



Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church

Service through Worship, Worship through Service

July, 2008



VERGER INSTALLATION – July 20

Trinity, The Woodlands is about to have a new verger. Joanne Welker, head of the Altar Guild has been chosen by Trinity's rector to join the verger corps. Her investiture will be July 20 at the 11:00 A.M. service. All vergers are invited to attend, vest, and process. They should gather in the parlor by 10:30 A.M.

Trinity is located at 3901 S. Panther Creek Drive, The Woodlands. Go to www.trinitywoodlands.org and click on Location for a local map and directions.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT— September 20, 2008

The September 2008 meeting of the Walter Mace Chapter of the Vergers' Guild will be on Saturday, September 20th, at St. George's and St. Patrick's Church, Houston from 1:00 to 3:30. Mary Mac Gregor, director of the Diocese of Texas Iona Institute, will be our speaker.

Lunch will be served at the beginning of the meeting. Donations (\$5) toward lunch would be appreciated. Please RSVP to

Peggy Metcalf, mlfm1943@yahoo.com, so that we can adequately prepare for lunch.

St. George's and St. Patrick's Church is located at 4040 W. Bellfort St, Houston 77025 (713-666-1408). St. George's is near the corner of Stella Link and Bellfort, just south of Loop 610 S. A map is available from their website, www.the2saints.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: SPRING 2009 SEMINAR— APRIL 25

The spring 2009 seminar, our 7th Training Seminar, will be held in Austin on April 25, at St. John's Episcopal Church, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Bill Beare, the our chapter's Austin area contact, and Peggy Metcalf, our president, are coordinators for this day.

Austin Bay, a noted syndicated columnist, author, and professor at the University of Texas, and The Rev. Al Rodriguez, rector of St. John's, will be the speakers. Information from the Church of England Vergers' Guild and their training sessions will be available through the auspices of Bid Drake.

Bill and Peggy will keep you posted as the details evolve. Keep

in touch about the seminar via the website.

A map and directions to St. John's Episcopal may be obtained from their website, www.austinstjohns.org. St. John's is located at 11201 Parkfield Dr, Austin 78758, phone number 512-836-3974.

And a special request in re the 2009 seminar: Those of us involved in making the seminar happen would like to have parts of the seminar recorded on a DVD, so that we have copies available to local chapters. Any one interested in being the chapter's videographer?

NOTE FROM BISHOP HIGH

Patricia Shepherd, our Secretary/Treasurer, received a very nice letter from The Rt. Rev. Rayford High, Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

Bishop High is now a member of our chapter, and has sent us a generous donation. He is quite supportive of the ministry of vergers.

OUR THANKS GO TO ...

St. John's Episcopal Church in La Porte for sharing their parish hall and their vergers as hosts for our June meeting. Carroll Blakeway was in charge of providing a delightful lunch for the sixteen of us who attended the meeting, as a joyful donation to the chapter.

The Rev. Lacy Largent, the speaker for the June meeting, gave a fine presentation on the ministries at the Lou Lawler Seafarer's Center and the Howard T. Tellepson Center of the Port of Houston. You may have seen Mother Lacy at Camp Allen; she is the Spiritual Director there.

Easter in Russia was...

The following photographs are from a Russian site, mentioned in a liturgy-l listserv note, dated June 2008.

The photograph provides an interesting contrast to how we Episcopalians "do" it. There is a lot to say about using one large emblem (the chalice on the altar, in this case) at the beginning of the service, rather than as many chalices as would be needed for a given service. It is often noted that the more symbols (as a cross) are visible in a service, the weaker we make the original solo emblem.

Commentary offered on the pictures: (Posted by: Tom-Poelker@aim.com Date: Mon Jun 9, 2008 11:18 am (PDT))

1. It looks to me like there are two patens with two different kinds of bread. What is the correct explanation?

This picture was taken just before the Great Entrance ("offertory procession"). The only bread which will be consecrated (the "Lamb") is the big cubic one on the main paten. It has been cut from a large loaf along with certain prayers during the Proskomidê (Oblation), will be consecrated during the Anaphora, and fractioned just before communion. The bishop in the picture is finalizing the Proskomide by removing small particles from a secondary loaf in commemoration of the living and the departed. He will then cover the gifts with the veils, cense them, and hand them to the deacon for the Great Entrance.

The preparation of the Lamb and the rest of this activity takes place, not at the Holy Table, but at the Table of Oblation ("Prothesis"), a table situated at the northeast corner of the sanctuary, where the gifts are prepared. You can tell it's not the altar because there is no antimimension on the table and the other items appointed for the altar (gospel book etc) are not present in their proper places; and indeed the next picture in the series shows the completion of the Great Entrance. The first picture (above), on the other hand, shows the bishops (the main one is the patriarch of Moscow) standing at the Holy Table itself; note the antimimension under the chalice; the chalice veils on the corners of the altar, the placement of the spoon, etc (the gospel book would be just off screen), and of course obviously the Beautiful Gate is just behind them.

During the liturgy, just before the Great Entrance, as the choir sings the Cherubic Hymn ("Let us who mystically represent the cherubim... lay aside all earthly care, that we may receive the King of all..."), the hierarch goes to the Table of Oblation and commemorates the First Hierarch of his church and his fellow

bishops-- this is the famous "Reading of the Diptychs" which you read about in Church History, the point usually being that someone was removed from someone else's list and *not* commemorated at this juncture in the service--- communion is thus literally broken, because they are not commemorated in the chalice. This particular picture is actually very significant, theologically and historically, because it shows the first time in about 80 years that a hierarch of the former "Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia" (ROCOR) has commemorated the Patriarch of Moscow at the diptychs; the bishop is Archbishop Laurus, Rocor's own first

hierarch, and the occasion is the reunification of Rocor with the mother church. You can see the same liturgical moment performed the next day at http://www.pravoslavie.ru/gallery/image65_7185.htm. On the other hand, the first picture (above) appears to have been snapped during or after the Anaphora, perhaps just after the communion of the hierarchs while the Gifts are being divided for the faithful, since the next in the series it appears in, seems to be the greeting which the hierarchs exchange after communion-- another significant moment.



As you see in the picture of the Proskomidê, there are many particles of bread at the base of the Lamb on the big paten; these would have been added by a priest or two during the first part of the liturgy, who read lists of names provided by the faithful and removed a particle for each name and put it on the paten. The smaller paten is simply for the conven-

ience of the priest who is taking care of this function. It's obviously easier to work with the small plate close in front of you than to keep reaching for a paten which is high off the table and set back a ways, especially when reading hundreds of names. The priest who reads the commemorations (and in the case of the picture, the bishop) will brush the particles onto the main paten with the Lamb when he's done reading all the names. As I say, only the Lamb is consecrated, divided, and (in our manner of giving communion) put in the chalice with the wine for distribution to the faithful on a spoon (see picture 1 above, at the right edge of the picture, for the spoon). The commemorative particles remain on the paten. After communion, the priest returns the holy Gifts to the altar, and sweeps them into the chalice, reciting, "Wash away, O Lord, the sins of all those remembered here"-- so, um, "literally", we are washed in the blood of the Lamb. The Gifts are transferred back to the Table of Oblation, and the deacon(s) consume them and purify the chalice.

The portions of the loaf which are left after the Lamb is cut and removed from it at the preparation, and the unused portions of the secondary loaves are chopped up by the servers and distributed to the faithful after communion as a kind of palate cleanser, and at the end of the liturgy to all the faithful as a blessing and as a consolation for those who couldn't go to communion for one reason or another. This is the "Antidoron", "anti-" meaning "instead of" or "opposite" and "doron" meaning "gift".

2. Also, there seems to be a lot of other hardware on the altar, particularly in the right foreground. What all am I seeing, please?



In the right foreground is the "Asterisk" or "Star", which is simply a frame designed to keep the chalice veil off the gifts when they are covered and transferred to the altar. Often (but not in this case) a little metal star dangles from the place where the arms cross. It of course "represents" the star of Bethlehem as the

prayer says when the priest puts it over the gifts. I think that item is the only "other hardware" there, yes? The embroidered cloth under it would be the main chalice veil (the "Aer" or "Air").

3. Does it take multiple people to pour from these multi-gallon chalices? Or is much of the wine ladled out first?

I've never seen a chalice that big in use, so I don't know if they use a ladle of some kind (never heard of one though), or just tip and pour, but as I pointed out before, the lip of the chalice is flared so that if they do pour, the wine will pour easily and without dribbling

down the outside. The big chalices I've seen are only about twice or maybe three times as big as a regular one, and not

that hard to manipulate.

A BIT OF RELIGIOUS TERMINOLOGY

From *An Exultation of Larks* by James Lipton

An emersion of Baptists
 A membership of Presbyterians
 A governance of Episcopalians
 A book of Mormons
 A visit of Jehovah's Witnesses
 A meeting of Quakers
 A glossolalia of Pentecostals
 A mass of priests
 * A sea of bishops
 A fidget of altar boys
 An evensong of choirboys
 A commentary of rabbis
 A keen of cantors
 A disputation of Talmudists
 A prophet (often, profit) of televangelists
 So, what is a grouping of vergers?

* Can anyone explain the pun?

LAMBETH CONFERENCE - JULY 2008

The Rev. Stacey Fussell, vicar of St. Catherine of Sienna, Missouri City has been invited to serve in the Secretariat of the Lambeth Conference 2008. Mother Stacey previously served as a brand-new deacon at the Lambeth Conference 1998 as head of Secretariat Section 1. The Secretariat is charged with working with the bishops to produce for publication the official resolutions and statements of the conference. Mother Stacey was a speaker at our first Verger's Seminar.

SPECIAL REQUEST

Peggy Metcalf would like to have stories and photos (high quality, jpeg if possible) from those willing souls of our Chapter, who have made their own verges from scratch.

Where did you find your emblem on top of the verge? What did you use to make the body or arm of the verge? How did you attach the emblem to the handle or arm? Why is your verge special to you? How do you carry your verge at your church for a typical Eucharist?

Potential uses for these stories include a display at our Verger's Guild booth at Diocesan 2009, and as a subject for a potential quarterly meeting, or in an upcoming pamphlet. Send the information to Peggy via email, mlfm1943@yahoo.com or to her home address, 4609 University Oaks Blvd, Houston, TX 77004.

Annual Dues

Annual dues are \$20.00. Please make your checks payable to: Walter Mace Memorial Chapter VGEC and send to: Patricia Shepherd, 5326 Carmen, Houston, TX 77033

Newsletter

The Chapter newsletter is posted on our website at www.texasvergers.org and e-mailed to all members who have given us their e-mail. If you want a copy mailed to you, please contact our Communications Officer, Bid Drake at bdrake2939@consolidated.net or by phone 926-756-3566. Please provide your name and complete address.

Contact Information

We are constantly trying to keep your contact information up to date so that we are able to keep you informed of all activities within our Chapter. Please notify the Communications Officer, Bid Drake at bdrake2939@consolidated.net, whenever there is a change in your address, phone number or e-mail.

Thanks!

Officers

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