

When to Talk to Your Priest

Many years ago I came across a tract entitled, "When to Talk with Your Rector", by Richard Downing which was published by Forward Movement Publications. With that disclaimer, I hope not to be found guilty of plagiarism as I recount it's very important topic.

Occasionally I have heard parishioners say, "Oh, I don't want to bother the priest with that" (whatever that matter is). Some people think that a member of the clergy only need to be called at a time of very serious illness or when a family member dies. Perhaps we recall the stories of children or others seeking out contact with Jesus and his disciples indignantly wanting to send them away because they (the disciples) thought He should not be bothered with trivial concerns. If you have the thought that you want to or should talk with a member of the clergy, then do it, it just may be the Holy Spirit nudging you to do it. Here are ten occasions when you SHOULD talk to your Priest/Deacon:

1. **Before admittance to a hospital:** An important role (and desire) of the clergy is to minister to the sick. Whether you're having a routine

procedure or major surgery, clergy want to pray for your healing and offer you the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Holy Unction. Knowing when a parishioner is ill also alerts us to put you on the Parish prayer list.

2. **If you discover that alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, gambling, etc. have become a problem for you or someone you love:** In today's society addiction to substances and activities has become more prevalent and out in the open than in previous generations. If you find yourself caught up in an addictive cycle of behavior, it does not mean you are a bad person or a hopeless sinner. It probably means you have a disease (such as alcoholism) which needs treatment. There are no easy answers to combating/overcoming addictions, but clergy can help you understand these problems and assist you and your families in finding help in dealing with the issues.

3. **When marital difficulties arise:** Before problems

in your marital relationship get "blown out of proportion" and you both are considering separation or divorce, make an appointment to talk with your priest. In the prayers of the marriage service the following petition is offered: "Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault, and to seek each other's forgiveness and yours. Amen." Seeking out a third party in a dispute or disagreement is good common sense. Priests have heard it all (or have firsthand experience), and they know of good referrals to Christian therapists if the scope of the problem is beyond their expertise.

4. **When a baby is born:** Again, when in hospital call your priest. The priest would like not only to rejoice with you over God's blessing, but to bring up the subject of when you would like to plan for the baby's Baptism. Also, there is a beautiful little ser-

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When to Talk to Your Priest (cont'd from page 1)

vice in our BCP entitled "A Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child" intended for use to give thanks and to be welcomed by the congregation.

5. **When you would like to talk or pray about a difficult decision:**

When you are faced with a big decision in your life, whether difficult or life changing, it is important to talk about it and pray about it with someone. Your work, getting married, a change of jobs, all these viewed and contemplated through another set of eyes, ears, and emotions can make the decision process easier. Your clergy person may shed new light on the matter, and at least, stand ready to discuss anything with you in confidence and prayer.

6. **When you know someone who is in need of spiritual help:**

Christ has called us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to care for one another. If you know of someone in need of spiritual guidance and help

beyond your spiritual capabilities, call the clergy. Together you and the clergy may be able to find a way to minister to those in need. "Whenever two or three are gathered together..." there's a special Presence present.

7. **When there is a death in the family:**

When death occurs call the priest – 24/7! The priest will come with prayers for you and for your departed loved one and the consolation of our Christian faith – the hope of the resurrection. When you are ready the priest will offer counsel and guidance concerning arrangements for a funeral.

8. **If you go off to college or will be absent from your home parish for an extended period of time:**

Your priest will want to know your mailing address away from the Parish to keep you informed about the life of your home church. The clergy will also keep you in his/her prayers and the thoughts and prayers of your faith community.

9. **If you become spiritually depressed:** Most Saints and many Christians have all gone through their dark night of the soul. God is always there even when we don't sense His presence. Most clergy have gone through their own trials, temptations, and dry spells when God seemed so distant. The priest has no easy answers or prayers, but most likely will understand and relate to whatever you are going through and will have some spiritual guidance to offer.

10. **When you want to share a special thanksgiving:**

When you want to offer a thanksgiving for all God's many blessings, the priest would gladly hear about it. He/she might suggest an appropriate time and manner in which to share your thanksgiving in the context of worship.

Faithfully,

Fr. Eric Symons +

Have you heard the story about...

Have you heard the story about the actor who was playing the part of Christ in the Passion Play in the Ozarks? As he carried the cross up the hill a tourist began heckling, making fun of him, & shouting insults at him. Finally, the actor had taken all of it he could take. So he threw down his cross, walked over to the tourist, & punched him out.

After the play was over, the director told him, "I know he was a pest, but I can't condone what you did. Besides, you're playing the part of Jesus, & Jesus never retaliated. So

don't do anything like that again." Well, the man promised he wouldn't. But the next day the heckler was back worse than before, & finally the actor exploded & punched him out again.

The director said, "That's it. I have to fire you. We just can't have you behaving this way while playing the part of Jesus." The actor begged, "Please give me one more chance. I really need this job, & I can handle it if it happens again." So the director decided to give him another chance.

The next day he was carrying his cross up the street. Sure enough, the heckler was there again. You could tell that the actor was really trying to control himself, but it was about to get the best of him. He was clinching his fists & grinding his teeth. Finally, he looked at the heckler & said, "I'll meet you after the resurrection!"

From: sermoncentral.com, Melvin M. Newland, Minister, Central Christian Church, Brownsville, TX

From the Deacon's Desk

The Rev. Rik Rasmussen

How do we Pray?

How many of us pray regularly? Being good Episcopalians I am willing to bet that most of us are most comfortable using a prayer book or memorized prayers. At least in public. It can be scary to be asked to give an extemporaneous prayer in public. Yes even for the clergy! We too often fall back on learned prayers in our worship and in our public ministries. So what is prayer?

For me there are at least two types of prayer. One is the type that is scripted prayer. It is the Lords prayer that is so deeply ingrained into our DNA that we can say it without even hearing the words anymore. That is why I like to say different versions from time to time. It makes to turn off the autopilot and pay attention. Not that the autopilot is bad. It is good to have something that we can trust will be there when our words fail us. It is wonderful to know that we have a backstop when our world has crashed around us and we can't think of words. I also love the predictability of our church. I know I can attend an Episcopal service just about anywhere and the core of the worship and the core of the prayers will be familiar and I will be at home.

There is also another type of prayer and for me that is conversational prayer. It is the unscripted free form prayer that can bubble up from deep within our souls. One of the blogs I read regularly – "Leave it where Jesus flang it" – opens her prayers with "Hey God – Its Margaret". Not a churchy, Episcopal Book of Common Prayer way to open a prayer. But it is good. It is a way that says that we can have a conversation with God. That prayer can be a two way street – a conversation. It is also consistent with the Lords Prayer where Jesus taught the disciples and us to call God Aba – Father – Daddy. A term of affection. Not an address to an all powerful all mighty indifferent God. But to claim our special status as intimate children of God. Or if you prefer partners with

God in creation.

How we pray reflects how we see God. And I will be the first to admit that for me my vision of God is a fluid thing. I want to see God and the wonderful loving parent who is just as happy at play as doing anything else. Society has built another image of God as the bearded monarch on the throne – who knows all and sees all, is unchangeable and all about judgment. I want that image of God too when I see the injustice in the world and humankind's inhumanity to each other. That is when I want a god who will spite the oppressor and make the world a better place. How we pray can also say a lot about us. Can we envision ourselves as partners in the bringing of God's dream to fruition? Or do we see ourselves as pawns in some mighty clockwork creation where we do personal good so that we can get into heaven at the end of times? When I am at my best I certainly try to be a partner with God in bringing the dream of a loving creation to complete fruition!

So how do we pray?

If we are partners with a loving God then we help bring the change into a world that cannot see or hear God's dream. If we see God as Hospitable – one who will open the door at any hour to provide hospitality. If we see God as one who desires to give his creation good gifts and not evil then we need to be agents to bring to fruition God's dream of Love and care of all creation to this world now. And we can only do that in conversation with God.

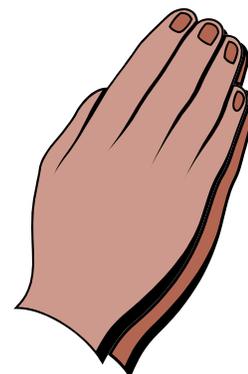
Prayer is that conversation. Prayer that springs out of our common prayers and prayer that spontaneously come from our hearts. Prayer opens us up to let God break into our heart. Prayer lets us empty our hearts and our pain to God. Prayer makes space for us to listen to the heartbeat of creation. Prayer lets us see that we are partners in making this world a better place. I

don't believe that prayer is some magical incantation that will make things different. But the conversation – the dance that is part of our relationship with God and with each other that ultimately does change the world.

When we provide hospitality and love to our neighbors we are answering prayers as well as praying. I invite all of us to go out of this House of Prayer and create a world of prayer. To have the conversations with God that will hold the good, bad and absolutely ugly up to the cleansing light that is Good.

Let us pray.

Hey God – Its Rik and the people of St. Paul's. Thank you for being in conversation with us on this corner of 15th and J streets in Sacramento. Help us to open our eyes to see your hand in the world around us and remind us that we are your partners in bringing your dream of Love into our world. Thank you for being strong when we are weak and for accepting all of our prayers. Our prayers of joy and sorrow, thanksgiving and lament. For comforting us when we cry –and crying with us when creation is hurt. For laughing with us in our happiness when we experience the joy of your creation. But most of all thank you for the conversations. Amen.





Occasionally, I come across an article in the literature that seems to grab my attention, and I feel encouraged to share it with others. Such is the case in the article I have chosen to reprint here for you to consider. It was written by the chaplain of the American Guild of Organists (AGO), Don E. Saliers. It was recently published in the journal of the AGO, *The American Organist*. Even though the article is written for music professionals, I trust you will discover it to be a salutary read (especially the paragraphs I have printed in *italics*):

Have you ever wondered how metaphors for our emotional life often borrow from talk about the weather? Someone has a "stormy" life; another has a "sunny" disposition; yet a whole group (a choir, a congregation) can be "cool" or even "frosty" to our ideas. Ensembles can build up "heat," or perhaps don't have the "foggiest" notion of how to play a certain piece of music or a crucial passage. We speak like this even if we aren't aware of it.

We borrow from one area of experience to speak of another. Aristotle recognized this long ago. The same, of course, is true of metaphors of space. Do you feel "up" today, or "down"? Are you "beside

Music and Metaphor

yourself" with anger, or "sinking down" into depression? Some behaviors strike us as simply "over the top!" To speak of our feelings and emotions already is like this; all poets and good text writers carry this out in heightened speech. Emily Dickinson observed, "Hope is a thing with feathers." Many poets have claimed that "Love's a consuming fire." Then there is Shakespeare's famously mixed "to take arms against a sea of troubles." Metaphors not only entertain, they can be a means of insight, perhaps especially for those who try to describe music.

We musicians are inveterate metaphor users. This is not because we necessarily want to be "artsy" or poetic, though Lord knows some of us are that way! No, it's because describing the ordered sound we call "music" requires metaphors and analogies. We deal with texts full of figurative language: "like as the hart desires the water brooks" or "The Lord is my shepherd." More to the point, however, metaphors are necessary to bring music to life. For example, think of how you help someone understand a particular composition or a particular performance. That piece has a "walking bass line." Or does it "march on"? What's the difference? Play that pas-

sage with a "liquid touch" or crisply with "rollicking abandon" – there is a big difference!

When you work with voices, don't you often use a physical gesture accompanied by a verbal expression you hope will enhance the sound? So when the line "drips" or breathing wanes, we say, "Draw the melody line all the way through!"

We come to interpret music this way. Even so-called "dead metaphors" that seem to have become clichés can be brought back to life. That passage should be "piercing," or your tone is "too piercing." The whole point is that it is possible to change and refine our emotional regard for something by using new metaphors, or simply by describing something in a fresh way. Good teachers and conductors are masters of metaphorical redescription but also of the right balance of exuberance and restraint.

There is nothing more satisfying than to have a student, or a choir, or a whole congregation suddenly "get it" – to hear something anew, to "see" into the way the music can express something deeper than they first thought or conceived. For the aim is to connect

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the music with the themes, rhythms, harmonics, and pulse between it and human life. This, of course, leads us to the truth that music making is itself a metaphor for coming fully alive. The deeper matter of life – especially of the religious and spiritual dimensions of life – are awakened and sustained when music brings a new imagination and new way of receiving hope, faith and love.

Some of the most needed

examples in our cultural time are metaphors of the whole body: of musicians and hearers drawn together. When “in our music God is glorified,” human beings, in an authentic community of instruments and song, become a living metaphor of the Rule and Reign of God. Such occasions are theological and spiritual embodiments. This is certainly why we come to think of music as one of the universal “doors to the sacred,” and even why we come to think

of the divine life itself as Eternal music and movement.

Ponder this metaphorical mystery the next time you are challenged to work toward a new musical level. Augustine strikes again: “Those who sing (metaphorically enlivened) pray twice.”

A note from The Experience

We have shared our worship space with The Experience for over 3 years. The following note was sent to Canon Lynell Walker a few weeks ago.

Dear Lynell:

Yesterday at the board meeting of The Experience it was decided to move The Experience to Pioneer Church. The board wanted me to express to you our deep appreciation for this most beautiful of spaces. It was always a real joy to come into the church and find its peace speaking to us. We have removed all the things we own from the church. The rent is paid up to the end of July. Dr. Darrick Lawson will return the keys.

Would you convey to the St Paul's congregation our deep gratitude for all the understanding and kindnesses they have extended. They have been marvelous ambassadors for the Faith of Jesus Christ. We felt trusted and welcomed and embraced. That says a lot about this fine congregation. Dwight and John were also very gracious to us, even updating us on your walk!

With every good wish and our prayers for the continued Life and health of St Paul's witness and sacred place in the Sacramento faith communities.

Sincerely,

David Thompson

Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the **After People**.

Stephen Ministers are there . . .

. . . **after** the phone call you hoped you'd never get.

. . . **after** the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life.

. . . **after** the funeral, when everyone has left, the flowers have faded and the feelings you've held at bay come crashing in.

. . . **after** the doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing more we can do."

. . . **after** the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home."

. . . **after** the last child honks the horn, waves and drives away – and the house suddenly seems incredibly empty.

. . . **after** the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.

. . . **after** the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.

. . . **after** you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.

. . . **after** your family and friends have heard your story one too

many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the **After People**. They are ready to come alongside you – or your friend, neighbor, relative, partner – to provide support and comfort for as long **after** as they are needed.

If you would like to explore inviting a Stephen Minister into your situation, please talk to Rik Rasmussen.

If you would like to train to become a Stephen Minister, talk to Rik right away. A new training class begins in September.

The After People - copyright - Stephen Ministries St. Louis

Important Dates and Reminders



Wednesday August 14, 6:30PM

Wednesday August 21, 6:58PM

Sunday August 25, after 10AM service

Sunday September 15, 8AM and 10AM

Vestry Meeting

Chancel Choir rehearsal resumes

Sack Lunch packing

Lynell returns from sabbatical

Announcements and News

From January 1, 2013—June 30, 2013, we distributed 587 sack lunches to those who came to our doors hungry. In July, we packed a record 136 lunches for distribution this month. The last Sunday of every month we gather in the parish hall and form an assembly line for packing the lunches. Extra hands are always welcome! Donations of individual serving, packaged food items are needed monthly. Monetary donations to purchase food items may be placed in the offering plate and noted for the sack lunches or given to any Vestry member. We are very grateful to Tom Drake for overseeing this vital outreach ministry and for all who help by providing food and assembling the bags.



On Sunday August 4th we welcomed two new members to the church. Harley and Garrett were baptized at the 10AM service. Harley has enlisted in the army and reported for duty on Monday August 5th.

"We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood. "



Labyrinth Walk—Friday August 16, 2013 from 6PM—8PM at Trinity Cathedral. Photos of Lynell's journey along El Camino de Santiago del Compostela will be placed around the labyrinth. All are welcome to walk, sit and mediate as they wish.

Area Congregations Together (ACT) will be holding a local committee meeting on Monday August 19, 2013 at 6:30PM in Room A at Trinity Cathedral. The topic of discussion will be homeless advocacy. All are welcome to attend.



A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS—EXCERPTS FROM THE FINAL LEG OF LYNELL'S JOURNEY

July 22—Tomorrow a most anticipated day where I will leave stones to remember those whose intentions I carry in my heart and give thanks for all who have shared in this journey. I am in the mountains now and will soon reach the highest point of the Camino, about 5K. So...if you all feel a sudden urge to do a happy dance, you will know why!

July 23—Woke this morning to fog heading for Cruz de Ferro where you leave stones (ok, pebbles) from people or places of significance for which one prays. The day started out in fog. I could see neither the mountains to the left nor the hills to the right...I brought a stone to pray for the people and ministry of Trinity Cathedral Church, Sacramento. I brought another from the grounds of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Sacramento, praying for her people and mission on the corner of 15th and J. I brought a piece of bark from the playground in front of the Pre-School at St. Michaels Episcopal Day School in Carmichael so I could pray for the students and staff. I brought stones from each of the homes of our six children so I could pray for them, their families and one from our home as well. As the day progressed, the list of people grew and grew. I was there two hours and the list continues to pour from my heart. I have lived a very rich life and so many have crossed my life for the good. It was a thin place. I felt close to those whom I love but see no longer. It has been a strangely weepy day, weepy with the joy of God's generosity. Count yourselves among those blessed this day and dance a Happy Dance for Jesus! I think I am now 350 miles into this 500 mile trek. Thank you again for your prayers and notes. Blessings to all and consider yourselves prayed for this day.



July 25—Today was a day of city walking. It took forever to get out of Ponferrada, and then another city and another and yet another. I must admit I gave some thought to grabbing a bus downtown and having it drop me off when the commercial area ended but then I thought that this is part of my Caminos too. It is not all stunning flowers and waves of golden grain. Life is dumpsters and tagging, traffic and exhaust, boredom and things taking up useless space that provide me no purpose. Can I possibly find God in the daily? Then I saw this sign. It was a reminder that there will soon be some way on the Camino this day that I can find a way to leave this planet with a cleaner space for grace to happen.



August 2—I have been thinking today about solitude. It is different than just being alone. It is about being aware that you are in God, God is in you, and you are somehow a participant in all that is around you. You are not distinct from, but part of...vibrating with... the world around you. This journey has given me a chance to notice that connectedness. Today it rained. I got wet. It is just water. The sun came out, I dried. The same thing happened to the cows, the grasses, the dirt under my feet. I have a poncho but did not want a sheet of plastic to separate me from what was happening in the world around me. I wanted to participate. I do not get to walk in the rain very often. Sabbaticals are a gift to remember and practice what it is to be childlike again. It was a wonderful day. It was a day of solitude...Chatter - Part 2: I think that is also why retreats or getting away to quiet places has played such an important part in my life. I can feel a change in my mind, heart and body when I am up at Mercy Center, Auburn or getting away to the North Coast. I rebound quickly, it does not take much to break the chaos. But



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

St. Paul's Education Committee meets in the church Sunday August 11 after the 10 a.m. service. We will be discussing fall educational programs for St. Paul's.



Are you interested in learning more about deacons, and in exploring whether or not this ministry could be your calling? There will be a series of workshops beginning Saturday September 14 at the Church of the Epiphany in Vacaville. The Rev. David Steadman and the Ven. Cookie Clark will be the workshop leaders. The workshops will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Participants will take turns leading worship and bringing snacks. Lunch is pot luck.

The six workshops will primarily cover looking at yourself and your beliefs. It will also be a time to look at what a deacon is, rather than what a deacon

does, and to talk about the ordination process. The morning will be a time for theological reflection and discussion. The afternoon will include visiting deacons sharing the stories of their call, formation and ministry.

Please contact the Ven. Clark at cookie.clark@sbcglobal.net to sign-up for workshops, or if you have any questions.



Thursday Night at the Cathedral -- Voices of Faith. 6:00pm: Candlelight Compline in the Cathedral; Classes begin 7:00pm in the Assembly Area

August 1: Teresa Sewell presents **Dietrich Bonhoeffer:** Author of *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer lived in Nazi Germany and involved himself in espionage as part of the plot to assassinate Hitler.

August 8: Dean Baker presents the **Old Testament:** Learn about the books of the Old Testament we're reading for the Bible Challenge.

August 15: Jerry Paré presents **Martin Buber:** A Jewish philosopher best known for his philosophy of dialogue centered on the distinction between the "I-Thou" relationship and the "I-It" relationship.

August 22: Randy Knutson presents **Marty Haugen:** Marty Haugen is a liturgical composer, workshop presenter, performing and recording artist and author.

August 29: Canon David Link presents **Thomas Tallis and William Byrd** - Thomas Tallis and William Byrd were the two most prominent of Elizabethan composers.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS (CONT'D)

it seems something has to shift in my outer world for my inner life to calm down.

August 4—In Arzua tonight. Must be getting close (within 25 mi.) - see I have begun to post duplicate photos! My plan is to arrive in Santiago de Compostela on Wednesday morning. There is a marked increase in energy, joy and chatter at the albergues. It is now within reach. Buen Camino.

August 6— It's a wrap! Love you all and overwhelmingly thankful for your prayers and support.





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**OPEN HEARTS,
OPEN MINDS**

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St. Paul's Vestry

Diane Richards, Senior Warden (2014)	Rik Rasmussen (2014)
Alex Larkey, Junior Warden (2014)	Leigh Stamets (2015)
Doug Clay, Treasurer (2015)	Daryl Reiber (2015)
Andrea Patten-Weerakoon, Clerk (2016)	Keith Askew (2016)

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