
The Outrider

June 2001

Confirmation in the Midst of Life

(The View from Above the Close)

(Waterbury, CT, April 21, 2001)

It was about three p.m. when we heard the first explosion. It was like powerful, but distant thunder. There were several dozen people in the chancel rehearsing for St. John's annual *Broadway on the Green* musical show. I was with two families in the library of the church, talking about the baptismal service that would take place the next day, on Easter II. One of our sextons was making sure the auditorium was properly set up for the reception that would follow the 5 p.m. Deanery Confirmation/Reception service. A few members of the joint choir had already arrived and were with Bob Havery, St. John's Minister of Music, up in the choir room.

Only a few minutes later, there were sirens serenading the Green and all of downtown Waterbury, wailing away beneath cloudy skies. It didn't take long to discover what had happened. A manhole cover on Main Street, on the south side of the Green, had been blown a hundred feet by an underground explosion. Flames were rising out of the manhole, ten or fifteen feet into the air. Something was dreadfully wrong.

The early arrivals were treated to a wondrous sight—fire belching out of the street like some eerie "eternal flame". John, our sexton, had been in touch with the firefighters and police who had blocked off the south side of the Green. A gas line had ruptured and exploded and was burning out of control. All this was going on a hundred yards from the front doors of St. John's. We were assured we were not in danger, and even though one priest was convinced we should evacuate the area and postpone the Confirmation service, we waited.

The second explosion rocked the church around 4 p.m. We later learned that two more manholes on Leavenworth Street had blown and some pedestrians had been injured. But at the time, it was merely another loud noise, more disturbing this time. People who were arriving were concerned because the second blast shut down the electricity to the church. On a cloudy day inside a neo-Gothic building, things are darkened, shadows are everywhere, fear is nearby.

By the time Bishop Smith arrived, there were perhaps two hundred people in the building. Drew and I went out into Church Street to meet with members of the Police and the Fire Department. A battalion commander of the Fire Department assured us we were still safe though they asked us to close the front doors of the church. I took two firemen into the basement to check for natural gas buildup while the Bishop calmed the people in the Nave.

There was no unusual amount of gas in the undercroft and the Fire officials were still willing to let us continue with the service. More and more people were arriving, dressed to kill, excited about confirmation and then worried about their safety. St. John's Curate, Mary Gates, began calling around on her cell phone (since the church's phones were out) to other churches and to

Westover School in Middlebury, looking for alternative locations for the service should things turn for the worse.

At 4:30 p.m., Fire Department workers were getting gas readings from the manholes in front of the church—only a dozen feet or so from St. John's front doors—that were within the danger level of possible explosions and we were asked to evacuate the building. By now there were over 300 people in the parking lot of St. John's and Mary was in touch with the Southern Baptist minister whose congregation meets in the basement of First Congregational Church, across West Main from St. John's, about the possibility of moving the service to their sanctuary. Westover School was also willing to begin setting up chairs in their auditorium should we wish to move the whole deal to Middlebury.

Bishop Smith and I agreed that "across the street" was much preferable to asking 400+ people (the crowd had swelled!) to find their cars—parked all over the downtown area away from the blocked off parts—and drive a dozen miles or so. I checked again with the Fire officials. First Congregational, only a dozen yards or so from St. John's, would be safe since natural gas, being lighter than air, moves "uphill" and away from the Congregational Church.

The decision was made at 4:45 p.m., only 15 minutes before the scheduled beginning of the service. Everything was moved across the street. We moved all the altar vessels—wine and bread for 500, altar flowers, Gospel book and service book, Pascal Candle decorated with flowers (which we couldn't light, by order of the Fire Department), all the service booklets, several hundred hymnals, the Processional Cross, all the food and drink for a reception for several hundred, the offering plates, cups and plates and napkins and flower arrangements for the reception, even the signs that marked the pews for the 9 churches' candidates.

How many people helped us "move"?—a hundred or so, I'd guess. And when we were all in the starkly modern sanctuary of First Congregational Church, so distinct from St. John's Gothic architecture, a few directions were shouted to the crowd and, at 5:07 p.m.—only seven minutes late!—the Procession began to Jesus Christ is Risen Today.

There was no electricity, no organ, no lights, no sound system. Those who had to speak spoke loudly. Drew preached without notes. The Verger carried, instead of a *verge*, a 18 inch long flashlight which she used to illumine the Bible and Gospel Book for the readers. Mary Gates held it on the Service Book during the prayer of consecration so Drew could see the words.

Eighty-three souls were confirmed or received. Communion was given to over 450 people in stations lit by flash-lights. By the end of the service, only those whose carotene levels were above average could see the words of The Strife is O'er, yet the voices of the throng were lusty and loud. The reception was full of companionship and joy. And as the ushers of St. John's, who had managed to shift gears with all the rest of us, gathered the extra folding chairs we used; and as dozens of people helped to move everything we'd moved across West Main Street back to St. John's; and as night fell with a vengeance, all those folks were "on their way rejoicing". As folks in my Holiness People childhood would have said: "**We'd had church!**"

Had things been different, everyone who was involved in the service would have been given strict and direct instruction, prior to the service, about their roles and what they were to do. Had things been different, St. John's remarkable McManis Organ would have thrilled our souls, the procession would have been much more elaborate, the sound system would have made it easier to hear, Drew's sermon would have been longer, the reception would have been more organized and elegant, the whole thing would have been wrapped in Episcopal "decency and order". And it would have been wondrous and joyful and full of life.

However—and this is the *great However*—I'm not sure the service, the event, the experience would have been "better" in any way. The astonishing reality is that a broken gas main participated in the plan and wonder of God. The remarkable reality is that 450 Episcopalians rolled with the punches, did what needed to be done, embraced "change" in a wondrous way, found freedom in the unexpected and joy in the unknown, "had church" under adverse circumstances and, we can only pray, discovered God in the ambiguity and uncertainty of life.

This much I know is true—no one who took part in this service will soon forget it. Would it have been grander and more spectacular with electricity and organ and pomp and circumstance? Probably. But, truth be know, "what you *have* is what you *get*." And what we "*got*" at the 2001 Waterbury Deanery Confirmation Service is the Truth we need to know and embrace and live into. Whatever life throws at us, we are the Children of Light, we can adjust, change, work together, find the "possibility" in the *problems*, celebrate LIFE whatever the circumstances, move across the street, sing in the dark, meet Christ in the Unexpected.

All that and more.

Much more. More than we can ever imagine.

Shalom,

Jim



Thank you Sandy Allard, Pat and Ted Bojarski, Dick Harris, Bill and Gert Payne and Jack Parker for your assistance in distributing Day by Day booklets and Easter lilies to our parishioners who are shut in.

Henry Friez

I want to thank each one of you, for the great response in our Food Drive for the Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries' Food Pantry on Palm Sunday. "Helping feed those in need does our hearts good".

Sarah Haines, Delegate to GWIM

Thank you to Mary Marlak, Phyllis Catuccio, Vivian Ospalek, and Marie DeRiso for helping Sarah Haines with the Easter Bulletins.

Thank you Vivian Ospalek for helping Sarah Haines with the Easter bulletin.

Bob Havery thanks Linda and Don Pomeroy, Bob Toffee and Dick Harris for providing a wonderful breakfast for the choir and staff on Easter morning between services.

And a special thanks to David Pritchard for helping us prepare the Outrider for the past few months.



*and 10:15am service
Sunday, June 10
At St. Margaret's-McTernan
School
565 Chase Parkway,
Waterbury*

*Food, Softball and Fun!!
Call George Zucca 203-758-4541 for more
info*

BE PREPARED

Now that summer is here it's time to get in high gear. When approaching a summer tag sale, look for great bargains for our Christmas Bazaar.

Jewelry We need a lot. Necklaces; earrings; bracelets; pins and more.

Crafts Don't wait for the last minute; have a summer project.

Books Look in every cranny and nook; gather them together.

Tag Sale Look in your garage, attic, cellar and house. "Be an eye detective mouse".

When September comes about, bring your loot to church so we can be prepared for the best Christmas bazaar. If we each do our part, we will have an overwhelming cart.

Sarah Haines

The 7th annual

Broadway on the Green

production was held May 4 & 5.

This year we included a matinee on Saturday to which we gave away 300 tickets to various social agencies in Waterbury so that folks that might otherwise not be able to come could do so. Attendance at the three shows was around 500 + and a profit of about \$3,500.00 was realized. In addition a \$220.00 made from refreshments was Donated to St. John's outreach. We now have sufficient monies to purchase the piano for the library and this will be done over the summer.

As we plan for Broadway 2002 we invite any and all persons interested in singing in the show to join us. If you don't know how to sing we will teach you. There will be a wrap-up meeting on May 20th in the Guild Hall (third floor of church). Anyone interested in know more about the show and how they might get involved is asked to attend. Interested parties can also call Jeanne Luedke at 754-8445 for more information.

Jeanne L



SAINT JOHN'S CENTER for SPIRITUALITY & MINISTRY in cooperation with SAINT JOHN'S PARISH Presents

THREE RETREAT OPPORTUNITIES

Saturday, September 22

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Led by

Brother Robert Hugh King Smith, S.S.F.

Saturday & Sunday, October 5 & 6

PARISH RETREAT at HOLY CROSS
MONASTERY

and for those who cannot get away
A CONCURRENT RETREAT IN THE PARISH
HOUSE

Led by

Dr. Ron Cebik & SJC Staff

Saturday, November 17

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Led by

Dr. Minka Sprague
Prof., New York Theological Seminary

Cost: \$25.* (Includes lunch)

**The Holy Cross Retreat has a separate set of charges*

June Parish Prayer List

June 3, 2001: Linda and Rick Blais; Rick and Lisa Blaszczyk & family; Marie Blatherwick; Charles and Donna Bock; Evelyn Bodor & family; Ted and Pat Bojarski; Gertrude and Christine Borocho; John and Josephine Bozzuto; Ann Braccio.

June 10, 2001: Jim and Bern Bradley & family; Evelyn Bradshaw; Bill and Laura Breslin & family; Margaret Briggs; Jeffrey and Betsy Brown & family; Lillian H. Brown; Linda Bruce; Ada Budhram & family; Verdell Bush.

June 17, 2001: Robert and Diane Caggiano; Robert and Maureen Caggiano & family; William and Norma Cambique; Mark and Donna Cambique & family; Ambler Canty; Nicholas Capobianco and Lisa Umbro & family; Cathy Caraballo and Kim Hunter.

June 24, 2001: Michele Carrano; Jaime and Amy Carrillo & family; Lorene Castle; Vivian Castro & family; Patrick and Phyllis Catuccio; Karen Sue Cavanaugh & family.

June Anniversaries

6/3 George and Carol Bequary
6/4 Robert and Diane Caggiano
6/6 Laura and Mario Varrone
6/7 Matthew and Holly Kosky
6/14 Richard and Sally Harris
6/17 John and Marjorie Parker
6/19 Vincent and Jill Matteis
6/20 Robert and Pamela Toffey
6/20 Victor and Paula Saverino
6/22 Gary and Traci Hill
6/26 Richard Ellefsen and Sandra FitzPatrick
6/29 David and Helen Pritchard
6/29 David and Elizabeth Santa Maria
6/30 Louis and Lillian H. Brown

June Birthdays

6/1 Brooke Aubrie
6/2 Christine Stolfi
6/3 Julian White
6/3 Jack Parker
6/3 Roseanne Sabol
6/3 Edith Klein
6/3 Howard Woods
6/6 Justine Budhram
6/7 Diana McIntosh
6/8 Sandy Allard
6/9 Gertrude Benjamin
6/9 Victor Saverino
6/9 Mark Thomas
6/10 MacKenzie Zeno
6/10 June Spata
6/11 Joseph Lowndes
6/12 Alyssa Jameison
6/13 Thecla Kirby
6/13 Vinnie Viega
6/13 Bobbie Santa Maria
6/14 Vivian Ospalek
6/14 Frank Caruso, Jr.
6/15 Eva Caruso
6/15 David Beecher
6/17 Michael McDonald
6/18 Ian Yuhas
6/19 Alexander Tapley
6/21 Amanda DeCarolis
6/22 Arlene Emmens
6/23 Betsy Brown
6/23 Jannice Johnston
6/23 Marie Blatherwick
6/23 Amanda Chilcoat
6/24 Mary Marlak
6/24 Tom O'Brien
6/26 Bill Garretson
6/26 Raymond Adomavicia
6/27 Curtiss Hunt
6/27 Elena Sabol
6/27 Jeff Mann, Sr.
6/28 Anna DeCarolis
6/28 Shelby Webber
6/30 Stephanie MacDonald
6/30 Elaine McDonnell



Altar Flowers in memory of

June 3 Anna Schumacher; Deceased
Members of the Rowland Family

June 10 Edward W. & Ellen Truelove; Leon
G. & Mary Farr; Leon J. & Della Farr; John &
Regis DiCorpo; Joseph & Dorothy Wolfe;
Larry Kelchner; Laurence Ferrari

June 17 John, Anna, Matthew, Joseph and
Alex Markowich

June 24 Rev. Samuel & Dorothy Budde;
Edward H. Pracny

Many parishioners
(or families and
friends of
parishioners) choose
to mark the



anniversary of a loved one's death by donating
\$25.00 toward the purchase of flowers for
the altar. We list the names in the bulletin
for the appropriate Sunday and, for those
who are unable to attend church that day, we
also list the names in the Outrider. We have a
form in the Outrider that you can complete
and send to the church office along with your
check. Gert Payne also maintains a list of
those who wish to purchase flowers every
year. Gert can be contacted at 203-757-
8481.

Another way to mark important dates (such
as birthdays, anniversaries or just
thanksgivings) is to donate \$10.00 toward the
Bread and Wine for a given Sunday. We
include a form for that purpose in the
Outrider also and list the donation in the
appropriate Sunday bulletin.

Thought for the day

From a poem by Edwin Markham

He drew a circle that shut me out -
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.

*Submitted by
Diane Caggiano*

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Become a part of St. John's History

Have your free picture taken courtesy of
Olan Mills and be in St. John's Pictorial
Directory 2001.

Have you ever wondered who the person next
to you at church or in the pew in front or
behind you was? Have you ever heard a name
mentioned at coffee hour but could not hook
up the name with the face?

Well, all that "wondering" will now cease, if we
all did our part and had our picture taken for
our new directory, Won't you please make an
appointment for your sitting by signing up
with one of our Pictorial Directory Chairs
after the 8 am or 10:15 am service. You may
also call the office at (203) 754-3116.

The following are the dates and times for the
sittings:

Thursday, May 24, 3:00 pm-9:30 pm

Friday, May 25, 3:00 pm-9:30 pm

Friday, June 15, 3:00 pm-9:30 pm

Saturday, June 16, 10:00 am-5:00 pm

**3 parking spaces for the
handicapped will be provided in
front of the church on Church
Street beginning in May.**

JUNE PLANTING DATES

Save the mornings of June 2 and June 23 to



join the Outdoor
Property Committee (we
need a catchier name!)
planting the beds in the
parking lot. Bring in your
plant contributions the
week before if you can't
make it. We are looking

for sun lovers!

Bob Havery's Sabbatical

We left On March 4th, driving to JFK Airport with surprisingly little traffic. The reason for such light traffic - the snowstorm of the century was reported to be on its way. We arrived with no trouble and our flight actually left a little early. We were told that it would probably be the last flight to London for 48 hours. That kind of luck followed us the entire trip.

When somebody recently asked my wife Bonnie "how was the trip, on a scale on one to ten", she answered "about a 24!" We heard great music, saw wonderful places that are historic and beautiful and discovered once again how much we love England, even in March when the weather is generally pretty wretched. Here are some statistics of what we did in one month: drove 2000 miles (on the left side of the road), visited eight cathedrals, four major chapels (most of which are larger than St. John's), four schools, seven museums, and attended ten Evensongs and seven concerts.

The music in the English Cathedrals is truly superb; the level of music in the chapels of Cambridge University is beyond superb. All of it is a national treasure, as are the glorious buildings in which it is made. It was inspiring to hear such great music in these fabulous buildings built hundreds of years ago and still thriving.

I want to tell you about a nonmusical experience that I had and found very moving. First I should explain that it is normal to find memorials in Cathedrals and churches to the English soldiers who died in England's various wars. There is still evidence of the ravages of World War II all around England. In the smaller cities it is not hard to tell where buildings had been bombed: you can easily see where lovely old buildings give way to the utilitarian brick buildings of the 1950's. Vast tracts of these modern buildings fill the areas that had been fire bombed, and a few bombed out buildings still stand as memorials to those who were killed. When one sees the size of these areas it is not difficult to imagine the great suffering that ordinary citizens had to endure in the war.

In York there is a small church that has been nicknamed "the half church." It is called that because only half of it was rebuilt years after the war - not until the late 60's. I went into this unusual church and found that it is dedicated to peace, and its other names are St. Martin's and the Peace Chapel. It was not surprising to find a memorial plaque on the wall. It began in the usual way: "To the memory of the people of York killed in the firebombing of 1942"; but the end of the memorial was something like I had never seen before. It continued: "and to the memory of the German aviators who were killed in the air that night." I stood there reading with shivers going up my spine. I turned and went to the wall on the opposite side of the Chapel, passing a charming small pipe organ at the rear of the church. There I found another plaque which read: "The Walker organ was given as a token of reconciliation by the government of West Germany and the German Evangelical Church." I realized as I stood in front of these extraordinary gestures of forgiveness and reconciliation that St. John's was involved in a Lenten series which explored forgiveness. I felt that I was receiving my own lesson so many miles away from St. John's. When I returned home, Jim told me that the series was a powerful experience at St. John's - I'm glad.

We were in England just a few days after the first cases of Foot & Mouth Disease had been reported. The news of it was with us everyday we were there. It is a great tragedy for the farmers and for much of rural England, but the reports of food shortage and travel difficulties that we heard from back in the U.S. were completely false. If you were planning a trip to England this summer, go. It is perfectly safe, everything except the country trails is open, the crowds will be down and there will probably be good value for your money.

Outreach

It's June, the 6th month of the year, many schools are closing allowing time for vacations, flower and vegetable gardens are planted, and many people are settling-in to relax and enjoy the lazy, steamy days of Summer.

St. John's continues to support its programs of Outreach, however, and the Safe Haven program invites you to remember the needs of the women and children of the shelter during these months. June's suggested contributions to help with basic needs are: 1 pair of women's or children's (all sizes) underwear or 1 dish detergent.

If you have been to a K-Mart or Walmart recently, you have seen there are many choices of underwear to choose from - very small to extra large, cotton vs. silky, plain vs. print, etc... Whatever you contribute will be most appreciated.

Every month we are delighted with the steady commitment of individuals who recruit supplies from friends and places of employment that have extra products to donate. If you know of someone traveling this summer, you could suggest he/she might collect the sample soaps and lotions from the motels and donate them to this project (every 1 oz. bottle is a help).

We continue to rejoice for each of you with your generosity and sharing with us in this ministry. Diane C. and Jan G.

Sunday, June 10th is the day
for Safe Haven Donations

Food Bank Needs

The Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries (GWIM) needs the following items: *kidney beans; pinto beans; chick peas, cereal; baby food (all stages); canned fruits and juices; pasta; hash and chili.*



Food is collected **every Sunday** and can be put in the baskets inside the sanctuary at both the front and back doors.

Meatloaf Ministry

A two-pound, cooked, frozen meatloaf **or** a casserole is needed the third Sunday of the month (**June 17th**) for the Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries Soup Kitchen (GWIM) located in St. John's auditorium. Please bring to church and place it in the basket on the chair located in the foyer. If you would rather not make a meatloaf, a \$5 donation will be accepted and a meatloaf will be made in your name.

We can always use more meatloaf volunteers. If you would like to join this worthwhile cause, please contact Sarah Haines at (203) 755- 7590

NEW STAFF

We welcomed in May Susan Pronovost as Parish Secretary. Susan is a Waterbury native and has recently retired from her position as Assistant City Clerk for the City of Waterbury. She is married with a daughter and an active member of St. Michael's Church in the Buck's Hill area.

The only down side to Susan's starting is that we say good by to Shirley Chouinard who has been filling in as Parish Secretary during our search. Shirley has brightened the dark days of winter with her always cheerful and caring manner. We have been so blessed to have her and will miss her.