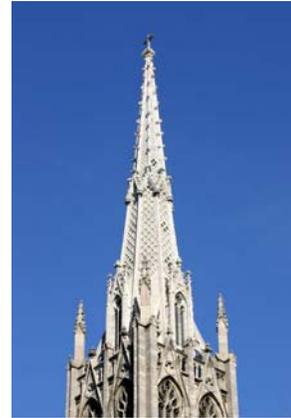


The Epistle *E-news*

GRACE CHURCH

in New York City



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Reflections on the *Hound of Heaven*

Parishioner and

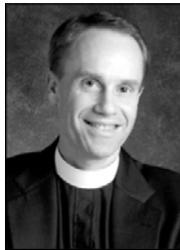
composer Joe

Budenholzer on his

Opera in One Act...

September 15, 2013

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost



Dear Friends,

I am always curious to see what books are on the NY Times Best Sellers list. Mind you, now, it doesn't mean that I buy and read the titles that are there, but it's a good barometer on where the public interest lies.

One book that has been near the top of the list this summer is called *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, by Reza Aslan. Would it be a sympathetic portrait, a negative attack, or more of the same that we read about Jesus? I decided this was a book I'd have to read.

With a book like this I often underline passages of interest and make copious notes in the margins. When I was finished with *Zealot*, the first 109 pages of my copy were completely clean, not a single note or underlined passage. Much of what Aslan writes has been standard fare in mainline seminaries for decades now. What I found interesting was his description of the revolutionary fervor that gripped Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. He also has compelling theories about the tension between the Apostle Paul and the leaders of the Jerusalem Church. Furthermore, I enjoyed his chapter about James the Just, the brother of Jesus.

What I found unconvincing about *Zealot* is Aslan's assumption that the Jesus of history is completely different from the Christ of faith. For Aslan, the Jesus of history - the flesh and blood person who grew up in Nazareth and



See This Sunday, the
SUNDAY FORUM
10AM...

**Celebrating the
New Bicentennial
Organ, Opus 65!**



See Sept 21 under
COMING SOON...



See Sept 23 under
COMING SOON...

gathered together a group of disciples - was a political zealot who, like many would-be messiahs of the day, tried to spark a revolutionary movement. In his attempt to oust the Romans from Jerusalem, Jesus failed when he died on a cross. Full stop to the Jesus of history.

According to Aslan, the early church then invented the Christ of faith through its own creative thinking and storytelling. The Christ who was divine, who offered himself for the sins of the whole world, who rose from the dead, who ascended into heaven, who is seated at the right hand of God, this is all the product of an overactive early-church imagination. What I kept waiting for Aslan to answer is why? After the crucifixion, why would anyone remember Jesus of Nazareth? Why did people who walked with and knew the Jesus of history continue to proclaim him as the messiah? Why did the early church go on at all? Why would Saul of Tarsus who persecuted the church suddenly convert and become Paul the Apostle? Why would James the Just, who was apparently unimpressed by his older brother in life, become the greatest bishop of the early church?

What Christianity has affirmed from Day One (Day One being Easter, by the way) is what the earliest followers of Jesus reported: that the Jesus of history rose from the dead. The tomb was empty, and they encountered the Jesus alive again in history. Aslan declares that the resurrection was not a historical event. I completely disagree based on the evidence of history. I can't see how any of what followed the crucifixion would have occurred had the resurrection merely been a fantastical story. If you are looking to read more on this, a far better historian and theologian is N.T. Wright. Check out his book, *The Challenge of Jesus*.

As for me, the witness of James is sufficient. If one of my brothers were to declare himself the messiah, it would take nothing short of a bodily resurrection for me to believe him.

See you in church.

[The Rev. J. Donald Waring](#)
Rector

This Sunday, September 15th

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring

Music: The Parish Choir

11 a.m. Morning Prayer

Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring

Music: The Choir of Men and Boys

6 p.m. Holy Eucharist, in the Chantry

Sermon: The Rev. Mary Cat Young

Music: Hymns with instrumentalists

(Service times are updated
weekly on the [website](#).)

REFLECTIONS ON "THE HOUND OF HEAVEN" - THE SUNDAY FORUM 10 AM - Performance and Worship series.

Grace parishioner Joe Budenholzer wrote, produced, directed and staged *The Hound of Heaven: A Para liturgical Opera in One Act* inspired by Francis Thompson's classic Victorian poem, *The Hound of Heaven*. In the opera, as Francis Thompson lays unconscious from a near fatal overdose of laudanum, an angel sends a guiding spirit to lead him through his past. He gains compassion for his own plight and insight on the divine process whose ultimate goal is to teach him that total reliance on God is his only hope. Joe will show video clips from the performance and discuss his personal relationship with this profoundly Christian poem. *Meets in Tuttle Hall. Coffee is served. (Next week: John Boody on "Pulling out the Stops at Grace!")*

20s30s SECOND SUNDAY BRUNCH resumes this month! (Please note that for the month of September, the brunch actually takes place on the third Sunday, 9/15). We will dine at JACK Bistro, 80 University Place. **RSVP is required to [Melissa](#).**

COMING SOON

SEPT 21 - An Exhibition Celebrating the New Bicentennial

Organ, Opus 65! If music be the food of love, play on! This special program of music features some of our talented friends: David Hurd, *The General Theological Seminary*; Renée Anne Louprette, *Organist / Director of Music of L'Église de Notre Dame*; Raymond Nagem, *The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine*; Jennifer Pascual, *Saint Patrick's Cathedral*; John Scott, *Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue (Episcopal)*; William Trafka, *Saint Bartholomew's Church (Episcopal)*. Saturday, Sept 21 at 3 pm. Free Admission - Bring a dry good to help feed the hungry of our City.

SEPT 22 - JOHN BOODY: PULLING OUT THE STOPS AT GRACE - THE SUNDAY FORUM 10 AM - Performance and Worship series.

John Boody, founding partner of Taylor & Boody Organbuilders, will regale us with an overview of the complex design and construction of their "Opus 65," Grace Church's recently completed Bicentennial organ. Comprised of seventy-five stops and some 5,000 pipes, our organ took his fifteen-person workshop more than three years to build. Parts of the organ - the bellows, the wind system and much of the tracker action - usually installed in the visible casework, are built into a climate-controlled space beneath the chancel floor. *Meets in Tuttle Hall. Coffee is served.*

SEPT 23 - FAMILY FAITH FORUM - OUR SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

(and how they strengthen us for our kids) **A chance for parents to get together**, share light refreshments, and chat about the different joys and challenges we face as parents. Monday, Sept 23, 7-8:30 pm. RSVP to [Melissa](#) by noon on Monday, Sept 23rd.

SEPT 24 - OPEN DOOR FALL RECEPTION - *We are in need of 5 new volunteers!* Parishioners and friends who **have an interest in sharing their welcoming presence with weekend visitors** to Grace Church are encouraged to join this team. The time commitment is only 2 hours per month on Saturdays or Sundays. Please come on Tuesday, Sept 24th at 7 pm in the Reception Room for fellowship and celebration of the coming volunteer year. RSVP to [Singleton Cox](#) by Friday, Sept 20.

SEPT 26 - WELCOME TO GRACE COOKOUT - New to Grace Church? Just moved to New York and church shopping? Don't have a grill in your studio apartment? Come for **a casual evening of fun and fellowship**-a barbecue on Thursday, Sept 26, 6:30-8:30 pm. Meet friends new and old, beat the heat with burgers and lemonade, and watch (laugh?) as your clergy serve as grill masters. RSVP to [Jennifer Metz](#) by Tuesday, Sept 24.

SEPT 29 - C.S. LEWIS' THE GREAT DIVORCE Join other folks from Grace for a theatrical adaptation of CS Lewis's *The Great Divorce* on Sunday, Sept 29 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$30 each. All will be welcome to meet at 1 pm for lunch a la carte, or else you may meet us at the theater for a 3 pm show. **Lewis's work explores our sense of self, will, and sin, inviting self-examination and a bit of humor too.** From the website: "Climb on board a bus ride from the great beyond as some of Lewis' most provocative and fiercely funny characters take a day trip from Hell to Paradise. Heaven awaits them . . . but will they like it?" For more info, visit: <http://greatdivorceonstage.com/> To join the fun, e-mail [Melissa](#).

OCT 9, 16, 23 WEDNESDAY NIGHT BOOK AND FILM STUDIES!

Join the Rev. Sarah Wood for a variety of book and film

discussions this year, beginning on October 9th with **Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold**. This 1956 novel by C. S. Lewis retells the ancient Greek myth of Cupid and Psyche from the perspective of Orual, Psyche's older sister. This stunning piece was Lewis' last novel, which he considered his most mature, and was written in conjunction with his wife, Joy Davidman. You are welcome to this book study time together, sure to inspire some great literary and theological reflection! Wednesday evenings, Oct 9, 16, 23, directly after the 6 pm Eucharist.

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