



A Light in the Sacristy

A newsletter for and about the Altar Guilds in the Diocese of Iowa

FROM THE BISHOP



As the Day of Pentecost arrives, the choir is preparing for its final grand chorus before the summer recess, the Christian Education program is winding down and possibly hosting its student awards ceremony in church, even the rector is getting fidgety about those summer holidays. Yet, the Altar Guild keeps on!

No relief for them, as the liturgical year shifts gears into the long green season of Pentecost.

In Iowa, of course, all of this coincides with prime time for fresh cut flowers – a seasonal phenomenon which continues to catch me by surprise. I still live by a longer summer than really exists around here. So what is the parable in all of this? How is the Kingdom of God like the parish Altar Guild moving into the summer months?

If it is a time for a richer variety of colorful flowers as I am suggesting, then perhaps the imaging of the Kingdom is to be found in the reality that God’s most profound and moving moments with us are often when the crowds have gone away. This was certainly true of Jesus and perhaps that was why He was always trying to avoid them. When a quieter pace beckons us, when we are immersed in the rhythm of the teaching of Jesus as opposed to the more dramatic events surrounding him as typifies Advent through to Eastertide, when we work often alone because our partners are away with family, it is then God has us all to God’s self and visa versa. Fresh flowers can represent God’s ever abundant creativity which can reach us at such a time.

One of my favorite sayings comes from an
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CO-DIRECTORS LETTER

“Let the earth glorify the Lord
praise him and highly exalt him forever,
glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills,
and all that grows upon the earth,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.”
Canticle 12

As we journey toward Pentecost sowing, digging, and pruning, we remember the events of Holy Week and Easter with awe and warmth in our hearts. Holy Week began with a beautiful Chrism Mass at St. Paul’s Cathedral. Jeanne Roland (St. Marks. DM) and Dorothy Wilson (St. Timothy’s, WDM) helped prepare for the service and to assist the Bishop. Holy Week was filled with moving and meaningful services — a Passion Play, Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and a Great Vigil of beauty and mysticism; spiritually filling. In the darkness of the Vigil one felt a connectedness with those around one and also a connectedness with those who sat in a similar service hundreds of years earlier; realizing spiritually we are all one. A very emotional week ending with a joyous Easter Day and a sermon and final hymn that “brought down the house!”

The wistfulness for spring during the ice storms, snow, and high winds became the miracle of green showing forth. The green of re-growth, renewal; the green of Pentecost. I’m reminded of a moment in a passageway prehistoric tomb in Ireland when the light of the solstice was simulated and one felt at one with peoples living thousands of years ago. People who shared our same reverence, joy and awe of a new beginning, a rebirth. We are part of the past and a part of the future and as such we have a reverence and compassion and respect for the precious earth around us and for each precious person walking this earth.

“Let the earth glorify the Lord.....”

Faithfully with Love and Joy,

Martha and Elinor

SACRISTY SECRETS



Last fall I purchased a bottle of "Wine Away." It has proven to be a remarkable red wine stain remover and has successfully removed stains from purificators, fair linens and various altar linens. It is made from fruit and vegetable extracts and has a fresh citrus scent. I heartily recommend "Wine Away." Probably available in most grocery or wine stores. Otherwise, Evergreen Labs, Inc. PO Box 2609, Walla Walla WA 99362 or www.wineaway.com

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HITTING THE HIGH SEAS

Dioceses are an important and conspicuous feature of the Episcopal Church. It's too bad that so many Episcopalians don't know how to pronounce the word. They distort it into all kinds of funny sounds. One simple rule of thumb may help: there are no "seas" in "diocese."

In the singular, the word is Di-o-sess. In the plural, it's Di-o-ses-sez.

Now isn't that simple? Singular or plural, no SEAS at all!
-William Dulaney

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DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD LOAN CLOSET

We are certainly delighted to announce that the Diocesan Altar Guild is organizing a Loan Closet at Mill's House, 225 - 37th Street (the Diocesan Headquarters). St. Paul's Church in Creston and the Reverend Margaret Weiner generously donated boxes of priest's vestments, altar linens and appointments, etc. that can be recycled and shared with other parishes and missions. We are in the process of minding clothing racks and tables for displaying item in the Loan Closet. Please come visit the Loan Closet and find any needed altar items. Old altar linens and priest's vestment should not be put in a drawer someplace, but should be used again and again. Recycling is a word to be used in the sacristy as well as in one's home. Let us know how we can be of help.

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UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- July 20-22 18th Annual Ministries Retreat, Grinnell.
- September 27-29 Fall Clergy Conference
- October 6 Diocesan Altar Guild Fall Workshops, Trinity Cathedral, Davenport
- Nov. 2-3 155th Diocesan Convention, Des Moines

FROM THE BISHOP

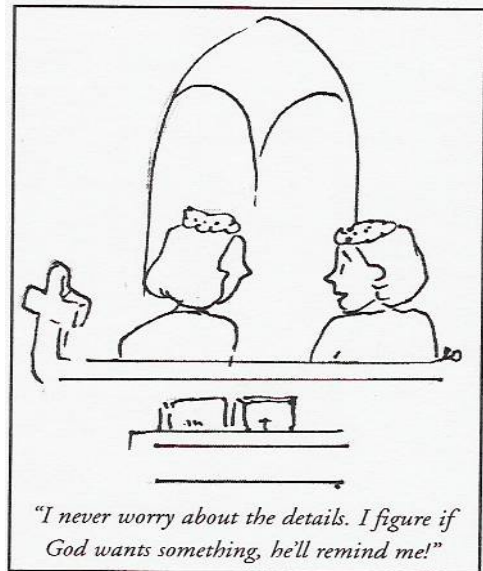
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imprisoned Lithuanian Catholic priest, who during his confinement under the Communists gave thanks to God that God was such a One who makes the most beautiful flower to grow in the highest of mountain crags where no eye will ever see it. Beauty for God does not need the eye of any beholder, but is there for God's own delight. And so are you as you serve Christ in this special calling, and especially so when no human eye can see you because they are all on vacation!

Of course, you too deserve a break. That is not my point. But enjoy the moment of aloneness not to ask where's the help or why me, but to greet your Lord who has us always under the special gaze of His love.

+ Alan



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May your walls know joy;
 May every room hold laughter
 And every window open
 To great possibility.

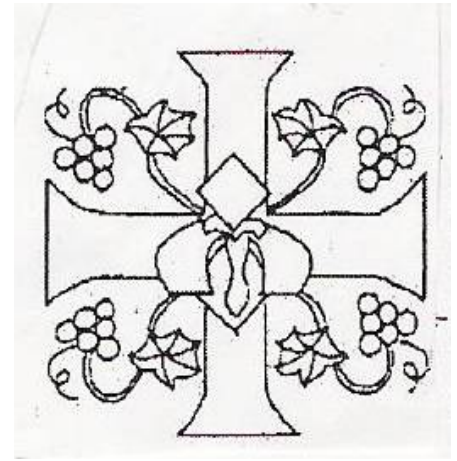
Maryanne Radmacher-Hershey

Ecclesiastical Embroidery in Silk and Metal Threads

Episcopal Diocese of Iowa

**Summer Ministry School and Re-
treat**



**Friday to Sunday
July 20-22, 2007**

**Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa**

Tract # 14: Ecclesiastical Embroidery in Silk and Metal Threads and Stole Making

Increase your skills in hand embroidery techniques and learn about patterns and techniques for making stoles. This workshop will feature simple metal and silk work appropriate for the ends of stoles, veils and burses. A list of supplies you will need to bring with you for the weekend will be provided for those who register.

Phyllis Melton, experienced embroiderer and director of St. Paul's Cathedral altar guild has been a member of the Embroiderer's Guild of America since 1987. She has trained with Elizabeth Elvin, Royal School of Needlework. Her service to embroidery includes jurying studies in white work, Ukrainian embroidery, black work, gold/silver work and silk embroidery as well as sewing linens for the cathedral.

How to register (Form available at www.iowaepiscopal.org/ministries/ministries_retreat.php)

Questions? Need help? Call Elizabeth at 515-277-6165

This continues the story of St. Fiacre that was begun in the Summer 2006, Issue # 2 newsletter.

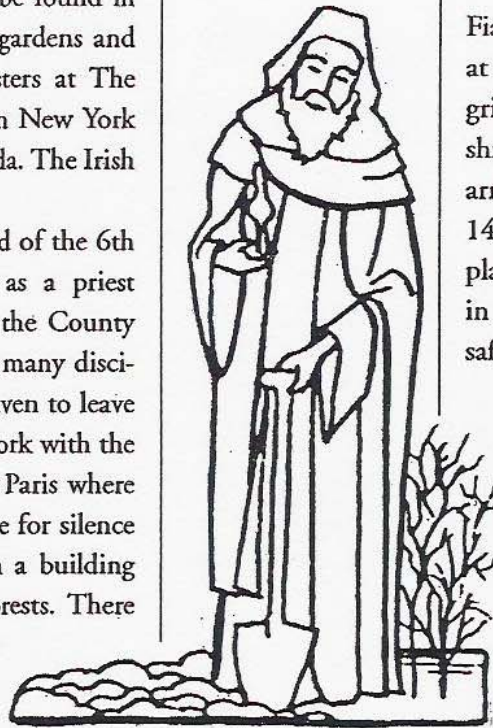
ST. FIACRE, THE SAINT OF LOWLY THINGS

Statues of Saint Fiacre can be found in many European and American gardens and museums, including The Cloisters at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and in Cypress Gardens in Florida. The Irish saint's feast day is August 30.

Born in Ireland near the end of the 6th Century, Fiacre was ordained as a priest before entering a hermitage in the County Kilkenny. There he attracted so many disciples that the Irish monk was driven to leave his native land for missionary work with the Franks. He settled not far from Paris where he told Bishop Faro of his desire for silence and solitude. Faro granted him a building site, surrounded by peaceful forests. There the monk built an oratory in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a hospice in which he could receive visitors and a cell where he could live a life of prayer, fast, vigil and could enjoy the manual labor of gardening.

Again disciples gathered around and soon they formed a monastery. According to one legend, the good Bishop Faro allowed Fiacre as much land as Fiacre might surround in one day with a furrow. Fiacre immediately began turning up the earth with the point of his crosier. A woman seeing his actions hastened to the bishop to tell him of this strange behavior. Bishop Faro went to the field and seeing that it was a man of God at work, sought his blessing. The legend ends with Fiacre excluding all women from his monastery grounds. More likely, such action would have been taken simply in following the common Irish custom of barring women from all foundations.

It is said that St. Fiacre cured all sorts of diseases by laying on his hands. Blindness, polypus and fevers were among them, and



especially a tumor, since called "le fic de S. Fiacre". His fame spread widely, and among his most famous clients were St. John of Matha, Louis XIII and Anne of Austria.

Following his death August 18, 670, St. Fiacre's remains were interred in the church at Breuil, still a destination for ailing pilgrims. In 1234, his remains were placed in a shrine by Pierre, Bishop of Meaux, the saint's arm being encased in a separate reliquary. In 1479, the relics of Sts. Fiacre and Kilian were placed in a silver shrine, which was removed in 1568 to the cathedral church at Meaux for safety from the destructive fanaticism of the

Calvinists. In 1617, the Bishop of Meaux gave a part of the saint's body to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and in 1637 the shrine was again opened and part of the vertebrae given to Cardinal Richelieu.

In an odd twist of history, the French cab derives its name from St. Fiacre. It seems that in the mid 17th century, the Hotel de St-Fiacre in Paris rented out horse drawn cabs. The sign of the hotel was an image of the saint, and, in time, the coaches came to be called fiacres.

Today, the saint is more likely to be known as the patron of gardeners, florists and potters. His dignified image stands in many churches in Paris, northern and western France, Belgium and the Netherlands. St. Fiacre can be seen dressed in coarse clothing and peasant shoes, holding a spade at his side and appearing to be studying the ground before him.

Perhaps he is contemplating the joy that comes with the smell of freshly turned earth and the flowering beauty which follows. †

Sources: *St. Fiacre Revisited*, Richard Marius, GreenPrints, 'The Weeder's Digest', Spring 2000; *Mississippi DAG Newsletter*, September 1998