

## Confirmation

For the first time in many years the Sacrament of Confirmation will be administered in the tiny little church of St. Margaret Nicholl's Town. Thirteen children will kneel before the Bishop on June 14<sup>th</sup> to, as Bishop Thompson alludes in his book, **"Instructions for Anglicans"** receive their booster shot. From the beginning of our Diocese, the bishop, in his travels would often perform confirmations. Many an interesting story is told of confirmations past: dissension in Nicholl's Town with no one getting confirmed in 1872, one little girl walking 35 miles to and from Bowen Sound in the same year only for Bishop Venables to have a special confirmation service especially for her in Fresh Creek, and shockingly the emptying of the church, confirmation candidates and all in Bimini with news of a fresh wreck during the middle of the service with the Bishop preaching.

Confirmation has always been a mysterious mystery in our church. The joke is told of a priest who had an infestation of bats in the belfry and after trying everything with nothing working to get rid of them, one parishioner suggests that he should confirm the bats and the problem would be solved.

True enough, it seems as though once young people are confirmed they forget about church all together. Ronald Goldman, in his book **Readiness for Religion** makes an attempt to identify what goes on in the mind of a child and their understanding of religious concepts. While at St. Barnabas I did a survey of the confirmation class and I wish I kept a copy of the results. Trying to find out what the kids liked and what they didn't like, things that could be changed from what worked well and what didn't was truly eye opening. In order to make something better we really should evaluate how good the experience was in the first place.

## Pure Gold



There is a dying, if not already dead settlement in South Andros named Pure Gold. At one time, so I am told, it was a bustling community. Long Cay too was a bustling community acting as one of the earliest 'container ports' in the Western Hemisphere. A basilica sits partially in ruins there dedicated to the memory of St.

David. In Pure Gold, there sits the ruins of a church with obvious signs of fire damage. A number of years ago Fr. Saunders, Humphrey Simmons, Colin Hanna, Francina Thurston and I, while on a West Central Archdeaconry Congress in South Andros, took a drive to 'the end of the world', Mars Bay, to look at the new church under construction. On our way back we passed the ruins of St. Cecilia, a gift back in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century from a Mrs. Newton, a generous benefactor to the Anglican Church. Roscoe Shedden, in his book **"Ups and Downs in a West Indian Diocese"** tells the story of this rich woman who, after having given the money to build the church, later died tragically while visiting South Africa. On one of the remaining walls there is a little plaque dedicated to the memory of an Archdeacon Webb. Shedden tells of a priest Webb who is posted to Fresh Creek to assist the ever busy F.B. Matthews. Anglicanism in Andros has a very well steeped history with it being one of the first places where indigenous Bahamian priests served their own people. Fr. Marshall Cooper was one of the first black priests in the Diocese and he served up and down the length of Andros. Fr. WH Sweeting was the other.

These days the gold of Andros come in either the black kind or the white kind. Its crab time! Next weekend the island of Andros will be heavy with people as the annual Crab Fest kicks off in Fresh Creek. The crab is truly an icon for Andros with the sale of these land crabs by the dozens in Nassau fetching a handsome little purse for young and old alike. The children at school in the days leading up to exams exclaim, with weak smiles on their faces, that they are too tired to concentrate because they've been up crabbing all night. "Father, how many dozen do you want to buy?" On my way home one night from Stanyard Creek with a group of kids we passed at least fifty people at different points along the road hunting in the bushes for their feisty prey. Funnily enough, we would pass people looking in the bushes for crab only to have to swerve to avoid running over dozens literally right in the road. They were walking by the sixes and tens in the middle of the road!

Hope to see you at the Fest!

### CONTACT US