



# Around Our Diocese

Issue #118

The Diocese of Northern Indiana

August 2010

*A Passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
A Willingness to do Whatever it Takes*

*A Heart for the Lost  
A Commitment to One Another*

## A Letter from the Bishop



Dear brothers and sisters,

Many of you know that I recently visited the Holy Land with a group of bishops and General Convention deputies. While much of our trip was focused on meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, we took time as well to visit some of the holy sites near Jerusalem. During one of those visits, a New Testament story sprang to life – in a most surprising way. After touring the Temple Mount (site of Solomon’s Temple, then Herod’s Temple, and now the Dome of the Rock; see photo), our team made its way to the Pool of Bethesda, just a few minutes’ walk from the Temple Mount. It was at this pool that Jesus performed one of his most famous healings:

*Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”*

*Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked (John 5:1-9).*

Archeologists have excavated the site of Bethesda (which means “House of Mercy”). The pool is deep, the stonework elaborate. Originally the pool was divided into two primary reservoirs, and periodically the water sloshed from one to the other. When that happened, people would immerse themselves and seek healing. Thus the man who’d been ill for 38 years had placed himself close to the pool, but couldn’t get into the water unassisted. Jesus intervened and healed him with a word.



One of our team members read the story from John 5. Then, from a vantage point above the now-waterless pool, I looked down and saw some very modern garden equipment (see photo; I’m working on the assumption that the equipment was indeed recent and not ancient!). At that moment, something clicked for me. Seeing stonework two thousand years old, side by side with plastic recently manufactured, somehow reminded me that Jesus continues to heal; that the miracle he performed at the pool of Bethesda was not (as the British put it) a “one off” event; that Jesus today speaks a word and makes us whole.

In mid-June, just before I traveled to the Holy Land, our annual diocesan summer camp pondered the theme of WATERWORLD. Over the course of a week, campers

looked at ways in which water figures into the story of our encounter with God: the Spirit brooding over the water in creation; Noah and his family rescued from the water of the flood; the Israelites escaping from slavery in Egypt through the parted water of the Red Sea; Jesus himself, plunged into the River Jordan at the hands of John the Baptist; you and I, immersed in the water of baptism, where we are “buried with Christ in his death . . . share in his resurrection . . . reborn by the Holy Spirit” (BCP, p. 306). The young people at camp celebrated these themes with characteristic joy and enthusiasm. *In or near water*, Jesus does stuff. All of this came pouring back into my mind, days later, as I looked at the stonework and the garden tools of Bethesda, and remembered that Jesus still invites us to stand by the pool with miraculous expectations.

Jesus asked the invalid, “Do you want to get well?” In other words, what do you want me to do in your life? How do you wish to be transformed? What kind of power do you want me to unleash in you and for you? Those questions are as pertinent today as they were when Jesus visited Bethesda. Whenever I confirm an adult or a young person, I anoint him or her with oil, lay on hands, and pray: “Strengthen, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit; empower *him* for your service; and sustain *him* all the days of his life” (BCP, p. 418). That’s a Bethesda prayer. Just as then, so now: Jesus continues to do stuff – in your life and in mine.

Yours in Christ,

**+Ed**

### Requiescat in Pace:

#### The Rev. Canon Robert J. Center

The Rev. Canon Robert J. Center, retired rector of Trinity Church, Michigan City, died on Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Fr. Bob came to the Diocese of Northern Indiana in 1956, serving as rector of Gethsemane, Marion for eight years, and then as rector of Trinity from 1964 to 1987. In 1973 he wrote "Our Heritage," the story of the first 75 years of our diocese. Please pray for his widow, Niki, and for his two children, April and Mark, and five grandchildren.

*O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered: Accept our prayers on behalf of your servant, Robert, and grant him an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of your saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

### Ministry Updates

The Rev. Deacon Gregory Wilde will be ordained to the priesthood on Friday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at Trinity Church in

Columbus, Georgia. He has accepted a call to serve as an assistant there following his ordination.

The Rev. Craig Uffman, assistant at St. Anne’s, Warsaw, has accepted a call to serve as the tenth rector of St. Thomas in Rochester, New York.

The Rev. Dr. Deonna Neal was recently awarded her doctorate from the University of Notre Dame. She has accepted a position as a visiting professor at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado and will teach Ethics.

### Evensong Invitation

St. David’s, Elkhart invites you to join in an Evensong to celebrate the Feast of St. Mary the Virgin on Sunday, August 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM. The Rev. Daniel H. Martins will be the guest homilist and Dr. Kathryn Oyer will be the guest musician. A reception will follow.

### Bishop & Diocesan Calendar for August 2010

August 1-15, 2010

Bishop on vacation

August 9-13, 2010

South Bend Area Vacation Bible School  
at St. Michael & All Angels, South Bend

August 15, 2010

5:00 PM (EDT) Evensong at St. David’s, Elkhart

August 18, 2010

12:05 PM (EDT) Holy Eucharist at the Cathedral

August 20, 2010

Ordination of the Rev. Deacon Gregory Wilde to the  
Priesthood at Trinity Church in Columbus, Georgia

August 22, 2010

Blessing of Health Clinic at Holy Family, Angola

August 22, 2010

10:00 AM (EDT) “Mass on the Grass” at Bonneyville Mill  
County Park hosted by St. John of the Cross, Bristol

August 24, 2010

12:00 PM (EDT) Standing Committee

August 24, 2010

2:00 PM (EDT) Ministry Models Task Force

August 25, 2010

12:00 PM (EDT) Planned Giving Committee

August 29, 2010

Visitation to Church of the Advent, Westlake, Ohio

*Delegated Episcopal Oversight*

August 31, 2010

12:00 PM (EDT) Deans’ Meeting

*Around Our Diocese is published monthly. Please send stories, articles, and images by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to:*

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*The editor reserves the right to edit all articles. Please visit [www.ednin.org](http://www.ednin.org) for regular updates and more news from around our diocese.*