

REPORT TO THE PARISH OF HOLY TRINITY METCALFE
The Reverend Canon Michael Fleming
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As we move forward under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we need to remember several things: first, that we are called together to be a community of women, men and children who witness to and for Jesus Christ; second, that we have each been given gifts and talents to harness and blend together in the work of ministry; third, that no one can do ministry alone but only when hands and hearts join together; that we are a family bound to one another by our Lord who commanded us to “love one another as I love you” and that through acts of love and sacrifice, we will renew our congregation, our community and strengthen our faith.

It is with the “how” that we struggle. Perhaps we feel that we are “too small a community” to have any affect on our environments’; perhaps we feel that we do not have what is needed for the work to which we are called; perhaps we do not have a sense of who we are and why we are as a family of faith; perhaps we feel that ministry is the responsibility of the “hireling” (clergy) to “do” ministry for and among us... you probably have your own definition of the confusion!

How do we begin the process which I believe is essential for us to not only survive as a parish, but to grow from strength to strength and become what the Spirit wants us to be – a dynamic, enthusiastic, alive, committed fellowship which empowers people of faith to reach beyond themselves to offer hope and love and compassion to all who come to us seeking healing and wholeness?

I believe that the whole thing begins by our being empowered by the Scriptures. While written long ago, the Gospels and the writings of the evangelists hold the clues and all we have to do is, in the words of the Collect prayer for Proper 32 (BAS), “Eternal God, who caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning, grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen”.

While we do not live in the same times and situations which were faced by the first followers of The Way, we can find within the narratives of the life of Jesus and the subsequent journey of those called by the death and resurrection of Jesus to “carry on carrying on” in His blessed name. If we rely only on whatever is “au current” or “trendy” to find our way “home”, I fear that we shall not have all the story we need to write our own chapter in the history of the continuing movement of men, women and children of faith who seek to be a part of and share the proclaimed Kingdom of God

which Jesus said “you are not far from the Kingdom of God”(Mark 12: 34) and then, “the Kingdom of God is within you”(Luke 17:21).

I am reminded of the commitment made by the first followers of Jesus, not only in His lifetime as they left their safe harbours and set sail with The Master on the uncertain seas of faith, but also as the community which was blessed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. After all was said and done by the Spirit, with a “whole lot of shakin’ goin’ on”, this group of men and women who had hidden behind locked doors out of fear **or** retaliation and death became a fearless company of witnesses. They moved out after the death of Stephen to the farthest corners of the Roman Empire and many died embracing their faith and committing their all to sharing what they had seen and heard with others. They established small faith families wherever they could – in caves in the deserts, on the shores of lakes and rivers, in the homes of the rich and the hovels of the poor in the great cities of the known world. They did this because they were convinced and were willing to bet their lives on the fact that Jesus had empowered them to not only speak about the Kingdom of God and its hallmarks of justice and equity and healing and wholeness and love and service and sacrifice and compassion, but to BE the Kingdom. That calling is still being sent out and my hope and prayer for you, my dear sisters and brothers in the faith, that you have the ears to hear, the eyes to see, the hearts to embrace and the courage to move where the Spirit leads.

I am convinced that you, the goodly and godly folk at Holy Trinity, ARE the inheritors of that “derring-do” which erupted from a locked room in Jerusalem and that, IF YOU HAVE THE WILL, great things lie in store for you. I remain committed to being with you as a fellow pilgrim “on the way”. All I ask is that you have courage, have faith, have hope and trust God when he says, “Don’t be afraid, for I am with you for ever” and as Cy Coleman and Carolyn Leigh wrote for Count Basie, “the best is yet to come”. Please do not be afraid to step out in faith with faith for the faith.

All prayers, hope and blessing be with you

Father Michael