

**Carter Lofton  
June 2, 2010**

**Do you believe in the Easter Bunny?**

**I am told that some time ago, the Easter Bunny appeared on Easter Sunday every year at the very same place. It was not an obscure location. It was the corner of Queens and Providence Roads, Charlotte, NC.**

**Maybe you were one of the folks lucky enough to get a wave from the Easter Bunny. The bunny was the size of an adult male – maybe about 5’10” – I am told it was very friendly – waving at everyone and even shaking his bunny tail every now and then.**

**I did not see the Easter Bunny, but I have been told about him by people who did see and I believe them – so I believe in the Easter Bunny.**

**Rumor has it that when his Easter duties were over, the bunny became a dentist (not unlike Superman – becoming Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter – though there was nothing mild mannered about this dentist.)**

**You say you’ve never heard a funeral homily begin this way?**

**I understand, I’ve never started one this way either. But then I’ve never before preached at Carter Lofton’s funeral.**

**Carter Lofton was a very strong person. He was a real character, and a powerful presence wherever he was.**

**In Carter's obituary it says that "...he was simple and complex man." By the way, Carter wrote that obituary – Charlotte doesn't want us to think she would describe herself as an angel.**

**I have to tell you, Charlotte, we've been calling you that for years.**

**Carter was right in describing himself as simple and complex.**

**I know that to be true.**

**There are hundreds of Carter stories – enough to fill volumes.**

**I hope that in just a little while at the reception, you can come together and share your Carter stories.**

**Certainly Carter was a person of many accomplishments, he had a very successful dental practice, in addition he had been:**

**Major US Army – served in Germany.  
Scout leader – St. John's  
Pres. East Charlotte Rotary  
Pres. Dental Society  
Pres. American Cancer Society  
Order of the Long Leaf Pine – NC Gov.**

**His most recent service included:**

**Board of Stop Hunger Now  
Homeless Shelter Advisory Board  
Board Member Penick Village  
Kanuga Board of Visitors**

**And I am sure that I have left something out.**

**(Family – loved his wife and children, grandchildren – and the extended family – as a father he was a great ‘list maker – giving everyone some chores to perform. – chickens – garden)**

**Carter built his own house (I mean built his own house – family members all had jobs at the site, but there was no question who the general contractor was. He told me, “I figured if I could build a tooth – I could build a house” – I’ll have to admit I never understood that, but I did accept it.**

**In our first reading, we hear these words from Isaiah:**

**“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor...”**

**Those words had special meaning for Carter. He chose that reading at the funeral of his son Mark. We think that they are particularly appropriate today as well.**

**“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted...”**

**As most of you know, Carter became a Deacon in the Episcopal Church while still conducting a very active dental practice. He was ordained on May 31, 1992 – 18 years ago.**

**He retired from his dental practice in 2003.**

**As a deacon, Carter served first at St. John’s Church and then moved here to the Church of the Holy Comforter. After his retirement, Carter joined the staff of Holy Comforter.**

**A deacon's role is "...interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world..." At all times (the deacon's) life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself."**

**It is a ministry of servanthood under the direction of the bishop. Deacons are called to serve particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.**

**"...to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted..."**

**Carter Lofton was a deacon's deacon.**

**In the midst of a culture where the constant quest for wealth and status are normative – where selfishness and greed are accepted as business as usual – Carter stood as one more concerned with giving than with accumulation of more things.**

**At a time in life where a rest is surely deserved and most justifiable – Carter stood as one more concerned that his inactivity might be the source of someone's doing without.**

**Carter did not just do all that he did because it is a deacon's job or duty – he was restless if he was not doing something for someone else. He had a passion for serving and service.**

**He was happiest cooking fried chicken at the homeless shelter. He loved organizing projects that pushed Christians out of their comfort zone and forced interaction with persons who were of different backgrounds and economic circumstances.**

**Carter put flesh and bones on Christian theology. He took it from the page and from the lecture hall and from the pulpit and made it come alive on the street.**

**He used the gifts God had given him in the service of others. He organized and raised the funds to equip a dental clinic for the homeless – he recruited other dentists and also worked himself in providing care to those who would otherwise have no care.**

**I said that Carter built his own house, but he was involved in building houses for many others through Habitat for Humanity. He organized builds here and assisted in organizing our building blitz in Mexico a few years back.**

**Our gospel today ends with these words attributed to Jesus by the writer of John: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

**“...I am the way...”**

**You know the earliest Christians were sometimes referred to as people of ‘the way.’**

**It seems to me that Carter had found following Jesus to be a way of life – not just something done in church, but indeed a way of living.**

**The cues for living this way are to be found in the life and ministry of Jesus.**

**“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

**If you want to get to the Father, follow Jesus. That isn't so much about your belief or your piety. It is about following – acting as you might see Jesus act – caring for the poor, the dispossessed, the lonely, and the sick, the prisoner and the outcast.**

**Or “bringing good news to the oppressed, binding up the brokenhearted.”**

**It is the path to the Father.**

**Carter Lofton had 12 admissions to the hospital in the last year. One of his hospital stays was 25 days. Yet in that same period of time Carter served at the Dental Van for the Homeless 8 out of 12 times. He organized and led a mission trip to Costa Rica, he participated in the liturgy here whenever he could and visited the sick and shut-ins on behalf of the parish whenever his strength would allow him. He cooked at the Men's Shelter on countless Friday evenings.**

**In January he drove the Stop Hunger Now truck to the diocesan convention and while there, witnessed the packaging of the I millionth meal from the Charlotte office.**

**Carter, you see, had brought Stop Hunger Now to Charlotte. Many of you are members of churches that have hosted this wonderful ministry.**

**And I almost forgot to mention – he also took The Right Rev. Hector Montoroso, Bishop of Costa Rica, on a wild ride around Lake Wiley on his Wave runner (Jet Ski)**

**It is the Carter Loftons of the Church that will keep us real – that will keep us accountable for our ministry to the world –**

**that will not allow us to become self satisfied just because we have full pews, pretty buildings and balanced budgets.**

**Those are nice, if you have them but if Carter were preaching today, this is what you would hear: “Have you helped somebody today? It is what Jesus wants you to do. If you need some assistance in finding someone to help, just see me after the service.”**

**Carter had to dress up in a bunny costume in order for folks to see the Easter Bunny. He just had to be Carter to allow us a glimpse of Jesus.**