



*If faith puts us on the road, love keeps us there.*

William Sloane Coffin

As must be obvious by now, I am a fan of Coffin's observations on faith, especially because he felt compelled to live them. As the famous son of a famous preacher, he didn't have to spend numerous hours talking with young people about the necessity of living-out the faith we profess, of spending hours in jail for civil disobedience making good on his claims or, late in life, being the voice of radical love from the pulpit of Riverside Church in New York, preaching in a world divided by political disenchantment and apathy. He simply lived the love he professed and created a more loving world in doing so.

I talk about Coffin's capacity for love because I am continually inspired by the people of St. Paul's to offer that model, to be the love we want to see in the world. I also say it in the context of the work I have seen among the people of Project Interaction, who do what can only be described as labors of love for the people on the margins in this city. No doubt you have heard words like these many times. As I hear more stories of the people involved in this enterprise, however, I am continually astounded at the seriousness and the joy that goes into this work. As I have read Fr. Gutwein's history of Project Interaction, it is clear that faith put the enterprise on the road but it is love that keeps it going. It is not meant to be perfect—nothing this imbued with love ever is—but it bears witness to a common

expression of love among many worshipping communities that is too rare in our time.

Because we need to sustain the work of Project Interaction through funding efforts (and because getting together outside of a kitchen can simply be a lot of fun), we have fundraiser scheduled for October 5 at La Scala Birra. These annual fundraisers have taken several forms in the past; this year we are having a luncheon, with tickets at \$40 each. Because the best form of advertising is always word-of-mouth, I encourage all to tell their families, co-workers and friends about this opportunity. Love, like the kingdom it supports, does not work as a well-kept secret.

We have a similar opportunity on November 16 to show our commitment to the St. Paul's community with a get-together at the Tavistock Country Club. Again, this is an event to share with friends, especially because it is an evening affair (If you have a tux/evening dress/anything else you would like to show off, now is the time) and will benefit the ministries and building fund at St. Paul's. You will be hearing more about this event in coming weeks.

If love has kept this community on the road, I believe it is useful to reflect that the road is where we always meet the kind of love we are celebrating. In the gospels, we are always on the road, toward Bethlehem, toward Emmaus and Jerusalem. It is in the DNA of a movement that was originally called The

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Way. It is rare that we have an opportunity to celebrate, both the accomplishments and the road we continue to travel as people of faith. I hope you will join me in these chances to rejoice with our neighbors in what we have done and all that lies ahead for Project interaction and St. Paul's. If they will know us by our love, that fact alone is reason enough to celebrate.

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# Julian and Hope

*"I may make all things well; I can make all things well, and I will make all things well, and I shall make all things well; and you shall see for yourself that all manner of things shall be well."*

Julian of Norwich

Approaching the waning days of the season after Pentecost, when our liturgical year closes before the beginning of Advent, our readings turn toward the end of things: the necessity of being awake, Jesus' predictions of the destruction of the Temple, and it is a great comfort to me to hear Julian's words, that we can expect that "all manner of things shall be well."

Julian was a fifteenth-century anchorite, someone who was responsible to pray for the life of the community in which she lived. She did so from a cell attached to the Church of St. Julian, from which we derive her name; to this day we do not know her given name, only her faith in transcribing her visions into a book (the first written by a woman in English) detailing the deep love of God for all God's children. It is a book by which I have tried to live, a volume of reassurance and hope written in a

time of political unrest, plague and uncertainty. It has taught me that, with God's help nothing is so certain except the promise of divine care for us all.

Indeed, it is a wonderfully hopeful time at St. Paul's. We have a vestry retreat on October 12 that, I hope, will build on the work done by Bishop Bennison in defining priorities and setting goals for the coming year and a direction to be moving in subsequent years. With the time constraints that are a part of regular vestry meetings, I am looking forward to being with the lay leadership in a more relaxed setting to see the face St. Paul's will be presenting to the world.

But the reason I look toward Julian this time of year is the faith that I see in so many efforts that are not so visible. I was reminded of all the hard work that happens this time of year in a spirit of trust: the stewardship campaign, the budgeting process that determines where we are going to put our collective energies in the coming year. The vestry, who often have to make hard decisions about where to put our resources, will do so in a spirit of trust and hope that is wonderful to see in church leadership.

Any time of year is a good time to commend the hard work that I routinely see at St. Paul's. At year's end, however, I believe it is especially important to honor the effort of all engaged in ministry and to celebrate the trust and conviction of this wonderful worshipping community. There is a great deal to celebrate at St. Paul's, and Julian's message of hope is, in my view, something to live by as we close-out our liturgical year and look toward the promise of new possibilities and new relationships with our neighbors.

## Stewardship and Foot-washing

I have a friend who went on the journey to ordination with me and is now rector of a very unusual parish in Atlanta. It is the Church of the Common Ground and is located in one of the city parks. There is very little upkeep in this church, no need for sextons, lights to keep on or buildings to maintain. But there are plenty of people, those from all backgrounds, wealthy and poor and those who simply have nowhere else to go. My friend practices the quietest ministry imaginable, sitting with people, asking about their lives and gently offering to pray with them. There are services on Sunday, but it is fundamentally a ministry of presence, presence to people's lives amid suffering and scarcity, of acknowledgement of a common ground on which we all stand, honoring the living God in one another.

Some of the primary tools my friend uses in her ministry are sponges, towels and a basin, as she washes feet—a lot of feet, some of women who remove their pumps to show immaculate pedicures, or businessmen who are glad to have relief from the heat, which can be brutal in the summer. But most of the feet she washes belong to those who walk the pavements of Atlanta all day long, many of them bruised and torn. She can offer first aid in a pinch, but often the simple act of washing is enough, as if to wash away the indifference these people encounter every day.

If I asked my friend about stewardship, she would be adamant about its importance. She is, after all, a steward of people, an intimate part of many of their lives. She is paid for her work by the diocese, but my guess is that what she receives from her constantly- shifting congregation is far more valuable to her than the stipend from the Church. She, like all of us, is a seeker of Christ and her gift is to be able to find him in the affluent and forgotten, this strange God who arrives unannounced in the most unexpected guises.

As we enter the season for stewardship at St. Paul's, my hope is that we can all take this view. Through our support of ministries here, the work of Chester Eastside and our neighbors, we are ministering to the risen Christ in our midst. While we cannot all wash each other's feet, we can contribute to the growth of Christ's work in this parish and beyond it.

*God of the common ground for us all, help us to find you in places where we would not look, in the eyes we would not meet, and to honor you as you would serve us, to the glory of your Name. Amen.*

## Gala Reminders

Please be mindful of the upcoming events for St. Paul's and Project Interaction. The PI event will take place at the LaScala's Birra restaurant on October 5 at 1 pm, with tickets available at \$40 each; the Autumnal Fundraiser for St. Paul's will take place the evening of November 16 at Tavistock Country Club. If you have not thought about the Project Interaction event, please consider attending. It is the major fundraiser this year for this remarkable consortium of parishes, people without whom our own ministries would be impossible. If you can, tell a friend; most importantly, **tell Mitchell Morgan or Father Mark that you plan to attend.** We need everyone's support to make these evenings a success!

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## Stewardship Cards

By now, all should have received a

### RECOVERY MASS

One of the privileges of being at St. Paul's on weekdays is getting to know our sisters and brothers from the NA meetings, which happen several times a day down the hall from my office. Although their rules do not allow us to actively solicit their attendance at our events or worship, they are an integral part of our community. To honor them and their presence among us, we are planning a recovery service for November 17 during our usual 11:00 mass. It will be a chance to meet many who are going through the program and hear their stories. Please join us for this unique event on our calendar.

letter and card beginning our

we will hear from members of the parish and those who have been intimately involved in the ministries of St. Paul's, talking about their experiences with the church and what St. Paul's has meant to them. Many of these stories are truly extraordinary. We will finish our Stewardship season with a luncheon on November 11 and an ingathering of pledge cards. There will be more information on this event to follow, in the meantime please consider whether you can add your voice to the many wonderful personal stories about our parish.

stewardship season for 2020.  
Throughout this time of the year,

