

March 6, 2022

St. Thomas's Episcopal Parish  
276 S. College Ave Newark, DE  
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weekly newsletter

# The Carpenter's Helper

*This Week, we pray for our global family*

Though not unexpected after weeks of buildup, Russia's invasion of the Ukraine is deeply unsettling. Any armed conflict should concern us deeply and lead us to draw to God in prayer: violence and aggression are incompatible with our call to love our neighbor as ourselves and to honor the dignity of every human being. Violence begets violence; warfare unleashes hatred that inevitably spins out of control, destroying lives and upending the nations of the world.

Please join me praying for peace in Ukraine, for the safety of all involved and for a world order that reflects God's justice. Every human being deserves to live in peace. We work for that, we pray for that, and we ask God to comfort those who are in the line of fire in this uncertain and unsettling hour.

**“Almighty God,  
kindle, we pray, in every heart  
the true love of peace,  
and guide with your wisdom  
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth,  
that in tranquillity your dominion may increase  
until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.”**

-BCP

## ALL are Welcome

### *Lenten Season Worship Schedule*

**Sunday**  
8:00 am  
Rite 1  
spoken

**Sunday**  
10:30 am  
Rite 2  
with music

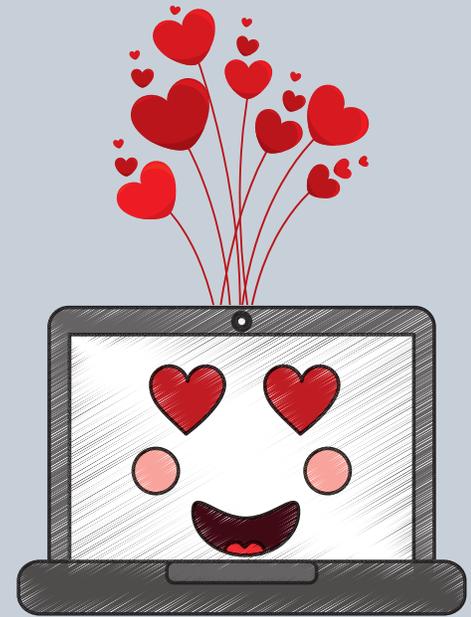
**Sunday**  
5:00 pm  
Lenten service  
with Holy Eucharist

**Wednesday**  
12 noon  
Intercessory  
Prayer

**Thursday**  
7:00 pm  
Evening  
Compline

## Do you always or even sometimes attend church online?

**We are looking for people to act as Online Greeters** for both of our virtual services. The Greeter would welcome people as they join the service and comment at several points in during the service. – we can provide a script to be used in the chat box. The Greeter would also be the liaison between those participating in the virtual service and those in the building and be provided a contact number to report any technical issues in real time. Ideally we would have enough people for both services that Greeters would only have to be online once a month or so, enabling them to participate in person at other times if they wished. If you are interested in becoming an Online Greeter please contact Philippa Sunnergren 302 643-2111, [phil@sunnnergren.com](mailto:phil@sunnnergren.com)



## Thinking about Marta y Maria

The poem in this week's "Carpenter's Helper" is entitled "Martha and Mary" by the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral, but I find myself thinking of the words of another poet, Maya Angelou, when she wrote that traces of history are "lost in the gloom and dust of ages." ("On the Pulse of Morning") We, the Christian faithful, must accept that we do not know the entirety of our history. Much of what happened two thousand years ago, in a preliterate society, no less, is lost to us, and much of what we do know is seen through prisms and interpretations that might be wrong.

I do not doubt the existence and divinity of Jesus Christ, yet having read "Martha and Mary," I find myself wondering how much I do not know, and how much I know which is incorrect. Who is Mary of Bethany? She is said to have anointed the feet of Jesus Christ at the home of Simon the Leper. Yet, as the centuries passed and the Gospels were read, reread, interpreted and reinterpreted, Mary of Bethany became intertwined with Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was, herself, intertwined with the story of the Fallen Woman, and became the "whore" of Christ's entourage. (Thanks for muddying the water, Pope Gregory the Great.) However strong our faith might be, our understanding of Scripture cannot help but be influenced by the way in which we have read it, or how it has been taught to us.

What do I believe? That is immaterial to this piece. (Though I hope I haven't said anything too opposed to standard doctrine!) The question I find interesting in this particular moment is the bilingual nature of this poem. Mistral wrote it in Spanish; I can only read it in English. What am I missing from this poem that Mistral might have wished her readers to understand? What liberties might the translator have taken? Any of us could work to answer that question for ourselves by learning Spanish; no such parallel exists for learning an ironclad history of Judea two thousand years ago. I am curious as to why this poem highlights Martha, and why it is that she seems to wither away when her sister fades away, but, like an understanding of ancient Judea, this is a question I will never be able to find an answer for, as I will never be able to ask Mistral.

All I can do, all any of us can do, is compare and examine, to think critically about the oppositions, the reflections and refractions we see in Scripture, poetry, translation, history, and faith. I may not understand "Martha and Mary" in the original Spanish, but I am glad that it is here for others, fluent in Spanish, to make those very necessary comparisons.

by Kenneth Hansen-Jones

## Marta y María

Nacieron juntas, vivían juntas,  
comían juntas Marta y María.  
Cerraban las mismas puertas,  
al mismo aljibe bebían,  
el mismo soto las miraba,  
y la misma luz las vestía.

Sonaban las lozas de Marta,  
borbolleaban sus marmitas.  
El gallinero hervía en tórtolas,  
en gallos rojos y ave-frías,  
y, saliendo y entrando, Marta  
en plumazos se perdía.

Rasgaba el aire, gobernaba  
alimentos y lencerías,  
el lagar y las colmenas  
y el minuto, la hora y el día...

Y a ella todo le voceaba  
a grito herido por donde iba:  
vajillas, puertas, cerrojos,  
como a la oveja con esquila;  
y a la otra se le callaban,  
hilado llanto y Ave-Marías.

Mientras que en ángulos encalado,  
sin alzar mano, aunque tejía,  
María, en azul mayólica,  
algo en el aire quieto hacía:  
¿Qué era aquello que no se acababa,  
ni era mudado ni le cundía?

Y un mediodía ojidorado,  
cuando es que Marta rehacía  
a diez manos la vieja Judea,  
sin voz ni gesto pasó María.

Sólo se hizo más dejada,  
sólo embebió sus mejillas,  
y se quedó en santo y seña  
de su espalda, en la cal fría,  
un helecho tembloroso  
una lenta estalactita,  
y no más que un gran silencio  
que rayo ni grito rompían.

Cuando Marta envejeció,  
sosegaron horno y cocina;  
la casa ganó su sueño,  
quedó la escalera supina,  
y en adormeciendo Marta,  
y pasando de roja a salina,  
fue a sentarse acurrucada  
en el ángulo de María,  
donde con pasmo y silencio  
apenas su boca movía...

Hacia María pedía ir  
y hacia ella se iba, se iba,  
diciendo: "¡María!", sólo eso,  
y volviendo a decir: "¡María!"  
Y con tanto fervor llamaba  
que, sin saberlo ella partía,  
soltando la hebra del hábito  
que su pecho no defendía.  
Ya iba los aires subiéndolo,  
ya "no era" y no lo sabía ...

## Martha and Mary

Martha and Mary were born together,  
lived together, ate together.  
They closed the same doors,  
drank from the same cistern,  
The same grove watched them,  
and the same light robed them.

Martha's dishes clinked,  
her porridge-pot bubbled.  
Her henyard teemed with doves,  
with red cocks and plover.  
Coming and going, Martha  
was lost in a cloud of feathers.

In a whirlwind, she would rule  
over meals and linens,  
the winepress and beehives,  
the minute, the hour and the day...

And wherever she went, all things  
voiced a wounded cry to her:  
crockery, latches, doors,  
as to their bellwether;  
and for her sister they gew hushed,  
spinning tears and Ave Marias.

Meanwhile, in a whitewashed corner,  
without lifting a hand, though she was weaving,  
Mary, on blue majolica,  
made something in the still air:  
What was it that was never finished,  
neither changed nor fulfilled?

And one golden-eyed noon  
when Martha with ten hands  
was busy mending old Judea,  
without word of sign, Mary *passed*.

She only grew more languid,  
only drew in her cheeks,  
and lingered as the countersign  
of her shoulder on the cold lime,  
a trembling fern,  
a slow stalactite,  
no more than a great silence  
no lightning or cry would break.

When Martha grew old,  
oven and kitchen rested;  
the house gained its dream  
the ladder stayed unraised,  
and on going to sleep Martha,  
fading from ruddy to salt,  
went to sit curled up  
int hat corner of Mary's  
where with wonder and silence  
her mouth hardly moved...

She prayed to go to Mary  
and she went and went toward her,  
saying "Mary!"- only that,  
and saying again "Mary!"  
And she called out with such heat  
that, without knowing, she departed,  
releasing the thread of breath  
that her breast didn't defend.  
Already she was climbing the wind,  
already *was not* and didn't know it...