Many years ago on Christmas Eve, at the famed Riverside Church in New York City, the renowned William Sloan Coffin was scheduled to preach. The Christmas Pageant preceded his sermon. They had come to the point where the innkeeper was to say there was no room in the inn for Joseph and Mary.

The part seemed perfect for Tim, an earnest youth of the congregation who had Down’s syndrome. It was one line and he had practiced it over and over again with his parents and the pageant director. He had this! So there Tim stood in the sanctuary, a bathrobe over his clothes, as Mary and Joseph made their way down the center aisle. They approached Tim, said their lines, and waited for his reply. “There’s no room in the inn,” he boomed out just as rehearsed. But then, as Mary and Joseph turned to travel further, Tim suddenly yelled, “Wait!” They turned back startled. “You can stay at my house,” he called.
Bill Coffin did not wait for the pageant to end to deliver his sermon. He strode to the pulpit right then and said, “Amen!” Later he said it was the best sermon he never preached.

Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, you can stay at my house. In this Christmas season when our church buildings cannot be open, let’s say that again and again. Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus you can stay at my house. We miss being in Church so much. But your presence is still here. A pandemic cannot stop your love for us.

Theologian and spiritual guide Richard Rohr says this: “We are not human beings having spiritual experiences. We are spiritual beings having human experiences.” Now there is a lot to unpack there. But let’s go with it as true. We are not human beings having spiritual experiences. We are spiritual beings having a human experiences. Now we are having the human experience of a pandemic with all the economic and social disruption and suffering it is causing. How do we live as people of faith in this time?

It has been said “every time a baby is born, it is proof that God has not given up on the world.” My family has been blessed with two births this year. Our granddaughter, Charlotte, was born on April 28. And Elizabeth, called Bee, was born on June 6th. Both were born in New York City where the curve was starting to flatten but the virus was still rampant. On June 6th, 5 week-old Charlotte needed emergency stomach surgery. Betsy and I sat and waited to hear if Charlotte would come through the surgery OK. At the same time, we waited to hear how the labor was going and anticipating the birth of Bee. Talk about having a human experience! The surgery on Charlotte was successful and everything went well in the birth of Bee. Thank God.
“Every time a baby is born, it is proof that God has not given up on the universe.” That is exactly what the Gospel writers Luke and Matthew tell us so clearly. Luke tells us that the birth of Jesus causes an angel to go to shepherds and proclaim, “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. To you is born this day in the city of David, a savior who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

Matthew is a lot more low-key about the events of that night. He just writes, “She had borne a son and he (Joseph) named him Jesus.” But Matthew tells us a lot more about what happened after that. There is the story of the Magi and King Herod’s plan to kill the baby by killing all babies two years old and younger around Bethlehem. This results in Joseph and Mary taking the baby and fleeing to
Egypt for two years. They remain there until a dream tells Joseph that King Herod is dead and it is safe to go back to Israel.

Two years living as refugees in a foreign land with no Zoom calls with the grandparents and the aunts and uncles. Two years of staying faithful in the midst of suffering.

2020 has been a brutal year for our country, for our world, AND God has not given up hope. I’ll end with a poem from Madeleine L’Engle which has touched my soul this Advent and Christmas. It is called, “First Coming.”

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
Turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
He came, and his light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
To heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
The Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
To raise our songs with joyful voice,
For to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

First Coming, By Madeleine L’Engle

Amen.

+Doug
Christmas is always an emotional time. And it has its own Spirit that can carry us away. We all get caught up in the experience of a dark church singing Silent Night as the candles are lit and the light spreads.

In most years, we get caught up in Christmas. But this year we have to choose it. We have to make a choice for Christmas.

Recently I was reading a Christmas sermon by Warren Swenson. He says the biblical passage from the Christmas Eve service that we should pay special attention to this year is the Letter to Titus. Now you might be saying “what is that?” I remember Luke’s story of the census and the innkeepers and the shepherds and the angels and the manger. I remember all the great Christmas hymns. No one ever comes out of a Christmas Eve service saying, “Wow. That reading from Titus was really awesome.”
But it is there. The second reading. Here is part of it:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all...Jesus Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.”

The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to ALL. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry did not preach about Titus in his Christmas message but his words help us understand it. “Mary gave birth to her first born son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. There, in the simplest bed, lies the One for whom no room was made. And yet strangely, there lies the One whom not even the universe can contain.”

The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all. And what is our response to that greatest gift? Titus says it is a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

I have been inspired over and over again by the generosity of our churches to community organizations that are addressing the rising food insecurity of this time and other social needs. And checking in on one another. And finding ways to be community in such a challenging time. And by doing the good deed of wearing a mask.

And may we be zealous in choosing the resilient spirit of Christmas this year. We might not be caught up in Christmas because some of our traditions are not happening the way we always did them. And there is a deep sadness to that. But we can choose to live in the Spirit of Christmas. No one says this better than Howard Thurman, a leader in the Civil Rights movement and a great theologian.

“I will light candles this Christmas
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.
Candles of courage where fear is ever present.
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.
Candles of love to inspire all my living.
Candles that will burn all the year long.”

We are blessed by God taking flesh in Jesus and the gift of salvation. May we respond zealously with the good deed of choosing to be a light in this world. May God bless you with a resilient Spirit this Christmas.

+Doug

Photo Credits: TEC Stock collection; used with permission
The mission continues. Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

At our Convention last year (which seems like 100 years ago), I told a story about Michael Curry. We were in Providence for a large national gathering of deacons. Michael was giving the keynote address and he was preaching about St. Paul. He said “wherever St. Paul went there was a revolution, a revolution. When he went to Corinth there was a revolution. When he went to Phillipi, there was a revolution.” And then Michael started pointing out bishops in the crowd. He would say the bishop’s name and then he would say “what would it look like if there was a revolution in your diocese” And he would name the diocese. He did this four times. Name of the bishop and what would it look like if there was a revolution in your diocese? Then he calls me out. “Doug, what would it look like…oh, wait, there is already a revolution going on in Western Massachusetts.”

I was never so proud of our Diocese!

Now a year later. We find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic. Stress and anxiety are everywhere. Clergy and lay leaders feel it. As do health care workers, teachers, parents of school age children, owners of small businesses, the unemployed and so many others. The pain I felt the most has been our inability to be with our loved ones when they were dying and then having to severely limit the number of mourners who could attend the funeral. The Episcopal Church is far from perfect but something we are really good at is pastoral care for the sick and
the beautiful Prayer Book burial where we say that “life is changed not ended” and “into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant.”

And there is so much about church that we miss. Like seeing each other in person. Holy Communion. Choirs.

Add in an election that does not seem to end. In a deeply divided country with two vastly different visions for our future.

So what does a revolutionary diocese like Western Massachusetts do in this deeply challenging time?

The revolution, the Jesus revolution, always begins with a radical commitment to faith. I have three “go to” prayers in these days. One comes from the Prayer Book for use on All Saints Day. But I use it every day.

“In the multitude of your saints you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses, that we might rejoice in their fellowship and run with endurance the race that is set before us. And together with them, receive the crown of glory that never fades away.”

_The Book of Common Prayer, p. 380_

We didn’t pick this race. But it is the race that is set before us. We don’t run it alone. We are surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses that testify to the faith and to staying faithful. Who is in your cloud of witnesses? Bring them to mind. They are running this race with you.

My other go-to prayer is from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, minds and souls, and love our neighbor as ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and sorrow.”

_The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr._

Dr. King preached over and over again about “blessed assurance.” “Blessed assurance” that God is always present. And he felt that presence most clearly and deeply in the most fearful, anxious moments of his life.

And here’s one more. “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” We boldly proclaim we know God in the person of Jesus. Jesus who forgives, heals, feeds, lifts up, blesses, dies and rises. Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. You are more resilient than you think because you are in the hands of a death conquering God. Resurrection is not just for the end of life. Resurrection happens throughout life when we fall and get up again.
The revolution will mean love of neighbor. We did a survey of our churches asking how they are addressing the needs of their neighborhoods during the Covid-19 pandemic. 39 of our 51 churches responded. Here is what love of neighbor looks like:

- 37 congregations have assisted their local food bank
- 28,000 meals were prepared, served and delivered by our congregations
- 22 congregations collaborated with mission partners by giving financial support totaling $138,000
- 8 people were sheltered
- 1,200 care packages for people experiencing homelessness
- 105 backpacks were made for those leaving prison
- Rector’s discretionary funds accessed for the vulnerable – $40,000
- Over 1600 masks were made and donated
- Over 50,000 diapers and hygiene products given away
- Hundreds of gift cards to local grocery stores given away
- Several parish halls used for Wi-Fi by students who do not have that at home
- Home repairs for 5 families
- A farmers market that served 6400 customers
- 50 blankets for babies in neonatal care at Baystate
- 200 school uniforms for children in Haiti

That is all done by individual churches. On a diocesan level through Human to Human we are supporting lunches for veterans, Walking Together in Worcester, laundry love and recovery programs. Living out Matthew 25 is part of the revolution in Western Massachusetts.

The revolution demands racial justice and dismantling white supremacy. For several years now we have had a very active Beloved Community Commission here. The tragic events of 2020 have shone a light on 400 years of racial injustice and made their work more important than ever. More than ten of our parishes have actively engaged in education programs such as Sacred Ground. We offered a webinar to our clergy and lay preachers about how to preach racial justice. Early on in the pandemic, Laura Everett, the Executive Director of the Mass Council of Churches said she feared that at the end of this, only the white wealthy churches would be left standing. She started a One Church fund to help black urban churches from a variety of denominations. Our Diocese donated $15,000. And there is so much more to do. Come Holy Spirit.

Next week I will ordain two transitional deacons. Both are people of color.

And we have doubled down on our commitment to starting new Episcopal Latino faith communities. There will be more about this later in the Convention.

I spoke before about the great cloud of witnesses running this race with us. One of them is a local saint. Jonathan Daniels, born and raised in Keene, New Hampshire. He went to the Virginia Military Institute and there heard a call to ordained ministry. He went to Episcopal Divinity School in the 1960’s. Dr.King invited clergy from the north to come and work with him in the south. With other
students, Daniels went to Alabama as a volunteer for a few days. At first he was not particularly moved by the experience but he missed the bus going back to Boston. It meant he had to stay another week and in that week he recognized the injustice of segregation and the Jim Crowe laws. When he returned to the seminary he asked for a year off to work in Alabama. He did great work integrating an Episcopal Church in Selma. With others he was arrested at a protest and jailed in Haynesville Alabama. They were released after a week and went to buy sodas at a local store. A man with a gun stopped them and aimed his gun at a black teenager named Ruby Sales. Jonathan realized he was going to shoot so he threw himself in front of her, taking a bullet that killed him. A martyr at 26. His writings include this: “I began to know in my bones and sinews that I had been truly baptized into the Lord’s death and resurrection...with them, the black men and the white men, with all life, in him whose Name is above all names that the races and nations shout...we are indelibly and unspeakably one.” Jonathan is with us now in the great cloud of witnesses.

In 2020 we have witnessed unprecedented climate events showing us that climate change is not in the future. It is now. Because of the prophetic voice of Margaret Bullitt-Jonas and others, our diocese has long been a leader in Creation Care. That work is urgent.

During the pandemic, more guns have been purchased than in any six month time frame since records have been kept. Bishops United Against Gun Violence continues to work diligently for gun safety through legislation and inviting gun manufacturers to become part of the solution.

I have said often in 2020 “although most of our church buildings are closed, the mission of the church is wide open.” I am so inspired by our clergy and lay leaders who have adapted over and over again to provide pastoral care and worship. I get how hard this is. And there are more challenging months to come. Thank you for your resilience. Your commitment to doing the most loving and safe thing. Whatever the tragic toll of this virus will ultimately be, the numbers will be less because of you.

Learning the technology of getting together for worship on zoom or YouTube live or video streaming is so challenging. Thank you for engaging that challenge. And to help you in that effort, we are starting a new financial initiative. From diocesan funds, we will reimburse any parish that upgrades their digital communication capacities up to $2000. We want to encourage you in proclaiming the Gospel with the best resources available.

And the revolution is continuing in our diocese through the development of lay leaders. Jane Griesbach and Meredyth Ward are teaching 40 people how to lead
Morning Prayer. Rich Simpson and a team are training 12 new lay preachers with another class of 12 or follow. Jenny Greg has led the Loving the Questions program for several years now. It is an in-depth process to help participants discern how they are called to serve. Most years there are 5-10 people in this program. In 2020 there are 26. And I’m grateful to Pam Mott who has promoted the training of coaches in our diocese. We all need coaches to help us make decisions in this ever changing environment and now they are available as a holy resource.

We live in hard times. But the Church has gone through hard times before. The church was born in hard times. St. Paul describes it in his second letter to the church at Corinth:

“We proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord... For it is God who said ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

“But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.”

2 Corinthians 4:6-12

I’ll end this Convention address with one more Saint and what the early church did in tough times. It is at the end of the fourth chapter of The Acts of the Apostles. A man named Joseph of Cyprus joined the apostles. And the apostles renamed him. They gave him the name Barnabas, which means “son of encouragement.” You see, the apostles knew what they needed. They needed a son of encouragement.

We live in challenging times. What would happen if everyone here at this Convention promises to be a son or daughter of encouragement in our churches, in our communities, in our families? It might be revolutionary.

The mission continues. Surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses my we run with endurance the race that is set before us and with them receive the crown of glory that never fades away.

Amen.
At a recent zoom meeting of my bishop classmates (all consecrated in 2012) we had a lively discussion around how we are called to lead in this chaotic and politically volatile time in our country. The bishop of New Hampshire, Rob Hirschfeld, pointed out that our Book of Common Prayer has two prayers “For Social Justice.” And they have quite different emphases. One is a “collect” found on page 260:

“Almighty God, who created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

_The Book of Common Prayer, 260._

“Contend against evil and make no peace with oppression.” It is an inspiring call for courage and fortitude. Does that speak to your soul? It does to mine.

And yet there is another prayer “For Social Justice” and it is found on page 823 in _The Book of Common Prayer._ (It is on the same page as the prayer “For those in the Armed Forces of our Country”. When I was the Episcopal Chaplain at West Point we used to say both of those prayers on page 823 one after another every Sunday.) Here is the second prayer “For Social Justice”:

“Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart (and especially the people of this land), that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

_The Book of Common Prayer, 823._

“Our divisions being healed.” Does that also speak to your soul? It is the work of reconciliation that our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is always urging us to do.
"Make no peace with oppression." "Our divisions being healed." How do bring those two statements together? We cannot make peace with racial injustice. We cannot make peace with policies of separating children from parents at our borders. We cannot make peace with the public health crisis of gun violence. We cannot make peace with environmental destruction.

And yet we are called to heal our divisions. We are called to respect the dignity of every human being – not just the people who agree with us. In the radical ethic of Jesus we are called to love those who disagree with us.

Those two prayers for social justice are both true. As followers of Jesus we live in that tension. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did. He said this: "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." AND "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

My prayer for all of us is that we might hold both prayers “for Social Justice” together in our souls. And in our communities. And in our nation.

+Doug
Jesus Is Calling Us Out of the Boat

August 9, 2020

Photo by Ankit Sinha on Unsplash

Often times when I gather with acolytes, lay readers, Eucharistic ministers, clergy and choir before a liturgy, I’m asked to say a prayer. (We will have those gatherings again, when we can do that safely.) Part of that prayer is this: “Lord, in this hour together, may you comfort us as we need to be comforted and challenge us as we need to be challenged.”

I believe that today’s story of the storm at sea, together with another story of a storm at sea, reveals the comfort and the challenge we receive from Jesus. Today’s story of a storm comes in the 14th chapter of Matthew. Matthew tells another story of a storm at sea in chapter 8. Let’s look at that one first.

In chapter 8, Jesus and the disciples are on a boat at sea. After a long day of preaching, teaching, forgiving and healing, Jesus is asleep in the boat. “A windstorm arose in the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves.” The apostles were terrified and they woke up the sleeping Jesus. Jesus “rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm.”

Psychologists like Carl Jung and many theologians encourage us to pray stories such as these as our stories. Imagine the boat and what happens in it as the story of our lives. Have you ever experienced your life as one caught in a great storm? Other Gospel writers use the words “the boat was being battered by the winds and waves.” Or the gospel of Mark says “they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind.” I love that line. Have you ever felt you were “straining at the oars against an adverse wind?” Have you ever felt like that during this pandemic? I know I wake up some mornings feeling that way.

The apostles wake up the sleeping Jesus. Taking this story as our story, we have the possibility of doing that same thing. It is our Christian belief that “the kingdom is within.” Christ is present in us. In baptism we have been “claimed as Christ’s own forever.” When the adverse wind hits us, when our lives are being battered by the winds and waves, when we are afraid, it is time to “wake up the Christ within us.” It is time to go to that place in our souls where we are loved by God. Remembering what our Michael Curry says over and over again: “If it is not about love, it is not about God.”

Wake up the Christ within who had the power to calm the winds and the waves. Wake up the Christ within who said so many times in his earthly ministry and says to us now, “do not be afraid. I am with you.” Wake up the Christ who offers us “a peace which passes all understanding.”

In this story we experience the Christ who comforts us as we need to be comforted.
Now for the second storm at sea. In this one Jesus is not in the boat with the apostles. Jesus has been praying on a mountain while the apostles are in the boat far from land and the wind was against them. Early in the morning they see Jesus walking on the sea. And they are terrified – not because of the winds but because of Jesus. They think it is a ghost.

How can they find out if it is a ghost or it is Jesus? Peter knows how. He says “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He says this because if the answer comes back: “oh no, Peter. Stay in the boat. Stay there in your fear. Keep things exactly as they are.” That would not be the Jesus they knew. That would be a ghost. When Jesus says “come, get out of the boat and follow me”, that is the Jesus they knew. The Jesus who had come to them months earlier when they were tending their nets and invited them on a journey that would change the world. That’s the Jesus who challenged them to become part of the Jesus Movement that is out to change the world from the nightmare it is do so many into the dream God has for it.

Brothers and sisters, we are being challenged right now in many ways but one that might finally be getting our attention is that of racial justice. We are being challenged to acknowledge our history of white privilege and our oppression of people of color. Jesus is not a ghost saying “stay in the boat. Keep doing what you have been doing.” Jesus is being Jesus and he is saying, “Get out of the boat. Yes it will be difficult. But now is the time.”

Recently I read a Fourth of July sermon by The Rev. Deborah Lee at St. Bart's Church in Manhattan. She refers to “the land of the free and the home of the brave” and says this:

“Rather for people of color, it has often been the land of the followed and the home of the fearful. The land of the harassed and the home of the intimidated. The land of the suspected and the home of the disenfranchised.”

_The Reverend Deborah Lee_

Lee goes on to quote activist Ginna Green. “The United States is breaking – painfully, visibly – but not irreparably. The cracks have always been there for us to study. Perhaps now we can create a place that holds us all.”

May Christ comfort us as we need to be comforted AND may Christ challenge us as we need to be challenged. Jesus is calling us out of the boat to follow him on an adventure that will change the world.

Amen.
A Good Prayer for This Marathon

July 17, 2020

There is a story about a young woman who was a dedicated daily jogger. She signed up for a five mile race in a nearby town. When the day of the race came, she checked in and went to the starting line. The opening gun went off and the race began. Our runner passed the one mile mark and the two, three and four. By this distance the runners should have made the turn back to the place they started. That prompted her to ask another runner, "We have already gone four miles. There is only one to go. When do we head back?" The other runner looked at her with surprise and said, "This is not the five mile race. That had a different starting line. This is the marathon!" The marathon – 26 miles!

Our runner was in a race she did not train for. She was totally unprepared. She did not sign up for this. But it was the race she was in. So she kept going. Mile after mile. Our runner was one of the last to finish, but finish she did.

I’ve been thinking about that story as we enter the fifth month of this pandemic. Most scientists are telling us this may go on for a long time. I didn’t sign up for this. I didn’t prepare for this. I didn’t train for this. But this is the race I am running.

That led me to go all the “running the race” references in the letters of St. Paul. One is in his Second Letter to Timothy. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

There are running images in First Corinthians and two more in Philippians, and another in Hebrews – a letter which Paul did not write. The inspired writers of The Book of Common Prayer created a prayer out of that one:

“...in the multitude of your saints you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses, that we might rejoice in their fellowship, and run with endurance the race that is set before us; and together with them, receive the crown of glory that never fades away.”

Preface for All Saints Day, BCP, 380.

This is one of my favorite prayers. It is for use in the Holy Eucharist on All Saints Day. I admit that I use it on a lot of other days as well. (Don’t tell the bishop!) I believe it is a good prayer for this marathon of a pandemic.

“Run with endurance the race that is set before us.” We did not choose this race, but it has been set before us. And from where does our endurance come? It comes from the “multitude of saints” that “surround us with a great cloud of witnesses.”
This pandemic is a new race for us, one we have never experienced before. But the world has been through many other times of suffering. And people have kept the faith. As St. Paul writes to the Romans: "Who will separate us from the love of God? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

Recently I read a letter that Tom Synan, rector of Grace Church in Amherst, sent to his church: “The current circumstances do not define or control us. We are the Body of Christ. We are descendants of the saints and mystics, holy women, holy men, holy young people, holy children. We are God’s servants, God’s agents, a community of faith gladly doing its part for the common good.”

Let us run this race with endurance. And at the end of it we’ll be able to say, "we kept the faith."

+Doug
When should we pray with our feet?

June 18, 2020

In 1859 The General Convention of the Episcopal Church met in Richmond, Virginia and said nothing about slavery. Now we have another pivotal moment in the work of anti-racism in our country. We cannot sit this one out. There are many ways to engage this work and our Beloved Community ministry has offered us resources. One way to take part in this moment is through public witness.

I have participated in a number of public witnesses through the years. In the early 1980’s I marched with Pax Christi in opposition to the nuclear arms race. I was arrested twice (but not detained) with Daniel and Philip Berrigan and Elizabeth McAllister for planned and peaceful symbolic actions.

As a bishop I have marched in public prayer processions with other bishops in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Salt Lake City, Alaska and Austin, Texas to bring attention to the public health crisis of gun violence. And have led public prayer witnesses at Smith and Wesson headquarters in Springfield. Caring for God’s creation led me to take part in public witness in Minneapolis and several towns within our own diocese.

How do we, as people of faith, discern when to take part in public witness? I find these questions helpful in my own life and ministry.

• Does the event align with the values of the Gospel?
• Is it meaningful and timely?
• Is it intended and likely to be non-violent?
• What do I know about the planners/leaders of this witness?
• Will this public witness bear witness to the Risen Christ and to the presence and power of a loving God?
Ours is a unique moment in history and a time for each one of us to consider how to lend our voices to the work of justice. I have been deeply moved by peaceful protesters who willingly risked exposure to the virus to stand up and stand together for the dignity of black lives. There is always a risk when we put our values out there on a sign for all to see. In these days deciding to be part of a public witness can have real consequences, so please wear a mask. How deeply we are feeling the grief of our biases, our blindness and our white privilege.
We pray for justice. We work for justice. And, sometimes, we walk for justice. May God be with all who pray with their feet in these days and may God’s justice roll.

+Doug
We must confront racism within and without.

May 30, 2020

Photo by Josh Hild on Unsplash

Tomorrow we gather to celebrate the great feast of Pentecost. I hope you all plan to be part of this diocesan service at 10:00 AM tomorrow morning. My sermon was prerecorded several days ago, so I want to say something to you about the events in Minneapolis – what I would say to you as part of my Pentecost reflection.

The killing of George Floyd points to the racism that is part of our society, embedded in our history, systems and institutions – including the Church. People of faith cannot ignore the unconscious racism that dwells in our own hearts and minds. We must confront it within and without. Mr. Floyd’s murder is yet another in a centuries-long line. Not decades, but centuries. Our Presiding Bishop, in a joint statement with the Bishop-elect of Minnesota, reminded us that we are not powerless in the face of racism. “We are not, however, slaves to our fate … unless we choose to do nothing.”

We have all been traumatized by the footage of one man’s death. We have also seen people of every color take to the streets to give voice to their anger and frustration. This moment asks something of all of us. More than ever, we need God to breathe on us. We need the courage of the Holy Spirit to stand up against the brutalization of black lives. I bid your prayers for Mr. Floyd’s family, for the safety of all those giving witness to his murder, and for those police officers doing their jobs to keep the peace. As we prepare to celebrate the gift of the Spirit in this troubled time, I ask us to recommit ourselves to the work of justice and peace.
It is good that we will be together on Pentecost morning as a diocese to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. That afternoon at 4:00 PM, the Union of Black Episcopalians will host an online prayer vigil for racial justice and the healing of the nation. I plan to attend that event and pray that many of you will be able to join me. It will be an outward sign of the work to which the Holy Spirit calls us – work for which the Spirit empowers us. We must all find ways to express our sorrow for our complicity in the sin of racism. The Gospel calls us to the work of racial healing and to the hard inner work of
personal transformation. That work begins with prayer that speaks the truth. I offer this prayer written by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the summer of 1953.

Let us pray:

Most Gracious and all wise God; Before whose face the generations rise and fall; Thou in whom we live, and move, and have our being. We thank thee for all of thy good and gracious gifts, for life and for health; for food and for raiment; for the beauties of nature and the love of human nature. We come before thee painfully aware of our inadequacies and shortcomings. We realize that we stand surrounded with the mountains of love and we deliberately dwell in the valley of hate. We stand amid the forces of truth and deliberately lie; We are forever offered the high road and yet we choose to travel the low road. For these sins O God forgive. Break the spell of that which blinds our minds. Purify our hearts that we may see thee. O God in these turbulent days when fear and doubt are mounting high give us broad visions, penetrating eyes, and power of endurance. Help us to work with rewed vigor for a warless world, for a better distribution of wealth, and for a brotherhood that transcends race or color. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

+Doug
Welcome to a reflection on the 5th Sunday of Easter. Today’s Gospel begins with words we long to hear in this time of a pandemic. “Do not let your hearts be troubled,” says Jesus. Let’s spend a few minutes seeing how that might be true for us – even now.

The apostle Philip interrupts Jesus. Now Philip is a saint but this was not one of his finer moments. He says, “Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied.” In other words, “show us the Creator of it all. Show us the one who gives us all the answers. Why do we suffer? Why do we die? Why is there evil in the world? Give us those answers and we will be satisfied.” Throughout history we have asked those questions. Maybe we are asking them in this pandemic.

Four hundred years after Philip, St. Augustine will become one of the greatest theological minds of all time. He is in the theologian Hall of Fame. He was obsessed with the big questions and the big answers. He wrote seven books about the Holy Trinity. One time, when he was writing still another book on the Trinity, he was walking along the beach on the Mediterranean and saw a child running back and forth from the sea to a hole he had dug in the sand. The child carried a bucket, filled the bucket with seawater, dumped it into the hole he had made and did this over and over again. Augustine asked him why he was doing that. The child replied, “I’m trying to put the sea into this hole.” Augustine responded, “You can’t do that. It won’t fit.” The child, who was an angel in disguise, said “Neither can you put the Mystery of God into your mind. It won’t fit.”

Philip was like Augustine before that encounter with the angel disguised as a child. Show us the Father, show us all the answers, and we will be satisfied. There is another apostle in today’s gospel. It is Thomas. Unlike Philip, he asks a humble question: “How can we know the way?” Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” The way of sacrificial love – compassion, mercy and hope – is the way. A way that we will not always understand, a way that is greater than anything we can fit into our heads, it is a peace that passes all understanding. And that way will emerge everywhere and forever because love is stronger than death.

I was blessed to come across a poem recently that says this truth far more powerfully than I can articulate it. It is called, “A Coming Alleluia” by The Rev. Erika Takacs. One should never explain a poem before it is read, so don’t tell the bishop, but here is something to keep in mind. The poet will refer to the “old mother hen.” This comes from Luke 13:34 when Jesus uses this maternal image of himself and says this: “How often have I desired to gather you together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.”

Here’s the poem written for our Easter Season, written for our season of a pandemic.
“They say there will be no Easter this year.
No hats.
No hunting.
No hymning.
No lilies to fill a bright room
with a fanfare of pollen.
No garden, no angel,
No victory.

They say that our journey
Born in sackcloth and ashes
will lead us at last to nowhere.

And so we sit worried
that the tomb, this year,
will be found, for once,
still full.

That Mary and the others
will leave with their spices
and come back home with nothing.
That this year the women will finally end their work- anoint and then leave empty.

Ssh. Be still.
Do you not hear her?
Clucking close by like an old mother hen, brooding and sighing and stretching her wings?

Fear not, she says,
for I did it before
In the silence
in the dark
in a closed and locked room
In a world that had known
only death.

Did I not prove
once for all
that there is nothing you can do,
no decision you can make
(for good or for ill)
that can stop
me rising?"

_The Rev. Erika Takacs_

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Jesus is rising. Even now. Especially now.

Amen.

+Doug

One of my favorite theologians, Walter Brueggemann writes,

“The whole book of Acts is about power from God that the world cannot shut down. In scene after scene, there is a hard meeting between the church and worldly authorities, because worldly authorities are regularly baffled by this new power and resentful of it. At one point, in chapter 17, the followers of Jesus are accused of turning the world upside down.”

Walter Brueggemann

As our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry says, “this new world is really right side up.” They proclaimed the Resurrection of Jesus and therefore the old powers of death were no longer defining reality. The new reality was oh so present in the passage we read on the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

“All who believed were together and had all things in common. They would sell their possessions and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and
generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.”

Acts 2: 44-47a

Sounds good, right? They even renamed one of the new members “Barnabus” which means, “son of encouragement.” Wouldn’t you love to have a son or daughter of encouragement in your life right now? Someone saying, “You can do this. I believe in you.” And maybe you could be a son or daughter of encouragement for someone else.

“Distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.” Throughout history there are always people in need. And this pandemic has expanded the list of those in need. It has torn back the curtain on societal and political and financial forces that create an enormous chasm between rich and poor.

I’m inspired by all of you who distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Many of you are distributing food, taking in family members, contributing to organizations that are in direct contact with those in need, sewing masks for under-equipped medical staff. Those are acts of the apostles for our day.

If you read all 28 chapters of Acts, you will see that everything was not as perfect as it was in today’s passage from chapter two. There were disagreements, mistakes, failures. But the Jesus Movement kept on going because it was immersed in prayer, and because it was humble enough to be a learning community. Let me give you one example.

In Chapter 12, Peter was arrested by King Herod. He was bound in chains and several guards watched over him. When the guards fell asleep, an angel came to Peter and set him free. Peter escaped the prison. The next day when Herod heard Peter got away, he ordered all the guards executed.

Go to Chapter 16. This time Paul and Silas are arrested. I told you the early Christians were always in trouble with the government. This time the guards took extra precautions. Paul and Silas were placed in the “innermost cell” with their feet fastened in stocks. There was no angel this time, but an earthquake that broke open the chains and made the doors fly open. Paul and Silas could have easily escaped. But they didn’t. They stayed right there. When the guard came the next morning and saw the doors open, he took his sword out to kill himself, knowing that his boss would have him executed for letting the prisoners escape. Then he heard Paul’s voice, “Do not harm yourself. We are all here.” The jailer ran in, saw Paul and Silas, and realized they stayed to save his life. He was so moved by this act of compassion he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And by that he meant REALLY saved. What would it take to turn away from a world of cynicism and hate and toward a new world of hope and love? To show he was not merely giving intellectual assent to this new way of living, the jailer “washed their wounds.” He joined their mission of mercy, compassion and hope.

You see, the church learned and grew in compassion from Chapter 12 to Chapter 16. From Peter’s arrest to that of Paul and Silas. And in our day, our time of a pandemic, can we choose to stay in place, at home, to slow down the spread of this disease and so save the lives of others? Do we still have a learning church – a church that grows in sacrificial love?

Remember the Easter message: Love is stronger than death, and to that love you are returned.” Amen.

+Doug
The Risen Jesus: Still there, still present, but unseen.

April 24, 2020

Welcome to a reflection on the Gospel for the Third Sunday in Easter. Easter is not just one day. It really is a season. And throughout this season, I have been amazed at how much these stories of resurrection speak to our time in a pandemic.

This week’s Gospel is the Road to Emmaus. Cleopas and an unnamed disciple are walking the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Whenever someone is “unnamed” in a Gospel story, it is meant to represent the reader. You and I are the unnamed disciple.

As they walked along, “talking about all these things that had happened,” the Risen Jesus joins them but they don’t know it is Jesus. He asks them what they are discussing and they stand still, looking sad. Cleopas says, “Are you the only one who does not know what has happened in these days?” Then they tell him about the crucifixion, the death, the empty tomb and how confusing it all is.

If Jesus were to ask us that same question right now, we would tell him all about COVID-19. We would tell him about loved ones getting sick, some of them dying alone in hospitals, about the courage of doctors and nurses and hospital staff, about sheltering at home to keep the virus from spreading, about the millions of jobs lost, and the chaos at the top levels of our government.

After Cleopas and the unnamed disciple answers Jesus’ question, Jesus speaks. He reminds them of the Scripture passages about suffering and entering into Glory.

In our time and in our place, what Scripture verses do you think Jesus would interpret for us now? Maybe they would be these:

“Many are saying ‘oh, that we might see better times! Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.”

Psalm 4

“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me.”

Psalm 23

“In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge…Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe…Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.”

Psalm 31

“You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day. Of the plague that stalks in the darkness, nor of the sickness that lays waste at mid-day…because he is bound to me in love, therefore will I deliver him, I will protect him because he knows my name.”

Psalm 91

As they continue to walk, evening draws near. Cleopas and the other disciple convince the one they still don’t recognize to stay with them. They finally recognize Jesus when he takes bread, blesses it and breaks it. Gospel writer Luke describes what happens: “Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight.”

There are some scripture scholars, who really know their Koine Greek – the language the gospels are written in – who say this is not the best interpretation into English. They say the original is not “and he vanished from their sight.” They say the meaning in the original Greek is, “and he disappeared among them.”

“He disappeared among them.” The Risen Jesus was still there, still present, but unseen.

Cleopas and the other disciple say “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

At the core of our faith is the continued presence of the crucified and Risen Jesus disappeared among us in the form of the Holy Spirit. Every time we go back and read those psalms I quoted before, or the stories of Moses and David and the prophets and Jesus himself, may our hearts burn within us. May we know that the love of God is stronger than death, stronger than any virus and it reaches into our lives wherever we are. We will get through these days and months with our God who is ever present. Amen.
Because of Thomas

April 17, 2020

Welcome to a reflection on the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Easter and for the sixth Sunday of this pandemic in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In my prayers and study of the Easter season Gospel stories, I have been amazed at how much they speak to our situation in this vulnerable time.

And this Sunday, when we hear the mislabeled story of “doubting Thomas,” I think we discover an apostle who is truly speaks to this moment in history.

In all of the gospels, Thomas speaks rarely and those times are all in John’s Gospel. In Chapter 14, Jesus is telling the apostles that in his Father’s house there are many dwelling places. And that he – Jesus – is going to prepare a place for them. He tells them they “know the way” to the place that he is going. Thomas, honest and humble, says “Lord, we do not not where you are going. How can we know the way?”

“How can we know the way?” Isn’t that a pandemic question? When will this end? Will it end and come back? Will society be forever changed? Thomas knows what it is like to live with uncertainty, and to receive the answer of Jesus: “I am the way.” Jesus’ way of compassion is the way.

A few chapters earlier we hear Thomas speak when Jesus says he is going to Bethany, which is near Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the center of the Temple’s and the Empire’s resistance to him. It is a place to be feared for the followers of the Messiah but Thomas says “Let us go also that we may die with him.” Thomas is committed to Jesus no matter what. Can we be committed, no matter what? I am inspired everyday but the doctors and nurses and first responders who go toward the sick and dying. I am inspired by those who do the sometimes difficult work of staying at home to keep this disease from spreading.

And then we get to Sunday’s Gospel. It is evening of the day Jesus rose from the dead. The disciples locked in a house out of fear. And the Risen Jesus appears to them. But Thomas is not with them. John’s Gospel does not tell us why Thomas was missing. I have a theory. Could it be that Thomas is not there because he is still doing the work of Jesus? This apostle who was not afraid to die with Jesus is still doing what Jesus did. He is healing the sick and feeding the hungry. For Thomas, Jesus’ death does not stop the mission he gave us. It’s just a theory, don’t tell the bishop.

When Thomas comes back, the disciples tell him “we have seen the Lord.” Thomas replies with the most misunderstood statement in all of the Gospels: “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and I put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

For this we commonly call him “doubting.” Or could it be that Thomas really knows Jesus? Thomas knows Jesus as the Way. The way of compassionate love. You see, Thomas does not want an angelic, abstract, spiritualized Jesus who is Risen above it all. He wants the real Jesus, the wounded Jesus, who will stay with the wounded of this world and who will take the wounded of this world to where he is.

We know how the story ends. The wounded Jesus appears to Thomas. And Thomas says the most profound expression of faith uttered by any of the apostles: “My Lord and my God.”

In our days, days of terrible suffering, times when some of us are dying without the physical presence of family and friends, a time when many are in financial need, we might ask, “where is God?” Because of Thomas we know where God is. We know that the wounded and Risen Jesus is right here among the wounded of the world. And we know his way – the way of compassionate love – is the salvation of the world. Amen.

Doug
Welcome to an Easter reflection at a time when we need, really need, to feel the presence of the Crucified and Risen Jesus. Every day during this pandemic I have been saying this prayer from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Written in 1968; I believe it speaks to our time.

"God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, minds and souls, and love our neighbor as ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and sorrow."

"When the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail." Easter began in just such a moment. In John’s Gospel we hear that “while it was still dark” Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus. Mary Magdalene got up from bed after what was probably a sleepless night spent reliving the horrific death of her friend Jesus. How would she ever get those images of a tortured man out of her head? And “while it was still dark” she left her home and walked to the tomb to go and anoint the body of the one she thought could save Israel. Mary walked to that tomb in sadness, in grief, in disappointment, in loneliness.

After Mary sees the empty tomb, Peter and the other disciple go in, see the tomb is empty and return home. Mary stays, weeping. As she wept she looked into the tomb and saw two angels. The angels don’t say “Alleluia, Christ is risen.” They don’t say “Hail, Thee Festival Day.” They say “why are you weeping?” She tells them why. And then the one she thinks is the gardener – who is actually the Risen Jesus – asks her the exact same question: “why are you weeping?”

You see friends, New Life, resurrected life, begins when compassion comes into the darkness. “When the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail” that’s when Jesus and his Mission of mercy, compassion and hope rises.

The next thing that happens in the story is that Mary hugs Jesus. At a time of physical distancing we might feel jealous of Mary. But Jesus says “don’t cling to me.” He has to be on his way. The great preacher Barbara Brown Taylor explains: “The only thing we cannot do is hold on to him. He has asked us to please not do that because he knows that all in all we would rather keep him with us where we are than let him take us where he is going. Better we should let him HOLD ON TO US. Better we should let him take us into the presence of God, who is not behind us but ahead of us every step of the way.”

Death could not hold Jesus. When the problems of this world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, the Risen Jesus cannot be held down. Jesus, the crucified, risen, compassionate one holds us in faith, hope and love. And gives our spirits New Life.

Remember Ash Wednesday? That might seem a world away. On that day ashes were placed on our foreheads with the words “Remember you are dust. And to dust you shall return.” That is a true statement. But is only part of the truth. On Easter we hear the rest of the truth: “Love is stronger than death. And to that love you are returned.”
Death could not hold Jesus. But resurrection on that Easter Sunday was not just for Jesus. It was also resurrection for Mary Magdalene. In the darkness and the chaos she experienced the compassionate love of Jesus. And she joined him in a mission of compassionate love in this world. A mission that goes on even "when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail." A mission we see every day in the hospital workers and first responders who keep healing at the risk of their own lives. A mission of compassionate love that expresses itself in the many ways we stay in contact with friends and neighbors and church members even while we can’t physically present. A mission of compassionate love expressed in staying home to keep others safe. Because you see St. Paul got it right:

"Love is patient. Love is kind. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. And now faith, hope and love abide, these three. And the greatest of these is love."

Amen.

+Doug

The Rt. Rev. Douglas J. Fisher, Bishop
For the past two weeks I have been leading Compline at 8 pm every evening via zoom. We get quite a number of participants as we all look for community, prayer and hope in this time. Compline has beautiful prayers to help us do just that. My favorite is:

“Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work or watch or weep this night and give your angels charge of those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.”

I have said that prayer for many years, but somehow it seems written for this time of pandemic. As do the psalms for Compline, such as this one: “Many are saying, ‘Oh that we might see better times! Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.”

Here are a few other prayers and meditations I have use these past two weeks in the midst of Compline. My friend and bishop classmate, Rob Wright, says this:

“Music is not cancelled.
Prayer is not cancelled.
Rest is not cancelled.
Compassion is not cancelled.
Hope is not cancelled.
Study is not cancelled.
Memories are not cancelled.
Phone calls are not cancelled.
Faith is not cancelled.
Planning is not cancelled.
Dreaming is not cancelled.
Laughing is not cancelled.

Imagination is not cancelled.

God is not cancelled.”

The Rt. Rev. Robert Wright

On another night I quoted this from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968:
“God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, minds and souls, and love our neighbor as ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you, God in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and our moments of sorrow, until the day when there shall be no sunset and no dawn.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We normally associate Dr. King with moments of glory on spiritual mountaintops and great dreams. But the time he felt the Divine Presence most deeply was at a time of confusion and despair. One night when he was home alone, he answered the phone. The caller told him unless he ceased his activity for civil rights, he would kill him and all his family.” Martin got off the phone and rested his head on the kitchen table. There he confessed his fear to God. And he asked God for a way out of this work so he would not look like a coward. While Martin sat there in fear, he felt the Divine Presence in the room. An heard a voice saying to him : “Martin, have courage. Stand up for justice. I am with you always.”

In this time of fear and confusion, may we feel that same Divine Presence.

We all know the hymn “Now Thank We All our God.” But do we know the context? The author is Martin Rinckart, a Lutheran pastor who was serving in the walled city of Eilenburgh in Saxony, Germany during the plague of 1637. It was very overcrowded with refugees from the 30 Year War. In the plague, all the clergy died except Rinckart. In that one year, he did over 4,000 funerals, including that of his wife. And yet, in the midst of all that devastation, he wrote these words:

“Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices; who from our mother’s arms hath blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.”

Martin Rinckart
When our children were little and all upset about something, we would tell them to stop and think of five things they are grateful for. (Sometimes our Caragh would react by saying “I hate five things.”) Perhaps in the spirit of Rinckart, we can stop and thank God for “five things.” And may one of those be the doctors, nurses, hospital workers and first responders who are saving lives at the risk of their own.

St. Paul wrote:

“Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends...For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; 12-12

In a time when we have been sheltering at home for many days, perhaps alone, but perhaps with one or many more people, it might be good to remember the wisdom of Saint Paul. When stress builds, remember Love is patient and kind. It does not insist on its own way. It bears all things. Endures all things. Love never ends.

And in these confusing, anxious times, when we see dimly in a mirror, when we know so little of what might come, can we live in faith and hope and love? Knowing the greatest of these is love.

Our Diocese will keep offering compline via zoom every night as long as this pandemic continues. God bless you all.

In Christ,
+Doug

Episcopal WMA is inviting you to pray Compline with Bishop Fisher

Time: Mar 28, 2020 08:00 PM Eastern Time

Join Zoom Meeting
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