



# Holy Trinity Hillcrest

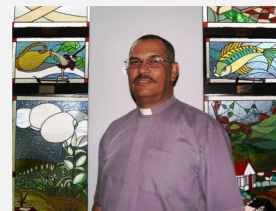
## News Letter

August 2016

### Rector's Reflections

Dear God's people,

Enid and I often joke when faced with an 'unnecessary challenge' that if only everyone was like us we wouldn't have these challenges because we would all automatically be on the same page. But that will probably be the worst thing that God could have done for creation. Imagine what life would be like if we all thought the same, behaved the same and all liked the same things. We would lose God's precious gift of our uniqueness, independence and individual talents. Life would be plain, simple and scary. We would have nothing new to add or to show or to take a personal pride in because all will have the same ideas and plans and likes and dislikes. Many years ago when the then Metropolitan, Desmond Tutu, visited the Diocese he told the clergy that they should not try to defend his actions and words. Then he jokingly said, "imagine what this government will do if they had two Tutus." Mindful of my many failings and preferences, I don't think that I would appreciate living with someone like myself. Sorry Tessa and Kaleb.



In my daily readings and contemplations I've been bothered by the question, 'why do I continue to contravene the great commandment of God?' In other words, why do we continue to lapse into sin of thought, word and deed if sin is a violation of the law of God? It is a question that many struggle with in their own personal journeys of faith. Even the divinely inspired men and women in Scripture seem to share this debilitating complaint. The Psalmist laments, "*I take my life in my own hands continually: yet I do not forget your law.*" (Ps 119:109 APB) In the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus found his disciples asleep after he asked them to watch and pray with him, he resignedly says, "*The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.*" Like the Psalmist and the Apostles we may deeply desire to fulfil the laws and do the things that God requires of us but we just appear to be too weak to fully carry it out. Maybe St Paul's words to the Romans sums it up a lot better when he writes, "*We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. <sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. <sup>19</sup> For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*" (Romans 7: 14-20) Sin appears to have become part of our make-up. But that was never God's original intention. It is more that we preferred to misuse the confidence that God placed in us to strive to satisfy our desires than choose God. So how do we go about living obediently?

In my quest for the 'why', the thought came to me that it may be that human beings fail to fully grasp and understand the significance of God's love, and hence the struggle to reciprocate it and express that love to our neighbours. According to Scripture, God's love is very different to human expressions of love. In the Greek, God's love is called '*Agape*' (unconditional love) whereas the human expression is either, '*phileo*' (friendship); '*storge*' (brotherly love) and '*eros*' (erotic love). Not being unconditional, our experiences of receiving and sharing love may be tinged with not necessarily sharing a part of ourselves as much as how it may benefit us. Could it be that because we have not physically experienced true unconditional love, we would then naturally have a difficulty in expressing it? If that is the case how do we attain the levels of obedience that Scripture calls us to? Here are some of my thoughts:

✦ As so many have discovered, living Godly lives require more than just self-determination and personal resolve. It begins with this personal commitment, but the journey of faith requires a power beyond our self. Last month I quoted Archbishop Fulton Sheen's assertion on why an 'outside power' is necessary. Because of our fallibility, susceptibility, and our limitations, we are unable to achieve that which is beyond our capacity and experience. We need a higher power. In St John's Gospel Jesus calls this higher power the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, which comes from God and will lead us into all truth and righteousness.

✦ The Holy Spirit was given to the Church on the day of Pentecost and the Bishop prayed that we be anointed with her at our Confirmation. At the end of every Eucharistic service we pray that God will send us out in her power. We live and walk and move in the power of the Holy Spirit. The

challenge is how do we appropriate it for the benefit of achieving the Divine purpose. I often have to check myself when I ask God to give me God's spirit because I already have it. I should rather be petitioning God for courage to submit to the Spirit's authority and guidance upon my life.

✦ Submitting to the Holy Spirit requires discipline. St Paul often uses the metaphor of sport when teaching the Gentile converts. In 1 Corinthians 9: 24 – 27 he writes, *"Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified."* Christians must employ a similar discipline in our spiritual lives as an athlete in preparation for the competition. We should consciously set aside the time for prayer, bible reading and quiet time. Attending worship and participating in the Eucharist should become the highlight of our week and every other activity built around that.

✦ The Holy Spirit will lead us to discover what Richard Rohr calls the Immortal Diamond, the true self. Rohr argues that we operate in the realm of a 'false self'. We pursue the things which give personal gratification, and involve me rather than you, self rather than God. In maintaining the image of the false self or ego self we would need to resort to all kinds of 'tricks' and misconceptions to keep up the facade. In discovering the 'true self', the precious diamond we would have to become the miners of our soul and be prepared to dig into the dark spaces and crevices of our souls. The psalmist prayed, *"O let my soul live that I may praise you: and let your judgements be my help."* (119:175 APB) Our soul or as some refer to it, our inner being, needs to be nourished and fed with the food for the soul. The diet for the soul is prayer, Bible reading, quiet time, retreats, worship and Holy Communion. It is by doing these things that we connect with God, learn more about God and God's amazing love and mercy, understand God's expectations of us, and strengthen our trust and faith in God.

✦ Growing into whom God wants us to be requires taking responsibility for our spiritual relationship. Hand in hand with the diet of the soul comes the responsibility to apply what God may be directing us to do. We cannot pray and then leave it there expecting that God will change us or our circumstances without any input from us. With the help of the Holy Spirit, and the roadmap to becoming who God wants us to be, we need the will power to embark on the journey. We cannot desire a deeper faith but then refuse to change our environment and circle of influence that may negatively impact our lives.

I conclude with a thought from Richard Rohr, "In the resurrection of the Christ Body, we are not talking about the resuscitation of an old thing, but the raising up of what will always appear to be an utterly new thing." *Ibid.* It is the excitement of the recurring 'new thing' that keeps us persevering even when we fail in meeting the 'requirements'. Our journey will be filled with the ups and downs, the high and lows, the joys and disappointments of being God's children, but it is in the realisation of our failings that an opportunity for a new thing is granted.

With my prayers and love

Fr Gary

You would have noticed that we recently replaced the Candles on the Altar. The use of candles within Anglican worship can be traced back to the reign of Edward VI who "called for two candles to be placed on the Altar to symbolize that Christ is the light of the world" the three elements of the candle would come to symbolize: the outer case (traditionally made of beeswax but today of plastic) the body of Christ; the wick his soul and the flame his divinity.

In the sanctuary at Holy Trinity we normally have four candles burning. The Pascal candles which we light at Easter and throughout the season of Easter, at Baptisms and funerals. The candles on the Altar are lit at all our worship services. The candle on the left represents the Gospel of Christ and the one on the right Jesus Christ.



For some it represents the epistles of the New Testament. The ritual in lighting the candles is that they are lit from right to left and extinguished from left to right. The Gospel side candle is never burning alone. And at the Eucharistic services we light the small oil candle as we pray for those afflicted in body, mind and spirit.

Today, instead of using wax candles we have adapted to modern times and use oil candles. At Holy Trinity we have used them for more than 10 years. The previous set were donated by the EWG and will continue to be used on occasions

when we use more than the normal number of candles. In the past year it had become more difficult to locate the wick mechanism and the oil. Our local suppliers now only stock scented or insect repellent oil. The wicks are no longer available and Bruce

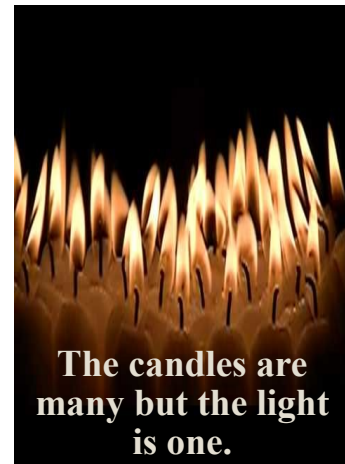




very kindly got his uncle to adapt a replacement.

The new candles use oil cells. They are common in many restaurants and I pray will be available for many years to come. Each cell gives approximately 80 hours of flame.

The new candles were donated by David Shepperd in memory of his wife Joan. We give thanks to God for the gift to Holy Trinity; we thank God for the talent of those who designed it and the hands that molded it. We pray that as we enter here for worship we will become aware of the light of the candles and that we have entered into the presence of the One who is the Light of the World.



## ***Jesus loves me. This I know, for the bible tells me so....***

***WHY ARE YOU CAST DOWN, O MY SOUL? AND WHY ARE YOU DISQUIETED WITHIN ME?  
HOPE IN GOD, FOR I SHALL YET PRAISE HIM FOR THE HELP OF HIS COUNTENANCE. Ps 42:5***

The question of the Psalmist was the question I asked myself many times last year, they described perfectly how I felt, restless and empty but not understanding why. Slowly through words spoken and spending time in the presence of God I have come to the point of wanting to share this personal journey with you.

It happened in 2013 at my mum's funeral. The priest, Mervyn Singh, paid tribute to both my parents who had ministered at St Etheldreda's, Montclair for 20 odd years as Lay Ministers. He related an incident he had with my dad who died in 2009

Prior to his death my dad suffered from excruciating back pain and had become very unsteady due to his Parkinson's disease. Mervyn suggested that he would love to minister to my mum and dad at home as he could see the immense difficulty dad had getting to church. My dad very gently replied to him "if God could sacrifice his only beloved Son and God's only Son could suffer the most excruciating death for my salvation, then surely I can endure this little pain to come to my Lord's table"

These words, which clearly define my dad's deep appreciation for all God had done for him during his lifetime left an indelible mark on my heart which led me to the consciousness that God really truly loves me, it is a heart thing not an head thing. It took a while to sink in but it has and I rejoice in this knowledge but I was also truly humbled and almost ashamed that my dad who with great difficulty in movement would never miss an opportunity to go to the altar rail to partake in the Holy Sacrament when I would at times rather put something before a time of worship.

Recently Gary preached on the theme "don't look the gift horse in the mouth." The essence of the sermon was having appreciation and gratitude for all that God does for us. This sermon reawakened in me my father's statement of showing deep gratitude to God.

For the past year the need for me to be appreciative has been like a thorn in my side, particularly at those times when I displayed attitudes that are so clearly contrary to what St Paul lists as the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22 ff St Paul writes "but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

There are so many occasions in my own life when my attitude does not resemble any of the things that Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit. It is especially when I display attitudes of impatience, intolerance, uncaring ..... that a very clear and vivid image of Christ dying on the cross for my salvation comes to mind and I feel so heart sore that I have yet again let God down or disappointed Him.

We all know that God loves us, previous generations had it drummed into their heads at school and at Young Church. You would remember the chorus "Jesus loves me this I know", but how many of us honestly believe and truly accept this? This brings me back to Gary's sermon.. How on earth can we not be grateful for the greatest blessing in the world, for our very being and every single day that we wake up knowing that God sacrificed his only son because of His unfailing love for us - to personalise this because of His unfailing love for ME.

It is this knowledge that allows me to wake up and serve with such joy. I give thanks to God for my most cherished Dad whose unconditional love for me led me into my relationship with God, our Creator, and for those amazing words that borne testimony to his faith and now mine. *Enid*



# Environment Month

## Week 1 - 7th DVD -

"Caring for God's Creation and How whales change the climate"

## Week 2 - 14th DVD

"Why should Christians care?"

## Week 3 - 21st Mark Liptrot—Aller River

## Week 4 - 28th Outdoor service



Sometimes when someone prays for something God sends this plea straight to our heart. So when The orphanage in Fouriesburg prayed for jerseys for their little ones I am sure God must have immediately thought of the busy knitters at Holy Trinity. God answered the orphanage's prayer through your gifts, talents and generosity. The excess jerseys (yes, we had more than enough) were delivered by Ann Maud... and another prayer is answered.

*"thank you for the kind gesture of bringing warm clothes for the local orphanage. I have attached the photos of the children for you. We do hope to see you all again in the near future Kind Regards and thanks again, The Wyndford Team"*

This got me thinking about the prayer of Jabez and how he asked God to extend his territory. It is a beautiful heartfelt prayer. Maybe he did not pray for the extension of his territory in a physical sense but I think that as disciples when we pray this prayer we are asking God to extend our territory, just as our mission statement says **"To share our love for Christ in response to the need for God, through ministering to each other and surrounding communities"** so we should give thanks to God that we are able to reach out further than our local communities and pray for God to continue to give us courage and strength to extend our territory.

The prayer of Jabez is one tiny little verse of 1 Chronicles, but it is packed with a valuable testimony of Jabez's understanding and loyalty to God. May we all strive to pray like Jabez did! God bless you as you live a life worthy of the calling! Enid



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Environmental  
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Flowers  
Food Parcels  
Garden  
Hospital Visitors  
Lay Ministers  
Martha's Friends  
Morning Women's Gp  
Musicians  
Music Group  
Prayer Chain  
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Recorder  
Readers  
Sacristans  
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Jill Howard	031 765 1061
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Ann Maud	031 765 2111
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Pat Dawson	031 765 8013
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