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Lent & Construction Update

February 18, 2016

A Note From Father Donald Staib

Members of the Parish,
On Wednesday, a bulldozer appeared on our property. On Thursday, other earth moving equipment came. By weekend, we may all see some clearing of the property.



Lent

Here is a list of Lent upcoming Penance Services in nearby parishes:

- Monday February 22 at St. Francis, Raleigh at 7 pm
- Monday February 29 at St. Francis, Raleigh at 11 am
- Thursday March 3 at St. Andrew, Apex at 7 pm
- Wednesday March 9 at St. Michael, Cary at 11 am
- Thursday March 10 at St. Bernadette, Fuquay Varina at 7 pm
- Wednesday March 16 at St. Michael, Cary at 7 pm

Bishop's Annual Appeal



Our parish Bishop's Annual Appeal goal is \$186,555. At the moment we have received pledges/gifts of \$129,827 from 403 members of the parish. Thank you very much for this generous and early response. 403 responses represent 27% of our parish.

To reach 100% of our parish goal please consider a gift of \$174, which is payable over a six month period. [\$29 each month for six months]

The largest BAA funds - \$1M - go to Catholic Charities, which last year supported 68,000 people in donations of food and other services. To reach 100% of our parish goal please consider a gift of \$174, which is payable over a six month period. [\$29 each month for six months]

Reflection

For those who wish: Here is a deeper reflection on the Transfiguration of Jesus by Father Ron Rolheiser, President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. I find his insights helpful and I hope you do also.

The Hiddenness of God and the Darkness Of Faith

When I first began teaching theology, I fantasized about writing a book about the hiddenness of God. Why does God remain hidden and invisible? Why doesn't God just show himself plainly in a way that nobody can dispute?

One of the standard answers to that question was this: If God did manifest himself plainly there wouldn't be any need for faith. But that begged the question: Who wants faith? Wouldn't it be better to just plainly see God?

There were other answers to that question of course, except I didn't know them or didn't grasp them with enough depth for them to be meaningful. For example, one such answer taught that God is pure Spirit and that spirit cannot be perceived through our normal human senses.

But that seemed too abstract to me. And so I began to search for different answers or for better articulations of our stock answers to this question. And there was a pot of gold at the end of the search; it led me to the mystics, particularly to John of the Cross, and to spiritual writers such as Carlo Carretto.

What's their answer? They offer no simple answers. What they offer instead are various perspectives that throw light on the ineffability of God, the mystery of faith, and the mystery of human knowing in general.

In essence, how we know as human beings and how we know God is deeply paradoxical, that is, the more deeply we know anything, the more that person or object begins to become less

conceptually clear. One of the most famous mystics in history suggests that as we enter into deeper intimacy we concomitantly enter into a "cloud of unknowing," namely, into a knowing so deep that it can no longer be conceptualized. What does this mean?

Three analogies can help us here: the analogy of a baby in its mother's womb; the analogy of darkness as excessive light; and the analogy of deep intimacy as breaking down our conceptual images:

First: Imagine a baby in its mother's womb. In the womb, the baby is so totally enveloped and surrounded by the mother that, paradoxically, it cannot see the mother and cannot have any concept of the mother. Its inability to see or picture its mother is caused by the mother's omnipresence, not by her absence. The mother is too present, too all enveloping, to be seen or conceptualized. The baby has to be born to see its mother.

So too for us and God. Scripture tells us that we live, and move, and breathe, and have our being in God. We are in God's womb, enveloped by God, and, like a baby, we must first be born (death as our second birth) to see God face to face. That's faith's darkness.

Second: Excessive light is a darkness: If you stare straight into the sun with an unshielded eye, what do you see? Nothing. The very excess of light renders you as blind as if you were in pitch darkness.

And that's also the reason why we have difficulty in seeing God and why, generally, the deeper we journey into intimacy with God, the deeper we are journeying into Light, the more God seems to disappear and become harder and harder to picture or imagine. We're being blinded, not by God's absence, but by a blinding light to the unshielded eye. The darkness of faith is the darkness of excessive light.

A final analogy: Deep intimacy is iconoclastic. The deeper our intimacy with anyone the more our pictures and images of that person begin to break down. Imagine this: A friend says to you: "I understand you perfectly: I know your family, your background, your ethnicity, your psychological and emotional temperaments, your strengths, your weakness, and your habits. I understand you."

Would you feel understood? I suspect not. Now imagine a very different scenario: A friend says to you: "You're a mystery to me! I've known you for years, but you've a depth that's somehow beyond me. The longer I know you, the more I know that you are your own mystery." In this non-understanding, in being allowed to be the full mystery of your own person in that friend's understanding, you would, paradoxically, feel much better understood. John of the Cross submits that the deeper we journey into intimacy, the more we will begin to understand by not understanding than by understanding.

Our relationship to God works in the same way. Initially, when our intimacy is not so deep, we feel that we understand things and we have firm feelings and ideas about God. But the deeper we journey, the more those feelings and ideas will begin to feel false and empty because our growing intimacy is opening us to the fuller mystery of God. Paradoxically this feels like God is disappearing and becoming non-existent.

Faith, by definition, implies a paradoxical darkness, the closer we get to God in this life, the more God seems to disappear because overpowering light can seem like darkness.

Father Donald Staib
St. Mary Magdalene E-News

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Commemorative Bricks

Commemorative Bricks line our walkway entrance to the Activity Building and are a wonderful way to honor a loved one, living or deceased. The next batch for 2016 will be in the ground by First Communion and Graduation. **Deadline to order is March 15, 2016.** Be part of St. MM history!

Questions contact the parish office at acadran@stmm.net or 919-657-4800 ext. 7282.

[Brick Order Form](#)



Knights of Columbus Annual Fish Fry



Our next Fish Fry is this Friday, Feb. 26th
in the Dining Hall from 5:30-7:45pm.
Eat in or Take Out

We use top quality cod and shrimp, prepared fried or baked. Fried fish is freshly breaded just prior to cooking which delivers to you a perfect golden brown crispy filet. We serve our meals with your choice of seasoned French fries, parsley potatoes or macaroni and cheese along with Cole slaw, corn bread and dessert prepared by a local youth organization. Come out and enjoy a great meal with friends and family while supporting community causes championed by the KofC.

Our last Fish Fry is March 11th!

Pre-order online at www.lentfishfry.com.

You could win a trip to Great Wolf Lodge with our Spring Family Fun Raffle Sales at each Fish Fry! Don't forget to stop by the table!

2015 Tax Statements

Tax statements are now available online. Click on the link below which will take you to the instructions on how to obtain your statement. If you do not have access to the internet or have any

problems, please contact Kathy Lynch at 919-657-4800 ext. 7281 or lynch@stmm.net

[2015 Tax Statement Instructions & Link](#)

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