



# Saint John's Spirit

St. John's Episcopal Church Crawfordsville, Indiana  
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[www.stjohnscville.org](http://www.stjohnscville.org)

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## Rectors Article

The Bishop writes about . . .

By The Rt. Rev. Catherine M. Waynick, Bishop, Diocese of Indianapolis

### A Time for Delving into the Mysteries

The Great Fifty Days of Easter have traditionally been a time when new Christians (those baptized at the Great Vigil of Easter) were invited to discover the deeper meanings of the Supper of the Lord and other mysteries of the faith. In the spirit of this sort of ongoing deepening of our faith, I share with you a possible topic and resource of your own Easter season Study.

It is one thing to proclaim Jesus the Christ to be God Incarnate; it is another to consider what that means, and what the implications of that are for the lives of those who bind themselves to Christ, both as individuals and as the Church.

If Jesus is both human and divine, what weight does that give his actions and his teachings? If we consider the things most frequently reported about him, we might conclude that Jesus' greatest intentions are to heal and to invite us into the reality of the kingdom of God – not only as a far away, otherworldly place encountered after our deaths, but as a way of life to be lived here and now, in the midst of the world.

Yet, for many of us one of the central visual images of the faith is the cross – most particularly the crucifix. Because for centuries, a prevailing belief of some people has been that the primary purpose for the Incarnation was to provide a perfect sacrifice to expiate the sins of the world, and that the primary purpose of the Church is to mediate that expiation.

I have recently come across a fascinating book in which the authors provide a description of the artwork present in the earliest places of Christian gathering and worship, gaining from them a sense of purpose and identity for the Church more in harmony with the presentation of Jesus' actions and teachings in the Gospels. Their work began when they realized that art historians could find no images of the crucified Jesus in the earliest artwork of the Church.

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, in their book, "Saving Paradise, How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire", describe their discovery that paradise figured heavily in the images and themes of the early Church. Among these are also the stories of rescue and deliverance – the Exodus, and other stories such as those read at our Easter Vigils. The risen and ascended Jesus is depicted as a way of re-entry into the beautiful, bountiful (and earthly) paradise lost to humanity through sin, and as the Pantocrator – ruler of creation.

They track the influences which culture, evolving religious belief, politics and military conquest have had on each other, and the ways in which certain bright threads of early tradition have been nearly forgotten by the modern church of the West.

With solid commentary on Scripture, historical references, and copious (and very interesting!) notes they reveal important shifts in understanding about paradise, the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the meaning of Baptism and the Eucharist – all of which figure heavily in the Church's self-perception and sense of mission.

"In Christianity's second millennium the Crucifixion expelled paradise from earth. And Jesus died again. We found the corpse of Jesus in northern Europe, in a side chapel of the enormous Gothic cathedral in Cologne, Germany...Here, among the mottled light and shadows, hangs the Geri Cross, the earliest surviving crucifix, sculpted from Oak in Saxony around 960-970." (pg 223)

In contrast to earlier images in which the Risen Lord ruled serenely over Paradise, "Depictions of the crucified Christ proliferated in Europe in the eleventh century and became increasingly grotesque and bloody... Jesus was routinely displayed being tortured in a grim landscape...A stern Christ sat enthroned in judgment, presiding over a graveyard from which he divided the resurrected into the saved and the damned...What brought about these changes? Why did Christians turn from a vision of paradise in the life to a focus on the Crucifixion and final judgment? How did images of terror, torture, and the desolation of the earth come to permeate the religious imagination of Western Christianity?" (pg. 224)

Perhaps these short quotes will be enough to pique your curiosity about the book...What these authors suggest is not new, there are many references to the writings of early Christians, but they have collected and presented it in a fresh way which makes the overall premise accessible to those of us who are not scholars. (I did mention the notes are very good...)

In a connected vein, there is much value in doing some reading and study about the Great Emergence---as it is being called – and how Christianity in general and Anglicanism in particular are responding to it. I can recommend a helpful volume entitled “Ancient Faith, Future Mission, Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition.” One of the essays contained in it is by Phyllis Tickle, whose own longer works on the topic are also very helpful, as are works by Diana Butler Bass. Tickle asserts that Anglicanism, with its determined comprehensiveness, is uniquely poised to carry Christianity through the tumultuous time because of our liturgy, our foundations in quasi-monasticism, and our invitation to spiritual disciplines such as Sabbath keeping, fixed hour prayer (morning, noon, evening, night-Compline), fasting, tithing, observance of the liturgical calendar. Our “Book of Common Prayer” is a treasure trove for those wanting to find and adopt a faithful shape for their lives in Christ. I found her essay particularly reassuring ....perhaps you will as well.

During the Easter Season we raise questions, discover answers – perhaps a variety of answers – and we delve as deeply as we are able into the mysteries of our faith. What we seek is nothing less than an awareness of God's deepest desire for us and most precious gifts to us, and our most faithful way of receiving what God offers. May this Easter season be a time of discovery and blessing for all of us.

## **Christ Church Cathedral Strawberry Festival**

I have **finally** heard from Karen Farmer at the Cathedral regarding our helping them at their Strawberry Festival on the Circle as in past years. Several of you responded to the first call for volunteers, but then a few had to back out. Let's start over now and see how many would be willing to help out on June 9th. I'll include below the info that was sent out previously, so that everyone knows what this is all about!

For the new folks who may not know about this, for several years running we have taken about a dozen folks down to the Cathedral to work a 3 or 4 hour shift serving sundaes to the masses of people who turn out for the event. In return we are paid for our service, so make a little extra money for St. John's while we have a good time! We carpool, usually taking three vehicles, so everyone doesn't need to drive. I might also add that each of us will be given a free T shirt to wear that day, as well as a free very large strawberry/shortcake/sundae! Are you salivating yet?

Those of you willing to take part in the project, please call or email me as soon as possible.

Carole Meyer  
362-9262

## **Shepherds and their flocks Your extra point of connection with St. John's Congregation**

A list of those included in each flock is now posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. Some newcomers have not yet been assigned. If you do not see your name, please contact me at 435-2408 or [jspencer@link2000.net](mailto:jspencer@link2000.net) and we will get you safely placed!

### Servers Schedule

<b>Service</b>	<b>Lector</b>	<b>LEM</b>	<b>Crucifer/ Acolytes</b>	<b>Greeters</b>	<b>Altar Guild</b>	<b>Offering Tally</b>	<b>Altar Flowers</b>
<b>6/5 8am</b>	Adrienne Ashbaugh	Adrienne Ashbaugh	Ben Green				
<b>6/5 10:30</b>	Dan Booher	John & Betty Culley	Steve Charles/CJ Charles/Sara J Hemmerlein	Ed & Sue Fain	Terry Lawrenc e & Jerilyn Yerkes	Susan Albrecht & John Culley	Albrechts & Easterlings
<b>6/12 8am</b>	Kristen Albrecht	Vern Easterling	Teresa Anderson				
<b>6/12 10:30</b>	Alex Lebedeff	Larry Baumgardener & Jane Gallagher	Robbie Little/Mike & Peggy Lohorn	Susan & Brian Albrecht	CJ Charles & Cyndy Fields	Barb Easterling & Ed Fain	Larry & Sandy Baumgardener
<b>6/19 8am</b>	Barbara Penny	Barbara Penny	Joe Green				
<b>6/19 10:30</b>	Bev O'Rourke	Meribeth Kussmaul/Ad rienne Ashbaugh	Chas Cooksey/Paul Moehling/And rew Patterson	John & Betty Culley	Chas Cooksey & Carole Meyer	Tom Twarek & Jim Smith	Ball/Twarek
<b>6/26 8am</b>	Dylan Thomas	Mark Kussmaul	Steve Charles				
<b>6/26 10:30</b>	Mary Angela Cooley	John & Betty Culley	Chris Redmaster/Eri n Redmaster/Ro bbie Little	Vern & Barb Easterling	Betty Culley & Meegan Reidy	Cindy Smith & Vern Easterling	Elaine & Randy Pickering

The next Newsletter submissions are due by Wednesday evening, 6:00 p.m June 22nd

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**Return Service Requested** Dated Material — please deliver by—June 22nd