

Pastoral Reflections

By Joseph Tamborini Czolgosz
Supply-Plus Priest

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed
by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern
what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

Romans 12: 2



Since my pastoral reflection last month, the uncertainty about Mother Tanya’s service as priest-in-charge now yields to plans to celebrate her years of service and ministry. Please plan to be present at the special Evensong service at 4:30 PM on Sunday, September 10, to thank God for all graces shared during Mother Tanya’s and her husband Joe’s presence with you. The reception afterward will be opportunity speak personally your regards and say farewell.

In meetings with your Vestry and with Bishop Sparks, I have agreed to continue my service as “supply-plus” priest until Trinity’s next priest-in-charge is called. Also, when your Vestry leaders engage the search process for your next priest-in-charge, I will discern with them whether or not my ministry with you seems to fit well with our respective calls to do God’s will. While there is uncertainty about who will be called, what is certain is that ***now is the time*** for all members of Trinity ***to engage in mind-renewing activities***. To better discern what is the will of God for this church community now and into the future we must talk with one another.

To that end, one “mind-renewing” activity your Vestry leaders are planning is “Trinity Conversations.” All Trinity members are invited to listen and to have conversation with one another in sessions on September 23rd and 24th. Please check the article in this Newsletter that provides more particulars about these “Trinity Conversations” sessions, ***and, please, sign-up to participate***. The fruit of these conversations will inform Vestry efforts to lead this church more fully into realizing its mission as disciple and apostle of Christ Jesus, now and in the upcoming year. A hoped-for fruit of these and follow-up conversations for Trinity members is better knowledge and understanding of Trinity’s ministry and governance priorities. Vestry leaders will spend the next year or so identifying the essential policies and practices that will guide our ministries and our personal behaviors. These in turn will not only renew our respective missional minds. Clear, mission-linked policies and processes will create a renewed climate and culture for this church that, we trust, will more fully align with “the will of God.”

Since joining you as supply priest, conversations I’ve had with some members of Trinity indicate that some members, and potential members, are carrying hurts and apprehensions due to their experiences of gossip, name-calling, and failures to listen and to hear what an other person is trying to say. These experiences have made some members and visitors wary of the climate and culture of this church. As a result, they are not involving themselves more deeply in this church community. This transition time must become a time for healing, for reconciling, for giving one another second... and third chances, to relate respectfully as fellow disciples and apostles of

Christ Jesus' Kin-dom come. Changes in our behaviors with one another can indeed renew our minds and our hearts, and better align us with God's will.

Finally, prayer is an essential mind-renewing activity wherein we listen to, and for God. Prayer changes us! Given the uncertainties that come with this unique time of transition, I ask that each of us recommit ourselves to daily prayer. Yes some forms of our daily prayer need to provide us with means to listen attentively to God, to the movements of Christ Jesus' Spirit in our midst. And, we can share a daily common prayer for Trinity Episcopal church, its leaders and members. I commend the following prayer for our individual and communal use:

Gracious and loving God, prosper with your blessing the Mission of Trinity Episcopal Church. Deepen, we pray, our love for Christ Jesus and one another. Strengthen our fellowship and discipleship that we will have the strength to do our part in the building up of your church.

Send your Holy Spirit to fill us with love for those outside the church. Deepen our understanding of their needs and your presence with and through them. Help us be a true light in our community, that, in this place all people may be drawn into your fellowship and transformed by your love.

And now, faithful God, equip and guide those who are tasked with selecting our next priest-leader. Pour out your Spirit of wisdom on each of us during our search, that saved from false choices, we may show forth the light of your presence in our renewed journey with a new clergy leader.

All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, who died and rose for us, that we may grow together into the full stature of the Christ. Amen!

In gratitude and grace,
Pastor Joe