

Salute to Mr. Spencer



The Parish of St. Margaret's and St. Mary Magdalene would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to Mr. Ron Spencer, a winter resident in the North Andros Community, who has always been willing to donate his time and talent to us whenever he is in residence. He is pictured holding his latest work of art, a painting of St. Margaret's Church. He is currently working on new Stations of the Cross paintings for St. Mary Magdalene.

Thank You Ron!!!

WELCOME from Fr. Shazzabazzar A. Turnquest



Fr. Turnquest was ordained to the sacred priesthood November 2004 and has served as Priest-in-Charge of St. Margaret's and St. Mary Magdalene (North Andros) since June 2007.

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Lent!!! In Andros, this is also a time of great harvest. The farmers' fields are filled with vegetables and citrus. Shiploads of grapefruits are being exported from Morgan's Bluff dock every day. There is an abundance of tomatoes, sweet corn, broccoli, sweet peppers, cucumbers, eggplants, squash and the list goes on. Every day I look around this beautiful island and think of the enormous potential that exist. Not only do we reside on the doorstep of the Great Bahama Bank (one of the best fishing resources in the world) but the island of Andros boasts some of the most rich and fertile soil in the entire Bahamas. Sadly, much of our potential is wasted, as the majority of Androsians are disinterested in farming, and those who are, often succumb to poor attitudes which result in their choosing to allow the vegetables to rot in the field rather than sell the crop below their asking price.

Good Anglicans often feel obligated to give up something during this season. I tried to give up meat (so touché) for Lent. That lasted until suppertime. But the point is, as Bahamians, I feel, what we should attempt to give up during this Lenten season is our negative, often slothful attitudes, which have kept us from reaping the true bounty which God has afforded us in our seas and on land.

By The Sweat of Your Brow...

*Do not hate toilsome labor, or farm work,
which were created by the Most High
(Sirach 7:17)*

*Much labour was created for every man,
and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of
Adam, from the day they come forth from
their mother's womb till the day they return
to the mother of all. (Sirach 40:1)*

I write to salute one of our catechists, the Honourable Lawrence Cartwright for a first class job at the helm of his most important Ministry of Agriculture. While watching the news the other night, he and the Hon. Edison Key (also doing a first class job at BAIC) led the Prime Minister around the stalls showcasing locally grown produce and livestock. The North Andros High

School has a vibrant Agricultural program under the supervision of the ever energetic Mr. Rai Budhu. The sad reality is that a lot of young people do not see the importance of agriculture as the foundation of any economy. The Bahamas has always been importing food, as far as they are concerned, so why should we change? Can you imagine that almost the entire economy of New Zealand is dependent on lamb, sheep, mutton and wool? The wheat fields of Canada stretch for hundreds of miles, the corn fields of Kansas are bigger than New Providence, the potatoes of Idaho are legendary the world over and yet still we still view agriculture as 'work for the Haitian.' Many have tried agriculture in Andros, some have succeeded, but many have failed. It is not that the ground is unsuitable; the problem for the most part

has been the securing of buyers. If the pressures of growing sisal were not as severe for Neville Chamberlain, I dare to say that Andros would have been a completely different place today. The North Andros High School, where I teach, is has a lot to offer and should be an Agricultural Academy. All of the feeder primary schools have vibrant agricultural programs and some of the children get their thumbs green and dirty from an early age. I have planted some citrus trees in the rectory yard, but I really would like to experiment with wine grapes. Apparently the limestone soil is ideal for it and Andros has an abundance of fresh water. Maybe one day the bottle your communion wine comes in might have a picture of a little red and white church by the seaside on it. The monks made champagne didn't they?

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The American Reformation

"For long ago I broke your yoke and tore off your bonds; But you said, 'I will not serve!'

For on every high hill and under every green tree you have lain down as a harlot.

Jer 2:20

This week I came across a very strong report written by the American Anglican Council entitled **"The Episcopal Church: Tearing the Fabric of Communion to Shreds."** The report accuses the Episcopal Church of all manner of things including the denying of heaven and hell, the resurrection, the uniqueness and divinity of Jesus Christ among other things. It further accuses the Episcopal Church of adopting a myriad of new theologies incorporating same sex blessings, the weakening of traditional family values and the varied forms of sexual deviations. Finally, it offers a personal attack against the presiding bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori suggesting her affirmation of the classic heresies of Pelagianism, Pluralism, Gnosticism, Universalism and Marcionism. Some heavy stuff indeed.

I penned this piece while watching the re-broadcast of the Enthronment of our new Bishop Boyd late on a Sunday evening. The cathedral was full to bursting, the classic elegance of our liturgy, the beautiful music and singing made me proud to be an Anglican, proud to be an Anglican in the Diocese of the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Tragically all is not well elsewhere in the communion. The inhibition of clergy, the deposing of bishops, the misusing of Canons, a litany of currently 56 lawsuits pending in Courts of the land over church

property and possessions paints a very dark picture of the life of our church in other lands. How do we as a Diocese not end up in the same predicament as others, or even worse?

For a long time, after "serving" my time at Westcott House, I have wrestled with this whole notion of inclusion. It is a dirty word to me. Westcott (at that time at least) was considered a liberal college and as such was very fond of inclusion and all it stood for. Sadly though, inclusion didn't include those who didn't agree with all permutations of theological interpretation. In the perfect world, the community of like minded individuals labelled as orthodox Christians should be included within the realm of what constitutes the boundaries of inclusive theology. Sadly though, I feel that they are not. But then again, the world isn't perfect. In the perfect world of theology, we are all to get along, all sing the same song and all love each other. If that were so, in this realm of our existence, there would only be one denomination and to a larger extent only one religion. But yet still in our quest as human beings to draw nearer to and possibly understand the God of the universe, we differ.

In the Episcopal Church (TEC), a movement to affirm the variance in sexual preference of human beings has met considerable resistance, much debate and many tears. But this is not a new exercise for the church. Jeremiah and most, if not all of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament disciples had to wrestle with this problem. For some reason, the children of

Israel, the children of the Judeo Christian faith have always been seduced by the alternate customs of their neighbours. Moses had not even made it down the mountain with the ten commandments when the children of Isreal are worshipping an idol, built no less by Aaron, the high priest and brother of Moses. Ninian Smart in **The Religious Experience of Mankind** (Collins 1969) speaks extensively about the role of sex within religion especially with the fertility cults of the ancient Babylonians. Paul in his letter to the Romans (Chapter 1 especially) is very strong where he expresses incredulity at the sexual misconduct of not only the men, but the women as well. Anthony Storr in **Sexual Deviation** (Penguin 1964) suggested that a possible reason for the Maccabean Revolt of 586 BC was the influence of the Roman gymnasium and pederasty associated with it on the Jewish male.

So how is God working in all of this then? The TEC promotes a deviation of theology and out of the TEC emerges new parishes, whole Dioceses and maybe even a new Province. It feels like the reformation all over again. Out of disagreements with some of the theology of the Roman Catholic Church a few hundred years ago, the Protestant denominations emerged and both walk side by side to this day, though attempts at mending the yoke and repairing the bonds have proved unsuccessful so far.

I find the current economic crisis symbolic in that the prophets of prosperity now seem to choke on the words of their message. Sometimes,

I feel as though people don't really listen to anything the priest has to say. No matter how often it is said. That is until calamity comes knocking. As a boy growing up in Christ the King Ridgeland Park Archdeacon Brown would preach ever so often on the need to 'live within one's means.' At just about every wedding he would remind the happy couple that grouper and tuna are both fish. When you can't afford grouper, buy a can of Bumble Bee. For too often we as Bahamians live well above our means. And now that tough times have returned we are caught unawares. How many times did Archdeacon William Thompson preach against infidelity and promiscuity and the effect it would have on society? Probably too many times for some, but look today at the social whirlwind that envelops us. The proposed Anglican Family Life Mission is not only an excellent idea but long overdue.

How long will the prophets cry out until God himself gets tired and takes matters into his own hands?

Sunday Feb 22, 2009

The Eve of the Feast of St. Polycarp

Bishop of Smyrna
Martyr 156

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