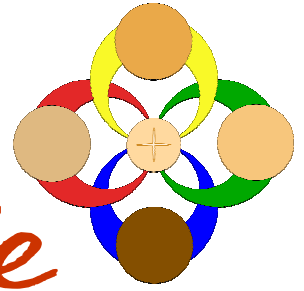


CREATOR

Chronicle



"As a congregation named for our Creator, we are children of the Living God, beloved brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, selflessly living out our faith in worship, fellowship, giving, education and outreach."

October 2020

Dear Friends:

*In this and the next two months we will continue our study of the **Christian Wisdom Traditions**. I am convinced that the great Catholic theologian Karl Rahner was right when he claimed: "**The Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all.**"*

*He meant we will either have a dynamic, immediate and experiential relationship with God, or we will be bereft of faith. **Faith** will either affect our ordinary awareness, create new ways of living and energize every dimension of our lives, or it will be formulaic, superficial and empty.*

True Self-Separate Self

The thing that we have to face is that life is as simple as this. We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent and God is shining through it all the time. This is not just a fable or a nice story, it is true. —

Thomas Merton

I learned the terms "**True Self**" and "**false self**" from Thomas Merton (1915–1968). These are words he used to clarify Jesus' teaching of **dying to self** or "**losing ourselves to find ourselves**" (see Mark 8:35). Merton rightly recognized that it was **not** the physical body that had to "**die**" but the "**false self**" that we do **not need** anyway. The **false self** ... or what Richard Rohr is calling the "**separate self**," disconnected from **Divine Love** ... is simply a **substitute** for our **deepest truth**. ... It is a useful and even **needed part** of ourselves but it is **not all** of us ... the **danger** is when we think we are **only** our small or **separate self**. Our **attachment** to the **false self** must **die** to allow the **True Self** ... [the **Image of God**] our basic and unchangeable identity in God ... to live fully and freely.

Thomas Merton said that the **True Self** should **not** be thought of as anything different than **life itself** ... but **not my little life** ... the **Big Life**. [1] Franciscan philosopher **John Duns Scotus** (c. 1266–1308) said that the **human person** is **not** different or separate from **Being** itself. This is **not** the **little being** that you and I get **attached** to and take too **seriously**, but **Universal Being**, "the **One in whom we live**, and **move**, and have our being," as **Paul** put it to the **Athenians** in (Acts 17: 28). ... **Franciscans** call this "**the univocity of all being**" (speaking of **all beings** with **one consistent voice**), "that all may be one" (John 17:21).

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Rev. Robert M. Blanton, Priest-In-Charge * office hours: Monday—Thursday, 9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

Please call the church office, 601-924-2261, to schedule an appointment.

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When you've gotten too **comfortable** with your **separate self** and you call it **Life**, you will get trapped at that **level**. You will hold onto it for dear life ... because that's the **only** life you think you have!

Unless someone **tells** you about the **Bigger Life**, or unless you've had a conscious **connection** with the **deepest ground** of your being, there's **no way** you're going to let go of your **separate self**. But your **attachment** to that **separate self** must "**die**" or "the single grain of wheat **remains** just a single grain" (John 12:24).

Your **True Self** is **Life** and **Being** and **Love**. **Love** is what you were **made for** and **love** is **who** you **are**. When you live **outside** of **Love**, you are **not** living from your **true Being** or with **full consciousness**. The **Song of Songs** says that "**Love** is **strong** as **Death**. . . . The **flash** of it is a **flash** of **fire**, a **flame** of **YHWH**" (8:6, Jerusalem Bible). Your **True Self** is a little **tiny flame** of this **Universal Reality** that is **Life** itself, **Consciousness** itself, **Being** itself, **Love** itself, **Light** and **Fire** itself, **God's very self**.

[1] Merton about the true self throughout *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New Directions: ©1961).

Adapted from Richard Rohr, *True Self/False Self*, disc 2 (Franciscan Media: 2003), CD;

The Glory of God in Us

Today we begin with **Thomas Merton's** classic description of the **True Self** as written following his "**conversion**" at Fourth and Walnut in Louisville, Kentucky. [1] It is so inspired; I want to quote it at length:

At the **center** of our **being** is a point of **nothingness** which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or **spark** which belongs entirely to **God**, which is never at our **disposal**, from which **God** **disposes** of our lives, which is **inaccessible** to the fantasies of our own mind or the **brutalities** of our own will. This little point of **nothingness** and of **absolute poverty** is the pure glory of **God** **in us**. It is, so to speak, [**God's**] name **written** in us, as our **poverty**, as our **indigence**, as our **dependence**, as our [birthright]. It is like a pure **diamond**, blazing with the invisible **light** of **heaven**. It is **in** everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of **points of light** coming together in the face and **blaze** of a sun that would make all the **darkness** and **cruelty** of life **vanish** completely. **Merton** goes on to say ... I have no **program** for this seeing. It is only **given**. But, I know, that the **gate** of **heaven** is **everywhere**. [2]

Most of us spend our entire lives living up to the mental **self-images** of who we think we are, instead of living in the primal "**I**" that is already **good** in **God's** eyes. But all I can "**pay back**" to God or others or myself is **who I really am**.

This is what **Merton** is describing. It's a place of utter **simplicity**. Perhaps we don't want to go back there because it is too **simple** and almost too **natural**. It feels utterly **unadorned**. There's nothing to **congratulate** myself for. I can't prove any **worth**, much less **superiority**. There I am **naked** and **poor**. After years of **posturing** and **projecting**, it will at first feel like **nothing**.

But when we are **nothing**, we are in a **fine** position to receive **everything** from **God**. As **Merton** says, our **point** of **nothingness** is "the **pure glory** of **God** in us." If we look at the great religious traditions, we see they all use similar words to point in the same direction. The Franciscan word is "poverty." The Carmelite word is *nada* or "nothingness." The Buddhists speak of "emptiness." Jesus speaks of being "poor in spirit" in his very first beatitude (Matthew 5:3).

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A Zen master would call the True Self “the face we had before we were born.” Paul would call it who we are “in Christ, hidden in God” (Colossians 3:3).

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

It is who we are before we’ve done anything right or anything wrong, before we even have a conscious *thought* about who we are. Thinking creates the separate self, the ego self, the insecure self. The God-given contemplative mind, on the other hand, recognizes the God Self, the Christ Self, the True Self of abundance and deep inner security.

In Jesus’ Name ... Amen.

[1] Walnut has since been renamed Muhammed Ali Boulevard.

[2] Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Doubleday & Company: ©1965, 1966), 142.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, [*Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*](#) (Crossroad Publishing: 1999, 2003), 76–78

The Illusion of the Separate Self

*Center for Action and Contemplation faculty member **James Finley** studied under **Thomas Merton** as a young monk in formation. While many have been influenced by Merton’s writings, few have had the opportunity to learn from the mystic himself. In today’s lesson we will hear Jim reflect on the insights on the True Self and false self that he gleaned from his studies with Thomas Merton.*

In the following text Merton makes clear that the self-proclaimed **autonomy** of the **false self** is just an **illusion**. ...

Every one of us is shadowed by an illusory person: a **false self**.

This is the **man** or **woman** I want myself to **be** but who cannot exist, because God does not **know** anything about him. And to be unknown of **God** is altogether too much privacy.

My **false** and **private** self is the one who wants to exist outside the reach of **God’s will** and **God’s love** ... **outside** of **reality** and **outside** of **life**. And **such** a self cannot help but be an **illusion**.

We are not very good at recognizing our **illusions**, least of all the ones we **cherish** about **ourselves** ... the ones we are **born with** and which **feed** the **roots** of our **particular** **sinfulness**. For most of the people in the world, there is no greater subjective reality than this **false self** of theirs, which **cannot exist**. A life devoted to the **cult** of this shadow is what is called a **life** of **sin**. [1] ...

The **false self**, sensing its fundamental unreality, begins to clothe itself in **myths** and **symbols** of **power**. Since it **intuits** that it is but a shadow, that it **is** nothing, it begins to convince itself that it **is** what it **does**. Hence, the more it **does**, **achieves** and **experiences**, the more real it becomes. Merton writes,

Continued on next page

All sin starts from the **assumption** that my false self, the **self** that **exists only** in my own egocentric desires, is the fundamental reality of life to which everything else in the universe is ordered. Thus, I **use up** my **life** in the **desire** for **pleasures** and the **thirst** for **experiences**, for **power, honor, knowledge** and **love**, to clothe this **false self** and construct its **nothingness** into something objectively real. And I **wrap** myself in **experiences** and **cover** myself with **pleasures** and **glory** like **bandages** in order to make myself **perceptible** to myself and to the world, as if I were an **invisible body** that could only become **visible** when something visible covered its surface. [2]

Richard Rohr writes: *Our false self is how we define ourselves outside of love, relationship, or divine union. After we have spent many years laboriously building this separate self, with all its labels and preoccupations, we are very attached to it. And why wouldn't we be? It's what we know and all we know. When we first begin to move beyond it, it will always feel like losing or dying.*

[1] Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New Directions Paperbook: 2007, ©1961), 34.

[2] *Ibid.*, 34-35.

James Finley, *Merton's Palace of Nowhere: A Search for God through Awareness of the True Self* (Ave Maria Press: 1978), 33, 35, 36.

Richard Rohr, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self* (Jossey-Bass: 2013), 36.

For a deeper exploration of Thomas Merton's teachings, tune into James Finley's podcast, "Turning to the Mystics," produced by the CAC.

ATTENTION! In-Person Worship returns

10:30 am, Sunday, October 11

We will gather as we have been on Zoom October 4 and will return to in-person services October 11. Wednesday Zoom services will continue until further notice.

Please only enter through the main church doors where:

- Hand sanitizer will be provided
- You will be required to wear a face mask (bring your own or one will be provided)
- You will sign in (a record of attendance must be maintained)
- You will receive a bulletin (that includes the complete service)

Seating:

- Three people per every other pew (spaces will be marked with tape)
- Families may sit together on the marked pews

Communion:

- Bread only will be dispensed from the floor, not from the Chancel Railing. You will come at the direction of the Ushers, receive the bread and return to your pew while maintaining six foot separation.

The Peace:

- Please remain in your places and greet those around you verbally.

Acolyte Ministry

Acolyte Recognition Day

September 27, 2020

This year, since we are not holding Sunday services, I held a special Acolyte Awards Day celebration on the church grounds. Pastor Bob opened with his thoughts. (*Previously, I had asked each Acolyte to bring with them a thought, experience or whatever they wanted to say concerning how this year had affected them.*) I asked each Acolyte to read what they brought. I concluded with my thoughts. Then, after a discussion of these contributions we commissioned the Adult Acolytes. The service concluded with photos and Pastor Bob sent us off with a prayer.

Acolyte of the Year: Max Lanford
Honor Acolyte: Landon Daniel and Rowan Braley
Acolyte Service Plaque: Landon Daniel (Senior)

Adult Acolytes Commissioned:
Ruby Lanford, Joan Blanton, Deborah Runyan



My Message to the Acolytes on Acolyte Recognition Day

As we gather here today we find ourselves in the midst of a very unusual and trying time. Nothing in our lives is the same as it was when this year began. We haven't been together inside this building now in almost six months – no incense, no processions, no music, and no pot luck lunches! I miss all of this every time a Sunday rolls around but most of all I miss you and our time together before, during and after mass. I miss seeing your faces, I miss hearing your voices, I miss listening to your stories and I miss watching you interact with each other. Yes, sometimes you do frustrate me but mostly you make my heart smile and that's what I really miss the most. You've probably heard from the TV, news or from some other source that, due to this crazy virus, the government forced churches to shut down in the middle of March, with no definite date of when they will open again, keeping people from worshipping God.

But you know what? – Christ's church never ended. It never closed. His church was not and is not shut down. The only time this building is "God's Church" is when you and I and others like us are inside celebrating God through: fellowship, music and hearing the words of His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus doesn't live in this building - He never lived here – He lives inside each one of us – He lives within our hearts - and He reveals Himself to the world through us – through our words, our actions, our thoughts, and in our deeds.

You see - we are God's Church, not this building, you and I are the Church. We are the Christ that others see, not 1445 Clinton-Raymond Road. Most of the people you and I encounter in our lives will never ever enter these doors and for some of those people we interact with - the only Church they will ever know - is you and me. Think about that for a minute: You and I are the only Church experience some people will ever know. Their perception of Christianity and what that looks like will be directly influenced by how they witness you and me living out our daily lives in the image of Christ.

One day we will be back filling this building with joy and praising God, but in the meantime, I challenge each of you to fulfill Christ's commandment by continuing to be His Disciples by going out into the world every day spreading His word through: everything you do and everything you say, and by loving everyone you meet in the same way as you want to be loved.

Church has not ended here at Creator; it has only been temporally transferred out of this building and into the community and perhaps, at this point in time, it's for the better!

Mike Milone



ATTENTION! In-Person Worship returns October 11

We will resume church services by holding only one service each Sunday at 10:30 am. See details on page 4.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Bob



Saint Francis Day Observed

October 11 @ 3:00 p.m.

Join us in the blessing of our pets as we celebrate St. Francis' Day.

We will meet in the parking lot at 3:00 pm for the Blessing of the Animals service.

Submitted by Mike Milone

Please note! — We ask that everyone please help support God’s homeless creatures by bringing to the **Blessing of the Animals** one or more items as a donation to C.A.R.A.



FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY

(3rd Sunday each month)

When you are grocery shopping, please remember to pick up some extra, non-perishable food goods and bring them to church the next time you come. We will be continuing this outreach ministry each month on the third Sunday each month, so mark the dates on your calendar.



Monthly Workday List

Saturday, October 17 (8-12 am)

The following is a list of things that need to be done most workdays. There are tasks that can be done individually, so if you cannot make it to a work day then please feel free to work on list items when you can.

Inside projects

- Clean up pantry, storage closets, and storage rooms in education building and Parish hall.
- Cleaning scuff marks from walls in Nave and Education building.
- Clean window sills of cobwebs, etc.
- Any general sorting or reorganizing in sacristy, narthex, kitchen, Ed. Building foyer, classrooms, attic, etc.

Outside Projects

- Check trash cans and place at road if they need to be emptied. Garbage days are Wednesday and Saturday. Recycling is on Wednesday.
- Blowing off sidewalks and parking lots.
- Hedge trimming, trim plants in front of parish hall.
- Burn leaf pile near education building.
- Picking up trash and limbs in front of church and near road.
- Weed beds around church buildings as needed.
- Clean debris out under foot bridge and culverts.
- Treat, pull, or round up any weeds or trees in drainage ditches.
- Clean up playground area.
- Pick up limbs behind church and place in burn pile.

Contact Beth if you have any questions or additions or would like to form a grounds committee.



Vestry Digest

September 21, 2020

Present: Pastor Bob Blanton, Priest-in-Charge, Ross Turner, John Lanford,
Jennifer Duncan, Tommy Mills, Treasurer, Dianne Martin, Clerk of the Vestry

Absent: Isabel Mills

Visitor:

Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting:

Dianne said she had inadvertently dropped a digit in the reported reconciled balance for July in the minutes and will make that change. With that caveat, Jennifer made a motion to accept August meeting minutes. Ross seconded. The motion passed.

Treasurer Report:

Tommy reported that the scout money in the amount of \$2821.78 has been moved from the General Fund to the Outreach restricted account. That's good but the amount is showing as an expenditure in the general fund. That together with the air conditioner repair, lawn service, and tree removal contributed to our total expenditure in August being reported as exceeding our total revenue. We now have 3.15 budget reserve months.

Dianne asked why the restricted account 8155.00 (Fundraisers) is not showing an ending balance of zero. Tommy will check on this.

Junior Warden Report

Bob asked us to be considering what we are going to do about Junior Warden duties now that Rhea and Larry have moved.

Old Business

The church building door at the choir entrance still has the old lock and key as do the doors on the parish hall.

Because of the generosity of church members, the church provided \$1500.00 for those affected by the ICE raids. With that money, Deborah Runyan was able to buy 50 gift cards for those families in need.

Vestry Minutes continued on next page

New Business

Bob commented on the happy fact that we have so many children in our congregation. The acolytes will be installed this Sunday at 1:00 in the parking lot. Our two babies, Emmanuel and Sloan, will need to be baptized in the future.

Bob is interested in having the church service live streamed. John said he would talk with Ruby about helping with that.

Northside Baptist Church has started a new scout troop and would like their trailer back. John moved that we give it back, Jennifer seconded, and the motion passed.

The vestry meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Minutes of vestry meetings may be found on the bulletin board outside the administrator's office following their approval and correction if needed. If you would like a copy, please call the office and a copy will be provided to you via email.



October

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Birthdays

- 11 Vicky Donaho
- 17 Darby Donaho
- 21 Tommy Mills
- 24 Brittany White
- 25 Rylee Johnson

Anniversaries

- 6 Monty & Beth Braley
- 18 Samuel & Elisabet McGahey
- 28 John & Dianne Martin



October, 2020

The Episcopal Church of the Creator

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	2	3 5 pm: AA / Al-Anon Meeting Safe Harbor Retreat 2-7pm
4 10:30 am: Zoom: Healing Service 6:00 pm: Zoom: Safe Harbor	5 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	6 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	7 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	8 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	9	10 5 pm: AA / Al-Anon Meeting
11 10:30 am: Mass 6:00 pm: Zoom: Safe Harbor Animal Blessing 3pm	12 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	13 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	14 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	15 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	16	17 5 pm: AA / Al-Anon Meeting Church Work Day 8am-12pm
18 10:30 am: Mass 6:00 pm: Facebook Live: Safe Harbor FOOD PANTRY for the 4 C's	19 6:30 pm: Vestry 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	20 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	21 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	22 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	23	24 5 pm: AA / Al-Anon Meeting
25 10:30 am: Mass 6:00 pm: Facebook Live: Safe Harbor	26 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	27 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	28 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	29 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	30	31 5 pm: AA / Al-Anon Meeting

Episcopal Church of the Creator

Church Office Hours:

9:00 am—2 pm, Monday—Thursday

Presiding Bishop

The Most Reverend Michael Curry

Bishop

The Very Reverend Brian Seage

Priest-In-Charge

The Reverend Robert M. Blanton

Administrator

Beth Braley

theepiscopalchurchofthecreator@gmail.com

Choir Director

Vacant

Senior Warden

Vacant

Junior Warden

Vacant

Treasurer

Tommy Mills, 601-259-5333

Vestry

Ross Turner, 601-214-2484

John Lanford, 601-708-4374

Dianne Martin, 601-906-5086

Isabel Mills, 601-954-3769

Jennifer Duncan, 601-850-6353

Contacts

Church Office

Administrator—Beth Braley, 601-924-2261

Email: theepiscopalchurchofthecreator@gmail.com

Pastoral Emergencies

Rev. Robert M. Blanton, Cell: 601-291-0652

Polly Marshall, Cell: 601-953-2980

Acolytes

Mike Milone, Cell: 601-473-6305

Adult Christian Education

Rev. Robert M. Blanton, Cell: 601-291-0652

Altar Guild

Joyce White, Cell: 601-672-0842

Choir

Vacant

Children's Christian Education

John Lanford, Cell: 601-966-3441

Columbarium

Vacant

Flower Guild

Becky Wright, Cell: 601-940-4861

Funeral Guild

Vacant

Parish Lunches & Special Events

Andrew Wilder, 601-842-0058

Doug George, 601-502-5063

Wedding Coordinator

Vacant



Episcopal Church of the Creator
1445 Clinton-Raymond Rd.
Clinton, MS 39056

*We are part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion and in communion with the
Archbishop of Canterbury.*

“We are a congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi: One church in mission, inviting, transforming, and reconciling. We seek to serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being.”