



St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center is the ministry center of The Community of the Cross, an intentional community of Christians affiliated with the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America. ALL ARE WELCOME



St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center

FIRST SUNDAY

August 2018, Vol 12, Issue 8

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I couldn't resist using this picture above of the loaves and fishes that some of you will recognize from Fr. Richard Rohr's column this past week. It shows hands reaching into the pile of fishes and a variety of other foods - I'm not quite sure which so you can guess all you want - maybe it's "manna" or maybe its bread crumbs or pieces of dried fruits or perhaps some other "soul food" - whatever it is, I thought it fit perfectly with this "Season of the Living Bread" - a very appropriate name for this month of August when we leave Mark's gospel for a while to meander through Chapter 6 of John - and the focus is on the Living Bread - the Bread of Life. This title was pointed out to the OCCA clergy by our retired Archbishop Peter (Bob Zahrt) in a post a week or so ago.

It seems fit for divide the season after Pentecost into several different sections as it goes on for a rather long time. To me it's kind of strange to drop readings from John into the middle of Mark's gospel. Keep in mind that John wrote at least 30 years after Mark and to a different community. It is also a different style of writing. Mark was telling the story of "Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God" which can be a little confusing because those titles, "Messiah" and "Son of God" were not unique to Jesus. There had been and continued to be other "Messiahs" and the "Son of God" was also a name assigned to the Emperor and his sons. Mark's titles did not speak directly or necessarily of Jesus as Divine.

On the other hand, John began his gospel in a different way. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

This is not quite the same as Mark's understanding of Jesus. John presents Jesus as

Sunday Liturgy

10:00 AM

2800 Rolston Street
Fort Wayne

All are Welcome!

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divine and as existing from the beginning of the world - this is the Cosmic Christ that is the incarnation of God in all creation, come in a human form to be the image of a loving God who made all things, and in whom all things live and have their being.

So we leap from a series of stories about a truly holy man to stories about God-dwelling-with-us. John is different from the other gospels and it becomes obvious in this Season of the Living Bread.

"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry." Yet people hunger. "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews began mumbling and asking, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

"Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." Many of his followers left him at this point. How can this be? What is he talking about? This is what we will be exploring the next few weeks. Please don't expect a perfect answer.

+John

CLERGY FOR AUGUST

Aug 5	+John	11 Pentecost
Aug 12	Jim+	12 Pentecost
Aug 19	Cliff+	13 Pentecost
Aug 26	Jim+	14 Pentecost
Sep 2	+John	15 Pentecost

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2 - Anita and Tom Carter's
50th Anniversary Celebration

September 15, 4:00 PM at Beacon
Heights Church of the Brethren - Deacon
Charlene Rorick's Ordination to
Presbyterate

September 16, 10:00 Mother Charlene's
First Eucharist as Presider

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Pray for patience for Buzz who is headed to Cleveland Clinic for some heart surgery. As of the printing of this bulletin we don't know when.

Continue to remember Jim Tobolski as he heals from cancer and also Kris' sister and others who have this dreadful disease. Remember all those who are sick. May they heal quickly and may their family be strengthened in these times of need.

Pray for victims of violence and injustice. Pray most of all for justice - justice would prevent so much of the misery and problems that we face in our world and in our communities.

Pray for a sense of outrage at the violence, greed and waste in our world.

Pray for all people in those places that are experiencing or have experienced violence, destruction or any other events causing suffering.

Remember all of the Church in your prayers, each of us is struggling with something. We all have challenges as we go on our journeys.

Pray for those who are unemployed or under employed, for those who are lonely and alone.

Honor the earth, the waters and the sky and do what you can to stop pollution.

Pray for an end to genocide, apartheid and the displacement of people from their lands all over the globe. Let go of any form of racism, sexism, homophobia, agism and other forms of hatred and bigotry.

Pray that we may all grow stronger to be able to witness to the true Gospel message, a message of good news that God is Love and we who love God love our neighbor - God is here and we are one - all else is failing.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON OUR SYNOD

This past month, the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America met in it's General Synod. OCCA has a required meeting of the bishops every two years and every four years a general synod is held that includes all those ordained as well as any other members of the Church who wish to attend. The

READINGS FOR AUGUST

**Proper 13 (18)
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
August 5, 2018**

2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a Psalm 51:1-12
Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 Psalm 78:23-29
Ephesians 4:1-16 John 6:24-35

**Proper 14 (19)
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
August 12, 2018**

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33 Psalm 130
1 Kings 19:4-8 Psalm 34:1-8
Ephesians 4:25-5:2 John 6:35, 41-51

**Proper 15 (20)
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 19, 2018**

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14 Psalm 111
Proverbs 9:1-6 Psalm 34:9-14
Ephesians 5:15-20 John 6:51-58

**Proper 16 (21)
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 26, 2018**

1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-43
Psalm 84
Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18 Psalm 34:15-22
Ephesians 6:10-20 John 6:56-69

**Proper 17 (22)
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 2, 2018**

Song of Solomon 2:8-13 Psalm 45:1-2,
6-9
Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 Psalm 15
James 1:17-27 Mark 7:1-8, 14-15,
21-23

REFLECTIONS ON OUR SYNOD - CONT'D

Synod this year was held in Indianapolis at the Benedictine Monastery of Our Lady of Grace hospitality facility, the Benedict Inn.

We had 20 members in attendance and the focus this year was on remembering and redefining who we are as Church. We focused on three charisms that I think are very important for us. They are by no means unique to us but in many ways because they are all part of us, they do define who we are and are perhaps unique in the way they are combined.

The first is a welcoming community. All are truly welcome at OCCA. We welcome people from all different walks of life, different gender orientations, races, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic stations. Many of our clergy serve the homeless, the imprisoned, those in hospice or healthcare facilities that may not have access to ministry. In addition, we have house churches, small parishes, and prayer groups that truly welcome all. We also are ecumenical and welcome other believers from other faiths to join us at the table and at our services and projects. We spent Thursday focused on welcoming and ministering to different groups who are not always served in a way that treats them as equals, as the children of God that they are. Bishops Paul, Stephen and Elizabeth along with Mother Laura led us in presentations and discussions on this topic.

The second characteristic is that we are Trinitarian in our faith and practice. We took time Friday morning to watch *The Shack*, a great little film that presents the Trinity in a positive, approachable, loving manner. The emphasis was on the God who loves us and who is with us when we suffer, when we experience intense pain, and when we celebrate. This was followed in the afternoon with presentations by Archbishop Paul and Bishops Anthony and John (me). Paul took *Creator* and I took *Redeemer* and Anthony took *Holy Spirit* and gave presentations and led discussions on each of these.

The third characteristics is that we are Sacramental and so Saturday we focused on sacraments. While Roman Catholics and Lutherans and other mainline religions usually limit themselves to 7 sacraments, we align with the Orthodox tradition of not limiting God's ability to manifest Godself

REFLECTIONS ON OUR SYNOD - CONT'D

through only these 7 signs. So first we talked about sacrament in general and then Bishops Elizabeth and Stephen along with Archbishop Paul presented a discussion of sacrament and also of the sacraments that are usually administered. Baptism, chrismation, eucharist were presented as sacraments of initiation usually administered together in infancy but also for adults who enter the faith. A discussion on penance, anointing of the sick and dying, holy orders and matrimony finished up the afternoon.

We began our Synod on Wednesday evening with the ordination of four new deacons. Archbishop Paul asked me to preside at the ordination and asked Deacon Charlene to preach. Our new deacons are representative of who we are, I believe. Brett Banks is a young man who is enrolled in theology school and going to be teaching at a Jesuit High School in Texas. Thomas Wynn is another young man who lives in Texas as well. Thomas has been involved in an Orthodox Church previously and will be holding evening prayer services in his home. Thomas also writes icons and is a baker by trade. Constantine Wright works in a library at the University of Georgia and will be ministering to students on campus in the upcoming months. In particular, he is concerned about LGBTQ students from Orthodox and other backgrounds who often feel uninvited or unwelcome in their jurisdictions. Jose Castro was our fourth ordinand. He is from Alameda, California and has a small parish organized that he has been ministering too as well as his ongoing work in visiting persons in prison and in detention centers. Jose is from Argentina originally and has traveled

extensively in South America as well as Europe and his varied experience suits him well in organizing a new parish. I will be flying out to Alameda this fall to ordain him as a priest.

Each morning began with morning prayer led by one of our new deacons. In the evenings, we had different kinds of evening prayer incorporating the sacraments that were discussed during the Synod. Bishop Stephen led us in a group penance service that you will be experiencing here this upcoming Advent and Lent. Bishop Elizabeth led us in an anointing service and Bishop Anthony led us in a Reflective Taize type evening prayer.

Following evening prayer we enjoyed some time together with refreshments - everywhere from cheese and wine to beer and nuts to ice cream. We played some games that opened up discussion among us and had time to visit with our colleagues.

At times the presentations led to discussions, arguments and then resolution of differences. It was a learning experience for all involved to see how a synod works.

I missed the Sunday Question and Answer Session with the Archbishop as we came home for St. Mary Magdala's Feast.

Fr. Cliff and Deacon Charlene may have different views and are welcome to present them in future issues.

+John



Families Torn Apart: US Immigration and Palestine,

with our guest, Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

Thursday, August 23, 6:30pm

Plymouth Congregational Church UCC

501 West Berry Street, 260.423.9424

What is the connection between what is happening to children on the US southern border and in villages in Palestine? Christine Martinez is Co-Coordinator of Inter-Religious Task Force, an activist for workers' and immigrants' rights, specializing in services for refugees & asylum-seekers from Central & South America, and human rights in Palestine & Israel. The program is free, open to public.