

The Good News

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Rose Sunday

Someone suggested I say a few words about the significance of "Special Music Sunday," traditionally held at St. Mary's on the Third Sunday of Advent and Fourth Sunday in Lent. Advent is a penitential season and has been called a "mini Lent." Both seasons use the color purple associated with a time to prepare for the two great Feast Days of the Christian Year: Christmas and Easter.

The Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday in Lent were observed as an easing up of the penitential discipline of fasting and self-denial. A lighter shade of purple marked the change on those two occasions with a pink candle for the Third Sunday of Advent and rose-colored vestments for both Sundays.

So they were called "Rose Sundays" not for the flower, but the color. They were also called "Rejoice Sundays" for the two Latin words used at the beginning of the services "Gaudete" in Advent and "Laetare" in Lent. During the Middle Ages the opening words on the Fourth Sunday in Lent were "Laetare, rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad for her."

The traditional reading on that day was Galatians 4:26 which states, "Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all." And so in the 16th Century the collect reflected upon "Holy Mother, the Church" and in the English tradition, the Fourth Sunday in Lent became "mothering Sunday."

At first families would visit the cathedral or "mother church" with special offerings of cakes and bread—a lightening of the Lenten fast. Later the observance became associated with maternal care and the special cakes and bread were brought home to mother and subsequently the origin of Mother's Day.

Rose Sunday is also called "Bread Sunday" for the reading in Anglican, Roman Catholic and Western Orthodox churches was always from the sixth chapter of John and the miraculous feeding from the five barley loaves and as we pray – give us this bread.

Music is a special part of worship every Sunday at Saint Mary's. The third Sunday of Advent and the fourth Sunday in Lent are special observances because music lightens our hearts and feeds and refreshes our souls. Moreover, music provides us with a time to be reflective—to listen, contemplate and be still—things we need to do in order to make these seasons more meaningful.

—Peter Chase

Ex Gratia

Liberation Theology

Liberation is a common theme during the season of Lent. It is a time to be liberated from all that constrains a more spiritual life. Liberation involves moving beyond the habitual or the familiar and entering into promising territory. And so, in Genesis, we hear how Abram is led from his home by God into a new and foreign land. And in John, how Nicodemus is led by Jesus to ponder the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Two theologians provide powerful messages of liberation theology: Dorothy Solle is a German theologian who has taught in America and Father Oscar Romero was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador.

When asked, "Why be a Christian?" Dorothy Solle replied, "Because we need liberation." We are more accustomed to the classical formularies of deliverance, redemption and salvation, but listen to

“The Gospel is wonderful. It speaks about my life in the way in which I want my life to be talked about. It speaks with the seriousness that does not permit even a single day of my life to be despised. It speaks of a hope that does not permit even a single person to be omitted. It speaks of a sorrow, which does not allow itself to grow blind, and a joy that is contagious.”

Nobody is counted out in the Gospel. It does not allow me to accept life only partially. The Gospel stands in the cause of freedom for all human beings. *The Bible* demands that we participate in this concern for the liberation of all.”

On another occasion, Solle writes:

“If we look at the paradigm of liberation theology, we find there an understanding of Jesus which strives for neither objectification of the mystery in dogma nor for subjectivizing in personal appropriation. The liberation theologies mention the mystery of Jesus in his historical existence. They say of him that he was poor, hungry, forsaken, subversive, and out of his mind, that he was a worker, a nobody without papers, a carpenter, unemployed, a political prisoner, tortured. They attempt to begin where Jesus began, where he lived, where the people met him not in churches but in everyday life and that means in misery. He is not recognizable by his halo.” (Solle: *An Introduction to Theology*, p.114.)

It is this discovery of Jesus which is the keystone of the liberation theology of Archbishop Romero.

By way of background, which is of keen interest given our upcoming mission trip to El Salvador with St. Paul’s of Natick, Archbishop Romero was appointed as Archbishop of San Salvador on February 3, 1977, presumably because he was perceived as “a peaceable, spiritually oriented, morally severe apostolate, . . . a man more likely to be at ease with the powerful than to act in unshakable solidarity with the poor.” (Ignacio Martín-Baró, introductory essay, *Voice of the Voiceless* p. 1.)

Before the end of Romero’s first month as archbishop, a massacre of civilians protesting fraudulent election practices gave rise to a new grassroots organization, The Popular Leagues of the 28th of February, whose members were determined to fight in defense of their interests regardless of the consequences. During the following two weeks there continued to be attacks on priests, which culminated in the assassination of a Jesuit Father Rutilio Grande and two companions. Father Grande was a close personal friend of Romero. The attack was viewed nationally as “an attack against the identification made by priests with the hopes and the sufferings with the people of God.” (*Voice*, p. 6.) It was a galvanizing moment for The Popular Leagues and the crucial moment in Romero’s conversion to a liberation activist.

During much of his three years as archbishop, Romero witnessed increased military repression of the people who continued to organize, and increasingly he became a voice for the downtrodden. On March 24, 1980, he was assassinated while celebrating Mass. While his tenure was but a short three years, he is today regarded as El Salvador’s most famous martyr and liberation theologian.

The Reverend Jon Sobrino (*Voice*, p.22-51) offered the following observations of Romero:

- Romero fulfilled Jesus’ command to make a disciple of everyone. As archbishop, it was his duty to preach the gospel to all and to “evangelize the structural reality” of the country.
- **In the faces of the poor, in the oppressed and repressed of his people, Romero saw the disfigured countenance of God.**
- Poverty and desolation is a denial of God’s will, a perverted creation in which God’s glory is mocked or scorned. Faith in God begins with the defense of life here and now.
- He did not rely on purely political considerations, but on his faith in God. That is why he did not stop where others stopped, at conflict and the organization of the poor.

Lenten Study Programs

Final WSM Lenten Study Series, Tuesday, March 13 at 10:00 a.m.

During Lent, The Women of St. Mary's has been hosting a study of many facets of "The Search for Peace" on Tuesday mornings in the Chapter Room. On Thursday, March 13, The Reverend Canon Edward W. Rodman, professor of Pastoral Theology and Urban Ministry at Episcopal Divinity School and a veteran of the civil rights movement, will be speaking on Restorative Justice, a social movement to institutionalize peaceful approaches to problem solving and violations of legal and human rights.

Final Lenten Soup and Cinema Study Series, Sunday March 9 at 5:30 p.m. (Please bring guests.)

This year's Lenten film series will conclude with *Smultronstället (Wild Strawberries)* produced and directed by Ingmar Bergman. This movie explores the disillusionment of an elderly physician, Professor Isak Borg, as he reflects upon his life and begins to perceive his mortality. As he travels to Lund to receive an honorary award, he meets strangers and relatives, and in his dreams he is confronted by his own past as well as fear of insufficiency. He slowly comes to realize that the choices he has made have created a cold and empty life, devoid of real meaning or value. Finally, he receives redemption and reintegration through forgiveness and the love of his family. Following the film there will be a discussion on redemption and grace by Peter Chase and Bill McAndrew. McAndrew taught film studies at Phillips Andover and was involved with the WBUR film series.

Holy Week Schedule of Services

Holy Week marks the events of Christ's life beginning with his joyous triumphal entry into Jerusalem and ending with the somberness of crucifixion and death. It is a week in which we as the Church dramatize the events which led up to and include the suffering and death of Jesus on the Cross. The theme of Holy Week is one of passion, of ultimate love and caring.

The Sunday of Passion—Palm Sunday, March 16 at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

The tension between suffering and glorious triumph is set immediately before us on Palm Sunday, when joyful hosannas ring out even as the sense of foreboding grows. Jesus enters Jerusalem proclaimed as a king, riding toward a destiny of suffering and death amidst the shouts of those who soon will turn against him. We begin with "All glory, laud and honor," the hymn traditionally associated with the procession, then move to a dramatic reading of The Passion Narrative.

Tenebrae, Wednesday, March 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Tenebrae comes from the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows" and has for centuries been applied to the service of Evening Prayer observed during the last three days of Holy Week. The most conspicuous feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights in the church, until only a single candle, considered as a symbol of our Lord, remains lit. Before each candle is extinguished, there are readings from the Psalms and Biblical lessons. The service concludes with prayers and silence.

Maundy Thursday, March 20 at 7:30 p.m.

We get the word "Maundy" from the Latin "mandate," to command. This service recalls two events in the life of Jesus. First, we recall the Last Supper when Jesus broke bread with the disciples in the Upper Room and said, "Do this for the remembrance of me." In the Eucharist we have the promise of Christ's presence with us. Secondly, we recall that Jesus washed the disciples' feet and commanded them to follow his example of love and humble service. In the foot washing we have the model of ministry of servant hood. At the conclusion of this memorable service we strip the altar.

Good Friday—The Way of the Cross, March 21 at 12:00 noon

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by the pilgrims to Jerusalem, wherein they offer a prayer at a series of places traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. At St. Mary's, the children of the parish will assist us in this service which includes walking throughout the parish grounds observing moments of Biblical

Good Friday Liturgy, March 21 at 7:30 p.m.

A solemn service beginning with a reading from the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John and followed by a service of Evening Prayer using the Solemn Collects which date from the Third Century. These prayers contain a bid to the congregation for silent prayer, concluding with a collect. The service ends with Anthems said before the Cross and the Lord's Prayer.

The "Ask-It Basket":

Q: Do you ever get to church and find someone sitting in "your" pew? The experience leads one to wonder, "Whose pew is it anyhow?"

A: While it is easy to feel "territorial" about a specific pew, the fact is that for much of St. Mary's history, pews were indeed owned by individuals. Hence the numbering on the door to each pew. Parishioners paid rent on pews as a way to finance the church's activities and capital expenditures. Some pews were individually owned until the 1940s. A 1944 document in the church archives indicates that only 44 of the 57 then-existing pews were owned by the church. Originally St. Mary's had 69 pews; twelve were removed, probably as part of the renovations done in 1838. These changes probably indicate why there are gaps in the sequences of the pew numbers.

St. Mary's was one of the first parishes in the diocese to begin a stewardship program to finance church operations, at which time it began phasing out pew ownership or rentals. The stewardship program is believed to have commenced well before the 1940s.

Through St. Mary's archives, we are able to trace the history of most of the pews. Names that are found in the graveyard are the most prominent: Crehore, Daniels, Hagar and Jones. (Note that Hagar St. runs off Concord St beside the churchyard.)

Sarah Fuller, in her *Memories of St. Mary's Parish*, published 1923, recalls who sat where but admits that she sat in a pew midway in the body of the house, and therefore "the exact pews in which persons, whom I associate with the rear of the building, are not definitely remembered."

Fuller does recall:

"Mr. Amos Warren with his wife and three sons occupied the first pew in front in the centre of the church...and it has since been, continuously, the pew of his children and grandchildren.... Mr. Joshua Gould was the occupant of the next pew.... Mr. William Curtis, his wife, three sons and a daughter sat in the next pew.

"Mrs. Amos Allen, a daughter of Madame Parker, and her two sisters, the Misses Eliza and Sarah Parker, and Mr. Francis Blake, Sr. with his wife occupied the next pew.... The next pew was occupied by the families of Mr. Timothy Boit [the local undertaker] and Mr. Vaughan Jones [an architect and builder]. The owner of the next pew was Miss Sarah Whall, and it became the loved family pew of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Jordan, from the time of their marriage in 1845 to the beginning of the twentieth century."

Pew #8, "my pew", shared usually with the Warners, was originally owned by the Jennings family. It was transferred to the church in 1891.

—Lynn Farnell, with contributions from
Beverly Hurney

Editor: Tim Green