



Sacred Space Quarterly Newsletter

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Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Where there is Charity and
Wisdom,

- there is neither fear nor
ignorance.

Where there is patience and
humility,

- there is neither anger
nor disturbance.

Where there is poverty with
joy,

- there is neither greed
nor avarice.

Where there is rest and
meditation,

- there is neither anxiety
nor restlessness.

Where there is fear of the
Lord to guard an entrance,

- there the enemy cannot
have a place to enter.

Where there is a heart full
of mercy and discernment,

- there is neither excess
nor hardness of heart.

Something to Think About shared [Beauty for Ashes's](#) [photo](#).

Pastor Jeremiah Steepok (pictured below) transformed himself into a homeless person and went to the 10,000 member church that he was to be introduced as the head pastor at that morning. He walked around his soon to be church for 30 minutes while it was filling with people for service....only 3 people out of the 7-10,000 people said hello to him. He asked people for change to buy food....NO ONE in the church gave him change. He went into the sanctuary to sit down in the front of the church and was asked by the ushers if he would please sit n the back. He greeted people to be greeted back with stares and dirty looks, with people looking down on him and judging him.

As he sat in the back of the church, he listened to the church announcements and such. When all that was done, the elders went up and were excited to introduce the new pastor of the church to the congregation....."We would like to introduce to you Pastor Jeremiah Steepok"....The congregation looked around clapping with joy and anticipation....The homeless man sitting in the back stood up.....and started walking down the aisle.....the clapping stopped with ALL eyes on him....he walked up the altar and took the microphone from the elders (who were in on this) and paused for a moment....then he recited

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'



"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

After he recited this, he looked towards the congregation and told them all what he had experienced that morning...many began to cry and many heads were bowed in shame.... he then said....Today I see a gathering of people.....not a church of Jesus Christ. The world has enough people, but not enough disciples...when will YOU decide to become disciples? He then dismissed service until next week.....Being a Christian is more than something you claim. It's something you live by and share with others.

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Hinse
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The Rev. John Trubina
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Publisher



A Ministry of the Church

When Deacon John asked me to write an article for Sacred Space, I jumped at the chance. Not a day goes by where I don't think in large or small ways about the inequities that exist in our country and in the San Francisco Bay area. And those numbers are staggering.

The documentary "A Place at the Table" says: "50 million people in the U.S.—one in four children—don't know where their next meal is coming from, despite our having the means to provide nutritious, affordable food for all Americans." The great irony is that many of these families and individuals are the working poor and middle class. I know because I see and touch and speak to them at Sacred Space, Hayward. And what hurts most is looking at the children.

Maria Chilton, director of the Center for Hunger-Free Communities worries about them too. She says: "If you think about what's happening in the first three years of life the brain is growing so fast. They're the most important years of human development. So every moment those are the building blocks of good cognitive, social and emotional development. Neurons are growing and pruning and very active. 700 neurons are growing a second for an infant. It's an important window of human development.

So any type of nutritional deprivation during this time has a severe impact on the brain even if it's just episodic, even if it happens once or twice a month those are moments of lost opportunity to be able to interact with their family and their environment, to pay attention and to learn something new which helps to grow more neurons."

So here's the rub.

Sacred Space is more than just a feeding program...this is a ministry of the church, or rather several churches in partnership with business and even the public sector in feeding people: mind, body, and spirit. Sacred Space is a congregation made up of people on the margins, a church without walls, a "come as you are" congregation that meets in the park next to Hayward City Hall rain or shine. And the community of St. Clare's in Pleasanton has committed our time, our resources, and our efforts to support this ever growing ministry.

We do it because a mature Christian faith requires nothing less than a theology of the cross and resurrection. That theology says that those who have need to listen, engage, and sacrifice in order to be with Jesus on the cross. It also says that those who do not have need to experience being listened too, uplifted and supported in order to know that resurrection includes them. And while Sacred Space can't meet every need (I know of no church that can) it is a powerful ministry that began with one man's promise to a homeless woman and has grown to encompass a diocese.

My only wish is that more people would come and take part. Inclusivity has been a buzz word in the Episcopal Church for years but speaking as a cradle Episcopalian, we have epically failed at being "inclusive" in our congregations. Too many of our poor brothers and sisters linger on the streets, dig through garbage cans, and freeze in the summer because our inclusive parishes are not welcoming places. Sacred Space is one more chance to say to those on the margins: "welcome!" and mean it.

Are you an ordained minister of the church? Come, bring your congregation and celebrate the Eucharist at Sacred Space! If a suburban congregation like St. Clare's can do it, surely any congregation can!

Are you a lay person with a little extra time? Come hand out a meal or spend time listening to a member of the Sacred Space community! You will find your perceptions about the marginalized shattered and your heart lifted by caring! Are you a young person who would like to help? Come to Sacred Space and lend your time. No person is too young or too old to make a difference!

Are you a person with more money than happiness? Come, open your heart and

your purse or wallet and let Sacred Space turn your dollars into loaves and fishes to feed the masses! Not only are your dollars tax deductible, but your generosity will go to where the needs are the greatest.

In conclusion, the issue isn't whether this ministry is doing all it can for the homeless or poor, or whether or not it's a "real Episcopal church." The issue is that God is doing something new in the Episcopal Diocese of California and its ministry beckons with an opportunity for anyone who wants to see what exciting things the Holy Spirit is bring about.

Come expecting to share your gifts, and know that you will also be the one who leaves transformed.

Yours for the reign of God,

*The Reverend Ron Culmer, Rector
St. Clare's Episcopal Church, Pleasanton*

Opening Eyes and Heart

Over the past year, I've had the privilege of being Sacred Space's celebrant and preacher four times. I might as well admit it: was completely hooked from the first.

I love open-air preaching, and the give-and-take of the gathered community where we have a real dialogue when we break open that Sunday's scripture. I also know so deeply that the folks at the Hayward gathering are people in whom Jesus had (and still has) a very special interest -- you really can feel His gracious, loving presence strongly in the little congregation in the park.

Each opportunity to spend time with this community is an opportunity to see them as people deserving of concern, not as problems to be walked quickly by, avoided or ignored. It's to see them as someone's child, a brother or sister -- never someone to blame. It's to face our own fear of the homeless, and with God's help, have that be transformed into something approaching grace.

It's also very spiritually healthy to spend time with them, because it helps prevent generalizations about "the poor." Each person is a unique human being, with good and bad qualities, and all deserving of compassion and the warmth of genuine love. That love is in action in Sacred Space.

*The Rev. Dr. Rob Droste, Rector
All Saints Episcopal Parish, San Leandro*

Think About What You Love, and Make It Your Ministry

Being born and raised in New Orleans, I can say with confidence that I am a real Foodie! I love to cook, bake, try new restaurants, watch the Food Network, peruse any cookbook I can find, collect recipes, and I adore potlucks. Whenever I see something delicious on television, I want to jump into the screen. It's probably a good thing for me that we don't have "smellavision"! I am a good cook, and so is my sister. Our mother was a gourmet cook, so it's in our genes. I have been blessed every day of my life with good food since I was born, and thank God every day.

America is abounding in food of every kind, but we all take this blessing for granted. It hurts me terribly to see a homeless and hungry person. This country has many of them, especially here in California where the climate is so mild. Why are there hungry people in the richest country in the free world?

Sacred Space has afforded me a great opportunity to share my love of food by feeding the homeless. At St. Clare's, we make bag lunches for our homeless friends after our Sunday services and take them to neighborhood parks where we

also conduct a service for them. We bring donated clothes and sundries for them also.

I'm now living in Long Beach where there are a lot of homeless folks. My new church feeds them on a regular basis in our Parish Hall, and yes, I'm a part of it. I will be cooking and serving and doing what the Lord has commissioned me to do - share what I love best!

Deannie O'Cain

Grand Lake Gardens (Oakland) Steps up to the Challenge

Our interest in the Sacred Space ministry began when Deacon John came to speak at one of our monthly vesper services at Grand Lake Gardens. I asked if residents might be interested in helping to make lunches for the Oakland Sacred Space Project, and many of them expressed an interest in participating.

We started a schedule of making lunches on a quarterly basis this year we keep our eyes open for bargains on peanut butter and jelly and sandwich bags; and the week of our lunch making, We purchase the ham and cheese, the bread, fruit and cookies.

Tables are setup in our hall with sandwich-making stations, bag marking stations, cookie and fruit stations. For an hour, the room is buzzing with activity with a dozen people working away. Our favorite picture (below) is of 100-year-old Clara (L) and daughter Nancy Fong marking bags with "PBJ."



The lunches are boxed up and put into Carole's car and at 1:50, we drive to 32nd and San Pablo where the lunches will be distributed. Sometimes one or two of the residents will go and we join in the prayer circle to share joys and concerns and to give thanks for the blessings we receive.

The residents are committed to this as an Outreach project and feel that they are making a small contribution to the needy in the community.

Carole Jan Lee, Grand Lake Gardens Sacred Space Coordinator

Count Me In

Sacred Space is my chosen place of worship. I started out in Oakland while we were still Open Cathedral. Deacon John Trubina had been telling me about what he was planning and I said count me in. I didn't make it to the first two meetings but did make it there for the third and have been dedicated to the ministry ever since.

I wasn't sure of why I was drawn to this ministry but knew I needed it. One thing was my only child was leaving for Peru and I knew I needed to have something to fill that empty void before he left. That wasn't all that drew me back each Sunday; there was a stronger force at work.

As we changed locations from Frank Ogawa Plaza to the Peace Center I started to feel something inside of me grow I didn't know what but there was something. Then one day we had a prayer circle and then dispersed to hand out lunches. I was walking down 29th south of Broadway and heard sounds of digging in the dumpster.

There was someone in the dumpster looking for whatever he could find to eat. I was startled, he was startled and in one moment the emotions that registered in our eyes were surprise, shame, fear, and panic. Then I held up two bag lunches and his eyes were filled with joy, thankfulness, gratefulness and some sadness. This gentle man spoke no English but knew that a brown bag meant food.

I have had many encounters in the almost two years of the ministry but this one taught me this is where I belonged.

Robin Wiley, Sacred Space-Hayward

Thank you...Deacon Mary



Sacred Space would like to give our heartfelt thanks to the Rev. Mary Norquist Hinse as the Facilitator to Sacred Space-Oakland for the past 2 yrs for her dedication, support and prayerful presence to all the members of the Oakland Community every Sunday.

Deacon Mary is stepping down from this position and turning the reigns of the Facilitator over to Anne Meyers of St. John's Episcopal Church in Oakland.

Deacon Mary will be present as she can and continue to serve as Deacon to Sacred Space Oakland into the future.

Our Needs



We are always in need of: toiletries (small bottles), razors, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, reading glasses and adult tube socks. With the nights cooling off we can expect an increase in requests for warm shirts/jackets and blankets

If you have any questions regarding donations, please feel free to contact me at: glyfley@hotmail.com

By: Tracy Brown

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."
— Mother Teresa



We are starting something new! We are reaching out to our small businesses in the area and providing advertising to help support our efforts. If you are or have a small business and like to advertise in our quarterly newsletter, please drop us a line. Our newsletter reaches out to over 225 people with each issue. Email your interest to SacredSpace@comcast.net

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