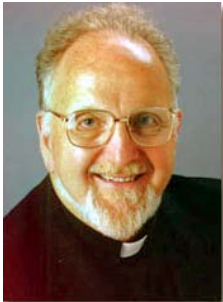


The bishop writes: Growing toward self-sacrifice

Lent is the journey of Christ to Jerusalem to make the ultimate human sacrifice - death - for the sake of others - us. As we journey with Christ we try to deepen our commitment to give ourselves up for others. When we have fully understood that self-sacrifice, we will fully know what it means to be "sent to share and serve."

Usually we think of such self-sacrifice in personal terms. But I have become aware that one of our churches has grasped that notion corporately and, without fuss, controversy or ceremony, gives itself for others. When the year end came and the church had a surplus of income over its operating budget, they gave a large portion of that surplus away, rather than holding on to it with the possibility of a leaner year in 2007.



H. Gerard Knoche

Salem Church, Catonsville, Md., gave \$2,500 to the campus ministry at Morgan State; \$2,000 to the Hispanic ministry at Peace Church, Glen Burnie, Md.; \$2,000 to the new Oromo (Ethiopian) ministry at Second English Church, Baltimore; \$500 to an Ethiopian student at Holy Trinity Church, Laurel, Md.; and \$3,500 to synod mission support. All this was done in spite of the fact that this January they called a second full-time pastor for the first time.

Now there may be many other congregations making similar sacrifices, and I rejoice in that possibility. But Salem learns by this act what it means to be part of the larger church. What they receive as they give is the privilege of being part of a ministry to black students, to Ethiopian Christians, to Latinos, and to the synod. As they decide to give, they learn more about how these other members of the body of Christ are them-

selves engaged in ministry that shares Christ's love.

This Lent I pray for your personal spiritual growth toward self-sacrificing love. And I pray for us as churches and as a synod that we might grow in that service as well.

Peace and joy,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gerard".

H. Gerard Knoche, bishop