

May 15, 2010

From the Rector: More Ruminations on the Flood

This past week has offered some much-needed perspective and emotional space following the initial shock and adrenaline rush immediately following the extensive flood damages to the church of May 2. Last weekend, for example, I ventured into Bellevue for the first time since the flooding and was deeply moved by the devastation I saw among so many residences. It is very sad to see the mounds of personal possessions piled high along the streets, ruined and awaiting the trash dump. Local news sources seem to have done a thorough job reporting the causes and lasting effects of the flood, as well as sharing many heart-rending stories from throughout Middle Tennessee. Obviously, the flood's impact stretches far beyond St. George's.

Quite naturally, in times of emergency we tend to respond to what is most important to us, the most familiar, the people and institutions most dear to us. I believe this is as it should be. Our parish continues to be blessed with exceptional turnout for much-needed volunteer help in continuing clean-up efforts. In fact, we could use even more, especially in the coming weeks as we get used to the "new normal" of the flood damage and other spring pursuits tug at us.

However, as a congregation deeply committed to ever-expanding outreach ministry, we are called to remember the needs of our brothers and sisters in the larger community. So far we have had more than 200 parishioners volunteer for church-organized flood-relief efforts beyond the parish itself. I express once more my deep gratitude for this outpouring of godly love by St. Georgeans.

These days I find myself praying the same prayers: "God, what are you doing through this event? How can this challenge to our ministry help us grow? Lord, use this event as a catalyst for renewed trust, new visioning, and deepening discipleship and witness. Help us not to waste this opportunity by simply being reactive or thinking the task before us is merely to return to what we already possessed."

As usual, I have found much inspiration and guidance in the Bible. The older I get the more my heart and mind is converted (and *conversion* is the right word) to read in Scripture the ultimate shape of reality as it really is. This is why the Bible is the inspired word of God. It reveals the Truth about who we are, how the world is, and who God is. Therefore, I suggest that one way you can make wise use of times that seem obviously to demand prayerful reflection is to commit once again to daily meditation and study of the Bible.

So many of you are already well-practiced in this vital Christian discipline. Indeed, on Tuesday of this week someone recommended I return to the Letter to the Ephesians where in the initial verses Paul shares these words with those beloved but challenged Christians: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you..." (Eph. 1.17-18).

These words are a prayer for us today. May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened to see how God might use this event to grant us wisdom and to deepen our hope as those who belong to Christ, a hope we are called also to share. – RLS+