

The Communicator August 20, 2024

Last week we were treated to another of the **Reverend Gillian Ball's** fabulous sermons. After mentioning in last week's Communicator how good her previous sermon was I had a number of requests for copies if available. I've attached both sermons to the end of this Communicator. I can't recommend them highly enough.

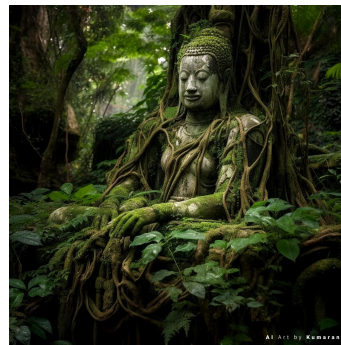
We had several new people at church last Sunday. A special welcome to **Helen Parachini and her husband Daniel Joven**. Helen immediately got into the community hospitality scene and saw **Debbie Jeffress** about helping with food!

This coming Sunday, August 25, will be very special! Our own beloved **Thomas Esakin** will deliver the homily. And, **Mother Naty Rangel** will celebrate the Eucharist. It will be a wonderful service.

And while talking about Tom, don't forget **Buddhist Meditation Practice and Dhamma Talks**, Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 at the church (August 21 and August 28).

The two following Sundays, August 1 and August 8, **Father Victor Hugo** will celebrate. We are hoping Father Doug will be able to return for **Bishop Trevino's** Visit on September 15m celebrating **Saint Michael's Sunday**. We know he will be unable to handle the whole service but we sure hope to have him with us for this very special occasion, the Bishop's once a year visit. We will also need special flowers for that Sunday. Please sign up at the back of the church if you can help provide flowers.

I asked Father Doug for an update and he cheerfully complied.



BUDDHIST MEDITATION PRACTICE AND DHAMMA TALKS.

August 2024 sits and talks.

Beginners to advanced are welcomed.
BYOC/M (Bring Your Own Cushion/Mat)... or
use an available chair!

A Dana Bowl will be present for any gifts of donations.

*A community program of: "St. Michael and All
Angels Anglican / Episcopal Church, Cuernavaca."*

*Meditation: A path to
inner-peace & serenity
through mindfulness.*

*DAYS: Wednesdays. TIME:
6:30-7:30pm. DATES:
August 14th, 21st, & 28th,
2024. LOCATION: IN-
PERSON in the "Pastoral
Meeting Space", St.
Michael and All Angels
Anglican / Episcopal
Church, Cuernavaca.*

*(ADDRESS: Calle Minerva s/n,
Esa. Erso, Col. Delicias,
Cuernavaca (2 blocks behind
Walmart Express on Rio
Mayo)).*

*Facilitated by Tom Esakin, a
member of St. Mike's, a former
lay-facilitator with the
Theravada Buddhist
Community of Toronto, & a
Buddhist Chaplain with the
Toronto Centre for Applied
Buddhism.*

*Tel or Text or WhatsApp:
1-250.716.6772 / Email:
thomas@spiritualfacilitatio
n.org*

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“The Metal Stitches come out this week... Fatigue is rampant although everyone is tired of hearing that. I know I am. Only now being able to rise with a minimum of pain and I can only walk 15 steps at a time. Veronica has been a Godsend. Blessings and Peace.”

Then today came a strange letter from Father Doug asking if I could please go to Walmart and buy six \$100US gift cards on his behalf. I was to scratch off the backs and send him the pin numbers. It was quite a complex scam with approximately 8 notes from “Father Doug.” Someone has managed to mirror Father Doug’s email address and he asked that I alert all of you to the fact that he will NEVER make such a request!!!

Senior Warden Judy Frothingham reminds us that we FINALLY have a working bank account and you can now make donations directly on our Website. saintmichaelcuernavaca.org

Alcoholics Anonymous is no longer meeting at Saint Michael’s. The group had become very small and it was decided we could better use the space building community. If you, or someone you know, has a group you think could work well with our space, please talk to either Senior Warden Judy Frothingham or Junior Warden John Stelly.



Our Parish Hall (Magnolia Hall?) can now also be rented for parties and occasions. Please help spread the word. We’ve repainted and spiffed it up to prepare for new groups. Check it out!!!

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Friday Senior Club (50 and up) with **Lorena Molina** and her trusty crew meets Fridays from 10-12. They do crafts, exercise, games, meditation, even dancing. A fun, FUN time is had by all. This is such an amazing offering we are providing as part of our outreach and it is way too underused. **Please help us find a few more Seniors who would like to join the Friday Senior Club.**



Food, toiletries and cleaning supply donations continue to be needed for **San Pablo's outreach to the Homeless of Cuernavaca.** Please don't forget to stop by your bodega Sunday on the way to church and pick out some canned goods, beans, rice, or other materials. The Donation Basket is at the back of the church. Last Sunday **Father Victor Hugo** again expressed his thanks for your generosity.

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Yoga with Ann is now on both Tuesday and Thursday. Tuesday it is 10-11 and Thursday 11-12:30. Meditation, Stretching, Breathing, Yoga. Ann Moxey combines them all! Ann will also be leading a 3-weekend retreat in September. Please see poster to the right.

Children learning English as a second language **(ESL)** with **Catherine del Rey Kolodin** restarts **Friday, September 13, 4PM**, in the room off the Library.



TRES FINES DE SAMANA EN
SEPTIEMBRE DE YOGA CON ANN,
¡EN CUERNAVACA!



DE LA TRADICIÓN KRISHNAMACHARYA:

7 de septiembre: TALLER LANGHANA.

Usa las herramientas del yoga, deja de tomar tanta pastilla, ideal para estrés, apegos, ansiedad y trastornos de sueño.

21 de septiembre: TALLER BRAHVAMA.

Ideal para cortar cuadros de depresión, síndrome amotivacional y para afianzar la intención de cambio.

DE PARINAAMA YOGA:

28 de septiembre: PARINAAMA YOGA PARA TRAUMA Y ADICCIONES.

Técnico-Práctico, con recursos específicos del HATHA yoga para resignificar.

HORARIOS: 11:00 a.m. - 15:00 p.m.

Costo por cada taller: Pronto pago un mes antes \$850.

Registro y mayor información 777 135 5352 o al correo
annmoxworkshops@gmail.com

Dirección: Río Mayo #15 col. Vista Hermosa C.P. 62290, Cuernavaca, Morelos.

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Current Events with **Charlie Goff** is every Wednesday 5-6:30PM at the Cemanahuac Educational Community, San Juan 4, Colonia Las Palmas (One block from the Glorieta on Morelos Sur). Always a lively discussion of current events in historical context, it is a fun group of people and Charlie is amazing! **FREE! NO RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!!!**

Would you like to read the Sunday lessons, Lead the Prayers of the People, Sing in the Choir, Acolyte, serve on the Pastoral Care or Hospitality Committees, volunteer to help with Friday Senior Club? Please let **The Communicator** know or speak to **Senior Warden Judy Frothingham**. Do you have another special gift you would like to share with the Community? We are all ears. **John Mitchell** heard that plea and is now coordinating our Lecture Series! Our next lecture will be **Walter Lopez** speaking about the one and only famous Mexican actress **Maria Felix!!!** (Date in next week's Communicator.) You won't want to miss it. We would love to be able to offer a board games afternoon each week but we need someone to take responsibility for the coordination of each activity. "Many Hands make light work!"

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In the meantime, thanks to the Library Guild's good work the Tuesday Tea continues to be a grand success. Please don't forget to join the library! The first Sunday of each month is Library Sunday and we have beautiful live music featuring **Edi Velazquez**.



Our Seminarian, **Michael Drell**, will be meeting with **Bishop Treviño** and the Diocesan Permanent Committee regarding his moving forward towards ordination. He has been shepherded through this process by the **Reverend Tamara Newell**. Let us hold all of them in prayer as Michael prepares himself. We know what a wonderful priest he will be; we hope it will come soon.



Reverend Gillian Bal' two sermons are copied at the bottom of this newsletter. Both Sermons are excellent. Last Sunday's was about German martyr **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** and the challenges to his faith created by Hitler and Nazism. It is a most thought-provoking homily.

I look forward to this Sunday and having our excellent SMAAA photographers back in attendance. :-) And you know who you are!!!!

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Reflections by Rev. Gillian Ball

Reflection 8/11/2024 There are times in our lives when we run into unkindness. It clouds our memories and causes pain. Children can be mean. Children can say things that hurt others. Children may not intend to do this but are often egged on by others. Adults also do it. It is probable that we have all been guilty of such behaviour. And I am sure most of us have, at some time, been the recipient of teasing or nasty remarks. I ran into this in my early teens when I went to a school in Canada where my (then) English accent was mocked. I was picked on by wealthy girls for not meeting their criteria. I was treated with contempt. One teacher was noted for giving higher marks to affluent students than the rest of us. That just added to my distress.

I had been fortunate until then. It was the first time that I had run into this kind of behaviour. It dented my naivete. I began to distrust. I had misgivings about developing friendships. I began to lose much of my self confidence. In a far less dramatic way, it echoed behaviour recorded by St. Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians. One feels that he was expressing some concern about conduct among the faithful with his entreaty to put away wrath, malice, slander, falsehood, anger and so on.

In this Epistle, Paul was addressing Gentile members of the Church in Ephesus who were recent converts. His main purposes were to help them grow in their spiritual knowledge of God and the Church; to promote unity, particularly between Gentiles and Jewish members; and to encourage them to withstand evil. He was encouraging them to reject their earlier sins and become new people in Christ. His teachings were declared in compelling terms.

I was fortunate to visit Ephesus some years ago. It was a fascinating place filled with history and artifacts and the remains of imposing buildings. We were in a large group with little chance of hearing what the guide had to say. I decided to break away to follow a narrow path through the ancient rubble. By good fortune I found myself entering the large amphitheatre. The place was empty and the silence was overwhelming. Here was the place where St. Paul had spoken to the people. I sat on one of the tiers of stone seating. I gazed out at the verdant countryside that lay beyond the columns. I looked down at the large stage below and pictured Paul exhorting the people and bringing them

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into a new faith. I feel sure that some of the words written in today's Epistle were pronounced many times in that setting.

His passage is strikingly relevant for us today. It is a plea about how to live with meaning in difficult and confusing times. Paul recognized that the period in which he was living was complicated and shadowed. Complex moments can bring out the worst in people if they are not careful. Our unsettled age is certainly revealing much anger, falsehood, malice and hatred. Most of it is stirred up by fear - fear of change, fear of disparity, fear of the future. And yet times of transition can also draw out the best in those who are willing to respond to the challenges

Dealing with changes produces pressures and tensions that play havoc with people. Some try to escape through the use of drugs or alcohol. Some turn to violence. Some use the uncertainty to attack others or put the blame on everyone but themselves for misdemeanours. Some use unsettled times to grab power and seek to control things in their own way. Some make unfeasible promises that can never be fulfilled. Some brag about their potential to set the world at rights. But all this misses the reality that the world needs a stronger resource for survival amidst the insecurity. Paul points to the Holy Spirit. That Spirit is revealed in today's Gospel to be Jesus Christ as the sacrificial bread of life. Here is "*the bread that gives life to the world*". We have seen increasing numbers of people being led into a deeper experimental and intentional approach to faith. They are seeking this eternal bread of promise. Now is the time for the Church to meet those needs.

Paul's entreaties may well lead us to wonder what kind of person we want to be. We can be encouraged by Paul asking that we live with care, sensitivity and a deep awareness of how our words and actions always have consequences. They can build up or tear down, they can encourage or they can offend, they can repair or they can damage. We can be beneficial by offering our gifts or obstructive by refusing to use them out of anger or simply by being uncaring.

It is time for a change toward greater kindness and consideration. It is time to follow Paul's plea to put away bitterness along with malice. It is time to be kind on social media, kind toward others we meet in stores, restaurants, at home with families, people who work with us or for us. Let us be tender-hearted and be open to offer forgiveness. These can mark the beginning of the

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end of the present vindictiveness and callousness that seem to have invaded human society.

It is also time to put away falsehood and the perpetual lies that infiltrate social media and news outlets and gossip and politics. It is hard for us to know where to turn to find unvarnished truth. But again - it starts with us. It starts by depending on the truth found in Jesus Christ where there is no deceit. He does not trick us, entrap us, deceive us. And if we are to follow his example, we too are to do the same and *“speak the truth in love”*. It is time to decry the harsh defamations and falsehoods that intrude into our lives each and every day. They do so much damage to our society and, above all, to the defenceless.

Putting away anger is a harder plea to accept. *“Do not let the sun go down on your anger”* says Paul. But then he says, *“Be angry but do not sin”*. We can't have it both ways, or can we? Indeed there are times when it is appropriate to be angry. The Old Testament speaks of God being angry. Jesus got angry. This was anger against injustice, corruption, oppression, cruelty and the way the vulnerable are sometimes treated. Anger can be a powerful force. Throughout history it is anger that has brought about positive change. But anger can also be a cause for negative change. Therefore we are to beware of letting our anger become a grudge against someone, of letting it fester, of letting it rule our lives. In times of anger we are still required to be even-handed and truthful.

Paul also mentions stealing. For most of us who do not tend to burgle, it means that we are to work honestly and put aside something to share with those in need. We don't imitate God by undertaking fraudulent practices. We don't imitate God by becoming wealthy or powerful. We don't imitate God by ravishing nature. We don't imitate God by hoarding what we have. We imitate God by caring for the least among us.

Perhaps one of the biggest problems in our world today is the constant complaining. Complaining undermines community. Complaining rarely builds anyone up. Complaining infiltrates churches, organizations, homes, schools, work places. We all tend to complain about something or other. Complaints are loud and clear due to dissatisfaction over matters that are beyond our control. So, perhaps we can try to pay attention to the times when we complain and feel the temptation to complain and stifle it if possible. Far better to find some way to build another person up rather than complain

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about what they fail to accomplish. Far better to seek for resolutions rather than grumble incessantly.

Paul sums up his Epistle with the words, *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us.”* Here is an invitation to walk in love, live with love, show love to others, imitate Christ in love. It isn't always easy but, again, it starts with us. Any simple act of kindness - even once a day makes a difference. Unkindness does damage. Malice increases damage. Nasty remarks cause damage. Unthinking comments foster damage. *“Do not let the sun go down on your anger”* is invaluable advice. To ‘think before we speak’ at times is essential. It avoids most of the bad habits listed by Paul to the Ephesians. Small things done with consistency and love inevitably change the bitterness of our present world. They cannot help but make it a kinder place in which to live. Amen.

Reflection: 8/18/2024 On July 27, 1945, a congregation gathered in Holy Trinity Church in war-scarred London and heard these words: *“We are gathered here in the presence of God to make thankful remembrance of the life and work of his servant Dietrich Bonhoeffer”*. These words come as a reminder that the Anglican church calendar commemorated Dietrich Bonhoeffer on August 14th - four days ago. The congregation in London had come to honour this man - not as a conspirator nor as a theologian, but as a Christian martyr. They were paying tribute to his steadfast faith that became a bright light during the dark years of Nazism. We continue to honour him today for his immense courage, for his dedication to his church and fellow beings, for his complete commitment to Jesus Christ to the point of self sacrifice, and for his steadfast faith that can be a beacon in our own troubled times.

Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau, Germany, in 1906. He came from a large bourgeois family and lived in a protected, privileged environment. His ancestors were noted for their deep involvement in community affairs and for their dogged independence. This may have led to Bonhoeffer's instinctive resistance to Nazi totalitarianism. He studied theology in Germany and the United States and was ordained a Lutheran pastor in 1931. He visited the famous Bethel settlement for the afflicted which brought him into firsthand contact with suffering in the world and what a Christian response should be to it.

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When Hitler became chancellor in 1933, Bonhoeffer understood at once the threat that this presented. He witnessed the intensifying persecution of Jews and saw that it was not just abhorrent in human terms, but a deliberate attack on Christ himself. As Hitler's strength grew, Bonhoeffer realized that "*A sick man was in charge of a sick nation in a sick world.*" Not for one moment did he countenance the idea of coming to terms with Nazi power. He joined breakaway Lutherans who refused to fall in with the requirements of the Nazi regime.

Bonhoeffer left Germany in 1934 to serve in England but returned a year later to care for his students. Just before the outbreak of war in 1939, he went to the United States. He was pressed to stay there but declined. He felt that he had to share that difficult period with Christians in Germany. As the darkness of Nazism grew, Bonhoeffer realized that it was not enough to pray and to fulfill his Christian duty. The time had come for action. Forbidden by the Nazis to teach, he arranged clandestine seminaries to train pastors. His opposition would make him both a conspirator and a martyr. During the war, he participated in the plot to kill Hitler - a difficult decision for a Christian pastor to make. When Bonhoeffer heard in prison that the plot against Hitler had failed, he knew the cause was lost, but never regretted his decision. He was arrested in 1943 and imprisoned. He could have escaped with the connivance of guards, but refused because it would have endangered relatives.

Bonhoeffer was a man who followed St. Paul's advice in our epistle today. He was a wise person. He made the most of the time he had in those evil days. He made his choices according to the will of God. He committed himself to a Christian life which gave him a sense of joy and meaning in a troubled age.

Men and women throughout the ages have had to decide how they will live. Much depends on the society or the circumstances in which people find themselves. Paul was writing to a community that offered many choices. Ephesus was a city where one could be drawn into a life of enjoyment, affluence and sophistication. We live in a similar society. Paul asks that we choose carefully - to seek out the worth of our time and energy.

For Bonhoeffer, the choices were more stark. His options had dwindled down to a denial of the horrors that lay around him or undertake opposition to them. Taking the easier route would have meant coming to terms with Nazi power or escaping from the turmoil of his country. Difficult and threatening as it was for him, Bonhoeffer recognized the life that he was called into as a Christian. Although he was a man with a strong desire to flee, he felt that avoiding danger

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would somehow take away his freedom. Dire consequences were involved. He chose to risk his life in the name of Christ.

Freedom, discipline and responsible action were important characteristics in Bonhoeffer's life and thought. He repeatedly affirmed that "*Freedom is one of the central hallmarks of a Christian*". As such, Christians are free to risk bold, decisive words and deeds on behalf of their neighbour. Bonhoeffer believed that his life was the vehicle for the expression of a will other than his own. He saw God revealed in Jesus Christ. He felt that the key to the Christian life was to respond to God by translating faith into action.

Bonhoeffer placed obedience to, and love for God, above all else. Like St. Paul, his devotion to God and his resolved fight against evil brought him imprisonment. Incarceration for a determined, energetic man who relished intellectual discussions, music and sports; for a loving man who was cruelly separated from his fiancée, must have been a frustrating time. It is clear from his writings that it tested his faith and often led to despair. But the time that Bonhoeffer spent in prison proved to be spiritually the richest and most fertile period of his life. He became a mystic. He wrote one of the great contemporary classics of Christian literature. His greatness grew out of his affliction. He found God in the suffering that surrounded him. He felt a call to share in God's sufferings amid a godless world. Despite the hopelessness of his situation, he found hope. He was able to bring comfort and courage to those around him. For Bonhoeffer there could be no escape. Like Christ, he was threatened. He chose to partake of the 'bread from heaven' and drink the earthly cup to the dregs. In doing so, he would discover the crucified and risen lord within him. In the words of today's gospel, Bonhoeffer truly experienced Christ and participated in the flesh and blood of Christ. This was no abstract term about abiding in Christ, but an encounter that led Bonhoeffer to experience death on a scaffold like his master.

Early in 1945, Bonhoeffer was transferred to Buchenwald. On Saturday, April 7th, he was taken to Schonberg. The following morning his fellow prisoners pressured him to conduct a service. An English survivor said it was "*An incomparable experience which carried them all to great heights of spirituality*". When the service was over, Bonhoeffer was summoned by the Gestapo. He knew the end had come. For him, he said, it was the beginning of life. That evening he was summarily tried and condemned to death. Bonhoeffer was hanged by the

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Gestapo at Flossenburg - three days before the camp was liberated. He went to his death with calmness and dignity.

Bonhoeffer's faith and his life and death can well inspire us in uncertain times. His example serves us well. He has given us a model of Christian humanism and duty. He has shown us the way of the cross and what it means to be a Christian. In the words of Bishop Bell, spoken at the memorial service in London, *"So now Dietrich has gone. Our debt to him and to all others, similarly murdered, is immense. He made the sacrifice of human prospects, of home, friends and career because he believed in God's vocation for his country, and refused to follow those false leaders who were servants of the devil"*.

We may not face the tyranny that engulfed Germany in Bonhoeffer's time, but we often feel that we are living in "a sick society" in which the basic values of truth, justice, goodness and decency are threatened. There are political changes in the world that are deeply troubling. We are facing Bonhoeffer's choice to disregard the sadness and turmoil of the world or enter into the suffering even when it could lead us into conflict and sacrifice. But if we, like Bonhoeffer, see Christ as liberator, we can never compromise the ideals that make life fuller, richer and more meaningful. We shall take Christ, his words, his life, his pattern of response, into our own lives. We shall follow Paul's advice to use our time wisely by following God's will. We shall, in the words of today's collect, *"Dedicate our freedom to God's service that all people may know the glorious liberty of the children of God"*. Amen