

# SOUNDS

of

Volume 40 No. 18

May 2, 2010

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*O Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*

*Amen*

## FROM THE RECTOR

With gentle sarcasm I sometimes think the term “these holy mysteries” applies to the seemingly infinite number of ways congregations take Holy Communion. (In fact, “these holy mysteries” is church language for the Sacrament.) No two churches seem to share that meal with the same manners. Often the differences amount to nothing more than local custom and have no significance beyond what one grew up with in a specific locale. On other occasions, those manners are more important and have deeper meaning.

In that latter category is the matter of receiving the bread and wine themselves, the consecrated elements which have become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord. In writing that I am speaking of meaning, not offering an inadequate explanation of *how* that happens. That is something to ponder at another time, and always with reverent humility. But this much is certain: We believe a change has taken place and that we receive that bread and wine as something different than what they were an hour before the service began – just as we pray we are different (renewed) when the service concludes.

The reverence due the Sacrament is no small matter. We have allowed our church manners to erode, and we can do better. The frequency of celebrations of the Holy Communion has come at a cost: In days when those celebrations were not as frequent, there was a deeper appreciation of the importance and the difference in the service. We have largely lost that, and in many ways we are not fully mindful of what we say when we pray “We do not presume to come to this thy table...” The fact is, we often *do* presume. We presume that just because we are here, we are entitled to what awaits us. It cannot be said too often that *not* presuming is the proper posture – not because of a low estimate of our worth, but because of

the infinite value of the gift we are offered in this meal. Not presuming leaves room for gratitude, which is the proper response to the gift we receive. We probably encouraged presumption when the liturgical busybodies who revised the Prayer Book removed the verb “vouchsafe” from the vocabulary of worship, especially from the prayer after Communion. Look it up if you have a stout dictionary, one that is not infected with liturgical political correctness.

Occasionally, as some come forward to receive communion, they are unsure what to do. Confusion starts with where to kneel at a circular rail (at the far end or at the nearer end of the line?) and can go on to what to do with the hands when the bread and chalice are offered presented. St Augustine wrote somewhere that we are to make our hands into a throne (one atop the other) to receive the Body of Christ. That’s a good way to think about it. There is not a verbal response expected, but occasionally someone who is unfamiliar with what is happening, or perhaps a child, will say, “Thank you.” Good manners, yes, but not liturgically necessary.

I was thinking of this on Easter morning when so many visitors were here and more than a few grateful responses sounded. And then it struck me: Isn’t that really the only proper response? To be sure, not spoken to a passing priest, and not spoken at all for that matter, nor at that moment. But when all is said and done, what can we do but give thanks for what we have received at that moment. “Here we offer and present unto thee, our selves, our souls and bodies...” God has indeed vouchsafed to feed us in a remarkable way, and while we did not expect such a meal, we have been fed. What can we say beyond a word – a life – of thanks?

## UNITED THANK OFFERING

SPRING INGATHERING - MAY 23RD

This important contribution to the welfare of those, particularly women and children, who are suffering around the world comes at a time when the beauty and new life of Spring surrounds and gives us renewed hope.

The UTO gives us the opportunity to express our thanks to God for the many blessings in our lives. The grants given focus on compelling human needs and every cent you give goes out to those who seemingly have little reason to hope.

You will soon receive the UTO blue envelopes by mail and we ask you to put them in the offerings on Sunday May 23rd. If that is not workable, you can always mail them back to St. Francis Church by that date.

Your gift will be well spent. Thank you.

## BOOK CLUB NEWS

Our May selection is *Crossing to Safety* by Wallace Earle Stegner. This is a book many of us read some time ago, but we felt it was time to read it again.

Publishers Weekly said "Stegner's book is an eloquent, wise and immensely moving narrative. It is a meditation on the idealism and spirit of youth, when the world is full of promise, and on the blows and compromises life inevitably inflicts."

One reader wrote "I was about to be captive on a 7 1/2 hour plane trip- I went into [the airport bookstore] and somehow I was drawn to this book. ... I was on the next to last page as we landed and read the last two pages while waiting for my luggage.

Whoopee, what a book, what a read! I hated for it to end. It is one of those kinds of books".

Please join us to discuss your reaction to this novel.

## JOY AND CONCERN

Please pray for Deanne Tardy and Marilyn Leahey, Susan Dolan's mother, who are ill.

## GET-TOGETHERS, FUTURE & PAST

LAGER-LOVERS— PLEASE NOTE

Here is another opportunity to get to know people from church or just enjoy a good time with ones you already know. On **Saturday, May 15th**, we will have a **Belgian Beer Tasting and Dinner** at 7:30 pm, hosted by Jim and Barbara Moore and Carol and Wayne Jarvis. The cost per person is \$35. We will be tasting 5 Belgian Beers chosen by Mr. Moore during the evening. RSVP by May 8th to the church office- 301-365-2055.

Thanks go to the Singham family who hosted a very enjoyable "newcomers" tea on Sunday, 4/18. One of the guests spoke about how hard it is to get to know members at St. Francis during the coffee hours on Sunday and how pleased she was to get to know more people at the tea.

## TABLECLOTHS MISSING

WE NEED YOUR HELP

A large number of our tablecloths cannot be found—particularly the pink ones and the white ones. If you brought some home to launder, or otherwise have any idea of where they have strayed, we would be very grateful if you would return them to the church as soon as possible.

If you did return some to the church and put them anywhere other than the closet on the kitchen end of St Francis Hall, please call Christine at the church, 301-365-2055, and let her know where you left them.

Thank you in advance for your help locating our missing linens.

**COMING UP AT SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH**

For more information, please visit our website at [www.stfrancispotomac.org](http://www.stfrancispotomac.org)

**SUNDAY, MAY 2**

8:00am Holy Eucharist  
9:00am Holy Eucharist  
Sunday School and Adult Education Hour  
11:15 am Holy Eucharist

**TUESDAY, MAY 4**

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

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 5**

10:00 am Holy Eucharist  
5:30 pm Jr. High Bible Study

**THURSDAY, MAY 6**

5:00 pm *Sounds* Deadline for 5/16/10  
5:30 pm Sr. High Bible Study  
7:30 pm St Francis Choir

**FRIDAY, MAY 7**

7:00 am Men's Bible Study  
30 Hour Famine begins

**SUNDAY, MAY 9**

**HUNGER SUNDAY**

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

The Scripture appointed for the Fifth Sunday of Easter  
Acts 11:1-18, Psalm 148, Revelation 21:1-6, John 13:31-35

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