



A Light in the Sacristy

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

FROM THE BISHOP



In Washington DC, the Church of the Savior on Columbia Avenue has always sought to put its feet into its prayer life. To pray with your feet means to find unity between what we seek in that secret conversation with God, and what we publicly manifest in our planning and action.

Altar Guild members should know about that for it is one way of describing your Saturday activity. To pray for God's glory to be revealed, and then to set up a sanctuary which seeks to meet God along the way by creating as much careful beauty, order and symmetry as we can is I think "praying with your feet".

The Church of the Savior did more. They encouraged people to find partners for any ministry idea anyone came up with. They also encouraged people to engage God's service at the level of their passions. Love to do pottery? Then start a Potter's Club. Perhaps take up a building on the same street as the Church (in a turn down neighborhood) and gather there. While together begin every meeting with a time of faith sharing and prayer. Over time, as you enjoy fellowship, how about opening the fellowship to the neighborhood? Open a coffee house. Call it the Potter's Place. See it grow in customers. Start a book club and a bookstore, and while we are at it, why not encourage certain spiritual topics of conversation for the customers as they wait to be served?

I may have some of the details unclear,
(continued on page 2)

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Spring 2008 Issue # 8

Published Quarterly

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

"What cheers me is the thought that spring isn't a human season, not like the seasons we create for ourselves. It comes without caring what you make of it. It may find you unprepared, ill at ease, in a state of erosion. It makes no difference. It will stir your blood anyway, once the freezing rain goes away at last." (V. Klinkenborg, NYT)

As I write this in early April, my garden appears as a wasteland -- but it seems to be clearing it's throat and getting ready to sing -- sing in color, fragrance and texture. There is a hint of a green "ping" emerging among the brown leaves. More "pings" will soon sing throughout. Each "ping" describes spring!

Our gardens, as well as bringing us pleasure and giving us a sense of accomplishment, teach us. The late Rosemary Verey, a masterful English gardener, tells us to "go around the garden every day, stand back and look at it from all angles....to decide what needs to be done." That same teaching applies to the altar and or work there. What we see in church affects our worship. "to enter into sacred space, to walk upon holy ground, to know that both care and prayer have been offered up to provide holy things for holy people -- it is at that moment that a life can begin to be changed."

I am reminded of a beloved Altar Guild Director at St. Paul's, Helen Brown. She, like Rosemary Verey, always encouraged us to "look." After placing the vessels and linens, "look." After arranging the flowers, "look." Look to make certain all is in readiness in God's own sanctuary. Helen not only grew glorious flowers (for the sanctuary) and tomatoes and green beans

(Continued on page 2)



*'Oh look! It's a teeny Altar Guild smock for my new granddaughter!
Isn't that SWEET?!!!'*

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER (continued from page 1)

(to fill us), but tended our souls as well. She was a gardener in many ways. Be a gardener of your altar guild soil.

“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf of springtime.”
 --Martin Luther

Blessings and Love to all,
 Martha

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**THE PURPOSE OF A PARISH
 ALTAR GUILD**

The purpose is:

- to minister to the altar of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- to minister to the clergy, supporting them as they go to the altar to celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- to minister to the congregation, setting before them an island of calm and beauty where they may come to receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord.
- to minister to each other by setting an example of dedication and gentle encouragement.
- to minister to the world by setting ourselves in

FROM THE BISHOP (continued from page 1)

but this was the way things unfolded. Soon doctors and nurses from the congregation decided to take over another house on the street, and open up a free clinic. They too met first for bible study and prayer. Their actions were always but praying with their feet. If ever you find yourself in DC track down the Church of the Savior on Columbia Avenue. Or look for books by Norm Crosby or Elizabeth O'Connor. The magazine Faith Works came from the spirituality group that formed along the street, out of the church.

You never know what God can do with praying feet. One rule however that the founding pastor insisted upon was this - when you come up with an idea look around and find someone else to share it and then come and see me together. God already has people who pray with their feet around the altar, where else might God take you walking beyond that place?

+Alan

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SPRING COMES MARCHING

Spring comes marching
 Over the hill,
 With crocus and snowdrop
 And daffodil.

Redwings and robins
 Have scouted the farm,
 Watching the snowdrifts
 Of winter disarm.

There's a hatching of moths
 On the window pane
 And the peepers are piping in
 Spring again.

The flowering army
 Springs from the ground
 At the peeper's sound,
 At the peeper's sound.

Elizabeth Rooney, Morning Song, Published by Brigham Farm Publishing, www.brighamfarm.com
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SPRING FLOWER NOTES

Clara Fowler

Spring is a preparation time for our lives. For many of us it is also the time to begin to plan our gardens.



We have a few basic requirements as flower arrangers. The flower should have a long enough stem to be useful; it should be long lasting when cut and an appropriate size for our containers. As you choose your plants, use same color if you make paired arrangements. I learn from what

other people are successfully growing in my area. Trying to force a plant intolerant to your climate or soil usually leads to disappointment.

TIPS FOR HARVESTING FLOWERS

Go out in the early morning or at dusk with a bucket of water. Cut your flowers at an angle and place them in the bucket as you cut them. Check that you are using only the freshest flowers for church work. Is the head stable? Is no pollen showing? Are the leaves sturdy?

When you take them inside, cut again at an angle, remove any leaves that will be under water and place them in a bucket of deep water overnight. If you purchase from a florist, wholesale or store, start by checking the flower. Wholesale will look bad because they are cut and wrapped in the field, but they will usually perk up by cutting an inch off and placing them in water.

Remember that wild flowers are protected. Those growing on public land cannot be picked. If they are on private land and you have permission, pick only those that are plentiful. Move around ~~as~~ so as not to deplete a small area.

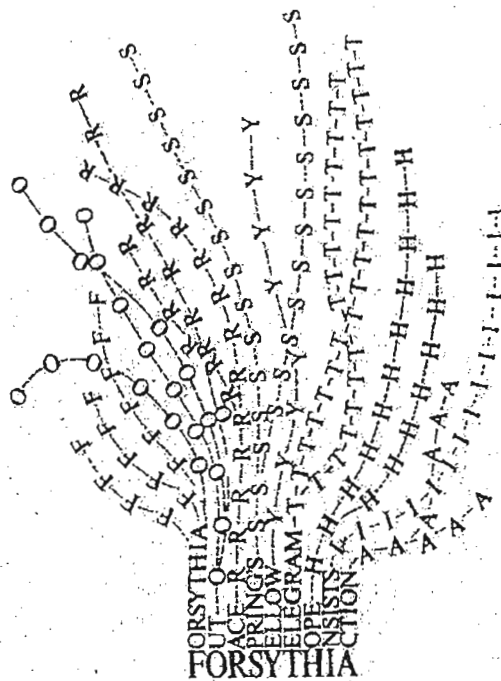
Beautiful arrangements can be made from gardens. It is rewarding to put your flowers on the retable and bring nature into the church.

TIPS FROM READERS

Flowers in the sanctuary follow no rules. What ever arrangements blend into the background and beautify the place are suitable. Try varying the position or arrangements from week to week, adapting size and shape to the location -- on stands, on the floor, on the retable, on the altar itself. And one arrangement is just as suitable as two or three.

When arranging tulips, to prevent drooping heads, stab a straight pin into each stem at an upward angle, just below the flower. Be sure the point has gone up into the cup; pull the pin out immediately. This lets out air bubbles.

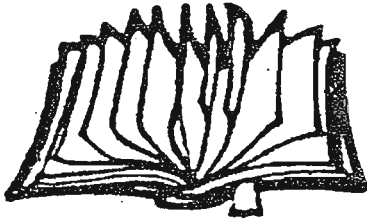
If you have trouble with fleshy-stemmed flowers when using a needle-holder, wrap the end of the stem with florist tape. It works with daffodils, calla lilies, clivia and is sometimes needed with tulips and dahlias.



Mary Ellen Solt "Forsythia."

Sitting quietly, doing nothing, Spring comes and Grass grows by itself.

Japanese Zen Poem



THE BOOKSHELF

MARY'S FLOWERS: A NEW LOOK AT LOVE IN BLOOM

Reviewed by Polly Marshall

Mary's Flowers, Gardens, Legends and Meditations is a feast for the eyes as well as for the heart. Written by Vincenzina Krymow, illustrated by A. Joseph Barrish, S M., with meditations by M. Jean Frisk, this is a book that you must have for your own library. For the non-gardener, it is an inspiration to plant hundreds of buttercups, just in case the legend is true: that when the Christ child was born all those years ago, stars threw themselves from heaven to bloom around his manger as buttercups.

Thirty out of many medieval legends can be found in this lovely book, thanks to an oral tradition perpetuated by travelers long ago and by the monks who fashioned their monastic enclosed gardens to pay homage to Mary. As with great paintings, the legends of the flowers and their symbolism taught the unlettered qualities of Mary that enriched her story, the spiritual journey of the early church and ultimately, that of their own lives.

For those of us in the altar guild, the symbolism of the flowers is one more way to worship, whether we are preparing the flowers for the altar or pressing the linens or tending the chalice -- one more way of becoming connected to all those before us who worshiped in diverse ways and preserved for us ancient traditions to glorify God. Certainly, no more beautiful reminders exist of His great bounty than flowers, and hundreds more reflect Mary's qualities, other than the roses, lilies and irises traditionally associated with her. Think of the marigold, for instance.

You will be surprised at how many of the flowers, herbs and grasses associated with Mary you find in your own yard, among them violets, morning glories, thyme, spearmint, dandelions, vetch and sweet woodruff, that seem to spring forth without help. A renewed interest in Mary during medieval times sparked the naming of plants that showed her qualities and became a form of worship and adoration.

The legends in this book associated with Mary's flowers deal with the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Presentation. The Flight into Egypt, her maternity, with her as a homemaker, at the Cross, as well in her tomb (roses and lilies) and the reward for her devotion (Our Lady's Rose, the Fleur-de-Lis, and the scotch rose). Watch for other unexpected ones as well.

Mary's Flowers: Gardens, Legends & Meditations will become the spiritual book that you did not know you were searching for.



Start using our water as a sacrament rather than a commodity: a gift rather than a possession."

Frank Griswold, former Presiding Bishop"

Come to Kanuga for learning and inspiration.

Nestled in the mountains of Western North Carolina, Kanuga Conferences sponsors and hosts programs that benefit you and your church. Learn a new skill, meet people from many places and go home inspired.

Kanuga Garden Conference, May 18-21

Experts on gardening and spirituality offer teaching sessions and workshops. Learn basic garden design, environmental stewardship, garden photography, ways to engage children in the garden and much more. Keynoters: Sharon Lovejoy and Julie Moir Messervy. Coordinator: Marguerite Batkin. Chaplain: The Rev. Linda Wofford Hawkins. Musician: Sam Hensley.



Province IV Altar Guild, June 1-4

Hosted by Kanuga. For information, contact Dolores Miller of Florence, S.C. at 843-662-4588 or djmfle@aol.com.

Province IV Women's Conference, June 2-4 (*Optional Play Day: June 1*)

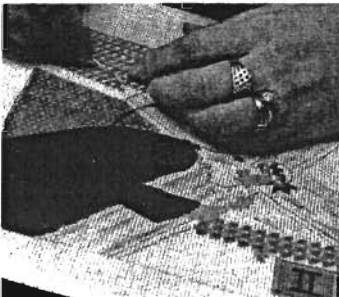
Co-sponsored by Kanuga and the Province IV Episcopal Church Women.

Liturgical Arts XI: *Holy Works for Holy Places*, August 24-29



For needleworkers, weavers, quilters, choristers, choir directors and now, potters. Learn from some of the best church artisans:

Stations of the Cross and Clergy Stoles: Advanced Canvaswork – SALLY BOOM; Re-energizing Singers and Choir Directors – CHRIS BRAYNE; Sewing Church Linens – PAT CRANE; Quilted Processional Banners and Textiles – PAM HARDIMAN; Assisi Embroidery – MARION SCOULAR; Weaving for a Liturgical Setting – JANE STICKNEY; Create a Pottery Chalice and Paten – DAVID VOORHEES; A Step Beyond: Intermediate Canvaswork – EILEEN ZA



Afternoon options: Flower Arranging, Robin Smith; Meditation for Creativity, Joe Howell; Music for Church, Chris Brayne; Using Found Materials to Create Personal Altars, Angels and Crosses, Provie Musso; Using Beads In Liturgy, Diana McKendree; Designing a Sterling Silver Cross, Molly Sharp and more to come!



Chaplain: The Rev. Susan Sloan. Coordinator: Lark Howell, assisted by Marnie Smith.



Iconography, Sept. 20-26 and Nov. 15-21

Attend either session. No art experience is required. Teresa Harrison of Jacksonville, Fla., returns as instructor.

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