

Subject: New From St. Francis Episcopal Church
From: "St. Francis Episcopal Church" <vicar@stfrancisva.org>
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To: "Larry" <lckiddjr@gmail.com>

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August 13, 2014

The Martyrs

... of whom the world was not worthy ...
Hebrew 11:38

Martyrs Today

In the church in the US we do not often get the picture of what it is to follow Jesus in other parts of the world. In recent weeks, however, it has become very evident to all of us that the Christian Church and certain segments of Islam are under intense persecution. Many have already been brutally killed for their faith. The Arabic symbol above is the letter "N" which was painted on the doors of known Christians so that they could be forced to deny Jesus or die. The photos above are of Iraqi Christians who fled their homes in the face of death and went to Arbil and gathered in St. Joseph's Church which is now their home. Throughout the 20th Century into the 21st Century up to today there have been more martyrs in the Christian Faith than all previous centuries combined.

What Can We Do?

Many of us feel helpless in the face of this crisis. We can do a little, but a little from a lot of people will help. One thing is to pray. Here is a prayer for martyrs from our Book of Common Prayer:

Almighty God, who gave to your servants boldness to confess the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ before the rulers of this world,, and courage to die for this faith: Grant that we may always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, and to suffer gladly for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

You might also follow Canon Andrew White on Facebook. He is the vicar of St. George's, Bagdad. He posts often about the situation in Iraq. His reports are first hand from his experience as well as the experience of the members of St George's. You may want to support his Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation in the Middle East.

Keep Praying

Return to prayer. Pray for peace. I've shared this video before, but I find Reba's song compelling: <http://youtu.be/i68Q8d4bpVg>.

Finally,

I another story this week we were all saddened by the death of Robin Williams who is reported to have taken his own life. It is also reported that he was dealing with clinical depression. He achieved a great deal, was also a member of the Episcopal Church, and I think he knew he was loved. Depression is a very serious matter. If you are struggling do not handle it alone. Call if you need help. In the U.S., call 1-800-273-8255 for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Coming Attractions

Wednesday, August 13, 2014 vestry at 6:00pm

Sunday August 17, 2014 worship at 10:00am.

Experimental Wednesdays

1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 6:00pm, at St. Francis Episcopal Church
June 4-September 3

The Seven Signs in the Gospel of John

Read each story once/day for a week before the Wednesday it is
scheduled

Read with these questions in mind:

What does this story say to you about people?

What does this story say to you about Jesus?

What does this story have to say about you

Who needs to hear this story?

August 20	Jesus Heals a Man Morn Blind	John 9:1-41
September 3	The Resurrection of Lazarus	John 11:17-46

Who needs to hear about this gathering? Bring them along!

What About The Church?

On October 12, 2014 Bishop Gullik will be with us to preach, preside at the eucharist, and confirm and receive our new members. In preparation for this we have a class entitle "What About The Church?". There are four topics which you study at home:

1. What is the Church?
2. What is the Episcopal Church?
3. What is St. Francis Episcopal Church?
4. What does Jesus want me to do about His Church?

Late in September all who have taken this course will come together for one very rich and encouraging session.

What is the benefit of taking this short course?

1. It prepares you make a fully informed and intelligent commitment to the vision, direction, and people of St. Francis.
2. It equips you to know with confidence that the vision, values and practices of St. Francis are the ones you want to employ to live out a Christian life.

Who should take this course?

1. Those who have become involved with St.

- Francis over this past year.
2. Those who choose to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church, that is to make an adult, public decision to follow Jesus in the practices of the Episcopal church.
 3. Those who have been confirmed in the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Churches and would like to be received into the Episcopal Church here at St. Francis.
 4. Those who would like to transfer their membership from another Episcopal church to St. Francis. This would include those who have been active at St. Francis for some time but not yet transferred their membership.

We will start the class in September. You will receive from me the material for each session on Tuesday of each week for four weeks starting on September 2nd. There are a few brief questions with each session. Return the answers to me by the following Monday. We will then have a gathering for everyone who has gone through the course on October 5th after the 10:00am service. Please let me know of your interest if you have not already.

Centerville Circle of Prayer

For McDonalds that qualified, competent people will find jobs there, and the community will benefit from the presence of this restaurant.

Diocese of Virginia

The congregation and clergy of All Souls, Atlee.

Metropolitan Richmond

For the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For financial institutions, healthy and constructive investment policies, and effective development efforts to benefit the entire community.

Grace and Peace,

John Maher

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St. Francis Episcopal Church
PO Box 303
Manakin Sabot, VA 23103

804-784-6116

info@stfrancisva.org
www.strancisva.org

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