

SOUNDS

Of

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February 21, 2010

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Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted of Satan: Make speed to help thy servants who are assaulted by manifold temptations; and, as thou knowest their several infirmities, let each one find thee mighty to save; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

FROM THE RECTOR

No doubt survivors of the Blizzards of 2010 will speak of them for many years to come. When meteorologists compared these days to the records of 1889 they offered a ray of hope: Maybe it will be that long before we have such snows again.

Before writing another word, I want to pay tribute to Steve Wilson, our Junior Warden, and to Mr. Thai for their indefatigable work over the course of 10 days. It was not just the storm that required their attention, but also the consequences. Homeowners know these problems full well, and the “house of the Lord” was hardly immune from them. Steve and Thai bore burdens which go beyond “job descriptions”, and that is what separated their service from merely doing one’s job. The gratitude I express is profound, and, I am confident, widely shared.

How does one begin to put such events into a theological context? One way is to call to mind, as we have done before in *Sounds* after earlier snowstorms, the words of the canticle *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*, “A Song of Creation”. It is found on pages 47-49 of the Prayer Book. The pertinent passage reads as follows: “O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord...O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord...O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him for ever.”

This canticle, or song of praise, dates to at least the end of the 4th century. Archbishop Cranmer included it in the 1549 Prayer Book, adding the refrain “Praise him and magnify him for ever” at various places. Although the original author of the text is known only in the heart of God, this hymn writer clearly knew Psalm 148, which is another theological reference appropriate to thoughts after a storm.

It is no stretch, especially in our parish, to consider the canticle Franciscan in essence. It

surely evokes the “Canticle of the Sun” which is attributed to St Francis, and which appears as Hymn 406 in our present hymnal. It cannot be stressed too often in this confused and sentimental era that Francis was not a “nature lover”, but rather a passionate lover of the Creator. His reforming insight was to reclaim the Bible’s judgment expressed in Genesis 1:31: “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” It was that truth, a truth only dimly remembered in his day, that led Francis to preach to birds and wolves, and sing canticles to the sun and the stars. And it was that very truth which inspired the ancient hymn writer of the *Benedicite* to summon even ice and snow to praise and magnify the Lord God.

In earlier winters, I have written in this space of the salutary effect of snowstorms on egos in our community. We are reminded, albeit not pleasantly perhaps, that we are not the masters of creation but constituent members of the created order. I still believe that to be a lesson we need to learn time and again. But now I add a more sympathetic note to that judgment, for having been without electricity for a few days, I cannot imagine what it would be like to face that prospect with no relief in sight. I do not mean the threat of no television or internet access, or those other inconveniences we all experienced. With, I hope, no sanctimonious note, we can offer our prayers and actions for those in need, those whom the current Prayer Book describes as “all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget” (p. 826). That means those in the cold streets of Washington or the broken streets of Port-au-Prince, and “all those who are in any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate.” Snowfall can sharpen our understanding of those words, too.

BOOK CLUB MEETING-THURSDAY 2/25

Please join us February 25th at 7:30 pm in the Youth Room to discuss *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese and choose next month's book. All are welcome.

THE THRIFT SALE APPROACHES

Now is the time to start spring cleaning and set aside your gently used items for the thrift sale on **Friday & Saturday, March 27th & 28th**. Donations are now being accepted. Ten families have offered their homes for storage. Call Beth Higgins at 301-294-3344 or Mary Ashworth at 301-251-9255 for a dropoff location.

We accept housewares, holiday items, clothes, shoes, purses, toys, books, video tapes and dvd's, small furniture, bedding, pictures, and so much more! This year we will be featuring the "Children's Shop."

Nothing to donate? You still can be a part of the fun we have getting ready for the sale. We need volunteers! Lunch provided daily. Call Beth or Mary.

YOUNG ADULT FORUM BEGINS SUNDAY

This Sunday, February 21, will be the first young adult forum. It is an opportunity for folks in their 20's and early 30's to connect, discuss matters of faith relevant to our lives, and enjoy fellowship with our peers. All young adults are welcome. It will begin following the 9 am Sunday service in the undercroft below the main church building.

WOMEN'S WEEKEND RETREAT- MARCH 5-7

The women of The Falls Church are having a weekend of fellowship, worship, and encouragement from the Scriptures at the beautiful Rocky Gap Lodge & Resort. The cost for the weekend is \$150.00 and **registration closes Sunday, February 21st**. To register

JOY AND CONCERN

Please pray for Ella DeHaven Fulcher, mother of Mary Hulen, who died in Hillsville, Virginia.

MUSIC AT EVENTIDE: LENTEN VESPERS

The fourth event of our *Music at Eventide* series takes place on Sunday evening, **March 7th at 5:30 pm** in the parish church.

Vespers is the ancient monastic service that is given as "An Order of Worship for the Evening" in our present Book of Common Prayer. We will use this liturgy to sharpen our focus on Lent and our necessary posture of penitence during this season.

To that end, this service will include the chanting of The Great Litany. This form of prayer dates from before the 4th century and The Great Litany as it appears in our BCP derives from the first English litany, compiled by Thomas Cranmer in 1544. He drew from the old Sarum rite, the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, and a Latin litany composed by Martin Luther. It is a powerful tool with its rich tapestry of petitions by which we implore God's mercy and grace. Its relevance is undiminished to these many centuries and I commend it to your study.

Choral music for the evening will feature the works of English composers, Hilton, Farrant, Howells, Moore, Wise, and Parry. A reception for all follows in St Francis Hall (no reservations necessary).

I truly hope you will join us for this offering in our parish life together.

Gary Davison, O-C

online, go to www.thefallschurch.org/women.

If your are interested or plan to go, please contact Anna Hirsch at anna@thecreativemouse.com.

COMING UP AT SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH

For more information, please visit our website at www.stfrancispotomac.org

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21

8:00am Holy Eucharist
9:00am Morning Prayer
Sunday School, Young Adult Forum, and
Adult Education Hour
11:15 am Holy Eucharist
3:00pm Wedding Shower—Kincaid Library

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23

5:30 pm St. Nicholas Training Choir
5:30 pm St. Clare Girl Choir
7:00 pm Centering Prayer—Undercroft

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

10:00 am Holy Eucharist
11:00 am Rector's Bible Study
5:30 pm Jr. High Bible Study

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25

5:00 pm *Sounds* Deadline for 2/12/10
5:30 pm Sr. High Bible Study
7:30 pm St Francis Choir
7:30 pm Book Club—Youth Room

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26

8:00 am Men's Bible Study

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28

8:00 am Holy Eucharist
9:00 am Holy Eucharist
Sunday School, Young Adult Forum, and
Adult Education Hour
11:15 am Morning Prayer

The Scripture appointed for the First Sunday in Lent
Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16, Romans 10:8b-13, Luke 4:1-13

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