

The Abundant Lite

September 8, 2011 For
Sunday, September 11th

From The Rector

Forgiveness From the Heart

We are caught.

This week we are caught between an important Gospel reading and an important anniversary. Each of them is cause for reflection and the reflections that may come from each are not easy or comfortable.

The 10th anniversary of September 11, 2011 is probably on more peoples' minds than the teaching on forgiveness in Matthew 18. Each of us probably has a clear memory of where we were on that day and how we felt. I do. We may be less clear about where we are as a country and church today and how we feel. I am.

This Sunday we will remember and we will pray.

Our Gospel reading is about radical forgiveness and I wish it was not on our schedule against such a high profile memorial, because I think it is easy for the one to overshadow the other. I would like us to hear Jesus' teaching on forgiveness as just that - Jesus teaching us about forgiveness. I think his message may be lost or devalued if it is placed against 9/11 before it is owned by each of us.

Under the best of circumstances, forgiveness is difficult. Scott Hoezee [1]reflects: To paraphrase a well-known saying from C.S. Lewis, everybody agrees in principle that forgiveness is a mostly lovely idea and this agreement continues right up until that moment when you have an actual person in front of you whom you must forgive—then suddenly caveats, nuances, and provisos start to fill the air.

At the beginning of our reading, Peter is looking to set reasonable boundaries on forgiveness. Jesus won't have it. At the end of the disturbing parable, Jesus reminds the disciples that forgiveness is not an intellectual activity, but must come from the heart. Boundless forgiveness that comes from the very center of who we are. My work is to embrace the depth of Jesus' calling. My

temptation is to jump to all sorts of obvious exceptions.

The example of Jesus did not admit exceptions. "Father, forgive them."

Join us in worship as we practice forgiveness with our brothers and sisters in church. It will get us ready for heart-deep reconciliation.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Matthew 18:21-35

Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him,

saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity

for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that

same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they

were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Interfaith Memorial

[2]Click here for directions

Episcopal Relief and Development - Somalia

On July 20, the United Nations declared a famine in two regions of southern Somalia. The food shortage is the consequence of a sustained drought that is said to be the worst in more than 60 years. Reports indicate that over 800,000 people have fled Somalia as a result, many seeking refuge in the neighboring countries of Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. Rates of mortality and malnutrition are extremely high; estimates indicate that malnutrition among children under age five currently exceeds 20% and is increasing, with over 12 million people across the region in need of food and water.

In response to the developing crisis, Episcopal Relief & Development will be working through its network of Anglican and Episcopal partners to support the humanitarian work of local organizations such as Ukamba Christian Community Services in Kenya and Christian Community Services Mount Kenya East (CCS-MKE).

Episcopal Relief & Development's support will be used to provide food aid (including maize, beans and cooking oil) to as many as 1,320 households in four areas over the next five months. Orphans, widows and the elderly will receive priority during distribution. The program will also support community efforts to prepare the land for the next rainy season, with soil and water preservation measures such as terracing and sand dam construction. Rains are expected during November and December 2011.

Please continue to pray for all those affected by drought and famine in East Africa, and especially for those who have fled their homes in search of food and water for survival. Please also pray for the return of rains, and healthy harvests in the future.

To support the crisis please make a contribution to St. Paul in the Desert and write in the memo section ERD: Disaster Response Fund.

Faith Building

Adult Faith Building - "Sundays at 9:15"

Sunday, we begin the Fall Adult Faith Building Program with a four week study on "An Introduction to Understanding Islam" September 11, 18, 25 and October 2.

This series will be led by Jerry DiNoto. Having 1.2 billion adherents, Islam is the second largest and fastest-growing world religion! Unfortunately, many of us in the West know little about this faith, except what we hear about the actions of a minority of radical extremists. To better understand this faith, we'll use DVD presentations by Dr. John L Esposito, Professor of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University. Join us Sunday in the Library, at 9:15am

Adult Faith Building - "Sundays at 9:15"

October 9, 16, 23, and 30, The Rev. Canon Victoria Hatch will guide us in Understanding the Hebrew Scriptures. This series provides an overview of what we traditionally call the "Old Testament." We'll explore [1] the Torah (or Pentateuch); [2] the Former Prophets (or what we call the Historical Books); [3] the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Book of the Twelve); and [4] the Poetic Books and Wisdom Literature. The course will give us a valuable background for any future study of individual writings from the Hebrew Scripture. Be sure to bring a Bible and a friend!

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"Thursdays at 7" begins THIS THURSDAY on Sept. 8th

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Adult Faith Building - "Thursdays at 7:00"

Continuing "In the Footsteps of Paul: An In-Depth Study of the Apostle's Missionary Travels and Writings." The focus now turns to the Apostle Paul as the earliest Christian writer and his Epistles. Using several new DVD presentations by Prof. Bart D. Ehrman, the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, we will delve into some interesting questions

he raises. In the last classes, we ourselves will make an in-depth study of Paul's first letter to the Church at Thessalonica. So, bring your Bible and join us in the Library on September 15th, 22nd, and 29th at 7pm.

Adult Faith Building - "Thursdays at 7:00"

In October, Jerry DiNoto will explore with us "The Creeds of the Church." Historically, Christian creeds have included everything from brief affirmations

to comprehensive statements. The earliest Christian creed is found in the New Testament, which declares, "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9). We will examine the historic creeds (The Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed). as well as contemporary confessions of faith, especially those coming out of the Anglican Church of England and the New Zealand Prayer Book.

"Thursdays at 7" in the Library, October 6, 13, 20 and 27. See you there!

Roy's Desert Resource Center

Please Continue to Aid the Homeless - The population of men, women and children

being cared for at Roy's Resource Center has increased 30% this year. These

clients are in need of the basic necessities of life. The SOS Fund needs YOUR support to continue to help our homeless friends who are trying to break the cycle of homelessness. Each month \$300.00 comes from the fund to provide undergarments, socks and other necessities. If you are interested in supporting this outreach ministry, drop a check in the collection plate. Make the check payable to: St. Paul's, and in the memo area, write: SOS Fund.

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Just ONE Extra Item!

In your grocery cart is what we ask of our parishioners to get in the habit of purchasing for the Desert SOS Dessert Ministry of St. Paul in the Desert.

While

accomplishing your weekly grocery shopping, buy ONE extra item. This ONE extra item would assist us in providing dessert for the children, their parents, plus

the rest of the 90+ clients, of Roy's Desert Resource Center. Dessert (box of cookies, doughnuts, fruit, cheese or any other special treat) is provided every

Monday evening by St. Paul volunteer servers and providers. These same 8 parishioners, week after week, from their own pockets, make sure that the St. Paul's Dessert Ministry provides for these special people who look forward to this once a week treat, especially the children. Parishioners can bring items to church on the weekend or deliver desserts before 4:00 p.m. on Monday. Place the perishable desserts in the Parish Hall refrigerator (labeled clearly "SOS"). Contact Hap for more information at 760.323.5726.

Well In The Desert

Now Serves Lunch at St. Paul's on Wednesdays

The Well in the Desert has moved its meal service at St. Paul's from Fridays to

Wednesdays. In order to support the retail businesses in our neighborhood, we requested a change in the day of our meal service. Now a hot meal is served at St. Paul's from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Wednesday.

The Well needs volunteers to carry out their services and they need financial support to provide them. You can call (760) 327-8577 to volunteer. If you want

to contribute to the Well, just write "Well" in the memo portion of your check.

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Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

[4]Click here to receive a Printer Friendly (text only) version.

Reminder to All Singers

The Adult Choir will meet for the first time at our Annual Retreat in Los Angeles September 9-11. This is an excellent time for new singers to join the group for team building, rehearsal of Fall music, lots of tasty food and great fun together. There is still space available to attend and singers (of all vocal parts and high school age or above) with a desire to assist in our worship services are needed. Please contact Nathan Ensign for more details through the Church office at: 760-320-7488 Ext. 225.

P.S. The first regular rehearsal will be on Wednesday Sept. 14th at 7:00 p.m. if you can't make the retreat.

Sunday School Resumes

On Sunday 11 September St. Paul's Sunday School resumes at the time of the 10:30 AM service. St. Paul's Sunday School seeks to make a safe and welcoming place for young children where they are introduced to the gifts of our faith.

For some years we have employed the Godly Play program which presents the principal stories of Holy Scripture with child friendly words and materials. Sunday School is conducted by two adults, Storyteller and Doorkeeper, trained in the Diocese's Safeguarding God's People program.

The children come from the church to Sunday School in the Parish Hall at 10:30 and return to the church to receive the Holy Communion and rejoin their family and friends.

Do you have children or grandchildren who might enjoy St. Paul's Sunday School, or know of someone who does? For further information please contact Bonnie Stroock, 760 324-7949, or Michael Howard, 760 323-1050.

SAVE THE DATE!

ST. PAUL AT THE FOLLIES

Sun., December 4, 2011

1:30pm. 50 tickets available.

Christmas Show starring
John Davidson.
\$49 each. (\$84 value.)
Questions?: call Mike Carson
(760) 318-6377

Coffee Hour

The hosts for the 10:30 a.m. Coffee Hour are Elaine Clermont and her daughter, Simone.

The 2011 coffee hour sign-up sheets are posted on the north wall at Hogarth Hall. Find an empty slot and fill it with your name. For more information, call
Ray Kelley at 760.778.1725.

Daughters of the King

DOK's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 27th at 1:00 p.m. in the church condo. The discussion will be on the book, "Heaven is Real" by Todd Burpo. Bring completed prayer shawls as the availability of them is extremely low. We extend an invitation to all parish ladies and newcomers to join us and join in the fellowship of this worthy ministry. Call Bonnie Stroock for directions or questions at 760.324.7949.

The St. Paul Columbarium Niches are over 60% sold out. If you are interested in a specific niche, please do not wait to purchase it or reserve it. Deposits are required for all niche reservations. Please contact Jonathan Abernethy-Deppe, at 760.320.7488, ext. 224 for further information.

The Bishop's Appeal

The Bishop's Appeal supports the mission of the diocese through gifts that are used for support of our ongoing programs and ministries: congregational support and development, leadership development, pastoral care, ministry development, and Christian formation. 100% of your gift goes to supporting our ministries. To make a gift, to the secure website at www.edsd.org or mail to: Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, 2728 Sixth Ave., San Diego, CA 92103.

Report Sexual Misconduct

As part of our ongoing commitment to creating a safe haven for everyone, please be reminded that our diocese values the tenet of our baptismal covenant to

"respect the dignity of every human being." Part of the way we live into that is to train people in the prevention of sexual misconduct. Another part that goes hand-in-hand with training is reporting incidences of sexual misconduct. Our bishop, the Rt. Rev. James R. Mathes, takes reports seriously and investigates them thoroughly and confidentially. If you believe you have experienced sexual misconduct of any kind, please contact Bishop Mathes immediately: bishopmathes@edsd.org, 619-481-5450.

NEWCOMERS

Are you receiving the latest mailings and the Abundant Lite weekly newsletter? If not, then we probably don't have your correct mailing and/or email addresses. We want to make sure that you receive the invites to join us in a series of Newcomer events that we believe you will find to be informative and enjoyable. Please fill out the form in the pew pocket and place it in the plate, give it to an usher, or send your contact information by email to: valerie.winters@stpaulsps.org

Bullies Not Welcome Here

At St. Paul in the Desert we want to welcome all worshipers to a place that is free of violence and bullying.

Physical, verbal or emotional violence against others or against oneself is not acceptable.

[5]"It Gets Better" is a series of video messages to encourage Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender youth and let them know that they are loved as they are.

[6]"A Blessing for Those Who Are Bullied" was written by the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, a Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

It is not enough to say "NO" to bullies. It is important to stand up for people and to provide resources for those who have been the targets.

References

1. <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/thisWeek/index.php>
2. <http://maps.google.com/maps?q=332+West+Alejo+Road,+Palm+Springs,+CA&hl=en&ll=33.830747,-116.551251&spn=0.011461,0.026157&sll=33.834943,-116.547702&sspn=0.011461,0.026157&vpsrc=0&z=16>
3. <http://www.wellinthedesert.org/>
4. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/The-Abundant-Lite-Sept.-1-2011.pdf>

5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPZ5eUrNF24>

6. <http://scg-wakeupcall.blogspot.com/2010/10/blessing-for-those-who-are-bullied.html>