



The Journey

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

An Online Monthly Pictorial News Record



September 2021

Let us this month

- * Wear a mask when appropriate
- * Attend Christian Formation Classes in person or online
- * Read the book of Romans
- * Consider talking with your priest about giving
- * Send photos of your ministry to The Journey staff
- * Remember you **can** be a blessing to others- just do it

Floral Arrangements

Flowers in the Sanctuary



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Photo by Graham White

Reflections

by Fr. Charles A. Browning II
Priest in Charge

More About Sin

Recently, we had a brief discussion on sin as part of our online, midweek Christian formation offerings. In that installment I talked a bit about how sin originates from two terms: the Hebrew “hata,” which refers to getting an arrow to hit a target, but missing a golden ring hung in the middle; and the Greek “hamartias,” which refers to throwing a spear, but it falling short of it’s intended target. I also noted that it was Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, that first utilizes the term “hamartia” for philosophic purposes, to describe the “event” that sets in motion the tragic elements of Greek tragedies—and that the apostle Paul seems to draw from Aristotle’s work in ascribing this “hamartia” as the spiritual *thing* that has caused humanity’s downfall and ultimate death.

However, I was also told by a few parishioners that they still don’t know what “sin” is. Asking about, specifically, the standard represented by that golden ring hung on the target board. I suppose, in my excitement over learning about the Aristotle connection (and how it helped me to finally make sense of the notoriously difficult sentence structure of Romans 7:14-25), I got a little carried away and “missed the mark” in my own way. Sorry about that. So, I will attempt to offer some clarity here.

One of the things that has been surprising, to me at least, is that the Bible doesn’t offer the most clear definition of sin. The closest thing we get to this is found in I John 3:4: “sin is lawlessness.” That’s it.

The entire verse reads “all who practice lawlessness commit sin, for sin is lawlessness.” This begs any number of questions. Such as “which law?” Are we talking about Jewish law? Does this mean that failing to keep kosher is sin? Does this go against what Jesus tells Saint Peter in Acts 10:10-16? If not Jewish law, is it *all* law? If that’s the case, what about civil disobedience? What about Daniel and his friends choosing their various fates rather than cave to Babylonian and Persian idolatry (which was legally binding)? How do we understand Saint Paul’s repeated notions that we are no longer under the law, but are now under the Spirit?

Well, let’s take a look at this same verse in ‘Olelo Hawai’i. Maybe Hawaiian translators were able to see something that we miss in English. *Ka Baibala Hemolele* (2012 orthographic revision) translates the the verse as: “‘O ka mea e hana aku ana i ka hewa, ‘o ia ka mea e ha’ihā’i ana i ke kānāwai; a ‘o ka hewa, ‘o ia nō ke kū’ē ‘ana i ke kānāwai.” The way that I read that second part is “sin (ka hewa) is in opposition to (ia nō ke kū’ē) the law/code/regulation (ke kānāwai).” For me, the key emphasis is found in the notion of “opposition.”

Being “without law” (the literal meaning of “lawlessness,” itself an direct translation of the Greek “anomia” used in this verse) suggests something slightly different than “being in opposition to law.” Being “without law” suggests that one is indifferent to notions of law, but “opposition” expresses intent, will. So, worded slightly differently, I John 3:4 could tell us that “sin is the willful opposing of law.”

Now, it’s a fairly frustrating thing that the New Testament’s use of terms like “law” are vague enough that it’s possible to interpret passages as either referring to a specific law (like the Torah) or to a more general sense of “law and order.” I think the latter is the more common intention of the New Testament writers. Which means that Saint John is telling us that sin is characterized by a general spirit of opposition toward “order.”

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Remember, the earliest Christians were Jews and they saw the universe as God's work to bring chaos into "cosmos"—a Greek term for "order." And God did this by issuing commands (see Genesis 1). These Jewish believers understood that everything exists by virtue of God's commanding it to exist. As we state in Eucharistic Prayer C: "at your command all things came to be" (p. 370, BCP). The early Christians believed that any sense of order was the result of God's will. This is why Saint Paul wrote about obedience to the Roman authorities—even as they were killing Christians and Jews (see Romans 13). He doesn't write this to encourage blind obedience to the government, but rather to encourage a general sense of orderliness (and not to bring unnecessary scrutiny or violence on the Christian community). It's a similar thing to both Gandhi and King advocating for non-violent resistance: violence results in justified retaliation, non-violent resistance aims to arouse shame in an oppressor, while conforming to a "higher" sense of law.

Reading back over the above, it's clear that, well, nothing is really all that more clear, is it? Which I think is precisely the point. The standard, the "gold ring," is perfect conformity to God's will, which is God's sense of order. Sin is living in opposition to that standard. But that standard is constantly being revealed to us. 200 years ago, few questioned the possible sinfulness of giving preference to one race over another—much less the enslavement of people. But we've now come to realize that such things are not within the boundaries of that golden ring. And so, with God's help, we adjust our aim.

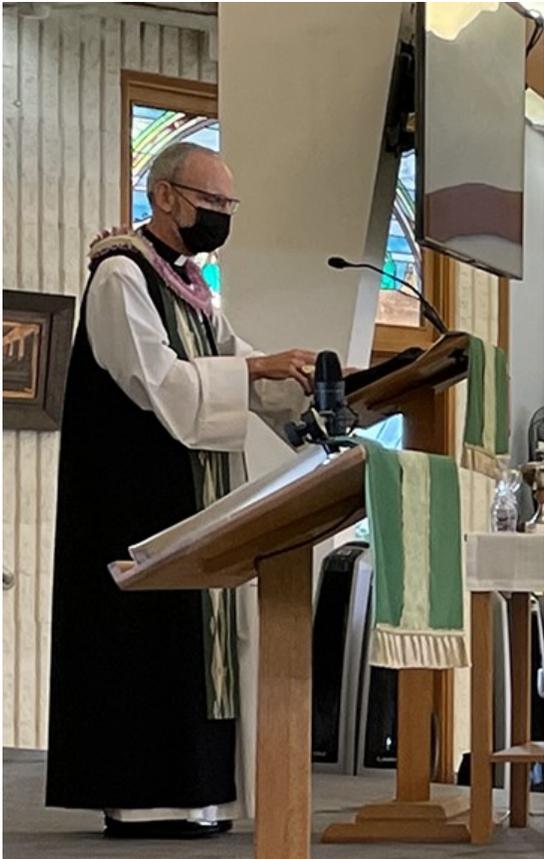
One of the things that the writers of the New Testament are very careful to avoid is fostering a new set of rules and regulations to replace those of the Torah. This is because they realized the danger in suggesting that Jesus' death and resurrection were not sufficient enough for

salvation. This is why Saint Paul tells us that we now live defined by God's grace, and not under the thumb of rules. Because rules simply provide the shape to what is considered "orderly." Which means that rules can be revised. For Christians, the rules are always revised in accordance with what the Holy Spirit is revealing to us in our journey toward "being conformed to the image of Christ." We've come to see just how deep we've fallen from what God intended for us. But, God's graciousness allows us to see those failures for what they are, and to allow Him to make adjustments in us.

So long as we are not in opposition to those adjustments.

This is difficult work. In comparison, following a list of rules is easier. But God wants us to move past such things, to wade into the deep waters of aligning more closely to what He intends for us. From the beginning, God gave creation a trajectory—to be on a journey focused on Him. Sin is us attempting to swim against that trajectory, living in opposition to what God has intended for us from the foundation of creation.

My Notes:



The Rt. Rev. Robert Fitzpatrick

Bishop's Visit



August 29, 2021

Bishop Fitzpatrick provided a thought provoking message. He met informally with the vestry after the service to "Talk story".

You Can Help

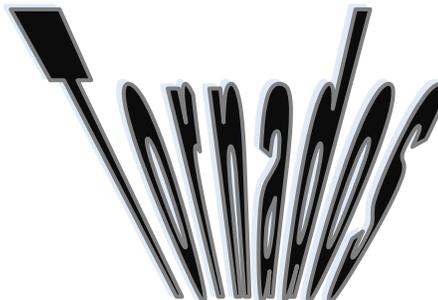
Wild Fires

Earthquakes

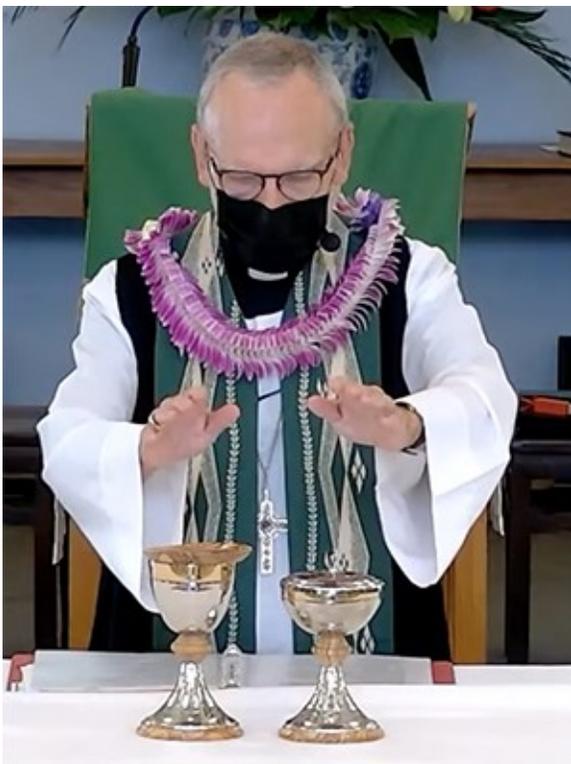
ESL4pdnsrke2

Ida Hurricane

COVID



Talk with your priest to see how



Blessing of the chalice, paten and ciborium



The new Holy Art olive wood and gold bathed metal chalice, paten and ciborium was bequeathed to Saint Mary's in memory of Betty & Shurei Hirozawa.

Standing with Bishop Fitzpatrick and Fr. Browning are from left to right, daughter Joan Fujita, son Robert Hirozawa and daughter Gail Hirozawa of Betty & Shurei.

Flowers in the Sanctuary

Prepared Faithfully by Arlene Sato



The floral arrangement in the sanctuary in front of the cross are always fresh, beautiful and well maintained. The person that makes this happen year in and year out is our very own faithful church greeter, Arlene Sato. Because of the Bishop's official visit on August 29, 2021, Arlene added some purple anthuriums and orchids for the occasion.



Arlene usually use tropical flowers. For Easter Arlene use spring flowers and poinsettias are purchased for Christmas.

Arlene said she doesn't recall when she started to do church arrangements saying: "kinda fell into it when Bernice Tawarahara asked me to help." The way Arlene does the church floral arrangements is mostly the same way Bernice did hers.

After working with Mrs. Tawarahara for a while, Arlene was looking for a new job. She found a flower shop that was hiring and started at the bottom, learned the profession and as she states: "...found a love for doing all sorts of arrangements."

Thank you Arlene for your dedication and faithfulness in all your ministries. You just had a birthday in August, we pray that the Lord shower you with special blessings this birthday year.

PIP



You Are Invited To Attend Christian Formation Classes

**Every Wednesday 6pm - live on YouTube
Saint Mary's Honolulu**

Saint Paul's Letter to the
Romans

A study of maybe the most important letter ever
written. Wednesdays @ 6:00 pm on YouTube

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The Journey Team Together Since 2014



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Road Map



An Online Monthly Pictorial News Record

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Vestry Meeting

10:15am
September 19



Sunday Worship Service 9:00am

In-Person and Live Streamed
on YouTube & FaceBook

Prayer Ministry 8:15am
Sundays in
Soldier Chapel

**Office Close
September 6**

In Memorial



5-Shurei Hirozawa

7-Jane Oki

10-Robert Kumura

12-Bernice Tawarahara

25-Gladys Miyamoto

5-Rania Hee

12-Rose Chu

16-Tamae Endo

17-Richert Au Hoy

17-Gail Hirozawa

24-Leland Lee

26-Hugh Kaiser

27-Albert Nishikawa

September Birthdays

Christian Formation Classes

Wednesdays: 6pm
Live Stream on YouTube

Saint Mary's Honolulu



11-Leland & Laurie Lee