



# The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA  
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## Veronica

By the Reverend Canon Mark Shier

Sermon given at St. Michael's on April 23, 2011.

The old woman lay dying on the narrow bed in the back room. Her hands plucked restlessly at the thin blanket covering her. Her eyes looked to another place and another time. She was remembering...

Veronica\* breathed in the cool dampness of the dawn's first glimmer, but it brought no refreshment to the restlessness and confusion of the past two days. She had slipped out of the governor's palace before any other signs of awakening to find a quiet place for just a little while. Soon she would return to her duties in Pilate's household, maid to his demanding, self-centered wife. But for now she needed the peace of this out-of-the-way garden.

Her world had been turned upside down two days ago. Orphaned in the slums of Rome, she had counted herself fortunate to have been taken as serving-girl into the household of one of the wealthy families. Scared when the master had bought the governorship of Judea and Samaria, she had found herself adjusting to this strange land, even secretly admiring this conquered people's spirit. They worshiped a strange god of the desert, a god who demanded a just life and provided guidelines that shamed the behavior of the gods of Rome. Roman gods aped the callous selfishness of Rome's ruling class, and, as far as Veronica could see, the Jewish ruling class was much the same. But the people had an immediate and confident connection with their god, who loved and cared for them even in the midst of conquest, slavery, and famine. The Jewish serving girls in the palace possessed a quiet peace that Veronica envied.

Even more so, since her inner turmoil had begun two days ago. She had been sent to the market for some perfume for her mistress. Caught up in a sullen, unruly crowd, she had found herself pushed to the side of the street by Roman guards who were leading three

Jewish criminals outside the walls of the city for crucifixion. They had all been beaten but the last in line most of all. He even wore a helmet of vicious thorn branches clamped onto his head, blood flowing viscously down his face from the piercings of the thorns. Veronica was arrested by his demeanor. In the midst of his degradation, he exuded



a stoic dignity in high contrast to the hysteria of the other two, who cried and moaned and begged for mercy from Roman soldiers who had no power or will to save them. Now and then a soldier cuffed one or the

other in an attempt to hurry them along, get this over with, return to the relative coolness of the army barracks. Just in front of her the quiet one fell. He seemed exhausted by the abuse and weight of the plank of wood he carried and blinded by the blood flowing into his eyes.

Without thinking, Veronica dropped to her knees beside him and pressed her apron to his face. He winced in pain, yet seemed glad of the cleaning of his skin and the clearing of his eyes. That was when the world turned upside down. He looked at her, deep into her own eyes, silvered by tears. For her, it seemed as if an ocean of mercy welled up in him, calling to the small bit of mercy she had just shown to him. For a moment, it seemed as if their roles were reversed, he the one granting mercy, she the one in need. Then the moment passed, the guard grabbed the man's robe and hauled him to his feet, pulled a bystander in to carry the wooden beam that the condemned man was clearly too weak to carry any further.

Veronica hurried back to the palace, going about her duties as if in a dream. She was brought back to reality by an earthquake that shook the palace about mid-afternoon. She

later learned from one of the guards that it happened just as one of the crucified men had collapsed and died. But she couldn't get the man out of her mind; she kept seeing his eyes and the mercy flowing from them, as if she were the one in need and he the grantor of clemency.

She could not get him out of her mind. That was why she was in this lonely garden this morning, trying to find in its peace the understanding she so craved.

She realized with a start that she was not as alone as she had thought. Through the lightening gloom she saw in the distance a man and a woman in deep conversation. After some time, the woman dropped to her knees and the man walked away, not in rejection but in completion.

Veronica saw that he was walking toward her and she sought some path away from him, but there was no place easily to avoid him. As he came up to her, the world turned upside down again. He was the same man she had touched two days ago, a man who had died on a cross (the soldiers had made sure of that). He was a dead man, but here he was undoubtedly alive, just as alive as she

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## Sermon *from page 1*

was. The same man. She could see scars on his bare feet, his wrists, and around his forehead, where he had been pierced (how had the wounds healed so quickly?). There was even some dried blood in his hairline. This man had been dead two days ago, and now he was as alive as she. Veronica felt herself go weak, faintness seeping into the edges of her mind. But she was brought back to herself by his eyes, the eyes which carried the same oceanic mercy she had seen as she knelt on the Jerusalem street. The crucified man and this man were one and the same. With that realization, a brave new world began.

She was never able to say exactly what he had said to her in that brief encounter. She told his followers later that it was less what he said than who he was. His presence was not only here and now but seemed to open up to a great beyond. What he said was important because of who he was. Who he was she didn't know, but she could sense an otherness that she could trust. She joined those who walked the way of life he taught. She sought to be a living true image of the infinite mercy she had once glimpsed. And she walked her way in the certainty that the dead can live again, if infinite mercy wants it. To that mercy she gave herself.

The old woman remembered. Slowly her restless hands quieted themselves as her breathing slowed. With a slight start, Veronica realized that there was someone else in the silent dark room with her. She turned her head—and looked into an ocean of mercy. The eyes she had so carefully remembered all these years were here once more. The scarred hands reached out and took her hands, lifted her no-longer-weak body to her feet, carried her to a place beyond the furthest stars. Jesus had come for His own.

\*Veronica, from the Latin *vera icon*, meaning true image

The full text of Canon Shier's sermons at St. Michael's may be read at [www.stmikessc.org/sermons\\_index.htm](http://www.stmikessc.org/sermons_index.htm).

### June 2011 MIKE Deadline

Please send copy and/or pictures via e-mail to [administrator@stmikessc.org](mailto:administrator@stmikessc.org) by Tuesday, May 17. If you don't have a computer, bring your articles to the Parish Office by that time.

## May Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Ayana Coho
3	Lise Friedman
7	Alexandra Lake
11	Maddie Charlton Lena Mitchell
15	Amanda Schwartz
18	Lois Vaughan
19	Brooks Taylor
21	Cathy Lewis-Dougherty
23	Anna Wilson
24	Gary Lucy
28	Barbara King
30	Rae Markus
31	Bonnie Winings

## May Anniversaries

Day	Name
26	Norma & Donald Johnson
27	Gary Lucy & Jane Wilson

**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 ([administrator@stmikessc.org](mailto:administrator@stmikessc.org)) to let us know. *Please Note: Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.*

## Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

- To: Everyone who participated in the parish work day on April 16, preparing the campus for Easter;
- to: Tom Heuer for his continuing efforts at painting and repairs. Tom leaves for Chicago this month. He will be honored at coffee hour on Sunday, May 8;
- to: All the angels who made the Agapé Supper a wonderful success, many thanks for your time and energy. From the set-up, making of wonderful soup, serving and clean-up, what a wonderful and blessed evening was shared by all.
- and to: Everyone who who worked on the Easter celebrations—from the Easter liturgies to the Easter egg hunt and coffee hour. It was a wonderful and festive day!

## Treasurer's Corner

### March 2011—Revenue and Expense Summary

	March Actual	March Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 25,608	\$ 24,107	\$ 75,833	\$ 74,980
Total Expense	24,960	33,402	81,509	113,625
Net	\$ 648	(\$ 9,295)	(\$ 5,676)	(\$ 38,645)

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### VESTRY

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Amador Rondilla, Treasurer  
Alex Morales, Clerk  
Rodney Dickson  
Diane Collins  
Sarah Cook  
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Betsy Hailey  
Norma Johnson  
Hank Meiman  
Meredith Reese  
Ron Schwartz

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**THE MIKE STAFF**

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## From the Vestry

Anne Kelly, Senior Warden  
David Connors, Junior Warden

As many of you know, over the past six weeks we have been engaged in a discernment process with a priest who we felt was called to be our Rector. After extensive written and phone conversations, the priest came to St. Michael's on three occasions from her current parish in the Midwest. We were very engaged with both the candidate and her husband during these visits. The Search Committee and entire Vestry spent many hours in discussions with her.

After very prayerful consideration, both parties, the St. Michael's Vestry and Search Committee and the priest, determined that she was not the person to be called as our Rector. This candidate had many positive attributes. She was a strong spiritual leader and our interactions with her have deepened our faith and created a time for very deep reflection on our call as a parish to serve God. She was a warm and generous person and came highly recommended.

However there were two key areas that ultimately determined that we would not call her to St. Michael's. The first was that it became apparent that it would be very difficult financially for her to sell her home in the Midwest and move into the very expensive housing market of LA. The candidate and her

husband spent several days and looked at more than 70 properties, but there was simply nothing that was realistic to meet their needs and was affordable.



The second major concern was that in the process of the second and third visit it became apparent that the Vestry and the candidate shared very different visions for the future of the parish. The vision the candidate had for the parish would have resulted in taking on considerable debt and would have moved us away from many things we believe to be important to our parish.



The Vestry feels confident that this was the right decision and that our prayerful process will ultimately lead us to a person who will be a strong and effective leader in helping us move forward in our ministries. We are confident in our process and feel that God has been leading us each step of the way. We will continue to keep you informed. Please continue to pray for the Search Committee

and for the Vestry.

On a related note, we have determined that in order to continue to be good stewards of our property and respect and care for it as our sacred space, we need to paint the exterior of three buildings: the south classroom building, the office building and the non-brick portion of the Parish Hall. We need to do this in a very conservative way, mindful of our budget.

Because the Sunnyside Preschool has already painted several sides of these buildings, we do not need to paint all the faces of each building. We have received a very conservative estimate from one of our parishioners who is an experienced painter. The cost of this project is estimated at \$10,000. Because this is outside our austere annual budget, we are seeking above-budget support from our parishioners to pay for this project. We ask that you prayerfully consider whether you are able to make an additional gift to St. Michael's for this purpose. We would appreciate your gift, regardless of the size. Please make checks payable to St. Michael's and indicate on the memo line that this is for the painting project.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request and for your prayers as we continue our search for the next Rector.

## Get on the Bus

By Nancy Woods

St. Michael's has been involved with Get On The Bus since 2006 with trips to prisons at Chino, Tehachapi, Soledad and now this year to the Men's Colony at San Luis Obispo.



For those of you not familiar with Get On The Bus, it is a program to take children to visit their parents in prison for one fun filled day. In 1998, a group concerned with the plight of women in prison came together from churches and faith-based organizations across the state to visit women in prisons. This group approached prison officials and families to find out why children weren't brought for visits. What they quickly discovered was that family separation was not created by a lack of will, but instead by a lack of resources, and the location of prisons far away from urban centers. Families simply could not afford to visit their parents. Regular visits are the key to helping children work through the trauma of parental incarceration. Research has found that abiding family bonds are the strongest predictor of successful re-entry, and that

the costs of such efforts are repaid tenfold in savings created by decreased rates of recidivism and foster care placement. Today, Get On The Bus fills more than 100 buses with children from all over California to visit their moms and dads.

The day starts very early (4:00 a.m.) with a breakfast in our parish hall and where each child and mom receive an activity bag filled with fun things to keep them busy on the long bus ride. The most exciting part of the day is when the children reach the prison and run into the arms of their expectant dads. What a joyful reunion. There is plenty of time to play with dad—board games, books to read, ball games outside or best of all just to talk. After lunch, and more

visiting, it is time to say goodbye. Always a tearful time. On the bus will be a teddy bear and a letter from dad to help with the sadness. They have photos to remember and stationary to write back.

Watch for notices in the bulletin! Look for flyers and sign-up sheets on what is needed for breakfast and the activity bags. Of course, donations made payable to St. Michael's designated for Get On The Bus are always welcome. *Deadline is Sunday, May 29th.*

Most of the boys and girls have not seen their dad for years. Let's make this a wonderful day of reuniting families and strengthening the bond that will hold them close until they are back together again.

Lit.Up! on May 14 will benefit Get On The Bus. Join us for a night of comedy and support the children for this special day.

If you have any questions, call Nancy Woods at 818.769.2820 or email at nancy2k@adelphia.net.

St. Michael's Community Outreach Projects presents



Saturday  
**May 14**  
8:00 pm

A benefit for  
**Get On The Bus**



Featuring performances by  
**Karen Anderson**  
**Nancy Pimental**  
**Brent Piaskoski**  
**Eddie Pepitone**  
**Sheila Wenz**  
**Tom Heuer**  
Sketch comedy by  
**Brophy & Parker**  
& more!  
Host: **Gary Lucy**  
Curator: **Jane Edith Wilson**

**GET ON THE BUS** gives children across the state a chance to visit an incarcerated parent in prison. GOTB provides transportation, meals, photos, a travel bag, a teddy bear & post-visit counseling, all at no cost. It's a very special day for everybody!



St. Michael's & All Angels Church  
3646 Coldwater Canyon Blvd  
Studio City, CA 91406  
Just south of Ventura Blvd.

**\$10**  
Donation



# The Calendar

May 2011

**Sunday Schedule** • *Sunday Services are 8:00 am (no choir) and 10:30 am (with choir) in the Sanctuary.*  
 • *Sunday School (Godly Play, Middle School, Sr. High, and Adult Forums) and Adult Choir begin at 9:30 am.*  
 • *Children's Church begins at 10:30 in the Blue Room and the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace.*  
 • *Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 am service unless otherwise noted.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 12:00 noon Healing Prayer Gathering (FR) 12:15 PM SMCOP (YL)	<b>2</b> St. Mark the Evangelist 6:15 PM Book Discussion Group (Woods Home)	<b>3</b> St. Philip & St. James, Apostles	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (MR)	<b>6</b> 12:00 noon Fourth Quarter Luncheon (CO)	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Easter 2 <i>Mothers' Day</i> Farewell to Tom Heuer at coffee hour today	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 7:00 PM Vestry (UR)	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 8:00 PM Lit.Up! (PH)
<b>15</b> Easter 3 12:00 noon Big Sunday	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (MR)	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Easter 4 6:00 PM Newcomer Dinner	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Easter 5 12:15 PM Pastoral Care Committee (FR)	<b>30</b> <i>Memorial Day</i> <i>Parish Office closed</i> 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Group (YL) 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Group (YL)	<b>31</b> Visitation of Mary				

**Locations:**  
 CO: Church Office  
 CR: Choir Room  
 MR: Music Room  
 FR: Fireside Room  
 PH: Parish Hall  
 UR: Upper Room  
 YL: Youth Lounge  
 S: Sanctuary

# BIG SUNDAY



**WHAT ARE YOU DOING  
BIG SUNDAY, MAY 15?**

*Saint Michael & All Angels Church  
& St. Michael's Community Outreach  
Projects Committee Invite You to a*

# FAMILY FESTIVAL

*Benefiting wounded soldiers  
& soldiers on the front line.*

**SUNDAY  
MAY 15  
12-3 pm**

Entertainment by  
**New Directions Choir**  
(whose members are formerly homeless vets)  
**Harvard Westlake Jazz Band**  
BBQ, BAKE SALE,  
CRAFT SALE & GAMES

**ALSO**

- ★ Letter writing station for frontline troops ★
- ★ Donation drop-off for frontline/wounded troops ★
- ★ Sponsor a wounded soldier visit to California ★
- ★ Luncheon with special veteran guests of honor ★

**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO SoldierCare**

A non-political wounded soldier mentoring project providing year-round support for wounded veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

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