

Journey Jottings: Notes from St. Luke's Deacon in Formation

Deacon formation classes were held on Saturday, March 16th, at our usual location: the Cathedral, in Phoenix. Our morning session was Part II of the Book of Common Prayer, taught by Rev. Judy Turberg. She had given us an interesting assignment to complete in preparation for the class: the planning of hypothetical liturgies for Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer during Lent; alternatives for celebrating major feasts that fall during the Lenten season; how to make worship space accessible to, and inclusive of, the handicapped; and writing a Collect to celebrate the gifts of one of our classmates. We also spent some time discussing how deacons can use their individual gifts in creating and/or shaping liturgies that truly touch the hearts and spirits of those who attend. It was a great class!

The afternoon session was led by Deacon Chuck Milhoan, who had brought with him all the items that might be used in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In all, there were about two dozen items, ranging from lavabo bowl to censer. He spread them out on a couple of tables, then gave us slips of paper and asked us to write down the correct name of each item and place it next to the item. It was not only a measure of what we knew, but what we didn't know! None of us scored 100%, but by the time we finished, everyone was familiar with each item: its name, its use, and where it should be placed during the liturgy. We also discussed liturgical garments, using photos from a church supply catalog and learning what each one is called; its history; its meaning; and when it is used. It was an interesting learning experience! So...if you're wondering what a surplis is, or a maniple, just ask me, because now I know!

Next month, we'll be venturing into the wonderful world of Scripture. It will be a two-part series spanning April and May, taught by Rev. Elizabeth Roles, Associate Rector at St. Barnabas on the Desert. The assigned books, which I've already started to read, are *Manna and Mercy*, by Daniel Erlander, and *Reverberations of Faith*, by Walter Brueggemann.

Two other layers of deacon formation were added this month and will be in place throughout our candidacy. The first one involves spiritual reading. Each month, we are to choose a book from an annotated list; read it; reflect on it; and write a response (but not a book report) that captures its impact on us. For the next twelve months, there will be twelve different spiritual

reading topics, covering everything from the Psalms (this month's theme) to the saints (the final theme). Our papers will be reviewed and commented on by Deacon Tom Lindell, who serves at St. Philip's in the Hills, in Tucson.

The second addition to our formation program is a monthly practicum: a "hands-on" worship experience aimed at establishing a thorough understanding of the deacon's role in various liturgies. The venue for most of these will be the Cathedral, with Rev. Canon Holly Herring and Deacon Myra Kingsley facilitating. This month's practicum involved attending/experiencing a culturally-specific liturgy of our choice, then writing a paper about it (which was subsequently critiqued by Rev. Canon Holly). Our assignment was to closely observe the worship team during the liturgy and take note of "who does what" at the altar. The liturgy I chose was a Spanish Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. It was similar to Sunday liturgies at St. Luke's, with a couple of notable differences. There were only two young servers assisting at the altar, vested in albs; there was no sub-deacon or deacon. And Communion was distributed by the priest and five Eucharistic Ministers who were not vested in albs, but came from the congregation after the Breaking of the Bread. With many, many young families with children in attendance, and everyone participating in all parts of the liturgy, both in song and in spoken responses, it was a beautiful and uplifting experience for me.

As the intensity of the formation program increases, I'm relying more and more on your prayerful support! To know that we are journeying together brings joy, and strength, and daily renewal of my spirit. Thank you!

—Keehna Sture