



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — February 17, 2021

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From Our Bishop

The power of relationships

This is a transcript of a video message.

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark, and Lent has begun. It seems such an odd thing this year, because there are no ashes being imposed in train stations across northern New Jersey or on street corners or on front steps of our downtown parishes. We will not gather in churches tonight to receive ashes, but we will gather online, or with our friends on the phone, or with our family around the table, and we will say the prayers and the Psalms and hear the invitation to a holy Lent the way we do every year.

It seems odd also because Lent last year coincided with the beginning of pandemic. And while we did have celebrations throughout the year – Easter, graduations, weddings, anniversaries, the start of school, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Epiphany – all throughout have been incredible tragedies and sorrow. There are many who have been very ill or who have died. And we have mourned them from a distance. And for some we still wait for their memorial services or funerals to take place, even as we gather around their families from a distance.

It seems in some way like one incredibly long Lent. I want us to reframe that a little bit though, because there has been much that has happened about restoration. And while Lent is a time of dedicating ourselves to God through prayers and

fasting, through repentance – turning away from other things, turning away from distractions from God, or from sinfulness, and back to God – self-evaluation, contemplation. These things that remind us how important our relationship is to God – that also happened over this last year. And so this year, with an invitation to a holy Lent, it's an invitation to take even deeper what we have been experiencing in our spiritual life over the last 11 months.

I also want to invite you with that invitation, to think about who in your household, who in your church, who in the community, who in this country and who in the world – who of the people of God, those beloved people that God has created – not all of whom believe in God or go to the same church that we do – but created by God and therefore beloved by God. Who of the people of God will you pray for? Who will you stand in solidarity besides? Who will you show care? Who will you give compassion? That as we dedicate ourselves to a holy Lent this year I invite you to dedicate yourself to loving the people of God the way God loves the people of God.

Take those words on page 265 in the Prayer Book: "I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." Take those words to heart this year, and take them a step further. Take them into relationship with the people of

God. Show them God's love, God's healing, God's restoration and God's compassion.

I invite you to a holy Lent.

Pursuing Racial Reconciliation

Lifting Our Voices: Jersey City Episcopalians launch oral history project

By the Rev. Thomas Murphy, Rector, St. Paul's, Jersey City

Many of you know that Sidney King was a longtime leader of the Church of the Incarnation in Jersey City, as well as a faithful member of many diocesan committees, and a fixture at diocesan events. Sidney's death last year was an incalculable loss for his family and our church. Even after all these months, his absence still feels somehow unthinkable. Maybe the reality of his death will only sink in after we can gather again in person, only when we can properly mourn and comfort one another. Like many other Jersey City Episcopalians, I often remember him, drawing lessons from his life and death.

Of course, Sidney was a deeply faithful Christian disciple, always open to new ways of sharing the Gospel through loving service. He never said "no" to ministry. He also cherished the institutional church, loving it more than anyone I have ever met. He was willing to put in long hours at church meetings, usually after a full day at his "day job." (When I start to feel irritated at tedious meetings, I try to recall Sidney's example of dedication and patience!) Because Sidney said "yes" to so much, he amassed a tremendous amount of knowledge.

Since there was so much that only Sidney knew, losing him has meant losing a deep reservoir of memory about the Episcopal Church in Jersey City. Sidney knew all the many twists and turns of our

history during the past few decades: the closing and consolidation of churches; the creation of the Jersey City Area Ministries (JCAM); the birth of what became Garden State Episcopal CDC; and, most of all, Incarnation's fight for respect and survival. He never forgot the hard truth that the Church of the Incarnation had been founded in 1910 as a haven for Black people who were not welcome at the other Episcopal churches in town.

I remember being at many meetings when Sidney would speak up, drawing on his vast knowledge and unparalleled memory, lifting his voice in defense of his church and its future. Now, with him gone, I so wish I had paid closer attention or had even set up a time to talk about this precious history, taking detailed notes to pass on our story to the future. In an effort to not repeat this mistake, the Rev. Laurie Wurm, Rector of Grace Church Van Vorst, and I have invited our parishioners to participate in an oral history project: "Lifting Our Voices: Uncovering the Story of the Episcopal Churches in Jersey City."

In the months ahead, some of us will be reading written historical records while others will be talking with parishioners who have lived through our history. Although we are particularly interested in how racism has shaped our story, we want to get a sense of what life was like for Jersey City Episcopalians in the past. How did our parishioners celebrate together? What were especially important traditions and ministries? What were the blessings and challenges of those days? What were the hopes for the future? Although we will present initial findings on Pentecost (May 23), "Lifting Our Voices" will be an ongoing effort to understand our past and to be an even more faithful church in the present and future.

I know that Sidney would be pleased.

Diocesan Resources & Announcements

Mental & Spiritual Health Minute: Praying the Anglican Rosary

By Rosalie DiSimone-Weiss, PhD, Episcopal Mental & Spiritual Health Crisis Ministry

Praying with beads as a form of contemplative prayer dates back to ancient times. However, it was not until the 1980s that the Anglican Rosary was created. The basic Anglican Rosary is made up of 33 beads (years in Jesus' earthly life): 4 groups of 7 beads called Weeks (7 represents spiritual perfection and completion), 4 Cruciform beads between the groups of Weeks beads (forming a cross), and an Invitatory/Dismissal bead between the Cross and the wheel of beads. Some include an additional Resurrection bead (a reminder that Christ lives on) just above the Invitatory Bead.

Praying with the beads

To begin, hold the Cross and say the prayer you have assigned to it, then move to the Invitatory bead followed by the Resurrection bead. Enter the circle of beads with the first Cruciform bead. Moving to the right, continue around the circle, saying the prayers for each bead. Pray around the circle slowly, focusing on the words, feeling the beads against your fingers, and allowing the repetition to quiet your mind and body, while bringing your spirit into the presence of God. You can pray around the circle once or three times (which signifies the Trinity), ending with the Dismissal (Invitatory) bead and Cross.

The Anglican Rosary prayers are adaptable for the seasons of the Church calendar, as well as your own spiritual journey. Below you will find a prayer inspired by Julian of Norwich that has been created for mental and spiritual health and healing. Links to additional prayers (in video form that you can pray along with), as well as a link to make your own set

of Anglican prayer beads, can be found on the NJMindSpirit.org Spiritual Resources page.

Prayer for Mental and Spiritual Health and Healing

The Cross: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Invitatory Bead: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

Resurrection Bead: "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Be present, be present, O Jesus, our great High Priest, as you were present with your disciples. 1 Peter 1:3, BCP.

Cruciform Bead 1: I Await God's presence just as it is in this moment.

Cruciform Bead 2: I Allow a sense of God's presence just as it is in this moment.

Cruciform Bead 3: I Accept God's presence - that God is present whether or not you I am aware.

Cruciform Bead 4: I Attend to what I am called to as a beloved child in God's presence.

Weeks Beads: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

Dismissal Bead: God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference.

The Cross: Almighty and merciful Lord, Father Son and Holy Spirit bless us and keep us. Amen

May praying the rosary help you feel God's presence and bring you peace.

For mental & spiritual health resources, please visit njmindspirit.org. Confidential help for clergy is available on the Clergy Warm Line at 609-365-WARM (9276) on Wednesday mornings from 10 am to 12 pm and Fridays from 4 to 6 pm; if you call outside those times, please leave a message and a counselor will get back to you at the next scheduled time. ***If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call 911 or contact the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.***