



A Light in the Sacristy

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

FROM THE BISHOP



Several people within the Diocese of Iowa have direct links with the Diocese of Haiti, which is the largest Diocese within The Episcopal Church. Through their personal contacts they have been able to tell us that Bishop Duracin and his wife are safe though Mrs. Duracin suffered an injury to her foot. Fr. Kesner (the Jubilee Officer known to us in Iowa from this past summer's Jubilee Officer gathering and pictured in Iowa Connection receiving and demonstrating a chlorinator) has communicated that he is unharmed. The sisters at the convent of St Margaret's are also safe, but their convent has been destroyed, as has the Bishop's house. The Cathedral and its surrounds have also collapsed, along with buildings connected with the College St. Pierre.

I know that you are already praying, but I want to underscore that the two most immediate responses we can make are: 1) to pray for those who have died, those who are injured, the grieving, the displaced and all whose lives have been so grievously affected, and 2) to contribute gifts to Episcopal Relief and Development, marked for Haiti donate online or mail your check to Episcopal Relief & Development, P.O. Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058).

Concerned persons are asked not to try and phone Haiti directly, and I have been asked to discourage any who want to travel to Haiti. There is little or no ability
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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

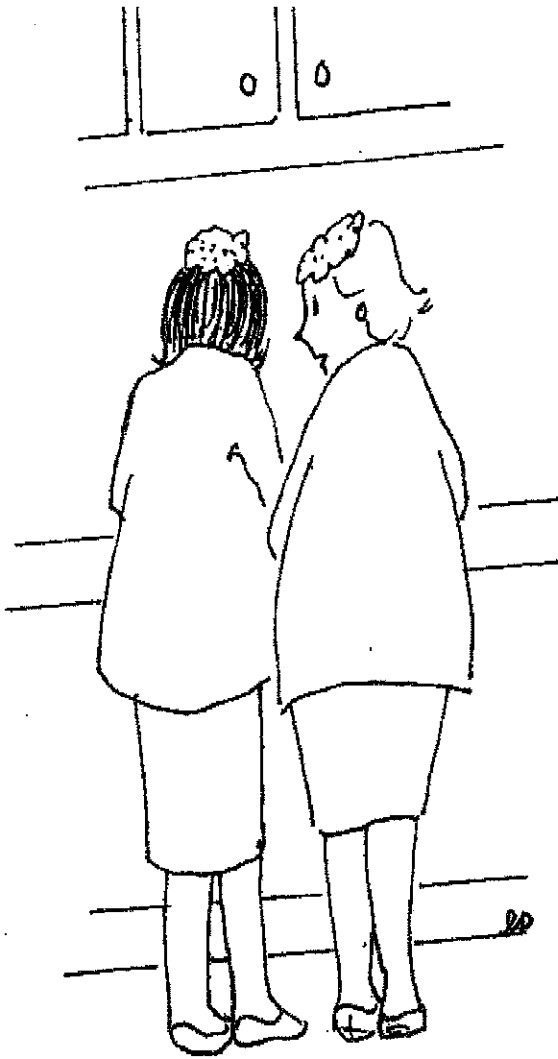
I sit, looking out the window, looking at an ice-encrusted world. I sit, because to put one foot out the door would be foolhardy and certain injury (even with my YakTraks!)

We most certainly feel a sadness and sympathy for those in Carroll and other Iowa communities who lost beautiful old trees and experienced disruption and loss because of downed power lines.

Yet, somehow the snowy, icy white world is filled with beauty--quiet and graceful. A world of silence when all shuts down and shuts up! Wintertime, as a whole, is a time of quiet reflection. A time for patience during these dark days, as well as trust that spring will come again. We must trust, despite the snow and ice, that the seeds and plants in the gardens of our lives are quietly resting, waiting to stir and spring forth. Our gardens, like ourselves, must have determination to make it through the cold, wind and snow--through the dark winter days--and survive. Some winters most certainly seem longer and harder than other! Someone once said: "Nature seems to be ever in charge of our lives."

I read an article this morning that explained the kinds of studies being conducted in order to (someday) predict earthquakes.

In the same article the historian Will Durant was quoted as saying: "Civilization exists by geological consent, subject to change without notice."
(continued on page 2)



Have you tried pounding it with your fist first?

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UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- 2010 Choral Evensong Series, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, March 7, April 25, May 23, all at 4 PM.
- March 29 - Chrism Mass, 11AM, Cathedral Church of St. Paul.
- July 23 - 24 - Summer Ministry School and Retreat, Grinnell College.
- August 21 - A Day with the Bishop, Cathedral Church of St. Paul
- October 29-30 - 158th Annual Diocesan Convention, Marriott Hotel, Des Moines.

THE BISHOP'S LETTER

(continued from page 1)

to receive people at this time. Recovery and rebuilding will take years, and such opportunities are not going to be available for quite some time. It is hard for us to not be able to do more. As the Presiding Bishop says in a letter to the House of Bishops, we are asked at this time to pray with those who walk through the shadow of death and know that the Lord travels with them.

+Alan



DIRECTOR'S LETTER



(continued from page 1)

We will most certainly keep the people of Haiti and other earthquake ravaged lands in our hearts and prayers. We all suffer with them during this tragic disaster.

Blessings and love to you all.



Martha

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*Only with winter-patience
can we bring
the deep-desired, long-awaited
spring.*

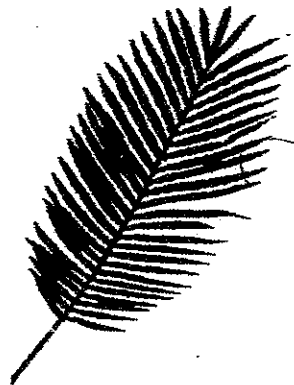
Anne Morrow Lindberg

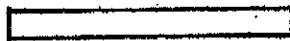
HOW TO MAKE PALM CROSSES

Barbara Parks

This is my preferred pattern. It takes a bit more practice, but looks like the ones I used to get when I was little. A palm frond about 1 1/4" wide and 13" long will make an average size cross.



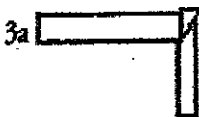
1. Hold the frond horizontally



2. Bend the right end straight up from the corner to form a right angle.



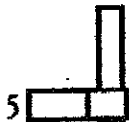
3. Fold this same top strip, from the center, (a) back and down, (b) up and over again, to form a square at the back. It will still be a right angle at this point.



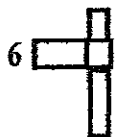
4. Bring the left strip forward and fold over the center towards the right.



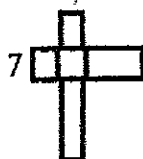
5. Fold away from you and pull through the square at the back, all the way.



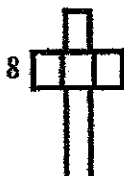
6. Bend the top strip forward and put the end through the center square to make a shaft of the desired length.



7. Fold left hand strip backwards and put through the back square. This makes the left crossbar and should be in proportion to the shaft.



8. Fold the right strip back, put through the back square and fasten.



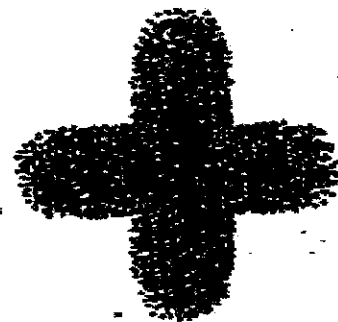
TURNING THIS YEAR'S PALMS INTO NEXT YEAR'S ASHES

Palm Sunday is over and the Altar Guild is preparing the Sacristy for perhaps the busiest week of the year, Holy Week. What is to be done with those leftover consecrated palms?

Put them aside carefully and on a quiet day when there is no fire danger burn them and prepare the ashes for next year's Ash Wednesday.

Using a large fireproof receptacle (a tin can will do), cut the palms into pieces and set fire to them. After the fire has gone out, place a square of metal screening over another container and using a small brush, a toothbrush works well, rub the burned ashes through the screening. Label and store this fine ash in a closed container in the sacristy until it is needed.

Dig a whole and bury the leftover ashes in the ground.



THIS EASTER, MAY YOUR LIFE

AND WORK BE

STRENGTHENED BY THE

RENEWAL OF FAITH AND

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD LOAN CLOSET

I was delighted to receive a call from Barbara Easley, St. Luke's Church, Ft. Madison, wondering if the Loan Closet might have several red stoles for the ordination to the diaconate of herself, Lyle Brown and James Kannenberg. Joann Olson, Altar Guild Directress at St. Anne's in the Fields, Ankeny, had recently brought an assortment of stoles and chasubles to the Closet. Although there was not a red stole in the group, there were many lovely stoles that I took to Barbara and Marilyn Wentzien, Altar Guild Directress. (Two red stoles were generously loaned for the ordination.) They were thrilled to receive the beautiful stoles that will be converted into



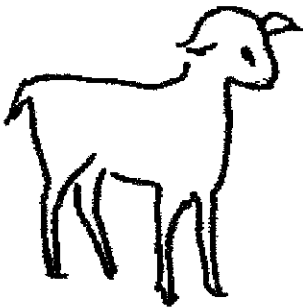
deacon's stoles for the new ordinands. The Bishop recently returned from Cedar Rapids with a large box filled with candlesticks, an altar cross and vestments given by Christ Church. We are very thankful for these many gifts to the Closet. If your parish has items that are no longer being used and are just taking up space in closet or drawer, think about sending them to the Loan Closet to be shared with other parishes and missions.

Barbara Easley, Lyle Brown and Marilyn Wentzien, St. Luke's Church, Ft. Madison, receiving stoles from the Loan Closet. Many of the stoles had been brought to the Loan Closet by Altar Guild Directress Joan Olson, St. Anne's by the Fields, Ankeny,

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EASTER AHEAD!

by Barbara Gent



The old, old verse "When Yule comes, dule comes, cold feet and legs. When Pasche comes, Grace comes, butter, milk, and eggs" carried with it in a quaint and worldly manner the sense of anticipation that the prospect of Easter brings. It also conjures up the multiple symbols of Easter that from the beginning have attached themselves to that holy day.

Lilies, Rabbits, and Painted Eggs by Edna Barth is a charming book about the origin of fifteen of these symbols, among them fire, candlelight, animal parades, hot cross buns, bells, new clothes, and of course lilies, rabbits, and painted eggs. Some Easter symbols are hundreds, even thousands, of years old, originating in various corners of the world. In the stories that she tells about their history, Edna Barth "shows how they reflect feelings shared by people throughout the world." Ursula Arndt's illustrations are delightful, two-colored line drawings of just about everything draw able in the book.

Lilies, Rabbits, and painted Eggs is a children's book written with adults in mind. Illustrated with adults in mind, too. It is not a new book, but is still in print in soft cover and available at any book store for a modest price. (Houghton, Mifflin). Give yourselves and Easter present!



DECORATING THE PASCAL CANDLE

If you have never decorated the Pascal candle stand with a wreath of ferns and small white and yellow daisies, or other spring flowers, you might want to try it this year. A wooden doughnut is cut to fit over the candle socket. It rests on the stand and will not slip off if cut carefully. Small cans (tuna fish size ones are perfect) are taped together in a ring using florists tape and filled with presoaked Oasis. The cans are placed on the wooden doughnut. Using these very simple mechanics you can add beautiful flower arrangements to your Pascal candle. †

HOLY WEEK, EASTER AND SPRING

Clara Fowler

Holy Week opens with Palm Sunday and we arrange with a variety of palms, if we are fortunate. Some ferns: jade, leather leaf and Boston will look like a palm and lighten the arrangement. If you clip off ragged edges of palms with regular scissors and arrange palms as they grow, they act better. The Bible says branches, so many churches today add flowering spring branches. I also add the palm pieces the people receive—straight or bent to add light to the arrangement. Many Orthodox churches add pussy willow branches to the palms, which also add light.

Maundy Thursday for some churches means a floral offering in which to place the reserved sacrament. Then a bare Friday and Saturday, until the eager flower guild comes.

Easter gives us the opportunity to arrange everywhere and the spring flowers are so beautiful. Lilies are traditional, but many churches use other flowers as well. Colors other than white and yellow are seen on altars and in windows. Do you decorate the Paschal Candle? Many have a circle on the holder to use. If not, there are many products on the market that are safe to use (oasis makes it easy to use small holders you can encircle the candlestick with). Some guilds do arrangements on the font. It may be in use so either leave a space in a wreath



or do a garden below. Window and door arrangements are fun to do.

It's also an opportunity to use outside helpers and interest others in the guild. Many altar guilds including mine place lily plants around the church, the font area and the chancel.

In my parish this year we may use hydrangeas, roses and other flowering plants as well. We arrange with spring colors. In the picture the palms have been reused from Palm Sunday.

Beware of lily pollen on material. It should be blown off, removed with a soft brush or a chenille stick. Do not rub it! If it does stain, pretreat it as a protein. There are good laundry products for this. Avoid bleach on linen or easy care. The whole pollen problem can be avoided by removing the pollen sacs when the lily first opens and before the pollen matures.

Have a blessed Easter Season †

PRESERVING YOUR PARISH HERITAGE

Mike Thomas, Diocese of Virginia, Epistle #131, Spring 2004

As a friend of NAGA, I have been asked to comment on personal property damage or loss... A first line defense in the stewardship of church property is the altar guild's inventory. It can play a major role in assuring parishioners that tragedy will not happen to them. Let's look at several steps to help organize the inventory process.

- 1 ***Why should we keep an inventory?*** The contents of your parish and social hall have great accumulated value as "personal property." Just as you protect your church buildings, it is extremely important to recognize and protect the value of personal property in them. In the event of loss or destruction, an inventory helps to substantiate the existence of items, and, importantly, the cost to replace them.
- 2 ***Where should the inventory be kept?*** Always maintain two copies. One should be a working copy, kept at the church to make additions and deletions as necessary. A master copy, updated from the working copy, must be kept at another location, preferably a safe deposit box.
- 3 ***How often should inventory be reviewed and modified?*** At least once a year.
- 4 ***What changes in insurance coverage should be considered?*** Consider revising the content value(s) used in determining the limit of your property insurance. (Remember that an accurate assessment of value is the best way to assure that your parish will be adequately recompensed in the event of a loss.)
- 5 ***How can replacement value be accurately estimated?*** The following list of organizations may be helpful:

† ***American Society of Appraisers*** — An

A first line defense in the stewardship of church property is the altar guild's inventory. It can play a major role in assuring parishioners that tragedy will not happen to them.

organization of appraisal professionals; its web site provides ability to locate hundreds of appraisers by specialty (books, manuscripts, textiles and other fine arts) by state www.appraisers.org.

† ***Industrial Appraisal Company*** — A company which can appraise just about anything; one of its sites features Houses of Worship and associated Fine Arts (sculpture, tapestries, art glass and stained glass windows and antiques: collections and precious unique pieces) www.indappr.com.

† ***Pipe Organs*** — While various insurance policies treat this category differently, it is still a good idea to point out an excellent web site specializing in pipe organs. This site contains approximately 42 pages of builders and directory lists www.pipeorgans.com.

† ***Stained Glass Association of America*** — Web site features articles, publication and a complete listing of accredited members; also organized by state www.stainedglass.org.

6 ***What personal property might be considered "Fine Art"?*** There is general agreement on the following: paintings, works on paper; icons; sculpture and wood carvings; Oriental carpets; textiles (tapestry, liturgical garments, needlework); gold, silver and bronze (liturgical and secular); gems and jewelry; stone carvings; ornamental woodwork; ornamental marble work (fonts, plaques, some columns); music library; documents, books and archives; decorative painting (murals and stenciling).

7 ***What additional steps can altar guilds take to ensure a good record of current items?*** A photographic or video graphic record should be kept of rare, unique or antique items, those items of value already described.

The altar guild ministry to the Church is invaluable. Your kind care, as faithful stewards of our past, is our connection to the future. †

★ What to Give Up For Lent ★

Give up grumbling...instead in everything give thanks.

Give up 10-15 minutes in bed...instead use that time for prayer.

Give up looking at people's worst points...instead concentrate on their best ones.

Give up speaking unkindly...instead let your speech be generous and understanding.

Give up your worries...instead trust God with them.

Give up hatred or dislike of anyone...instead learn to love.

Give up concentrating on sunday newspapers...instead study your Bible.

Give up TV one evening a week...instead visit some lonely or sick person.

Give up buying anything but essentials for yourself...instead give the money to God's work.

Give up the fear which prevents Christian witness...instead seek courage to speak to others.

Give up judging by appearances and the standards of the world...instead, learn to Give up yourself to God.

OPENING

NOW IS THE SHINING FABRIC OF OUR DAY
TORN OPEN, FLUNG APART,
RENT WIDE BY LOVE.
NEVER AGAIN
THE TIGHT, ENCLOSING SKY,
THE BLUE BOWL,
OR THE STAR-ILLUMINED TENT.
WE ARE LAID OPEN TO INFINITY,
FOR EASTER LOVE
HAS BURST HIS TOMB AND OURS.

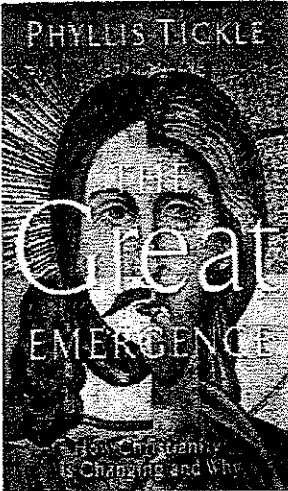
NOW NOTHING SHELTERS US
FROM GOD'S DESIRE—
NOT FLESH, NOT SKY,
NOT STARS, NOT EVEN SIN.
NOW GLORY WAITS
SO HE CAN ENTER IN.
NOW DOES THE DANCE BEGIN.

Elizabeth Rooney, Morning Song, Published by Brigham Farm Publishing, www.brighamfarm.com Used by permission



THE BOOKSHELF

The Great Emergence by Phyllis Tickle is one book you should read this fall. A survey of Christianity from the first century through our own, the



author traces the influences that cause the rethinking of this movement every 500 years or so. For those of us puzzled about where Christianity is going, be assured, according to Tickle that by the Church's "cleaning out the attic" what results is a stronger, more focused faith. That we have the opportunity to live through what emerges in our time should be a reason for joy.

This book is hard to put down and you will return again and again to sections of it, especially the section which concerns our own 500 years. Tickle notes that two questions are key: "(1) What is human consciousness and/or the humanness of the human, and (2) What is the relation of all religions to one another...how can we live responsibly as devout adherents of one religion in a world of many religions?"

Thus we get a quick guide, beautifully written, that takes us on a quick tour of the influences that shape our own time: Darwin, Freud, Jung, Faraday; science, math, biology, chemistry, cognitive science—Joseph Campbell and the *Power of Myth*. Take another look at the reconfiguration of the family, the influence of the automobile, the pill, the Jesus Movement, even Rosie the Riveter. Rich in detail, this book will have you rereading Einstein and Newton and paying attention to network theory an Alcoholics Anonymous, and the Quakers. A study guide is available.

There is no true solitude,

Except interior solitude.

Thomas Merton

WALK IN A RELAXED MANNER - Life Lessons From The Camino

by Joyce Rupp

At age 60 Joyce Rupp didn't know what she was getting into when she began a 37 day pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain. Joined by her walking friend, Tom Pfeffer, a retired pastor of her parish, Joyce learned how our lives are constantly influenced and shaped by others. Looking back she is amazed by the number of people who blessed her time on



the road to Santiago and contributed to the journey of writing this book. Joyce says, "the Camino inspired me to allow the ups and downs of daily life to be the pilgrimage and adventure it really is. My desire in sharing this story with you is to have these life lessons stir up fresh enthusiasm for your life as they have for mine."

Joyce Rupp ends by saying: "The Camino teaches the pilgrim to move on. One cannot stay in the past. Like all pilgrims, I am meant to live in the Now, to continue to embrace the road of life as my great teacher. It is here that its lessons will sustain and strengthen me as I continue to walk in a relaxed manner. The Camino's gifts will endure just as love endures. Every pilgrim knows this."

Joyce Rupp is well known for her work as a writer, spiritual "midwife," and conference speaker. A member of the Servite Community, she has lead retreats throughout North America, as well as in Europe, Asia, and Africa. She lives in Iowa.

Editor's note: In 2001 my husband and I followed the Camino across northern Spain. We journeyed by car, rather than walking the 500 miles, but still felt the extraordinary spirituality of that road.