

SOUNDS

of

Volume 40 No. 11

March 14, 2010

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Fifth Sunday
in
Lent

*Gracious Father, whose blessed Son
Jesus Christ came down from heaven
to be the true bread which giveth life
to the world: Evermore give us this
bread, that he may live in us, and we
in him; who liveth and reigneth with
thee and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and for ever. Amen.*

FROM THE RECTOR

St. John records that Jesus told Peter to feed his sheep (21:15-19). He did not also tell Peter to count them. Nevertheless, churches count a variety of important things, including the flocks committed to our charge. Every rector or vicar is required to count such things as baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, as well as both the number and variety of worship services and the number of those in attendance.

We shall shortly experience the decennial business of taking the national census. As required by the Constitution, every ten years the number of citizens is reckoned. The ostensible purpose of the census is to determine the apportionment of congressional districts, to divide the pie of the House of Representatives among the states. Every ten years since 1790 this national exercise has been conducted. That it is an exercise in politics as well as demographics was settled in the first census, the occasion of George Washington's first use of a presidential veto. (He objected that the proposed plan gave unfair advantage to northern states.) One may rest assured the 2010 census will have its own political implications. *Plus ça change.*

It used to be relatively easy to keep track of the sheep in individual parishes. Membership was recorded in the parish register, and one was enrolled by only a few avenues: Baptism, confirmation, or letter of transfer from another parish. Getting off the register was more difficult: Letter of transfer out to another parish only was one way; death was the other. Those who just disappeared, even if they stormed out to join a church down the street, were simply declared "Inactive", but not stricken from membership.

From 1986 on, rectors were told to count "baptized members" rather than use other, more precise categories. It was said such reckoning was more faithful to the importance of baptism, and in one respect it is: It is by baptism only that one is made a Christian and a member of the Church. But the consequences of this

change in the canons, intended or not, included two unfortunate ramifications: The loss of emphasis on confirmation, and a muddled, less accurate count of membership. There were always more baptized members than communicants, thus membership trends were more difficult to ascertain. That confusion continues even with reports are compiled in good faith.

Closer to home, it has been next to impossible to keep precise membership records. Often people assume they are "members" of this parish, but have never followed through on the parishioner's responsibility to request letters of transfer. In these days when denominational loyalty means less, it has been difficult to persuade folks of the importance of confirmation or reception (subjects for yet another exhortation some other time). Those avenues of membership reduce confusion on the parish books, but there are other ways one can be considered a "member". Thus with the latitude allowed by the canons, we have tried to reckon our membership faithfully and fairly, with exaggeration never an option in how we count people. Still, we need to make another valiant effort to figure out who is properly entered on our rolls, and for that we need a spirit of understanding.

Over the next months, we will contact people whom we consider members, but whose status we cannot "prove" by the definitions open to us. We are asking only for clarification, and offense is neither intended nor should be taken. No one will be denied the Sacrament on the basis of a parish membership register. And while we are all "the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand", we are also members of the Church, and the Church would like our records to be in order, even on the level of the records of the local parochial church (lower case "c"). Please help us if we contact you, and do not hesitate to contact us if we can help answer any questions you may have on the matter.

EASTER BAPTISM INFORMATION

Easter Eve, April 3, is the next date for the administration of Holy Baptism. Those with candidates to present are encouraged to contact the Rector as soon as possible to arrange preparation for this baptismal date.

LAST CALL FOR LUNCH AT GLEN ECHO

If you are interested in joining the other Seniors for lunch at the Irish Inn at Glen Echo on Thursday March 18th, you must make your reservations by mid-day on Monday, March 15th.



Call Don Harrison or Christine at the office (301-365-2055) and give them your name and the number of people who will attend.

APPLICATIONS FOR BISHOP SEARCH AND TRANSITION COMMITTEE ARE NOW INVITED

Following Bishop John Bryson Chane's Jan. 30 announcement of his plans to retire, the diocese's Standing Committee has started the process leading to the election and consecration of the ninth Bishop of Washington.

The committee's first task is to select a Search Committee and Transition Committee, and applicants interested in serving on either committee are invited to apply. Job descriptions for both committees and an online application form are now available at <http://search.edow.org/>

The deadline for these applications is March 26, and parishes are asked to communicate this news as widely as possible. Further details, including a proposed timeline, also are available online.

JOY AND CONCERN

Congratulations to Craig and Katie Astrich, and to grandmother Lynne, on the birth of Harold Edward "Hale" Astrich on March 1.

Please hold in your prayers Dick Walker and Chuck Byrd who are recovering from surgery.

THE THRIFT SALE IS ALMOST UPON US A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Isn't it funny how things can sneak up on one? The Thrift Sale is in two short weeks on Friday & Saturday, March 26th & 27th. We are receiving inquiries from all over the area. It does require preparation, though, to make it a success. **We would love to have you volunteer!** Not only will you selflessly benefit the needy by helping out, but volunteers get the first peek at the goodies as they come in! Read on for more information.

Donations will be accepted at the Church Hall starting Sunday after the Forum until noon on Thursday the 25th. This is your best chance of the year to turn your tax-deductible "clutter" into someone else's treasure. We don't accept electronics (e.g. TVs, computers), but we do accept almost anything else. If you are uncertain about an item, call Mary or Beth (below) and ask.

Starting on Monday, 3/26, the Volunteer hours are: Monday, 9am-4pm; Tuesday, 7am-4pm; Wednesday, 9am-8pm; and Thursday 9am to Noon. Lunch is provided daily. Call Beth Higgins at 301-294-3344 or Mary Ashworth at 301-251-9255 for more information.



DON'T FORGET THE TIME CHANGE

Change your clocks before you go to sleep on Saturday and avoid embarrassment on Sunday morning.

LISTEN UP!

“Music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend.”

“Let us all do what is right, strive with all our might toward the unattainable, develop as fully as we can the gifts God has given us, and never stop learning.”

“No friend have I. I must live by myself alone; but I know well that God is nearer to me than others in my art, so I will walk fearlessly with Him.”

“Recommend virtue to your children; it alone, not money, can make them happy. I speak from experience.”

“Anyone who tells a lie has not a pure heart, and cannot make a good soup.”

“What you are, you are by accident of birth; what I am, I am by myself. There are and will be a thousand princes; there is only one Beethoven.”

Well, he was right, you know... on all accounts! With no slight intended to the likes of Tallis or Byrd, Handel or Bach, Haydn or Mozart, Mendelssohn or Brahms, Ravel or Stravinsky, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) expanded the horizons of every form of music he inherited well beyond those before him or those, so far, who have come after. Brahms himself felt the omniscient presence of this musical firebrand so keenly that it caused him to struggle for twenty years just to complete his first of only four symphonies. After all, what could anyone possibly have to say after *him*?

A harsh disciplinarian, a drunk, and a not-too-illustrious court musician, Beethoven's father helped set the stage for some of his son's dysfunction and perhaps his inability to form a family of his own. Endless hours of forced practice were met with physical punishment and psychological abuse. Yet because of his father's contacts and efforts, the young Ludwig gained immensely useful connections

and technical abilities. That dichotomy would haunt him the whole of his life and may be, in part, some of the fodder that instilled such dramatic contrasts in his writing. Ultimately, the total loss of hearing, which began its slow descent upon him in his twenties, caused the greatest frustration and understandable anger. Even God could not escape his tirades, although "Louis" knew full well his immense talent was only by the grace of God, and that given in unheard of abundance (see quote #3). To be sure, he could equal Bach in contrapuntal acrobatics, did supplant his teacher Haydn's ability in the tender turn of a phrase, and crushed even his favorite composer, Handel, with the sheer force of his expression. He truly became the artist not understood, especially in the string quartets of his last two years. In all fairness, nobody had anything by which to compare this music nor little capacity to do so even if it were available to them. The *Große Fuge* (opus 133) was considered by no less than the innovative genius, Igor Stravinsky, to be the greatest piece of music ever written. This body of late Beethoven works still presents a monumental challenge to the musical mind.

Beethoven's music aside, part of what makes him so modern – and perhaps appealing – is that he became the prototype freelance composer. He settled in Vienna around the turn of the 19th century, a musical capital in league with Paris and London. By sheer industry coupled with his God-given talent, and inspired by the events in neighboring France under Napoleon, he eventually shirked the bonds of servitude to the privileged, which he despised (see quote #6). Perhaps irreverently, he went so far as to abandon his powdered wig when in public or the company of his "betters" after the fashion of the trend-setting Parisians. However, and make no mistake, he actively courted their attention and lived among them as a darling and one entitled. In return, his erratic behavior and

disorganized conduct was tolerated because of his genius recognized by some, and the egotistical needs of the others vying for his attention.

Recently, I finished a slim volume on the life of Beethoven by Edmund Morris. It gives excellent historic context, avoids the burden of too much technical analysis, and reads with engaging ease. If you want a good overview of Beethoven, this is as good a place to start as any. It is entitled simply *Beethoven*, a 2005 issue from Harper Collins in their *Eminent Lives* series.

If you enjoy visual renderings and crave "period" films, you must see *Immortal Beloved* (1994). Gary Oldman delivers a thrilling performance of the maestro and gives the rare and convincing illusion that he actually is performing the music heard on the soundtrack. Happily, Isabella Rossellini is also in it.... I dare say Herr van Beethoven himself would have approved of that!

Finally, it all comes down to the music itself. Because of its famous opening (you know, "Pah-pah-pah-pahm.... pah-pah-pah-pahm"), Symphony #5 in C minor, opus 67, is probably the most widely recognized of Beethoven's works. The brilliant conductor, Carlos Kleiber, recorded it with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra for the Deutsche Grammophon label in the mid-1970's. It is now coupled on CD with my favorite Beethoven symphony, the #7 in A major, opus 92, also directed by Kleiber with the VPO. I am not exaggerating when I say this is the best recording of these two works, by far. It is high on my desert island list and I cannot recommend it too highly. It convinces me that if the voice of God does, in fact, whisper to some, it must have been shouting to the trenchant mind of Beethoven.

Roll over, indeed!

Stay tuned.... Gary Davison, O-C

ADULT EDUCATION NOTES

With the completion of the excellent series coordinated by Norma Young, the spring term of Adult Education begins this week.

The Young Adults discussion group offered by Josiah Rengers continues. All those interested in exploring questions of discipleship and faith for those in their twenties and thirties are invited and encouraged to join the group in the Undercroft parlor. In St Francis Hall, the Rector will present a two-part series on "Some Words That Make a Difference" as we prepare for Holy Week.

In April, the main offering will be "The Trumpet Shall Sound: The Resurrection, St Paul, and Handel", a series in which the joy of Eastertide is experienced in the incomparable music of Handel's masterpiece, *Messiah*. All classes begin following the 9:00 service.

BENEFIT CONCERT FOR HAITI

FEATURING ONE OF OUR OWN

Yukiko Wilson, pianist and daughter-in-law of Chuck & Helen Wilson, will be one of the featured performers at a Benefit Concert for Haiti on **Saturday, March 20th at 2:00 pm**. She will join with several other talented singers and musicians performing original compositions as well as selected works by Debussy, Mozart, Rachmaninoff and more.

The performance will be at the **Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring at 10309 New Hampshire Ave.** in Silver Spring, Maryland. Admission is free but donations are encouraged since all the proceeds will benefit the American Red Cross Haiti Relief and Development Fund.

For more information, please e-mail the Haiti-benefit-info@comcast.net or consult the flyer posted on the kiosk in the foyer.

COMING UP AT SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 14

HUNGER SUNDAY

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

8:00 am Holy Eucharist

9:00 am Holy Eucharist

Sunday School and Adult Education Hour

11:15 am Morning Prayer

TUESDAY, MARCH 16

5:30 pm St. Nicholas Training Choir

5:30 pm St. Clare Girl Choir

7:00 pm Centering Prayer—Undercroft

7:30 pm Vestry Meeting

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

10:00 am Holy Eucharist

11:00 am Rector's Bible Study

5:30 pm Jr. High Bible Study

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

12:00 pm Senior Lunch—Irish Inn at Glen Echo

5:00 pm *Sounds* Deadline for 3/21/10

5:30 pm Sr. High Bible Study

7:30 pm St. Francis Choir

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

7:00 am Men's Bible Study

SUNDAY, MARCH 21

8:00 am Holy Eucharist

9:00 am Morning Prayer

Sunday School and Adult Education Hour

11:15 am Holy Eucharist



The Scripture appointed for the Third Sunday in Lent
Joshua 5:9-12, Psalm 32, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

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