



The Mike

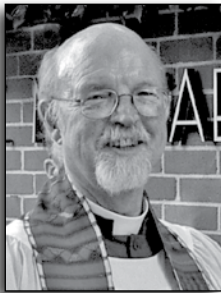
The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA
VOLUME 18, ISSUE 6 • June/July 2009

A Spirituality of Liberation, Part 2 of 2 by the Reverend Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr., D.Min.

To see clearly, it is important that the world enter our silence. In our silence, we must contemplate the streets of Iraq, the mountains of Haiti, the unemployed in our nation. In our contemplation, we must remember that in the beginning God created the earth so that human needs were met. It is not the will of God that people are hungry, are without clothing, are in bondage to other human beings. In our silence, we must remember that wherever the poor exist, there the will of God is not being done, and where people suffer as a result of the will of God not being done, there you will find Jesus the Christ. In Matthew 25 we read, "And the King will answer them...for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." To drink deeply from our well is to see the poor of Yahweh and to realize, in the words of Exodus 3:7, that God has seen the affliction of God's people and has heard their cry because of their taskmasters, and God knows their sufferings and has come to deliver them. It is also to see, in the words of Luke 2:52-53, that God has a preference for the poor, "he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away." The God of liberation spirituality is not a safe, neutral God.

In our contemplation, we contemplate in a concrete way the suffering present in our history. In our silence, we are drawn to those who suffer the most in our history as a result of individual and institutional violence. We are drawn to those who are the victims of institutional racism, sexism, and classism, and it is in those places of oppression that we contemplate God, because there God in Christ is surely found.

To see clearly, to drink deeply from our well, is not only to see the poor and the oppressed in their concrete historical reality, it is to see the cause of that reality. It is to see that people suffer under oppressive structures that we have created. The will of God is not for us to mystify reality, but to see reality as clearly as we can so that we may move against these structures which keep the poor poor and hinder the coming of the Reign of God. We need this second moment so that we can see our reality clearly and in the words of Paulo Freire, move "to create a world in which it is easier to love."



Those of us who live in the middle and upper classes in the United States need to take seriously this second moment, for often we do not see reality clearly. We see people as things; we need to return to Jesus and have hands laid on us again. We have been shielded by our own institutions, including our educational and religious institutions, from seeing the nature of oppression. We have tended to be dualistic in our understanding of spirituality. The fact that people are concerned about the relationship of spirituality and social justice is a prime example of this dualism. We have not seen clearly that the question about the relationship of spirituality and social action is a false question, a question that comes out of Pharaoh's palace. The question that comes out of a spirituality of liberation is how do we walk according to the Spirit, or what form does our spirituality in action take? There is no Christian Spirituality that does not seek to "do a way."

In modern times, a large part of our blindness has been ecclesiastical blindness. We have so wanted to forget the primacy of the poor in scripture, that is to say that God is first and foremost concerned for the "wretched of the earth" and have been willing to individualize and psychologize our spirituality for a bowl of pottage. This was not the position of the early church. When St. Paul went up to Jerusalem to meet with Peter, James and John, according to Galatians 2:9-10, he received the right hand of fellowship and had his orders recognized, with the stipulation that "they would have us remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do."

To develop an authentic "walking according to the Spirit," an authentic third moment, we today need a conversion, a conversion of our very understanding of spirituality. We need to accept the gift of the Reign of God and "do a new way!" This process is not a once-and-for-all experience, but rather a constant, ongoing experience. We need to see clearly that our choice is not between Spirit and matter, but between life

continued on next page

In This Issue

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Fr. Atkins' Message..... | 1 |
| Community Outreach Projects | 2 |
| From the Vestry | 3 |
| Treasurer's Corner | 3 |
| Calendar | 4 |
| Goings On..... | 5 |
| Big Sunday Recap..... | 6 |

continued from first page

and death. Jon Sobrino has pointed out clearly that the poor are those who die. Poverty means violence, rape, hunger and death. In Deuteronomy 30:19, God said to Moses, "...I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live." We need a conversion from death to life, from oppression to liberation, from dualism to wholeness.

To choose life is to walk according to the Spirit, to stand over against the powers and principalities of death. It is to realize that when one child dies of hunger, in a world of plenty, that there is a profound spiritual problem. It is to realize that if my neighbor is hungry or the victim of violence, that that is a profound spiritual problem because there life has been denied. Nestor Paz, before his untimely death, defined love "as the urgent demand to solve the problem of the other, where you are."

Our spirituality will lead those of us who are not poor into solidarity with the poor. The spirituality of the poor will lead the poor to believe in each other as poor people in El Salvador have learned to believe in each other, as black people in the United States and Southern Africa have learned to believe in each other, as women have learned to believe in each other, as gay and lesbian people have learned to believe in each other, as lay people in the church have learned to believe in each other.

The spirituality of the middle and upper classes in this country will lead us to walk out of Pharaoh's palace. This will mean for us that we will have to give up certain privileges, even the privilege of being known for our great spiritual insights. Pharaoh will no longer invite us to bless the oppression

of the poor under the guise of progress in Egypt. We will come to see that "walking according to the spirit" means entering into the world of the poor and oppressed, be that in Los Angeles or in San Salvador; it is to become insignificant, to be of little use to the powers that now rule our society.

We will also have to learn to be effective. "Walking according to the Spirit" means that we will have to live the second moment of seeing clearly again and again. We will have to have our insights refined over and over again. We will not be able to be settlers for very long. Again and again we will be called, as our Father Abraham was called, to move into a land that we do not know, a land known only by God. We will need the best "tools" that are available for our journey. We will have to learn that our actions matter. We will have to learn that we make a difference in this world. We will want to do, in the presence of the powers of death, the best that we can to enable the poor to live.

"Walking according to the spirit" also means that we will know solitude. We will know the solitude of being the only one in our family to stand with the people of Guatemala, East Los Angeles or the gay and lesbian community. We may even know the solitude of being the only one in our parish or religious community to enter into solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. Moving from a privileged position, if we are middle and upper class, especially if we are middle or upper class white males, in our present society, we will know the desert experience. We will learn that the desert is not so much a geographical location, but rather a decision to enter into solidarity with the oppressed, which includes in our

age the oppression of our "Mother Earth." When we come out of Pharaoh's palace, we almost always enter the desert.

However, the experience of the desert is not all that we shall know. We shall also know the joy of the Spirit. We shall know the joy of those who suffer in the Lord. The Christmas that I spent in La Virtud, Honduras, with the refugees was full of the joy of those who had also given birth to children in caves as Mary had done. I was full of the joy of those who fled Herod as Mary and Joseph had fled. The refugee camp was filled with the joy of the God who is always with the poor and the oppressed, who enables them to bring victory out of defeat, as Jesus brought victory out of death on a cross.

To "walk according to the Spirit" in the journey to the Reign of God is to be set free. It is to be free from the powers of death. It is to know, in the words of Ernesto Cardenal, that "to live is to love." It is to know, in the words of Archbishop Romero, "that the glory of God is that the poor live."

The coming of the Reign of God is, in the final analysis, dependent upon the Lord of history; however, our actions determine the haste with which the reign comes. Today, we need to realize in the words of Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." A spirituality of liberation is, I believe, an opening of the door to the one who knocks and longs for the liberation of all creation. May we have, as a people, the faith to open the door and be willing to "walk according to the Spirit."

Pax, The Rev. Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr.

Community Outreach Projects Committee *by Jane Wilson, Chair*

LIT UP! On June 13th, we have another great show at 8 p.m. in the Parish Hall. This month's Theme is "Papa's Gotta Brand New Bag" and the line-up of entertainers includes Nosmo King, Sarah Stanley, Natasha Leggero, Khay Phetamphone, Darcy Staniforth and St. Mike's very own Tom Hyer. The box office will be going to My Friend's Place, a drop-in center in Hollywood that helps teens living on the streets. As usual there will be free childcare and amazing food and drink and all just for \$10! Hope all can be there for this great show.

SMCOP meets every first Tuesday of the month and we need you! We are already planning the fall Angel Award Presentation as well as our annual Holiday Cheer! Christmas party. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 2nd at 7:30 in the Upper Room. For more info, please call Jane Wilson, SMCOP chair at 818-343-8438 or email project@stmikessc.org.



From the Vestry

Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden; John Pryor, Junior Warden

Silent Ministry

At a recent meeting of the pastoral care committee, in the process of reviewing the current ministries that are very visible such as Eucharistic Visitors, our involvement in the PRISM program serving those in jail and the many Community Outreach activities we also learned of some "silent ministries"—wonderful acts of kindness that often go unnoticed. Tom Heuer's visits to the nursing home to conduct a service and Ed Sugar's trips to take lunch to Mike Seaman are unknown to many but are only a few examples of loving acts by parishioners. The quiet and often silent acts of Jesus are seen reflected in these ministries at St. Michael's.



Some of the most important simple acts that each of us are called to do are acts of Evangelism—of reaching out one person at a time to invite others to join our community of faith. Over the past year we have started or strengthened many programs in our parish and we have built a vibrant community with much to offer. We offer much more than many parishes because of the diligent work of many people.

We need now to focus our efforts in growing our parish, bringing in new members, being sure to reach out to any new face we see and by sharing the good news of St. Michael's Parish one person at a time.

Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden • John H. Pryor, Jr., Junior Warden



Treasurer's Corner by Margie Mullen, Treasurer

April, 2009 – Revenues and Expense Summary

| | April Actual | April Budget | YTD Actual | YTD Budget |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Total Revenues: | \$25,856 | \$32,019 | \$104,652 | \$124,941 |
| Total Expenses: | \$43,785 | \$47,086 | \$167,386 | \$188,595 |
| Net Total: | (\$17,929) | (\$15,067) | (\$62,734) | (\$63,654) |

The good news is that we are completely on track for our 2009 budget through April.

But, by the time you receive this, the 5th month of 2009 will have completed and quite frankly, I am getting concerned about our finances—a feeling that the finance committee and Vestry shares, as well.

Here's the bottom line. We no longer have \$1,000,000+ in our investments to support our deficit spending. Like most other endowments, our investments took a sizable hit from the high of the stock market until we pulled the money out earlier this year. Our available cash and investments are down to \$696,968, as of April 30th. By the time the year ends, we will have around \$600,000.

Our 2009 total projected (budgeted) income without interest or dividends is \$360,700. If our income is the same in 2010, that isn't even enough to cover the basic expenses for the parish which I define as Mission Outreach (Diocese tithing), reduced office staff, office expenses, the Priest-in-Charge and our property upkeep. That's it—no programs, no music, no parish life, no other employees, no altar guild. That's really it.

This year's budget projected deficit is \$76,750 (34%) less than our 2008 budgeted deficit, so we are making progress. Also, it is unlikely that we cut all those expenses completely, but we need to be realistic. Our projections of the endowment lasting long enough for us to be self supporting through our own contributions and rental income is in jeopardy.

Why am I telling you this? I just want you to be as aware of our finances as the finance committee and the Vestry. We are a community and I know how much love many of us have for St. Michael's. St. Michaels' has been here for 60+ years. We need to do our part to make sure it lasts another 60.



Summer Calendar

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church

Sunday Services are 8:00 AM (said Mass) and 10:30 AM (sung Mass) in the Sanctuary. Summer fun for kids begins at 9:30 am. Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 am service unless otherwise noted.

June 2009

| | | | |
|----|----------|---|------------------|
| 2 | 7:30 PM | SMCOP Meeting | Upper Room |
| 7 | 9:00 AM | Men's Group Morning Prayer | |
| | | Studio City Convalescent Hospital | |
| | | Women's Care Cottage Clothing Collection | |
| | 12:15 PM | Healing Prayer Gathering | Fireside Room |
| 9 | 7:00 PM | Finance Committee Mtg. | Parish Office |
| 12 | 12 NOON | Fourth Quarter Luncheon | Parish Office |
| 13 | 8:00 PM | Lit.UP! | Parish Hall |
| 14 | 11:30 AM | Jeannie Blaine Scholarship Award Presentation @ Coffee Hour | Parish Hall |
| | 5:00 PM | Executive Committee Mtg. | Mullen Residence |
| 16 | 7:00 PM | Vestry Meeting | Upper Room |
| 18 | 7:10 PM | Dodger Game | Dodger Stadium |
| 20 | 11:15 AM | Liturgical Committee Mtg. (tentative) | Upper Room |
| 21 | 12:15 PM | Healing Prayer Gathering | Fireside Room |
| | 12:30 PM | Youth Group (tentative) | Youth Lounge |
| 29 | 10:00 AM | Knitting Group (tentative) | Fireside Room |
| | 7:00 PM | Knitting Group (tentative) | Fireside Room |

July 2009

| | | | |
|-------|----------|---|---------------|
| 3 | | Independence Day (Parish Office Closed) | |
| 5 | 9:00 AM | Men's Group Morning Prayer | |
| | | Studio City Convalescent Hospital | |
| | 12:15 PM | Healing Prayer Gathering | |
| 7 | 7:30 PM | SMCOP Meeting | Upper Room |
| 8-17 | | General Convention: Anaheim Convention Center | |
| 10 | 12 NOON | Fourth Quarter Lunch (tentative) | Parish Office |
| 11 | 8:00 PM | Lit.UP! | Parish Hall |
| 13 | 6:15 PM | Book Discussion Group | Location TBD |
| | 7:00 PM | Finance Committee Mtg. | Parish Office |
| 18-20 | ALL DAY | Wounded Soldier Weekend | |
| 18 | 11:15 AM | Liturgical Committee Mtg. (tentative) | Upper Room |
| 19 | 10:30 AM | Baptism @ Holy Eucharist | Sanctuary |
| | 12:15 PM | Healing Prayer Gathering | Fireside Room |
| | 12:30 PM | Youth Group (tentative) | Youth Lounge |
| 21 | 7:00 PM | Vestry Meeting | Upper Room |
| 27 | 10:00 AM | Knitting Group (tentative) | Fireside Room |
| | 7:00 PM | Knitting Group (tentative) | Fireside Room |

Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

To: **Tom Heuer**

for his chaplaincy visits to the Studio City Rehabilitation Center on the first Sunday of each month.

Bill, Anabel, and William Haddock
for going with Tom and playing their fiddles for the enjoyment of residents.

and David Rosenberg
for his hard work and leadership on Big Sunday and the SoldierCare Project.

The next time you see these individuals, please give each heartfelt thanks for their contributions.

In the months that follow, the Vestry will continue to recognize the gifts of work and time that help keep St. Michael's a beautiful and useful campus, and a thriving parish.

Read the MIKE Online! All you do is go to the website, www.stmikessc.org, and click on "THE MIKE ONLINE." Back issues are available there as well. And while you're at the web site, you can shop at Amazon.com through its link. St. Mike's gets a small rebate for each purchase made through this link.

GOINGS ON AT ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH

June Birthdays

| Day | Name |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| 4 | Polly Davis |
| 5 | Ken Wright |
| 6 | Jane Wilson |
| 8 | Anne Beckner |
| 9 | Jack Beckner Leonard Harman |
| 15 | Karen Rogers Alexis Walker |
| 16 | John Vincent |
| 24 | Joel Fisher Berkely Beaulieu |
| 25 | Annie DeRose |
| 26 | Emily Taylor |
| 27 | Dalton Taylor |
| 29 | Marj Jennings |
| 30 | Joan Dektar |

July Birthdays

| Day | Name |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Kathryn Argall |
| 4 | Alexi Swonger |
| 5 | Melissa Basta |
| 9 | Peggy Cochrane |
| 10 | Paris Carney Marshall Sharp |
| 11 | Divya Rosenberg |
| 12 | Andrew Beckner William Hendley III |
| 15 | Milena Mooradian |
| 24 | Jose Carrillo |
| 25 | Justin Shoemaker Sarah Kastak-Carrillo Sofia Kastak-Carrillo |
| 26 | Beth Matustik |
| 29 | Lauren Azeltine |
| 30 | Anne Stenquist |
| 31 | Jamison Freis Sue Harris |

Should you be listed here? Or, if you wish to leave your birthday or anniversary unpublished, give the church office a call or e-mail (lauren@stmikessc.org) to let us know. *Please Note: Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.*

June Anniversaries

| Day | Name |
|-----|--------------------|
| 12 | Mary & David Piser |
| 20 | Soni & Ken Wright |

July Anniversaries

| Day | Name |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 6 | Barbara & Jack Beckner |
| 26 | Sharon & Nick Renton |
| 30 | Rafael Arias & Clinton Leupp |

GO DODGER BLUE!

Thursday, June 18, 7:10 pm, vs. Oakland As

It's that time again! Bill Wright is planning our first St. Michael's night of the summer. Tickets (\$23 each, a \$32 value) may be purchased through Bill (checks written to St. Michael's, write "Dodger Tickets" on the memo line). E-mail Bill at wrightdiver@roadrunner.com or call him at 818-429-2312, or see him on Sunday mornings at church!

Always-Needed Food Pantry Items

Canned fruit and vegetables.

Baby food in plastic jars.

Tuna.

Peanut butter in plastic jars.

Powdered milk in individual packets.

Individual size snacks.

Plastic and paper shopping bags.

Diapers and feminine hygiene items.

Travel-size soap, toothpaste and disposable razors.

And money!

August 2009 MIKE Deadline: Please send copy and/or pictures via e-mail to lauren@stmikessc.org by Tuesday, July 21. If you don't have a computer, bring your articles to the Parish Office by that time.

Quotation for June/July

"Setting an example is not the means of influencing others; it is the only means."

*Albert Einstein, Scientist
(March 14, 1879–April 18, 1955)*

Big Sunday Recap *By David Rosenberg, SoldierCare Project Director*



David Rosenberg

Sweet Lady Jane Wilson!

Manny Del Rio and his fiancée Melissa

Eddie Wright

On May 3, Saint Michael's hosted its annual Family Festival for Big Sunday, with proceeds going to our very own SoldierCare outreach to wounded soldiers.

The day was a huge success, with the parish raising over \$1,500 for the cause and facilitating a huge carload of donations that were delivered to Operation Gratitude for the frontline troops.

We were thrilled to host wounded veterans Reas Axtell and his wife Sarah, Manny Del Rio and his fiancée Melissa, Eddie Wright and his gunny sargeant Dan Griego. A baby and wedding shower took place after the incredible lunch donated by El Cholo, and the cakes from Sweet Lady Jane and Cake And Art in West Hollywood.

Musical entertainment was provided by the New Directions Choir, a remarkable group of formerly homeless vets who were

touched to be included and who added to the spirit of the day. The vets were joined by Nicole Sullivan from MAD TV and David Rees Snell and Jay Karnes from *The Shield*.

Funds raised will go to support the wounded soldiers weekend here in LA July 18-20, where we will be hosting 6-8 heroes Watch for updates on events that you might want to participate in.

Special thanks to the Community Outreach Projects committee, including Jane Wilson, for their support. Also the Men's Group for wrangling a delicious BBQ, Adam LoCascio for heading the volunteer intake effort, Hank Meiman for the sound, Gary Lucy for the games set-up, Leslie Chapman-Rose and Julie Quinlan for the VIP luncheon, and Martha Shaw, Cathryn Michon and W. Bruce Cameron for coordinating the showers, Jason Bateman as honorary chairman, as well as all the volunteers.



Jane Mason

Monie Wright listens to Brooks sing and play guitar

Betty Ferrell's daughter Annie and granddaughter Lucie Jewel



Bridal shower for
Melissa and Manny

Baby shower for Reas and Sarah

African craft sale to benefit
the African Team Ministries AIDS work



The two Bills
(Wright and Haddock)

Annabel Haddock, Sammy
Sosa the (wonder dog) and pal.

Laz and Betsy Meiman

Brooks Taylor and
Father Atkins look on.



New Directions Choir

Winner Cakes All!

St. Michael and All Angels Church

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Vision Statement

We are a welcoming and evolving community of conscience engaged in the renewal of our faith by embracing diversity and encouraging growth through prayer, scholarship, social action, and artistic endeavor.

Our Mission Priority

Our mission priority is to focus on the United Nations' First Millennium Goal: To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.