

The Courier

Volume 58, Issue 7

July 2004

“I Read the Book”

Inside This Issue

Note from God/Electronic
Newsletter/Weekly Newsletter

2

Health News/Electronic &
Weekly Newsletter

3

Advertisements

4

Calendar

5

Being a clergy person, many of my friends asked me this spring if I had seen the Mel Gibson movie “The Passion of the Christ,” that premiered on Ash Wednesday. Since my tongue seems to frequently find its way into my cheek, I regularly answered the question with the response, “I read the book.” Most people would look puzzled for a moment, trying to think of the book Mel Gibson had published, and then the light would come on, and they knew I was referring to the New Testament. “Oh, I get it,” was a staple comment.

My answer may have appeared flippant, but deeper down, I really meant it. Movies, television, and more recently the internet have all become power forces that shape the myths by which we order our lives. Theologian Karen Armstrong has been helpful in pointing out the interplay between “myth” (story) and “logos” (science.) According to her, “science” tells us what is, and “myth” tells us what it means. In prehistoric times, for example, rational and analytical thought (logos) would help hunters shape flint into arrowheads, and develop a technology for bows and arrows that would land the arrowhead squarely on its intended target. At the same time, “myth” would allow the hunters and their community to process the cycle of life born out of death, for both animals and humans.

Television and movies have become so powerful and influential that I believe they are more effective in making societal change than communities of faith. I believe that shows such as “All in the Family” (Archie Bunker) and movies such as “Driving Miss Daisy” have done more to demonstrate the ridiculous nature of racism and bigotry than any 20th century preacher. I believe that the show M*A*S*H* and the evening news did more to end the Viet Nam War than all of the letter writing campaigns in churches and synagogues. The movie “Dead Man Walking” reached an audience of millions, and did so effectively. If I preach a sermon on the need to rescind the death penalty in New York State, only 120 people will hear it, (at best) and its effectiveness will be based upon my ability to write and speak.

Back to Mel Gibson’s movie....the gospels are more than story. Stories can be told and retold without including every aspect or detail, as long as the main characters and plot are included. I could recount for you my summer vacation or a traffic accident I had witnessed and then tell it again to someone else in a different way. It wouldn’t really matter that much. This is not so with the gospels. The four gospels we have in our New Testament are written documents. They often include words that have highly symbolic functions. They are very tightly written in a way in which no words are wasted. One of the best examples of this is the 16th chapter of Mark. It’s not enough to say that three women went to a stone



*...and
the heaven
gave rain, and
the earth brought
forth its fruit.*

James 5:18

tomb and discovered the body of Jesus missing. The author of the gospel went to great lengths to specify the time of day, who was present (a young man), what he was wearing, where he was standing, and what he said. The author reported the women's feelings of fear, and with a double negative (which means "extra negative" in Greek) emphasized their unwillingness to share what had happened to them.

There is no way the tight literary content of this passage could be adequately portrayed by a film. The clues given by the writer can only be encountered by reading the text. To understand the gospel, we not only need to know the story, we need to be given the literary clues embedded in the text. This is why seminarians are required to study Greek. This is why we read from the Bible every Sunday so that we will be exposed to the text, and the text contains the clues needed to understand gospel.

So, I did not see Mel Gibson's film. I heard it was very violent and that the character of Jesus shed enough blood in the film for about ten people. The movie was an attempt to present the gospel as "logos," in other words, to depict "what really happened," – a scientific approach. The gospels in the New Testament are decidedly "myth" in that they lead us to find meaning in the illnesses, the hungers, the labors, and the power struggles of the world around us. The gospels lead us to lives worth living.

Michael

A NOTE FROM GOD

July 4	Psalm 66:1-8 Luke 10:1-12,16-20	Isaiah 66:10-16	Galatians 6:(1-10) 14-18
July 11	Psalm 25:3-9 Luke 10:25-37	Deuteronomy 30:9-14	Colossians 1:1-14
July 18	Psalm 15 Luke 10:38-42	Genesis 18:1-10a (10b-14)	Colossians 1:21-29
July 25	Psalm 138 Luke 11:1-13	Genesis 18:20-33	Colossians 2:6-15

"*The Courier*" is a monthly publication of Christ Episcopal Church, Poughkeepsie, New York. Holy Eucharist is celebrated on Sunday mornings at 8:00 (Rite I) and 10:00 (Rite II), and in the afternoon at 1:00 in Spanish.

Deadline for submission of material for "*The Courier*" is the **third Sunday** of the month. Photographs are welcome with articles for the newsletter, and to be best reproduced should be developed on a CD.

The Rev. Michael Phillips, Rector
The Rev. Arnulfo Arámbulo,
Latino Ministry
Mary Gregorius, Deacon
Laura Russell, Music Director
John Sullivan, Organist
John Colclough, Senior Warden
Peggy Kraft, Warden
Michele Haynes, Parish Secretary
J. Peter Pelton, Property Steward
Samuel Somah, Sexton

The church office hours are
Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m.
to 4:00 p.m.

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Mission Statement for Christ Church: Christ Church provides a spiritual home for a diverse community of people united in the Eucharist, respectful of history and tradition, and actively engaged in Christ's ministry for today's world.

HEALTH CARE NEWS

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer recently released a report with a survey showing that health plans are failing to disclose information that could help consumers get medically necessary coverage.

According to the report, none of the plans received an “A” grade. Half of the health plans received an “F.” Health Plans that received an “F” included: Aetna US Healthcare, AmeriHealth Plan, Cigna Health Care of New York, Health Insurance Pan (HIP), Health Net, Horizon Health Care of New York, Magna Health, Managed Health, MDNY Healthcare, Inc. Preferred Care (Rochester), and WellCare of New York. To view or print a copy of the *report New York Managed Care Bill of rights Compliance Survey*, visit the Attorney General’s Health Care Bureau at www.oag.state.ny.us

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

In order to save on the expense of postage, printing, and paper, we are now equipped to send out the “Courier” electronically. Another advantage to an e-Courier is that it is not dependent on the US Postal Service and it arrives immediately on your computer. You can then read it and print out only the information that you need. If you would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please fill out the following form and return it to me via e-mail, or postal mail, as soon as possible. When you receive the newsletter in e-mail form and are unable to open it, go to adobe.com and download the free Acrobat Reader. You should then be able to open it and print any or all of it. It may take 4-5 minutes to open, so please be patient. If after downloading Acrobat Reader you are still unable to open the newsletter, please let me know. Our Rector has the Adobe program disc which you may borrow to install. Remember, our newsletter may also be read on the church website at www.christchurchpok.org. We really encourage receiving the newsletter electronically, but will still be sending it via postal mail for those of you who are unable to receive e-mail. Thank you for your assistance.
Michele

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Comments: _____

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Starting in June, The Courier will be sent electronically on a weekly basis, to those of you who have e-mail, as well as by postal mail. These “smaller bites” will be easier for your computer to process, and keep you up to date with your parish on a weekly basis.

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 IF YOU ARE ABLE TO DRIVE
 FOR TRIPS PLANNED,
 PLEASE CALL THE CAMP
 DIRECTOR, NICK HUGINS, AT
 471-3068.**

JULY 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Noon AA/CR	2 Noon AA/CR	3 AA/7PM/CR
4 9AM/MP & reserved sacrament	5 4th of July Holiday/Parish Office Closed Noon AA CR 7PM/AA/CR	6 Noon AA/CR 7:30pm - GALA CR	7 Lindy Hoop	8 Noon AA/CR	9 Noon AA/CR	10 AA 7PM/CR
11 9AM/HE 1PM Santa Misa 7PM AA	12 Noon AA CR 7PM-AA/CR 7:30PM/CR Bach Fest Reh.	13 10am HE Noon AA/CR 7:30pm-Center of the Square 7:30pm - GALA/ CR	14 Lindy Hoop	15 Noon AA/CR 7:30PM/CR Bach Fest Reh.	16 Noon AA/CR 7:30-9:30PM/CR SCA Dance	17 AA 7PM/CR
18 9AM HE/Guest Preacher Fr. Dietsche "The Courier" 1pm Santa Misa AA7PM/CR	19 Noon AA CR 7PM-AA/CR 7:30PM/CR Bach Fest Reh.	20 10am HE Noon AA CR 7:30PM/GALA CR	21 Lindy Hoop	22 Noon AA/CR 7:30PM/CR Bach Fest Reh.	23 Noon AA/CR 7:30pm Dignity & Integrity/CR 7:30-9:30PM/CR SCA Dance	24 AA 7PM/CR
25 9AM/HE 1PM Santa Misa AA -7PM/CR	26 Noon AA CR 7PM-AA/CR 7:30PM/CR Bach Fest Reh.	27 10am HE Noon/AA GALA 7:30/CR	28 Lindy Hoop	29 Noon AA/CR 7:30PM/CR Bach Fest Reh.	30 Noon AA/CR	31

HE-Holy Eucharist
MP-Morning Prayer
LMR- Lay Ministry Room
PLE-Parish Life Episkopos
CME-Community Life Episkopos
ESL - English as a Second Lang.
CR - Community Room

Christ Episcopal Church

We provide a spiritual home for a diverse community of people, united in the Eucharist, respectful of history and tradition, and actively engaged in Christ's ministry for today's world. We invite you to join us!

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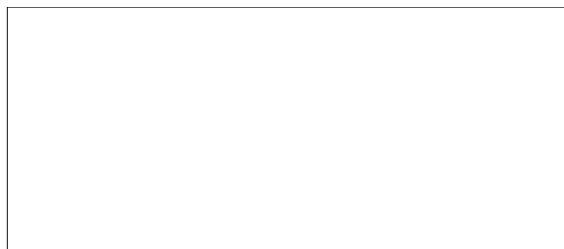
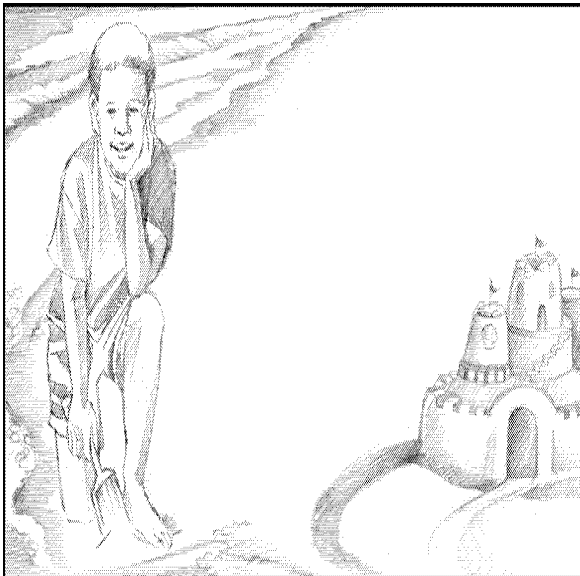
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July Prayer Cycle

In order to give emphasis to our ministry to one another, we have a Parish Prayer Cycle. Each parishioner or family is prayed for on a particular day. Here is the list of names to be kept in our prayers for each day during the month of July.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ed & Carol Lundergan 2. Larry & May Mamiya 3. Ray & Joy Marino 4. John McCleary & Carlie Graves and John & Anthony 5. Bruce & Joan McGilbray 6. Shirley McPeck 7. Barry & Jean Mennuez 8. Martha Millard 9. James Montietb 10. Katherine Moore 11. Bill & Kathryn Moran 12. Burt & Pat Morgan and Brian, Christopher & Andrew 13. Peter Nelson 14. Bonnie Nicholson 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Al & Becky Nielsen 16. Salomy Ntambi & Jacsymine & Lydia 17. Elizabeth Oakes 18. Peter & Betty Olson and Ann Elizabeth 19. Jim & Christine Oppenheimer 20. Peter & Clara Pelton 21. Michael & Sarah Phillips and Michael & Gracie 22. Gordon & Betty Plowe 23. Marshall & Maribel Pregnall and Drake & Hali 24. John & Denise Quis 25. Barbara Rhodes 26. Bill & Jeanne Richards 27. Marcia Richter 28. Jill Rivers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 29. Kathryn Rogers 30. Mary Ann Rose 31. Bill Rumble <p><i>Almighty God, look with favor on our brothers and sisters of this parish, especially (names). Strengthen them in their journey of faith, fill them with compassion for one another, and give them an awareness of your loving care, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.</i></p>
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