great Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, have been and are, sources of what is arguably the best scholarship and most reasoned theology in the whole of Christian history. Anglicanism has for better or worse earlier than any other tradition allowed scholars to pursue the truth as it comes to them, allowing their reasoning to then be subject to the scrutiny of that of others. Combined with the much more recent development of synods that include both scholars and ordinary believers, the search for truth has become disparate and occasionally irresponsible. But in a tradition as long as the Anglican tradition



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our present limitations will themselves develop into a deeper and more reasonable, more beautiful and profoundly liturgical Common Tradition. Anglicanism has learned patience.

Each week we will proceed together in a similar way.

The study will be based on the Scriptures appointed by the liturgy for the day (remember, to share a common liturgy is a deep part of what Anglicanism is). Bishop Salmon recalled, in his remarks to the Clergy in October, the time when his spiritual advisor required him to preach only on the Gospel of the day. That is a disciple he found transformative and has continued as much as possible to this day.

The reflections and questions will (hopefully) help us discover these three aspects of being Anglican Christians:

- 1) What we believe about God and Jesus Christ;
- 2) How we are invited to grow into communion or fellowship with Jesus the Christ in this life and after; and
- 3) How the Scriptural Tradition challenges us to do better in our life together, in the way we are with each other.

Needed for each study group:

- A place to meet: a home, a table, or in the church
- Copies of the Bible, Book of Common Prayer, and/or Book of Alternative Services
- Copy of the study guide for the Leader. We will leave it to the discretion of each leader as to how much of the study to provide to participants, but would encourage good stewardship in this. One option is to have participants, who have access to a computer, read the study notes in advance from the Diocesan web site:

anglican.nb.ca/synod/council/nicodemus_project/2010_lenten_study.pdf .

Please also note that a more in-depth reflection for the **week preceding the Fifth Sunday** can be read at the following web page: spiritualsignatures.blogspot.com .

Each week's study has been prepared by a different person but what is lost in consistency is gained in hearing different voices. We trust and pray that you will receive this offering as it is intended – a gift and a risk.



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ASH WEDNESDAY

Our COMMON Life

For today’s study it is assumed that worship, either the Eucharist or Evensong will be the focus of the community’s gathering, and that as part of that worship the Penitential Rite will be used. The ‘study’ part on this occasion can either be done as part of the service, or left with people to do on their own at home.

ASH WEDNESDAY is actually a typical Anglican problem in the sense that Anglicans have been known to argue both sides of a controversial question. We are, as Richard Hooker told us, the *via media*, the middle way between extremes. In this way the actual imposition of Ashes was abandoned by many Protestants in the 16th century as either not being scriptural or being yet one more dead work. That is probably why in many Anglican liturgies the Gospel appointed for today is Matthew 6, in which we are told to wash our faces. However by retaining the title *Ash Wednesday* along with the admonition “Remember [O man] that dust you are” it was inevitable that Ashes would remain in use as the perfect illustration of that admonition, even though Anglicans often have a basin at the door on the way out so they will ‘not appear to others to fast’.

The recent Exhortation used in the Book of Common Prayer perhaps gets much closer to resolving the tensions mentioned above. We are called to Penance, but that penance is not an end in itself. We don’t do it to impress God or earn his favour. Rather the penance has specific goals, benefits, for us here and now. Follow the Exhortation in the Book of Common Prayer, page 611, and find three goals of the penitence of Lent. (The BAS is not as specific here, though it certainly understands the goal of repentance as opening us to the mercy of Christ.)

There are three traditional practices of Lent mentioned in the Exhortation which are drawn directly from the sermon on the mount in St. Matthew’s gospel (chapters 5, 6 and 7). Can you name them? There are therefore two aspects of the faith as it is celebrated by Anglicans that appear in Ash Wednesday: one, the faith is *thought* through. What we believe and what we do has a purpose, it is not merely arbitrary, not merely custom. So think of the Gospel reading for today. How do our own practices: the ceremonies, the Lenten fast, the giving up something for Lent; fit in with what our Lord himself is saying about customs and practices?

Secondly, consider another aspect of Anglicanism as seen in the Exhortations and the keeping of Lent. Anglicanism is primarily a *corporate* faith: it is a faith practiced in



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Common, hence the Book of *Common Prayer*. The word communion, as in the Anglican Communion, emphasizes our common Life. How does this fit in with the view of penitence in the Exhortations and the gospel of Matthew. That is, how is our repentance, our self examination, our prayer, related to how we *live together, our common life*?

Probably each of us, and maybe parish communities together, could establish some goals for our Lenten Practice. What could fasting, prayer and almsgiving help you, with God’s help, to achieve for His Glory in Lent 2010?

Finally, something to be considered on one’s own as we prepare for the First Sunday in Lent: The coming Sunday’s gospel (whether from Matthew 4: 1-11 as in the Prayer Book, or Luke 4:1-13 in the Revised Common Lectionary), is the temptation of Christ in the desert. This is where we find the idea of a forty day fast (albeit not anywhere near as severe as Jesus’ was). In these gospels Jesus meets and overcomes three specific temptations which are understood as fundamental to the human experience of sin in this world: stones made into bread; authority over kingdoms of the world; and the expectation of angelic aid in a foolhardy test of God’s goodness. Are these temptations real to us—to what we expect of God in our lives, and in our communities?



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For The Week Preceding the SECOND SUNDAY in LENT

The Gospel for the Second Sunday in Lent: St. Luke 13. 31-35

The Gospel Proclamation

Again, typical of Anglicanism, we must begin by considering the following note: *The Anglican practice of faith has always allowed a certain breadth: after all Anglicanism is rooted in the Sarum (or Salisbury rite) which was only one of very many rites that thrived in western Catholic church during the middle ages. One way of understanding the Reformation of the 16th century onward was that because of the centralization of government and the invention of the printing press, it began to be desirable that uniformity be imposed. This, not surprising, led to rigid polarization. Anglicans and indeed English consistently tried to bridge gaps. So it is not surprising that the second Sunday in Lent in the Revised Common Lectionary has options. Some will use the second gospel appointed which is that of the Transfiguration. Some will have used that gospel on the last Sunday after Epiphany. Others will hold out for August 6th as the right and good day for the Transfiguration. Incidentally St Luke, who is the focus of the Gospels throughout this year, is alone in his telling of the Transfiguration when he tells us Moses and Elijah spoke with our Lord about his coming Exodus (often translated departure). This, as so much in Luke’s Gospel, is beautifully done, since for all the gospels the exodus from Egypt is the model for the death and resurrection of our Lord.*

The gospel readings themselves are appointed in a lectionary. The Prayer Book lectionary was Common (there’s that word again) to the Western tradition which developed over centuries. St Matthew’s gospel was most heavily used. About forty years ago now, coming out of the desire for renewal that came from the Second Vatican Council, the lectionary was rebuilt around the gospels themselves, and by now most Anglicans throughout the world are familiar with the Revised Common Lectionary, which concentrates on particular gospels in each year. This year, Year C, it is St Luke. What is the value of this?

Read the Gospel of Luke 13: 31-35.

In fact the four gospels themselves are, as they have been, deeply honoured in the Anglican tradition, as in the western catholic tradition. At every celebration of the Eucharist there is a proclamation of a gospel. There are ceremonies done around the gospel proclamation: (sometimes the book is moved, people stand, lights are carried in procession, etc.) Why these ceremonies? What do the exclamations before and after the gospel say about what the Gospel proclamation is doing? What is the value of having the gospel proclaimed aloud? Does the gospel seem to you to be addressed to a community or to you as an individual?



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Consider this. The proclamation of the gospel allows a local community (which is what we are), to share this particular reading with the world-wide Church. Then does it not bring us into the presence of Christ as he encounters many thousands of other communities and individuals around the world? Think that those in Haiti whose churches have been destroyed are nevertheless standing almost at the exact time we are standing to meet the same Christ and hear him. Does this move you? Challenge you?

Finally, let us apply this coming Sunday’s gospel to our own local community, to our parish.

What is the dominant feeling in the gospel? *A warning, urgency, threat?* How do we as a community feel that?

Jesus’ answer seems like an invocation or an allusion to a pattern that somehow is familiar to the hearers: ‘today, tomorrow and the next day’. We all know that Jesus is thinking of the image of Jonah in the whale’s belly. Certainly Jesus puts himself in the company of the prophets who were rejected by Jerusalem, their own city. Yet is there not a serenity of the feeling of being part of a pattern? What do you make of that? We can of course think of ourselves as in Christ’s company: being persecuted by the authorities. Or we can think of ourselves as part of the authorities who are doing the threatening---after all the Anglican Church is and has been 'established' and elite in a good many places including ours, and besides we are first-world communities, from one of the wealthiest nations on earth. In fact many of the problems the church faces in our 'consumer' minded society comes from the widespread wealth people either enjoy or long for. Again think of the days in Haiti, the first few days, the next week, the days of this week: today, tomorrow and the next day. But on the other hand we might sense bitterness in Christ’s words, particularly if we are suffering. Or alternatively we might hear irony. Irony? Consider this: St Luke is fascinated with how powers and individuals set against God nonetheless (unknown to themselves, despite themselves) do God’s work: the mighty Roman Empire calls for a census and in that census, almost uncounted because he was only an infant, is Jesus, God’s anointed king. These same emperors created by military might the so-called Roman peace. But that peace actually allowed the gospel to spread to all nations in the Acts of the Apostles, also written by Luke. So is there irony in Jesus’ words that begin 'And I tell you?' Is there irony in the way things are for the Church in our parish right now? Is there ironic good coming out of the diminishment of the Church? Is a diminished Church more able to witness to the Gospel as Jesus presents it to us now: today, tomorrow and the next day? Have we been tempted to bitterness?



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Going deeper. Perhaps you don't want to press the irony as far as suggested here, but you're welcome at least to consider it.

Remember that we say, (or sing), "Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord", every time the Eucharist is celebrated. At some stages the Protestant tradition rejected those words (they were not in the 1549 Prayer Book, for instance, perhaps, and how Anglican is this?), because they seem to imply a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist: he is coming in the Eucharist. But as the Prayer Book continued to be reformed the words came back. And Anglicans began to develop hymns with an enduring sense that Christ *is* present in the Eucharist even though we rejected 'definitions' of how this happens. Yet in the Eucharist, Jesus is present to us as we are, not perfect. So consider what Jesus says: "I tell you, you will not see me until the times comes when you say, Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord." For many in our time they 'will not' be gathered under his wings. We have all felt the temptation not to be. So, this Lent, knowing ourselves as we are, what hope do we find in this promise (whether we see it as ironic or not)? Do these words, Blessed is he, sung in our liturgy, herald the glory of our actual vision of him?



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For The Week Preceding the THIRD SUNDAY in LENT

The Gospel for the Third Sunday in Lent: St. Luke 13. 1-9

Reflections on Then and Now

There is no doubt that things have changed both within and outside the church during the past 50 years – a time frame shorter than the age of many of our parishioners. We lay much of the blame for our current struggles with members and relevance on these changes. But perhaps we should instead ask ourselves if some of the blame results from our reactions to these changes and a misunderstanding of what it means to be the Church.

As we have discussed in the previous weeks, Anglicans are a people with traditions, common liturgies and ceremonies. In the *Fiddler On The Roof*, the main character Tevye says: "*Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years ... everyone knows who God is and what He expects Him to do.*" We can relate to this. But now there is this sense that we are off-balance.

Fifty years ago, much of society knew and honoured the idea of tradition. Belonging to a religious tradition was considered the norm. This is no longer the case. There are many factors: the notion that tradition, and religion, is now out-dated; the easy mobility that has led to family units being spread around the globe and more people of other traditions living in Canada; the new prosperity and resulting pursuit of "more stuff" has made us more busy, either working or spending; the global communications and media that have made us aware of so many more tradition options; to generalize a few.

At the same time, it should also be noted that we can lose the main intent of the traditions – the forest for the trees, so to speak. In fact, when Tevye is about to explain the reasons for a specific tradition, he decides he does not know them, but that does not matter. It might be said that in past years many belonged to a church solely out of tradition, because it was the custom of their family, friends or co-workers. The Anglican branch of the Church was especially appealing for those who wanted to have a quiet faith; where there were no expectations of being a vocal witness of Jesus inside or outside the church building (although Anglicans are often, and historically have been, very good at the witness of God's love and rule through their lives and actions).

So our current dilemma is that people no longer come to us, we must go after them. It is not enough to quietly worship and follow Jesus in the way that seems right to us. But this new emphasis on witness and discipleship (and tithing) also has the traditional Anglican quite wary.



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Discuss and reflect on what the motivators were for being part of a church 30 - 50 years ago. Then, discuss how these motivators are or are not different today.

What have been the positive and negative effects on the local congregation of any changes in motivation you noted?

What has changed with respect to what is expected of members and what members expect?

Read the Gospel of Luke 13: 1-9.

Imagine your church gathered one Sunday morning. The priest blesses the bread and wine of the Eucharist and the people begin to partake. Suddenly, gunmen enter and shoot everyone present. The Communion wine is spilled and mingles with their blood.

How likely is this to happen in our Anglican parishes in New Brunswick? Recognizing that it can and does happen elsewhere in the world, discuss what the possibility of this happening would mean to our individual faith and our "Common" worship?

What do we lose in our faith and worship by not being concerned about this or similar life-threatening persecution?

Despite the gravity of what has happened Jesus does not seem concerned with either the Galileans or the injustice against them. Instead he both refutes the idea that we suffer in equal measure to our sins (see also John 9:1-3) and stresses the need to repent. Why do you think Jesus reacted in this way?

Bishop Salmon has warned us about when "the main thing ceases to be the main thing". That is, when we let circumstances get in the way of our relationship with God and our church family; or, when we move from being disciples to "owners" of the church (like country club members).

Look again at the parable of the fig tree (vs. 6-9).

Who do you see the players in this parable represent?

What fruit are we bearing? (See Galatians 5:22-23). And is that fruit helping to 'feed' a lost world?

How seriously should we take the warning of verse 9 if we do not bear fruit?



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For The Week Preceding the FOURTH SUNDAY in LENT

The Gospel for the Fourth Sunday in Lent: St. Luke 15. 1-3, 11b-32

The Nature of Anglican Worship

Begin in prayer: perhaps use an Order of Compline on page 722 BCP.

In the previous studies you have no doubt discovered that a tension exists in Anglican Worship – a tension that you are most likely aware of from your own experience.

- Are we protestant or are we catholic?
- Are we evangelical or are we charismatic?
- Are we conservative or are we liberal?
- Do we use the Book of Common Prayer or the Book of Alternative Services?
- Do we use the Prayer Book Lectionary or the Revised Common Lectionary?

The list goes on:

- Do we sing praise songs, contemporary songs, blue book hymns or a blend of them all?
- Do we sing the liturgy or say it?
- Do we celebrate Holy Communion (or Holy Eucharist) at every service or do we use the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer or are they Matins and Evensong?
- Do we even know what all these words mean?

All of these and probably many more help make up what we call Anglican Worship. The tension exists because our worship experience most often includes more than any one of the above elements. For example, we can be both protestant and catholic: protestant with its emphasis on the Word and catholic with its emphasis on the Sacraments. We all relate to God in different ways.

The one overriding thought is that the nature of our Anglican Worship remains the central part of the Sacraments. For as J. D. Crighton, in A Theology of Worship, says: “All liturgy is (both) ecclesial, of the Church, and ‘Christic’, centred upon Christ and done in His name.” W. Taylor Stevenson, in his essay Lex Orandi-Lex Credendi, writes: “In Anglicanism, the worship of the people of God plays a very distinctive role, being the principal arena not only of supplication and praise but also of theological experimentation and formulation. This relationship of worship and belief is often discussed under the Latin tag, *lex orandi, lex credendi* – ‘the law of praying is the law of belief.’”



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As you look more closely at the Gospel reading keep these tensions in mind. Perhaps the parables really do describe us Anglican Christians.

Read the Gospel of Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32, focusing on verses 1-3 prior to rushing into the Parable itself. Ask yourselves "To whom is Jesus speaking?" and "Why is He telling the parables?"

The answers to those questions will give you a better understanding of the parable: the prodigal (lost) son and his brother.

There are two groups of people present and both will hear Jesus’ parable. Both will identify themselves with one of the characters in the story. Describe what you think this means for us.

Jesus Christ said in Luke 19:10 “The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Read carefully and discuss the **progression into sin** that the prodigal goes through – from being at home and demanding his ‘inheritance’ to the degradation he would have felt as a Jew longing to eat the food of the pigs he was feeding.

Next, look at the **gradual awakening** in the prodigal – the understanding that he has sinned – until he eventually goes home repentant.

Thirdly, describe the **reception** that the repentant son receives when he arrives home. How would we welcome home our lost sons and daughters today: Perhaps our lost brothers and sisters from our congregations? Perhaps those whose Anglicanism is expressed differently than ours? Would we be like the father or like the elder son?

The story of the reception of the son is **our story**. Jesus Christ came to save the lost through the Cross. The sinner is welcomed home. What do you think of the Father’s great love for his lost son as displayed in the robe, the ring, and the sandals?

Compare what the father has done for this prodigal son with what our Heavenly Father does for us through Jesus Christ. Read Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6-7 and discuss what it means for us to be called ‘children of God’, clothed in the ‘righteousness of Christ’ and ‘set free’ – no longer slaves (slaves went bare foot).

As Anglican Christians what does it mean to be the prodigal son (tax collectors and sinners - Luke 15:1)?

As Anglican Christians what does it mean to be the elder son (Pharisees and the scribes - Luke 15:2)?



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Bishop Edward Salmon spoke about the Stewardship of the Gospel, that we must be intentional in our passing on the central message of, and about, Christ. As Anglican Christians can we come to a common understanding that the good news about Jesus must be studied and proclaimed, in our Churches, in our homes, and in our environments? The good news of Jesus is truly displayed in the drama that was unfolded for us in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus Christ came to seek the lost; He came to redeem the sinner; and He came to welcome us into His kingdom – not as servants, not as slaves, but as brothers and sisters. Regardless of the differences and regardless of the tensions that exist, we as brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus can do honour to our Lord and King as we bow humbly before Him in worship.



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For The Week Preceding the FIFTH SUNDAY in LENT

The Gospel for the Fifth Sunday in Lent: St. John 12. 1-8

The Beauty of Adoration - The Ugliness of Sin

"My suggestion is that you take a single event, or a parable, or a few verses or even a single word, and allow it to take root in you. Seek to live the experience, remembering the encouragement of Ignatius of Loyola to apply all our senses to our task.

Smell the sea. Hear the lap of the water along the shore. See the crowd. Feel the sun on your head and the hunger in your stomach. Taste the salt in the air. Touch the hem of His garment.

In this regard Alexander Whyte counsels us: '... the truly Christian imagination never lets Jesus Christ out of her sight - open your New Testament - and, by your imagination, that moment you are one of Christ's disciples on the spot, and are at His feet.'"

- Richard Foster - "Celebration of Discipline"

Read the Gospel of John 12: 1-8.

As Richard Foster encourages, enter into this most beautiful moment in the lives of Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus. Smell the aroma of the food cooking. Taste it. Smell the fragrance of the expensive perfume. See Martha busily serving the meal prepared with loving thankful hearts. Watch Mary as she anoints Jesus' feet and then dries them with her hair. This is an act of adoration and humility. Wonder at all the people gathered there to share in this meal prepared especially to honour Jesus. Then there is Lazarus, Jesus raised him from the dead. Just imagine that. Wow!

Yet, beautiful as this scene is, and we know that what is being offered here is the very best this family has to offer; yet there is one in the room who is not very happy with what has unfolded.

This might well be described as the beauty of adoration and the ugliness of sin.

Mary has offered an expensive perfume, worth about a year's wages. What else can we say; except this is the best she has to offer. Her act is one of devotion giving the very best she has to offer. And why not - how does one even begin to offer thanks.



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However alongside the beautiful act of adoration, we see the ugliness of sin. We know that Judas is not only a thief, but he will soon betray Jesus.

We know that Judas is concerned about the money, the mathematics. He understands how expensive this perfume is and decries what he sees as a terrible waste of money. He is unable to see the mystery.

What we see here in this Gospel is the great divide within the span of the human enterprise: on one side we have those great acts of humility, devotion, generosity and adoration, and on the other side, we see the selfishness and greed - the ugliness of sin.

Reflect upon the fact that each congregation, no matter how large or how small, represents the Body of Christ in its community as expressed from and through the Anglican perspective. Within each congregation, as the Body of Christ, there are those great and wonderful moments of generosity and sacrifice, the beauty of adoration; but there is also, if we are honest, those moments of selfishness and pride, the ugliness of sin.

There is one other matter that perhaps will assist in this. The Book of Common Prayer Service, The Order for the Administration of The Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion, illustrates beautifully the generosity shown in this Gospel, not only of Mary, but also of Martha and their brother Lazarus and encourages us as Anglicans at worship to do the same. It truly is a thing of the Heart. Adoration.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open all desires known... from whom no secrets are hid ... cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit

Love the Lord your God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength love thy neighbour as thyself write both these thy laws in our hearts

Almighty and Everliving God, we most heartily thank thee And here we offer and present unto thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee

The Invisible Embrace, in John O’Donohue’s wonderful words, is that moment when lives are touched by the Holy Spirit and we are changed and transformed in such a way that sacrifice and service become the way of life - as we profess that we will lead the new life.

Discuss those moments of ugliness that sometime seek to destroy all of the beauty, adoration, and sacrifice of the years in but a fleeting moment of selfishness and pride.



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From T.S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday*

CHRISTIAN AND ANGLICAN: growing in Communion with Christ

A Study for Ash Wednesday and each subsequent week of Lent

The one thing that this Gospel perhaps impresses upon those of us who are religious leaders - is to remember that one close to Jesus betrayed him, and those who gave religious leadership in that day, were now planning to not only kill Jesus, but also kill Lazarus - the ugliness of sin once freed grows. And as religious leaders we perhaps need to remember that the only enemies Jesus had came from within the religious leadership who firmly believed they were so right ... but in reality were so wrong.

Anglicanism has to be more than about mathematics. It has to be more than just putting an envelope on the offertory plate. You are an Anglican - what does it mean to you to be an Anglican?

Can you talk about a time when you were transformed in and by and through your faith?

Can you remember that moment when you became a disciple of Christ?

What does it mean to be an Ambassador for Christ?

What does it mean to be a minister of reconciliation?

What does it mean to be God's workmanship (work-of-art) created in Christ Jesus to do good works that God has planned in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

What does it mean to offer yourself, your soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice to Almighty God?

What does it mean to love God with all of your heart, with all of your mind, all of your soul, and all of your strength?

Where and how does 'tithing' fit into all of this?

Why tithing and why now?

Would you ever give a year's wages as a single offering? That's when the mathematics and mystery co-mingle.

Reflect and measure your congregation regarding the mathematics of life and the mystery of the Church.



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For The Week Preceding PALM SUNDAY

The Gospel for the Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday: St. Luke 23. 1-49

Time for Discipleship

As Christian Anglicans we are people that come from a tradition of books that lead us into a type of worship that is called “Anglicanism” that stands on the Word of God and the Sacraments to make us who we are today.

Are we people who sit in the pews for 1 ½ hours per week listening to the word being spoken (preached) and then go home forgetting what was said? Or are we people who take this food, which nourished and aroused our souls, out to share with others to help them in their everyday lives?

Let us begin by taking a few moments to invite the Holy Spirit to come into our lives: nurturing our relationships with Christ, allowing us to develop a real loving relationship that Jesus had with his Father, and opening our hearts and minds and souls so we can become one with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Read the gospel of Luke 23:1-49, allowing it to percolate within you.

This is the time when the assembly meets at day break, because after daylight a legal trial could take place. The chief priests and teachers of the law led Jesus off to Pilate. Now Pilate was in Jerusalem during the Passover to keep trouble from breaking out. But Pilate said he could find no laws that had been broken, for Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, not claiming to be a military or political king that would be against Rome. Jesus said He was a king and tells Pilate that His Kingdom did not look like any other kingdom and so it is not like a Roman Kingdom. Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. Upon hearing that He was he sent Jesus to Herod who was also in Jerusalem at the time. Herod and Pilate had no great love for each other.

Herod asked Jesus many questions but received no answers. At the same time the Chief Priest and the teachers of the law were accusing Jesus of many things. Herod and his men made fun of Jesus and put clothes on him to have Him look like a king, mocking him continually. This is the day when Herod and Pilate became friends.

Pilate calls back the chief priests, the rulers and the people into the room. He tells them that the charges that were brought against this man have not been proven. He has done nothing that calls for him to be put to death. I will punish him and then release him. But the people did not want this. The Chief Priest and the teachers of the law were afraid of



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Jesus because the people listened to him and followed him. They called with one voice to have a murderer (Barabbas) released instead of Jesus. But Pilate wants to release Jesus. He asked the people again for the second time. But they shouted even louder, crucify him, crucify him. Then the third time Pilate spoke to them, he granted their request. He released Barabbas and surrendered Jesus to their will. He gave Him over to the soldiers to be crucified.

The soldiers grabbed a man called Simon, who just came in from the country and they got him to carry the cross, and follow Jesus. At this time a large number of people had gathered and were following as Jesus was led away to a place called the Skull. Jesus says this because he knows that 40 years later the Romans take control of the city and destroy the temple. He tells them blessed are the barren for he knows that having no children is better than having them endure the suffering and judgement.

They placed two criminals, one on each side of him, at this place called the Skull which in Latin is “Calvarias”. So this is where the name Calvary comes from. This is when Jesus said “forgive them Father, for they know not what they do”. Then the soldiers divided up the clothes for all possessions belonged to the executioners. The soldiers drew lots to see who would get Jesus. They made fun of Jesus they jabbed him with sticks. They offered him bad wine; they told him since you are the king of the Jews save yourself. They placed above his head a board which said “This is the king of Jews”. One of the criminals insulted Jesus and told him if you are the Christ then save yourself and us. Then the other criminal on the other side of Jesus said to the other don't you fear God, we have committed a crime and are justly punished for what we have done. But this man Jesus has done nothing wrong. Then he said to Jesus “think of me when you get to your kingdom”. Then Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth today you will be with me in Paradise”... you see the man asked for forgiveness for his crimes and Jesus reached out with compassion to comfort him. (When you ask for forgiveness for your sins Jesus is always there).

Now the sixth hour has come and darkness falls over the entire land. The curtain that was in the temple was torn in half, opening a way for each of us to look directly to Christ.

At this time Jesus called out with a loud voice “Father into your hands I commit my spirit” and he breathed his last breath.

The guard seeing and hearing this, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man”.

Then all the people who had gathered to witness this left feeling grief stricken. They felt very sorry and asked for forgiveness. But all who knew Jesus, including the many women who followed him from Galilee, among them being Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother



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of James and Joses and also the mother of Zebedee's sons, stood at a distance watching all these things happen.

Why is this section of the scripture referred to as the "Passion of Christ"?

As Jesus lived His short life as a man on earth, preaching, teaching, spending time in prayer with His Father, committed to doing His Father's work, how can we as Anglicans compare this to the Rule of life? (page 555 BCP)

Is this how we model "Discipleship"? Is this how we can become "in your face" Christians, in our approach as Anglicans today?

"Make a stand today!" Go and be disciples for Christ proclaiming the gospel!