

A Reflection from Deacon Pitman

Is our Christian faith a matter of evidence? A matter of learned analysis? In his discourse on wisdom in 1st Corinthians, Paul suggests otherwise. Paul depicts the faith expectations of his time as driven by signs and wisdom – “Jews require signs and Greeks seek wisdom.” This challenges us in our time to consider our own faith journeys. Do we condition our faith on signs and wonders, praying for miraculous healing, for miraculous victories on the battlefield or the sports field? For miraculous transformations of people through ministry and fellowship? Perhaps there is merit in embracing those miracles. But is that all there is to our faith? Miraculous intervention?

Or are we more like the Hellenic societies of Paul’s day – emphasizing the abstract erudition of great thinkers and philosophers, conditioning belief on the persuasive logic of words and preachers? Is our faith dependent on intellectual justification – do we rely on the systematic theology of the great Karl Barth or the abstract connections between Jesus’ teachings and the philosophical traditions of liberal humanism, or even the complex post-modern suppositions of today’s cutting-edge theologians? Perhaps there is merit in this as well. But is that all there is to it? Is our faith dependent on intellectual analysis?

If not signs and wisdom, on what then do we rest our faith? Paul points to the way of the cross, to the foolishness of the cross - a stumbling block for some, folly for others. Today’s reading from the Beatitudes suggests that faith lies in our response to the invitation to that foolishness. Jesus does not impose a set of formal rules whose violation brings punishment, but rather offers hope through invitation. Blessed are the humble, those who mourn, those who are meek, or hungry, or merciful, who are pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted and reviled. All the outsiders, the “fools” of the world are invited to come to faith and be blessed. While the temporal and religious authorities of the day would condemn those who did not conform, Jesus blessed the excluded and the marginalized.

Herein lies the hope of our faith – not driven by evidence of miracles or the erudition of the wise, but the hope that all of us invited into the company of the blessed, as we accept the foolish invitation of Christ crucified. Because God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Let us too be foolish and weak, and so accept the invitation to salvation that Jesus offers.

Dear Abbey,

A few weeks ago when I was at the communion rail, after the priest gave me the wafer, I accidentally dropped it on the floor. I didn't know what to do, so I just picked it up and ate it. (I hope the floor was clean!) What should I do if this ever happens again? And what's supposed to happen to bread and wine that are spilled?

Sincerely,
Butterfingers

Dear Butterfingers,

I'm so sorry that happened. I know it can distract from the holiness of the moment of receiving the sacrament when things don't quite go the way they're supposed to. Please rest assured you did the right thing! Ordinarily in that scenario, the priest would pick up the wafer and consume it and give the communicant another one. But that's only out of courtesy, so that no one has to wonder, as you did, if the floors were clean. Clergy are usually willing to take that risk!

If, for some reason, consecrated bread were not suitable for consumption, it could be dealt with in one of two ways. Either it could be soaked in water until it dissolves and poured out reverently onto the ground, or (depending on whom you ask) it could be reverently buried in the earth. If consecrated wine were to be spilled on the floor or the altar, the clergy would use purificators (the linens the chalice administrant uses to wipe the chalice after each person takes a sip) to soak up the wine. After the service, the purificators would be soaked in water, which could then be poured onto the ground.

The two most difficult kinds of spills are when leavened bread is used and crumbs fall on the floor, and when a wafer is dropped into a chalice. The former results in consecrated bread remaining underfoot to be stepped on or sucked up by a vacuum cleaner. The latter necessitates the use of a special spoon to remove the bread. This is why we use wafer bread in our parish, and it is likely at least one of the reasons why intinction (dipping the bread in the wine) is not allowed in our diocese.

To some, this may seem like a lot of effort. However, as Anglicans we do believe that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, not just in spirit as the host of the meal, but in the bread and wine themselves. If we take seriously our prayers that the Holy Spirit descend upon the gifts, then we will naturally want to treat them with the care appropriate for anything we consider to be holy.

Still, accidents do happen, and there's no need to feel bad or to be embarrassed if we drop bread or even spill a full chalice. Anyone who's done this ministry long enough probably has a story to tell on this topic! But I appreciate your question, because it's always good to have thought the situation through ahead of time. Hopefully by doing so, we'll be able to remember in the moment that Jesus has lots of patience and a wonderful sense of humour, and that he is as present in the things that go wrong as he is in all the rest of our worship.

Blessings,
Abbey

Do you have a question about church, liturgy, Anglicanism, etc.? Is there something you've always wanted to ask but thought you should already know? Send those questions to Mother Terry at terry.dirbas@sjs.net. All questions will remain anonymous.

Upcoming Parish Events

February 5 at 3 p.m. - Choral Evensong
February 6 at 11 a.m. - Property Committee Meeting
February 7 at 7 p.m. - Outreach Committee Meeting
February 19 after 10 a.m. service - Pancake Breakfast (in anticipation of Shrove Tuesday)
February 22 - Ash Wednesday (services at 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.)
February 26 after the 10 a.m. service - Annual Vestry Meeting

Notice of Annual Vestry

Our annual vestry meeting will be held on Sunday, February 26, following the 10 a.m. worship service. Please mark your calendars for this important gathering.

Call for Vestry Reports

All those with reports to submit for vestry are asked to send those to the parish office no later than February 15, to allow time for the vestry booklet to be compiled. Your timely submissions are greatly appreciated!

WNM items for Homeless Needed

Thank you so much for your kind donations! We are a little low on pudding cups, protein (small cans of tuna or chicken), fruit cups and as always socks. We are quite well stocked at the moment for other items.

Send us your sign suggestions!

We are looking for suggestions for messages to put on our sign board on Granville Street throughout the year. Please email the office (church@sjs.net) with your ideas!

SJS Prayer List

If you request that someone's name be added to the prayer list, please keep in touch with us. At the end of each month, all names will be removed, so you will need to add the names again at the end of each month. Please also let us know if you want someone removed from the list. Email the office (church@sjs.net) anytime! Thank you.

Organ Virtuoso Loreto Aramendi

Saturday, February 4th, at 7.30 pm : St James' Anglican Church, Vancouver

St James' Music Series presents Loreto Aramendi, an international concert artist and main organist of the Basilica of Santa María del Coro in San Sebastián, Spain. She has given numerous recitals in Europe, Argentina, Japan, Russia, and the United States, and her extraordinary skill and musicianship have been highly praised. What sets Loreto Aramendi's concerts apart are the symphonic transcriptions of works by Liszt, Fauré, Rachmaninoff, and Saint-Saëns, which show off the rich tonal colours of the organ necessary for interpreting orchestral music, which are otherwise unheard in strict organ repertoire. As well, the organ transcriptions require a musician of exceptional virtuosic and artistic skill – and that, Loreto Aramendi has in spades.

This will be the first time for this Spanish virtuoso to perform on Canada's West Coast as she embarks on a tour in Canada and the USA. A rare opportunity to hear this extraordinarily-talented musician perform on the mighty pipe organ at St James' Church, this is a concert not to be missed !

The Gesualdo Six Return

Friday, February 10th, at 7.30 pm : St James' Anglican Church, Vancouver

This outstanding choral group from the UK made their Canadian debut at St James' in 2018, and it was glorious. Now, five years later, The Gesualdo Six return to Vancouver to present a programme of music from their most-recent Album, including selections by Cristóbal de Morales, Josquin des Prez, William Byrd, Howard Skempton, Donna McKevitt, Eleanor Daley, John Tavener, and Richard Rodney Bennett.

The 2018 Gesualdo Six concert at St James' was a sold-out, and the same is expected for their 2023 appearance.

Financial Support - Stewardship

If you would like to make a financial contribution to help support the worship and ministry of St. John's Shaughnessy,



please do! You can use this QR code (point your phone's camera at it) and it will take you to the donation page of our website. If you have recently made a contribution online or by cheque, thank you so very much! If you currently give by Pre-Authorized Donation, thank you! Our church has been affected by COVID-19 in many ways and financial giving is certainly one.

If you would like to give via monthly Pre-Authorized Donations (easy to change

and easy to cancel), please contact
Cynthia in the office
(church.office@sjs.net or 604-731-4966).
If you would like to give to the church
using a credit card, please use the

DONATE button on our website
(Canada Helps on top of page one, and
Paypal on the bottom of page one).
Cheques may be mailed or dropped
through the church mail slot.

ST. JOHN'S, SHAUGHNESSY STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

Please contact the parish office if you would like to be added to our mailing list, so that we may let you know about upcoming events.

Clergy and Staff

The Reverend Terry Shields Dirbas, Rector terry.dirbas@sjs.net
The Reverend James Hwang, Curate jhwang@sjs.net
The Reverend Dr. Marilyn Hames, Honorary Assisting Priest
The Reverend Karin Fulcher, Deacon
The Reverend Pitman Potter, Deacon
Michael Dirk, Music Director organist@sjs.net
Jaime Yoon, Interim Choir Director jaime.yoon@sjsparish.net
Cynthia Jutras, Interim Parish Administrator church.office@sjs.net
Patrick Mahon, Verger

Trustees

Ken Pepin, Rector's Warden
Maggie Sanders, People's Warden
Mike Dezell, Property Trustee
Donald Wood, Treasurer



1490 Nanton Ave. Vancouver, BC, V6H 2E2
(604) 731-4966
www.sjs.net