

## THE EPISTLE - June 2010

### ✘ June Message from Fr. Belton

Dear Friends:

The Liturgical Year begins with the season of Advent and our preparations for celebrating the birth of Jesus on Christmas. The year ends with our celebration of the Great Fifty Days of Easter and our anticipation of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Sunday after Pentecost we always mark as Trinity Sunday. It is the only Sunday on which our celebration focuses on a doctrine rather than a time or an event associated with Jesus' life and ministry.

The time between the Sunday of Pentecost and the first Sunday in Advent is known as Ordinary Time. The number of Sundays that come between Pentecost and that first Sunday in Advent depends on the number of Sundays that occur during a given season of Epiphany. Epiphany is what might be called an elastic season with the number of Sundays being dependent upon when Ash Wednesday occurs, and that in turn is dependent upon the date for Easter. And while there are specific Epiphany themed lessons for the first four Sundays in Epiphany and for the season's last Sunday, the remaining Sundays are Ordinary Time Sundays.

In his book *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church* Laurence Hull Stookey writes that the term "Ordinary" refers to the fact that in the old lectionary these Sunday were marked with ordinal numbers – first, second, third, fourth, and so on. Over time, because these Sundays do not commemorate the great times like Christmas, or Easter, or Pentecost, many began to see these "ordinary Sundays" as unexciting or simply ordinary.

While it is true that these Sundays of Ordinary Time lack the drama of many other of the liturgical days, that is not a bad thing. These days tend to be, on the whole, less hectic, less frenzied than, say, the days before Christmas. As a result, not only do we have the opportunity to more fully appreciate Jesus' life and ministry, but we also have the time to consider our own ministry in response to what God has accomplished in the person of Jesus.

And while it true that this time lacks the commemoration of the great Sundays found elsewhere in the liturgical year, there are Sundays that have special meaning. One of those special days is Trinity Sunday. For centuries what to do with this Sunday posed a perplexing dilemma for the Western Church, and it wasn't until almost the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century that Pope Alexander II finally relented to having this Sunday observed. For a time this Sunday was thought to be a time that signified the completion of the sequence of events that made up the liturgical year. However, what might be more appropriate is experiencing Trinity Sunday as a time to reflect on how the fullness of God has been at work throughout the entire story that the liturgical year commemorates. In this way it also serves as a Sunday of transition to Ordinary Time.

A second transitional Sunday is actually commemorated twice during the year. On the Last Sunday after Epiphany and on August 6<sup>th</sup> we always hear the story of the Transfiguration. In the Epiphany observance this Sunday bridges the time of Epiphany to that of Lent. It is an event in which Jesus' identity is confirmed and his inevitable death on the cross is assured. The August 6<sup>th</sup> date is rarely commemorated since it usually falls on a week day. This is one of those feast days that was originally marked by the Eastern Church well before it was ever observed in the West.

The third and final transitional Sunday is that of the feast of Christ the King. This Sunday makes the transition from the final Sundays of Ordinary Time when the lessons speak of the last days and anticipate the fulfilling of God's Kingdom to the season of Advent when we once again make preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Whatever else these Sundays in Ordinary Time do, they should remind us that as followers of the risen Jesus we always have the work of ministry to do. And as Laurence Stookey writes, *the liturgical calendar as a whole exists in large part to remind us that Christ has sanctified all of time, bringing us and the whole of our experience into the orbit of resurrection. What we deem ordinary, God has transformed into the extraordinary by the power of divine grace.*

One final note. Most of us learned in Church School that each season of the Church Year is marked by its own liturgical color. For example, purple is the color that has generally been associated with seasons of preparation like Advent and Lent. More recently, Advent has been marked by the color blue to differentiate the tone of this season from that of Lent. Traditionally, because we have generally referred to these Sundays of Ordinary Time as Sundays after Pentecost we have used the color green. However, since it is Ordinary Time and not a specific season we can use any color that we want. So, don't be surprised on those days when we might use red or white rather than the traditional green. Perhaps with red altar hangings the day might not seem so ordinary.

Allan+

#### ✘ **JABER AGAIN?**

Please remember the children who will not be getting lunch at school this summer. Our friends at Fairfield Community Food Bank will be grateful for any and all nonperishable foodstuffs they receive, but they particularly appreciate

Jams and jellies (especially the smaller sizes)

Applesauce (ditto size)

Biscuit mixes

Evaporated milk (especially the small cans)

Rice (especially the boil-in-bag form)

Just drop your donations on your way into church and I'll see that they get there.

*In the name of our blessed Redeemer, Bob King*

✘ **Annual Father's Day Brunch: Sunday, June 20th**

The women of St. Stephen's will host the traditional Father's Day Brunch in the parish hall following the service. Carolyn Babb will organize the event. Contact her for information and offers of assistance.

✘ **REMINDER: Opportunity For Confirmation, Reception Or Reaffirmation Of Baptismal Vows:** The Bishop will make his visitation to St. Stephen's on Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. Episcopal visitations are not only for Confirmation but also provide for Reception (recognition as a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church [Roman Catholic, Orthodox], and received into the fellowship of this Communion) and Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows. We currently have two probable Confirmations and one Reception. If you would like to be confirmed, received or reaffirm your Baptismal Vows, please contact JoAnn Palmer (803-337-3394 or [spalmer@truvista.net](mailto:spalmer@truvista.net)).

✘ **JUNE BIRTHDAYS:** *O God, our times are in your hand: look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives. BCP*

Beth Arndt Owens	6/3	Kyra Davis	6/16
Brenda McGrew	6/3	Chad Langdale	6/20
Emily Matthews	6/4	Carter Siegling	6/20

✘ **JUNE DATES:**

June 5	Celebration and Blessing of the Marriage of Mandy Halloran and Tom Medlock
June 9	Healing Service, 6:00pm, Church
June 16	Mission Committee Meeting, 6:00pm, Parish Hall
June 20	Annual Father's Day Brunch
June 23	Healing Service, 6:00pm, Church
June 24-27	Cursillo # 116