

LIVING A BAPTIZED LIFE: THREE QUESTIONS/FIVE PROMISES BY ANNE KITCH (PART 5 OF 6)

Seek and serve Christ in all persons



The Baptismal Covenant consists of two sections. The first is a recitation of the Apostles' Creed, put into question and answer form. The second part consists of five promises intended to help us live a Christian life.

The fourth promise: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as yourself? I will, with God's help.

Someone once pointed out to me the importance of the word "seek" in this promise. Our Christian life is about more than responding with love and respect to the people whom we hold dear. We are also asked to seek out others to serve.

This means we are called not only to serve the people we encounter on a daily basis, but also to actively seek out people who need our help and care.

There is one more twist. We are to look for the love of Christ where we least suspect it: deep within people whom we would just as soon not take a second look at.

This can be a challenging proposition. For many of us, loving those around us is hard enough work. If I spent the rest of my life learning how to be more loving towards my husband and children, that would be plenty of work. And work well done. If

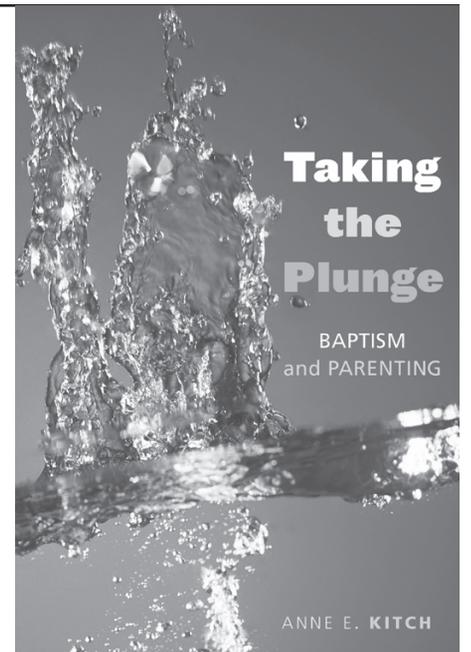
I spent the rest of my life learning to better serve those in my parish community, that would be plenty of work. And work well done.

But this promise calls us to more than that. It calls us not to limit the circle of our care. It asks us not to draw the boundary of our love too close to home.

It is vital that we practice loving our neighbor with those nearest us; with our loved ones, our families, our parish community. But our baptized life is not lived out only within the confines of these communities. Our baptized life is lived out in the world. We are to seek and serve Christ in every single person we encounter on every single day. We do this because it is the right thing to do.

It takes practice to do this. It takes vision. It takes discipline. It takes a lifetime.

Anne E. Kitch of our Cathedral is a member of the Standing Committee and the Liturgy and Music Commission of the Diocese of Bethlehem.



Visit morehouse.org and search for Kitch to find information about *Taking the Plunge: Baptism and Parenting*, a new book, and other books by Canon Anne Kitch.

NEWS WITH SPIN ... AND YOU'LL FIND A LOT MORE AT THE NEWSPIN BLOG

ECW Summer Picnic

Men as well as women are invited to the Summer Festival sponsored by our diocesan Episcopal Church Women board, August 15, at St. Matthew's, Stevensville. Meeting at 10:00 a.m. Program (Biblical Storytelling, Deacon Lou Divis) at 10:30. Bring your lunch and a lawn chair. Board members will provide beverages and desserts. Archdeacon Stringfellow will officiate at Holy Eucharist. Father Ed Erb will play the newly refurbished organ.

Unique?

Over the past eleven years since Bishop Paul was consecrated the Eighth Bishop of Bethlehem on June 29, 1996, some 120 of his columns have been published in daily and weekly newspapers throughout our 14-county Diocese. *The Morning Call*, Allentown, publishes the column on the first Saturday of every month. In at least five additional papers, the column is carried monthly, but not on a scheduled day each month. The combined circulation of papers that publish the column regularly is about 400,000. We may be unique in this regard. If you know of any other diocese of the Episcopal Church where a bishop's column appears regularly in secular newspapers, let Bill Lewellis, blewellis@diobeth.org, know. If the column does not appear in your daily paper and you are interested in speaking with the editor about that, speak with Bill about working together on this.

Diocesan Convention 2007

October 12-13 at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Pre-Convention meetings will be held on October 2 (St. Alban's, Sinking Spring), October 4 (Epiphany, Clarks Summit) and October 9 (St. Anne's, Trexlertown). All at 7:00 p.m. August 1 is the deadline for submitting Resolutions and for Nominations for Deputy to General Convention and for membership on the Commission on Ministry, Diocesan Council, Incorporated Trustees and the Standing Committee. There's more information on the *newSpin* blog.

*The *newSpin* Blog – www.diobeth.typepad.com/diobeth_newspin

Mark Laubach's new CD

Mosaics in Sound, has been released on the *Pro Organo* label. It was recorded at St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre, where Mark is organist and choirmaster. Visit www.zarex.com to read more about it or to purchase a copy. Click on "Pro Organo," then look on the left margin and click on "New CD releases." Mark's CD may be purchased also at the church, but can't be shipped. The Organ Fund will make a larger profit if you buy them through the church.

From the Recovery Commission

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) discovered that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink, or use illegal drugs ... and they're likelier to get better grades in school. CASA designed a program called "Family Day," this year on Monday, September 24. The Commission and Bishop Paul have endorsed the event. Information and downloadable materials are available at www.casafamilyday.org. The Commission is asking parishes to promote the event in bulletins, newsletters and websites. If your parish intends to participate, please tell John W. Miller, mlr1959@aol.com, or Donna Jean Kiessling, djkiessling@dejazzd.com, from whom you may also get more information.

Sex and Love in Jewish Literature

"Your Heart's Desire: Sex and Love in Jewish Literature" is the theme for book discussions at the Trexler Library at Muhlenberg College this fall/winter 07-08. Read about it at the *newSpin* blog.

Good religion/Bad religion

"I believe good religion is good for people because it teaches you to be repentant, to believe your actions are always fallible and resting on mixed motives, that you need grace and mercy. Bad religion tries to persuade you that God is invariably and automatically on your side." [TIME Magazine interview, June 7, with ABC Rowan Williams]

In the News

To keep up with Episcopal Church news and how our church is faring in news coverage across the country, even around the world, you may find these websites helpful.

(1) **Episcopal Life Online**, www.episcopalchurch.org/ens, offers the most up-to-date info about the news, people, life and mission of the Episcopal Church.

(2) **epiScope**, www.episcopalchurch.typepad.com/episcopse, a news blog of the Episcopal Church's Communication Office, features the latest stories in the media about the Episcopal Church plus links to resources and comment from insiders. It provides us with the capacity to see ourselves as others see us.

(3) **Episcopal Café**, www.episcopalcafe.com.

(4) **Anglicans Online**, www.anglicansonline.org/news.

The first three are updated daily, at times hourly. AnglicansOnline is updated weekly, usually late Sunday evenings.

Jeanne Wirth retires

When Jeanne Wirth left her office at St. Anne's on June 22, to enter the wonderful world of retirement, she had the satisfaction of completing more than 28 years of outstanding, faithful service to her adopted church. Jeanne is one of those rare people who, early in life, made an intentional choice to be a church secretary. She started work at St. Anne's, Trexlertown, in 1978. Read her story in the July 2007 newsletter of St. Anne's Church, www.stanneseiscopal.homestead.com.

Norberto Dominguez

We welcome Norberto Dominguez to the Bishop's staff. Norberto is a temp who has begun working part time with us as Linda Shifter's assistant during this time when Linda takes on an additional responsibility as chief administrator of the New Hope Campaign. Norberto is executive director of the Hispanic American League of Artists in the Lehigh Valley.

Programs at Kirkridge

Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center has been providing a place for rest and renewal to pilgrims along life's journey. The Center is located on the beautiful Kittatinny Ridge of eastern Pennsylvania near the Delaware Water Gap and the Pocono Mountains region. Since 1942, Kirkridge's emphasis has been the integration of contemplation and action for justice, or "Picket and Pray." Those early pilgrims and seekers who came to Kirkridge understood that the life of faith requires not only action to transform the world toward greater shalom, but also the cultivation of a deep spirituality to sustain that compassionate action. The legacy continues today, with a wide variety of programming and a growing constituency of folks from many faith traditions. Visit the Kirkridge website, www.kirkridge.org, and click on "Programs" for details of many currently offered programs. Kirkridge draws presenters and retreatants from across the country. You may also download some info about peace and justice programs conveniently laid out for your use at the *newSpin* blog.

Communion Matters

The Theology Committee of the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops, of which Bishop Paul is a member, has released a study document aimed at helping the bishops respond to the requests made to them by the Primates of the Anglican Communion. The 15-page *Communion Matters: A Study Document for the Episcopal Church* is available online. Visit www.collegeforbishops.org and click on "Resources." The ENS story is available at www.episcopalchurch.org/79901_86477_ENG_HTML.htm. The document is meant for bishops to use in conversation with the people of their dioceses prior to the September meeting of the House of Bishops in New Orleans. If you wish to respond in any way to this document, please send your comments online by August 25 to Bill Lewellis, blewellis@diobeth.org, who will present them to Bishop Paul.