



The Seedling

The Newsletter of the Altar Guild of the Diocese of Long Island ✠ Spring, 2024

From the President...

A few weeks ago, I received a text from my daughter that read, “The groundhog was right ... spring is just around the corner!” She attached a picture of a small blue crocus cheerfully sunning itself, rooted in the warming earth. Of course, the next morning I awoke to snow – not a lot – but enough to remind me to pay attention and embrace the reality of the twists and turns of this precious life.

It’s easy to leap ahead mentally in anticipation of the glory of Easter. But as I write this, we are still in a penitential period; the only color in the sanctuary is dark purple (symbolizing suffering, mourning and penitence) on the chalice pall and clergy’s vestments.

In my church, the colorful frontals have been stored away, the crosses veiled. A wrought-iron Chi Rho (✠) set in the front of our stone altar faces the congregation, and a simple array of bare branches in wicker baskets



recalls the sleeping earth. These are the visual cues that we are in a sacred, Christian time of deep reflection (both personal and corporate) as together we prepare for the days ahead.

The restraint of Lent’s 40 days will soon come to an end, and our spiritual focus will turn to the life-changing events of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and the Passion and death of Jesus. As Christians, we give thanks and praise for the empty tomb, rejoicing in the Risen Lord. We’ll burst forth in song and spirit, renewed in Jesus’ promise, “I am with you always.”

For the solemnity of Lent and which lead us to all the Alleluias of this life, we give thanks to God. Happy Easter!

May God continue to bless you. In His love,

Jane Ames

Jane Ames
President, Diocesan Altar Guild



Blessed But Mysterious

If Your sacristy is anything like mine, you may have a cupboard full of mysterious holy oils. There are three types that are blessed by the Bishop and distributed to each parish at the Chrism Mass on the Tuesday in Holy Week. Each has a purpose and the bottle is labeled with an abbreviation. Perhaps the following will reduce the mystery and maybe therefore highlight the holiness.

The first, made only of olive oil, is labeled “OC” for *Oleum catechumenorum*. According to J. Robert Wright in a piece he wrote for *The Anglican Digest* in 2004, “It is used to exorcise catechumens before proceeding to baptism/ confirmation which would be done with the oil of chrism.” It was sometimes also used for the coronations of royalty. Today it is “Seldom used by Anglicans today, and only by bishops, or priests designated by them, in exorcisms of persons (which is, by implication, what happens at baptism).” I know that I have never used it in nearly 30 years of ordained ministry, but somehow I appreciate the fact of it existing.

The second type, again made only of olive oil is what I have probably used the most over the years. It is labeled “OI” for *Oleum infirmorum* and is the oil used for anointing the sick. While it may be the custom in some places only to anoint the gravely ill, In the dioceses in which I have served, we have used it to anoint anyone who is ill

or may even be receiving healing prayers on behalf of another person.

The third is my favorite and is made of olive oil infused with balsam or other fragrant gum resin, is labeled “SC” for “*Sanctum Chrism*” It is used for baptism, confirmation, and holy orders. It is also used for English coronations.

This oil is created by the bishop when he blesses it with the words, “Eternal Father, whose blessed Son was anointed by the Holy Spirit to be the Savior and servant of all, we pray you to consecrate this oil, that those who are sealed with it may share in the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. (BOS p. 311) While some bishops might not do it, Bishop Provenzano then breathes into the vessel of oil three times to emphasize the literal inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Chrism is my favorite because it holds so much history and sacramental power. The absolute highest honor I have as a priest is to use the chrism to anoint the forehead of the newly baptized and declare that they are “sealed in the Spirit and marked as Christ’s own forever.” Someday I might even be able to say it without choking up..... but I kind of doubt it.

Faithfully,



The Very Rev. Laurence G. Byrne



Giving Up Nothing For Lent

How many times have you been asked, “What are you giving up for Lent?”

“Nothing!” that’s been My answer for the past few years. I gave up alcohol years ago and really don’t eat enough chocolate to warrant giving it up. As I think about it giving up something really doesn’t do anything for anyone. So instead of torturing myself into giving up one for the few pleasures I have left due to health restraints and that only makes me miserable, I collect 40 food items for Lent!

In my Parish we practice 40 days of giving. Each of us contributes 40 nonperishable food items in the weeks leading up to Holy Week. On Thursday (Maundy Thursday) morning the food is packed with each bag containing supplies for one full day, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

The way I go about this is to create 4 bags of 10 items each. To maintain my sanity, it’s 4 of each item and 10 items per bag, thus each bag is identical. There have been years where I just went to the store and purchased 40 items



without thought. Now I look at nutritional value, and synergy.

As donations come in, they are sorted and placed on the appropriate table, in the undercroft, for distribution. It is a small operation, but one that gives us a good feeling of giving. We get everything from cereal to canned hams and yams. Plenty of canned vegetables, rice, and pasta.

On the Saturday of Easter weekend, we hand out bags of groceries to our neighbors. There are several apartment houses in our neighborhood that benefit from this day of giving. Food insecurities are very prevalent in our society and for some people a bag with 40 food items is the blessing they prayed for.

I guess I could give up chocolate for Lent, but it feels so much better to give.

Kyle Susan Taylor

Altar Guild

Church of the Transfiguration,
Freeport, New York

Editor’s note: While the plan above may not work for your parish in 2024 (We’re almost halfway through!) it’s never too to contribute to a local Blessing Box or food pantry. Food insecurity is an increasingly serious problem on Long Island. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if every altar guild spearheaded a similar initiative either in Lent or another time of year? It could give us a new way to set the table for our Lord.

“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.’” Mt. 25: 40 NIV

A Moveable Feast And Its Symbols

It seems that the date of Easter hops around like a bunny, but there really is both rhyme and reason to find the date. The method is outlined on pages 880-881 of the BCP. (The easy way, of course, is to Google it!)

The following article about lilies, eggs and bunnies was shared by Barbara Taylor is from a long-lost Altar Guild Newsletter....

The date of Easter is determined by the Lunar calendar. It is set after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. The Easter season lasts for fifty days and lasts until the Day of Pentecost.

There are many traditional symbols to note how the three most common may have originated.

The Easter Lily: One legend holds that the lily sprouted from the ground where Christ's blood and tears fell during the crucifixion as well as in Gethsemane after He was betrayed. Of course, the lily has long been associated with purity. Its trumpet shape also makes it a logical herald of the Good News.

The Egg: Some pre-Christian religions believed the universe was derived from an egg, and so it was associated with new birth.

egg, and so it was associated with new birth. The coloring of eggs predates Christianity, but as with many pagan traditions, it has taken on Christian symbolism. Eggs dyed red symbolize Christ's blood and legend has it that when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and found it empty the eggs she had brought with her in a basket turned red. The breaking of the eggs often symbolizes the breaking of the tomb.

The Bunny: To equate "Peter Cottontail hopping down the bunny trail" with the original "Easter Rabbit" is a bit of a stretch.

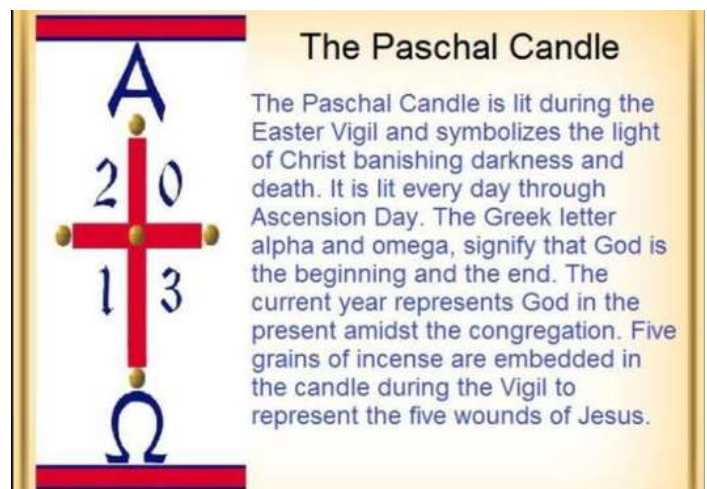
While we don't want to split them it was *hares*, not rabbits who were a symbol of the Anglo-Saxon goddess, Eostre, a.k.a. Ostara or Eastre. The 8th Century historian, The Venerable Bede, mentions Eostre as the name of a month corresponding with April and suggests that the festival of Easter may have been named after her. She is associated with themes of fertility, renewal and the change of seasons, the egg as well as the famously prolific hare are logical symbols for her. In time, the pagan spring festival was overtaken by the Christian Church and was itself reborn as the feast of the Resurrection. 🐰

The Light of Christ

"All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame pray with me to God the almighty for the grace to sing of this great light." The Exsultet

The most important of the great symbols of Easter is the paschal candle, which is lit from the new fire at the Easter Vigil. As A.G. members, you no doubt handled it, but are you aware of the richness of its symbols? LGB+

Graphic shamelessly swiped from the Internet





Your DAG Board listened to your requests and so are happy to announce a spring field trip! (It's the first we have been able to do since the COVID shutdown cancelled our last travel event!)

Join us for a chartered bus trip to the world's largest Gothic Cathedral

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine

It is a truly awe-inspiring church filled with marvels of art and architecture. The Cathedral is an ever-evolving place, so even if you have been there before, there will be new things to discover.

Our day will begin with a comfortable ride on a 56 passenger tour bus leaving from from one of three convenient locations:

Stop #1	LIE Exit 61 Park and Ride, 100 Smith Ave, Holbrook	8:00am
Stop #2	LIE Exit 49 Park & Ride, N Service Road, Melville	8:30am
Stop #3	The Mercer School, Garden City	9:30am

At the Cathedral, we will have a guided tour including the sacristy. Following the tour, Fr. Byrne will Celebrate the Eucharist in St. James Chapel.

After the service, there will be free time to explore the cathedral further and to enjoy the Cathedral Close with its lawns, the Peace Fountain, and gardens including a Biblical Garden with plants, flowers and herbs should be just beginning to show off their spring colors.

Lunch will be on your own. There are numerous restaurants within easy walking distance of the Cathedral. Trip Advisor and other sites have solid recommendations.

Our bus will leave the Cathedral to return to Long Island at 2:30 PM

We really need to fill the bus, so please bring a friend or three!

Before you ask.....

1. **Yes**, you can join us at the Cathedral. **However:** Getting there by public transportation requires a fair amount of walking and some stairs. If you drive, there is *no* parking on the Cathedral grounds. You have to park on the street or in a garage.

2. **Cost:** For the bus and the tour \$50.00 per person. The tour only is the discount rate of \$12.00 **NO**, lunch is not included in the price. (We tried, but it was impossible to arrange for a good price!)

Questions??? Please call Jane Ames – 516-921-0580.



What: A day trip to explore The Cathedral Church of St. John The Divine, the largest gothic cathedral in the world! Come experience the beauty of holiness in this historic cathedral

Who: Altar Guild members, acolytes, choir members friends, friends of friend!
Everyone is welcome!

When: **Saturday, April 13, 2024.** The bus will make 3 pick-ups: **Stop #1 8:00am** LIE Exit 61 Park & Ride, 100 Smith Ave, Holbrook ✂ **Stop #2 8:30 AM** LIE Exit 49 Park & Ride, N Service Road, Melville
Stop # 3 9:30 AM The Mercer School, Garden City.
The tour of the cathedral will begin at about 10:30 AM

Where: St. John the Divine 1047 Amsterdam Avenue.

Cost: \$50.00 Price includes tour and transportation. (Lunch is separate)
If you want to meet the group at the cathedral, the tour alone is \$12.00

Questions : Please call Jane Ames 516 921 0580 or email: JaneAmes913@ gmail.com

Register : Please register by **April 6, 2024** Return the form below by mail to
Sally Bergmeyer, 33 70 165th St., Flushing, NY 11358



Spring Trip Registration



Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Preferred Phone _____ Parish _____

Please Circle One: Tour and Bus \$50.00 Tour only \$12.00

Please make checks payable to "Altar Guild, Diocese of LI." ***Please register by April 6th***

Mail this registration to: Sally Bergmeyer, 3370 165th St. Flushing, NY 11358



mighty MARTHAs SACRISTY SUPERHERO

It's Spring cleaning time, and there is just too much of many good things! Not knowing what to do with all the special items in the sacristy leads to clutter and frustration. Holy items deserve special handling. Here are a few tips:

Holy Oils: Three options: 1. Empty the oils onto cotton balls and add to the New Fire at the Easter Vigil. 2. Burn the oil in a special oil burner. (*Caveat:* olive oil does not burn all that well, so it might be troublesome.) 3. Dig a hole in a good spot and bury the oil. Cleanse the container, pouring the rinse water on the ground or in the piscina. (*Do not* pour oil directly into the piscina unless you want to make an *unholy* mess!)

Damaged Linens: They may be reverently burned or buried.

Surplus Hangings, vestments and Altar Ware: If in good condition, pass them along via your Diocesan Altar Guild! Call Jane or Fr. Byrne and they will get to the right place. If in poor condition, save and repurpose embroidery or orphreys or whatever is salvageable.

Candles: Beeswax: New? Pass them along. Used? Try to melt down and repurpose. Stearine stubs? Reverently toss.

Beaten up BCPs and Hymnals: Give them to confirmands (or other students) to take home and use as textbooks. (The 37 KJV Bibles no one knew what to do with when Great Aunt Gertie died cluttering up the shelves can be given out to parishioners or passed along to the library sale or the used bookstore.)

Aged And Infirm Choir or Acolyte Robes : Just toss them. If reasonably good, Pass along via the DAG.

Palms, palms, palms! Bundle them up and stick on the Rector's desk. Or burn them for next Ash Wednesday.

One final spring cleaning tip: *Get rid of* any Tarn-X , abrasive cleansers, Scotchbrite or Brillo pads. They will all do lasting damage to silver, brass and most anything else the AG cleans.

MEMBERSHIP: ALTAR GUILD, DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND

Annual Membership is \$15 for an individual and \$25 for a parish or mission. Your membership dollars go to support our work in the diocese; provide assistance to all altar guilds; help defray the cost of workshops, programs and field trips. We also have a presence at our Diocesan Convention providing assistance with the Holy Eucharist, sharing information, and offering a clergy vestment exchange. We are also members of the National Altar Guild Association.

YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD

Please make check payable to: "Altar Guild, Diocese of Long Island" and submit to:

Kyle Taylor, 95 Colonial Avenue, Freeport, NY 11520

☐ Renewal ☐ New Member ☐ New Contact Info ☐ Individual ☐ Parish

NAME _____ PARISH _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Diocesan Altar Guild Directory

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Welcome, Happy Morning age to age shall say!



ALTAR GUILD

DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND
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GARDEN CITY, NY, 11530

**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE OPEN AND
SHARE!**

SAVE THE DATE! ADVENT QUIET DAY 12/14/24 SPEAKER: BISHOP FRANKLIN