



ALL SAINTS CHURCH
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Celebrating Community!

Laura Vossler

June 7, 2009 - Youth Sunday (Part III)

All Saints is the sort of place where changing the world seems commonplace. Every Sunday the lawn is packed with people advertising social causes, volunteer opportunities, and spiritual journeys just waiting for you to join, to lend your time, to expand your horizons and your mind. So naturally, as an All Saints member since before birth, I've come to believe myself capable of the impossible. In fact, to shy away from difficulty and adversity would be, in the words of our favorite Vulcan, illogical.

Yet, as I've had a chance to further explore my faith through the Seekers program and my time served on the Vestry here at All Saints, I've come to see my faith journey as a journey similar to that of the heroine of one of my favorite bed time stories, Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney. In the story, the young girl who becomes Miss Rumphius has grand aspirations for her future, much like myself. But the part of her story that resonates most with me is her grandfather's advice to do something to make the world more beautiful. In the end, Miss Rumphius' contribution to beautifying the world is in the form of planting lupines. Now, I can't tell you exactly how I intend to change the world, but I have come to realize that such change often doesn't occur with broad sweeping reform. Rather, it occurs through small shifts over long periods of time. This is especially true of my faith journey.

I remember quite distinctly, my struggle to come to terms with the concept of the Holy Spirit, especially since I was under the impression that my faith, as a Christian was contingent upon my unwavering belief in God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. My practical side simply could not fathom the idea of three separate entities as a singular entity, nor could I accept that such a thing cannot be given a single, straightforward definition, but all the same must be acknowledged and respected as the ultimate truth. Then, Rusty Harding explained to my Seeker's class the Holy Trinity in terms of the three stages of water. God, he explained, was like the liquid stage, a vital source of nourishment that often falls from the heavens when the sky is its darkest. Jesus is the solid stage, ice- definitive and tangible. The Holy Spirit is the gaseous stage, water vapor, something that can't be seen or held but is still felt by all.

I was particularly taken with the idea of the Holy Spirit as this invisible, omnipresent force of goodness and love that inspires the best in all people. I felt that I could really get behind a faith that inspires love, peace and understanding. Indeed, I believe that it is All Saint's commitment to embodying the Holy Spirit through peace and justice initiatives that has solidified my faith. I remember feeling so filled with the love of God that one day last spring when I spent the better part of a school day to work with my Vestry colleagues to pass a resolution affirming the California State Legislature's decision to recognize same sex

marriages. Regardless of one's views on the institution of marriage, as a religious ceremony, a state's issue, or an inalienable right, I am constantly inspired, and my faith is constantly rejuvenated by a parish devoted to resolving the injustices of this world.

Like the grandfather in the story of Miss Rumphius, I see All Saints as the force in my life, which challenges me to beautify my world. All Saints is a place that challenges people to become the change they wish to see in the world with the understanding that, in due time, they will leave the protection of such a place ready to unleash their leadership, compassion and grace upon the world.

Next year, my spiritual journey will take me to Bennington, Vermont and while I will miss the vibrant community, beautiful music and inspirational parish, I will take with me the notion that whoever I am and where-ever I find myself on this journey of faith, I will carry with me the Holy spirit, the spirit of All Saints as I set out to make the world that much more beautiful.