

A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness
Copake Falls, New York
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Summer 2015

Thoughts from the Wilderness

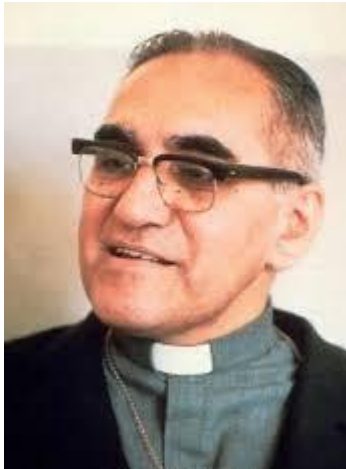
On Pentecost Sunday, on which we celebrated the outpouring of the Holy Spirit described in the Book of Acts chapter 2, I highlighted what the Nicene Creed says of the Holy Spirit: “He has spoken through the prophets.” I asked, who is a contemporary prophet, who has God spoken through in recent history? My answer was Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. A good example as one day prior, Oscar Romero was beatified (beatification is a major step on the road to canonizing a saint in the Catholic Church). I should note that Oscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador are *already* on the Episcopal Church calendar of *Holy Women and Holy Men* on March 24, the day Romero was shot to death celebrating Mass in 1980.

Oscar Romero was born in 1917 in San Salvador. At age 12 he began an apprenticeship with a carpenter. He felt called to seminary however, and attended for a while, but withdrew due to financial hardship in his family and had to work in a gold mine. Ultimately he was able to attend seminary and study theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. After this he returned to El Salvador where he worked among the poor, served as an administrator and started an AA group.

When he was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador in 1977, some progressives were unhappy with his relative conservatism. But Romero had been working with the poor and weeks after he became Archbishop of San Salvador his Jesuit friend Rutilio Grande was assassinated. The military government of El Salvador was engaging in injustice to the poor including policies of torture. Throughout Romero’s three-year tenure as Archbishop of San Salvador, he

spoke out forcefully for the poor and against the injustice, torture and assassinations perpetrated by the government (a government receiving support from the US).

Oscar Romero is indeed a saint. He was a pastor, a prophet, a mystic, and in the end a martyr. He was not a Marxist (though he was misrepresented as one – Jesus and probably all true prophets are misrepresented). Rather, he was a deeply prayerful and spiritual Christian leader who grew in awareness and could not help but stand up for the victims of gross injustice in El Salvador. Certainly liberation theologians sympathized as he spoke in Christian terms in defense of the poor and others who were being abused. He spoke for the whole person though, in support of people’s spiritual needs as well as their material needs.



The country’s corrupt and violent leaders initially thought he was a safe choice for Archbishop. But soon, as Romero’s colleagues and friends as well as laypeople and others were being tortured and killed all around him, he spoke up against it, and these corrupt leaders turned against him. Romero said, “Frequently I have been threatened with death. I should tell you that, as a Christian, I don’t believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will be resurrected in the Salvadoran people” (*Oscar Romero* p. 21, Marie Dennis, Renny Golden, and Scott Wright, 2000). Romero was correct in prophesying both his death and “resurrection.” For he *was* martyred and *is* the most popular Saint in El Salvador and an unequivocal holy hero with Christians of many denominations throughout the world. Hundreds of thousands celebrated his

beatification in San Salvador last Saturday! There is a statue of Romero “at the door of Westminster Abbey as part of a commemoration of 20th century martyrs” (*Holy Women, Holy Men*, page 286, Church Publishing, 2010).

Oscar Romero saw the Spirit’s work in broad terms: “Outside the limits of Catholicism perhaps there is more faith, more holiness. So we must not extinguish the Spirit. The Spirit is not the monopoly of a movement, even a Christian movement, of a hierarchy or priesthood or religious congregation. The Spirit is free” (*Oscar Romero*, p. 60).

It is the Spirit which gave Oscar Romero courage and wisdom to, “Speak the truth in love” (*Ephesians*, 4:15). May we all be inspired by Oscar Romero. Most of us are not called to be martyrs, but

the same Spirit which inspired him inspires us in our own lives and circumstances to speak the truth in love.

Here is the collect for Oscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador:

“Almighty God, you called your servant Oscar Romero to be a voice for the voiceless poor, and to give his life as a seed of freedom and a sign of hope: Grant that, inspired by his sacrifice and the example of the martyrs of El Salvador, we may without fear or favor witness to your Word who abides, your Word who is Life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be praise and glory now and forever. *Amen.*”

*In peace,
John+*

From the Desk of the Senior Warden

As we continue to care for St. John’s physical environment, we are starting to focus on a spiritual approach to our surroundings. This approach is under the umbrella of the Genesis Covenant, adopted by the Episcopal Church at the 76th General Convention in July 2009. With the Genesis Covenant, churches pledge to reduce their carbon footprint by 50% in 10 years. Literature on the Genesis Covenant was distributed to the Buildings and Grounds Committee and the Vestry in April by Brian Boom, parish member and Director, Caribbean Biodiversity Program at the New York Botanical Garden. In the May meeting of the Vestry, a motion was passed to begin the process of documenting our current energy usage including electricity and heating. Results of this survey of energy usage will produce informative facts and also will, in the long term, help to reduce costs.

A thorough explanation of the Genesis Covenant is online: www.episcopalchurch.org/files/genesis_covenant_final.pdf. This document begins with the premise of the Genesis Covenant: “Just below the surface, the covenant emerges from

a place of gratitude for the beauty and gifts of God’s creation. As the Psalmist proclaims, “The Earth is the Lord’s,” and so all we have and enjoy is a gift. Our covenantal relationship with God calls us to preserve that which God loves: all Creation. Paper copies of this document on the Genesis Covenant are available in the church.

Energy conservation has already begun this spring in several ways. Ralph Platt and a work colleague have repaired the exterior lights and installed LED lights in all 4 lights and in some of the interior lights. The Undercroft has undergone major painting, cleaning and the installation of LED lights by the team of Jeff Shea, Dale and Louise Peterson, and Ralph Platt. Our church gardens, surrounded by Taconic State Park continue to be enhanced by yards of mulch helping to conserve water (and also discouraging weeds!). A further addition to our natural environment will be a remembrance tree funded by Vestry members in memory of our beloved member Ginny Boughton.

A Voice in the Wilderness

Editors: Louise and Dale Peterson

Please send submissions including news of church members to peterlouise@gmail.com

Remaining issue dates for 2015: September 13, November 22

Please submit reports, articles and news items at least one week prior to the issue date. Thanks!

We celebrated both our interior and exterior spaces with the Sacred Sites Open House Weekend, May 16-17. A second annual Plant Sale & Seed Swap, along with a bake sale was held from 1-3pm on Saturday. The Children's Garden was on display, showing our interest in getting our children interested in their natural environment, and hence learning to care for it. The Sacred Sites day on Saturday was capped by a wonderful concert by the church choir, "Sacred Songs," honoring Edee Hedricks' 30 years of service as choir director.

During Memorial Day weekend, the church traveled to the Reinards' KOA campground in West Copake with a successful Bake Sale. And, now, we move forward to the Country Fair & Auction on July 11, the Pork Barbecue on July 12, Family Movie Night on July 15, and the second annual Sparkling Summer Soiree on July 18, all held on our beautiful church grounds. The Country Fair & Auction, with its generous donations from the community and the parish, of furniture, art, household goods, garden and boutique items, etc. is a great way to recycle! So, come, enjoy, and help our environment.

Lucy Eldridge

2015 County Fair & Auction

Plans are progressing for next month's Country Fair and Auction. We have leaders in place for our bake sale, snack bar, salad bar, linen and garden shop, books and cds, and boutique.



Thank you, Jeanne, Richard, Susan, Wendy, Betsy and Lucy for heading these up. Others have been moving furniture and refinishing it. Movers include Bob, Elen, Lucy, Richard, Dale and Louise. Our refinishers include Kent, Marilyn, Lucy and Louise. Lucy even found a couple of auction items in the town dump.

We are excited about the items we've already received for the auction. Take some time and check out our auction website: stjohnw.org/auction. We

have a beautiful partner's roll top desk, a lovely wrought iron outdoor table with four chairs, a Thomasville bedroom set, Southwestern rugs and much more. The website will continue to be updated as we receive additional items.

How can you help? If you or your friends have items you would like to donate, please bring them to Burke Hall beginning Monday, June 15. Elen, Louise or Lucy will be there between 10 am and 2 pm Monday through Thursday. On Friday, Burke Hall will be open for donations from 6 pm to 8 pm. On Saturdays, Burke Hall will be open between 10 am and 2 pm.

You can also help by sending the postcard which has been inserted in your Voice on to a friend. Invite everyone you know. We also need help the two days prior to the Fair moving furniture and setting up under the tent and of course we need help on the Fair day, July 11. There is a signup sheet in the narthex. Make sure your name is there! Our success with this major annual fund raiser depends on each of us. We need everyone! We may not be a big parish but we are an active one.

See you there.

*Elen Freeston and Louise Peterson
Co-Chairs*

Summer Soirée

Hold the date for the Second Annual Sparkling Summer Soiree – July 18, 2015. Last year was a wonderful evening and we are looking forward to another sparkling night under the tent. We have fun things planned:

- Enjoy a concert by singer and Broadway composer Jim Wann and friends
- Enjoy fine wines and delicious bites of Columbia County's summer bounty
- Browse and bid on silent auction of unique items, special services and fun activities

The event this year is to raise funds to repair the rectory starting with the front porch that desperately needs attention.

Mark your calendars and tell your friends. Hope to see you all on Saturday, July 18 at 6 p.m.

Martha Glantz

An Appreciation of the Life of Ginny Boughton

An overflow congregation gathered in our beloved Church of St. John in the Wilderness on May 7 to celebrate the life of one of the most beloved, not to mention one of the most long-standing, members of our parish family. We mourn the loss of this gracious and loving woman who played such a vital role in the life of St. John's, but take some solace in the knowledge that her earthly body reposes in a plot in St. John's churchyard next to her beloved Freddie, and overlooking the church she loved and so generously served for so many years.

We are thankful too, that the witness of her life in the church was absolutely contagious among many of her extended family of daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughter, and in many cases, their spouses. And so, whom do we find serving on the vestry of St John's, but Ginny's son-in-law, Ralph Platt, and her granddaughter, Regina Shea. And what parish event or service of worship could we imagine at St. John's where there would fail to be a good contingent of Ginny's extended family worshipping in the pews where Ginny worshipped so faithfully and so devotedly for so many years, and actively supporting with their time and their treasure, all the events from dinners to country fairs, to Easter egg rolls, to concerts for which St John's is known. Ginny lives on in the life of this parish church, in the lives of those she nurtured in the faith.

Well, what can we say about Ginny as we cherish fond memories of this loving and lovely lady

who showered us all with her love, and inspired us all by her example? Father John and I had breakfast today with the only agenda for this breakfast meeting being the sharing of our memories of Ginny, and our answering the question I just posed: "What can we say about Ginny?"

Well, if we were to say everything we would have liked to say, we could have filled all the pages of this edition of *The Voice*. Well, the first thing we two priests would like to say about Ginny is that she was the embodiment of Jesus' great commandment-"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Have you ever known someone who loved her Lord more faithfully, and each one of us more lovingly, than Ginny Boughton? She was one whom St. John the Evangelist once described as a "Living Gospel." Have you ever known someone who gave more of her life in the service of others, and loved all whose lives touched hers with such a limitless love? If these two priests were ever feeling sort of down on ourselves, a visit to Ginny would rapidly cure us of "the blues," because she would let us see ourselves in her eyes as the most wonderful guys on earth. And I know that all of you who knew her would say a hearty "Amen" to that.



Photo: Ralph Platt

In preparing this "appreciation" I stopped by for a visit to one of Ginny's oldest friends, and the one who has probably taken her place as the longest standing communicant of St John's Church, Edie Froggatt. And I asked Edie to share some of her most cherished memories of Ginny, and to join with Fr. John and me in answering the question I posed earlier: "What can we say about Ginny?" And Edie didn't even pause for a moment before she gave

me her answer to my question. "To know her is to love her," Edie said. In loving Ginny we were simply loving her back. What can we say about Ginny? "Well," Edie told me, "you might want to mention how she prepared dinner for every single member of her extended family every night of the week, (by my arithmetic, that's pushing a dozen diners.) And when Edie asked her why she did that, Ginny's answer was a simple one: "They all work!," not mentioning that for many years, Ginny worked too, as the food service coordinator at Berkshire

Meadows, a job she loved because it entailed one of her great loves: cooking, and, need we say, Church of St. John in the Wilderness was frequently the grateful recipient of Ginny's outstanding baked goods, and other culinary delights, time and time again. What were the priorities in Ginny's life? Faith, Fred, Family, and Friends, to whom she tirelessly devoted her life. Now may she rest in peace.

Fr. Walt Zelle

