

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

A few weeks back I was talking to Fr. Edelman and we joked that after the exciting events of Fr. Tyler Phass' ordination to the diaconate and Bp. Jones' episcopal visitation Holy Week and Easter will be anticlimactic! The ordination was beautiful and the fulfillment of several years of hard work and dedication on the part of Fr. Phass and his family. I wish to thank everyone – too numerous to list – who made the day a success. Father Phass will serve as curate of Saint Alban's while he finishes up his degree at Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Bluebell, PA. We hope to have him down at least once a month to assist at Mass, preach, and do other pastoral duties. Thanks to the generosity of several parishioners Tyler was able to get all of the things he needs to his diaconate ordination. He'll need a few more things for his priestly ordination which will be in another year, specifically chasubles (red, green, purple, and white), stoles (in the same colors), and a chalice and paten. There are a few other things as well. If you are interested in getting him one or more of these items please let me know. A few people can also go into together on one item. Above all, please pray for him that God will bless him and his family and use them for his glory and to further his kingdom. On another note, I am very sorry that this got out so late! Because of the activities leading up to Fr. Phass' ordination and then rushing straight into Passiontide and Easter I just was not able to get our parish magazine out in a timely fashion. But I can assure you that our May issue will be out on time! I would add that Fr. Phass will be contributing an article to the parish magazine each month from now on, so we can look forward to that especially next month. You would not believe how much of my time is absorbed with doing administrative duties! There are innumerable forms that have to be filled out and updated, bulletins that need printing, letters that need to be written, and on and on and on. This is something that needs to change at some point. When the administrative work becomes so much that it keeps me in the office all day instead of allowing me to get out in the community then we have a problem. I need to be out in the community more, meeting people and introducing them to the church. I need more to do strategic planning, and to pray and study. But I am constantly thwarted by the amount of administrative work that must be done. We have a number of retired folk that could be of great service to the church by helping out with administrative tasks periodically. Really, there is *always* stuff to be done around here at the church that ends up becoming my job to do simply because there is no one else to do it. Some people do step up to the plate and help with different tasks when I ask, and I'm thankful for that. But what we really need is *regular* help. Please see me if you'd like to help in some way!

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

April 2017

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UPCOMING PRAYER BOOK

HOLY DAYS:

Apr 10th – 15th - Holy Week

Schedule To Be Announced

Apr 17th – 18th - Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 25th – St. Mark

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 22nd – 24th - Rogation Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 25th – Ascension Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jun 5th & 6th – Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun Week

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jun 7th, 9th, & 10th – Ember Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jun 23rd – St. Barnabas

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

THEOLOGY: *A Primer On Moral Theology*

One of the things that has been keeping Father Anderson busy the last few months has been teaching classes for Logos House, a distance learning theological house of studies sponsored by several different Anglican jurisdictions. Logos House offers ecclesiastically accredited degrees for men and women wanting to serve the church in various forms of ordained and lay ministry. The classes are small – usually no more than three people plus the teacher. They meet online via Skype. There is plenty of required reading, as well as quizzes, tests, and papers. Last semester Fr. Anderson taught Liturgy 101. This semester he is teaching Christian Ethics 101... otherwise known simply as “Moral Theology.”

What exactly is moral theology? According to the author of our text, the Rt. Rev'd R.C. Mortimer, sometime Bishop of Exeter, and professor of moral and pastoral theology in Oxford, it is “the study of human behavior from the moral and theological point of view.” A branch of dogmatic theology, moral theology uses the insights of philosophy, theology, scripture, and tradition to form a framework by which the rightness or wrongness of human actions may be judged.

All of this begins with a consideration of the “end” of man. When the purpose, or object, of man’s existence is established, from that flows how he should behave. Our true end as human beings is eternal happiness and perfect good. Man cannot but help to seek and desire this. Even when he does something morally wrong, such as commit suicide, he is, in his own convoluted way, carrying out an action that he thinks will bring him eternal happiness. The reality is that the perfect good, that which will bring about eternal happiness, is (and can only be) God. The reason that “things” cannot give man the eternal happiness that he so desires is quite simply because they are temporal and transitory. Something that will pass away and longer be in existence and therefore cannot bring eternal happiness.

Actions which lead us to our true and final end – blessedness, salvation... God – are good and moral. Actions which lead us away from that are bad and immoral. But the question is how do we determine which actions are which? The answer is through the use of right reason. But man’s reason can only take him so far. For alas, his nature is fallen. Thus he needs the help of divine revelation to assist him – to elevate his reason – so as to more accurately discern what actions lead to blessedness. Through reason and revelation human beings are able to know the will of God as he reveals it in nature and divine positive law. It is in properly reflecting on these, especially the natural law, that we come to understand what it is to

be truly human, and thus what our end is and we go about attaining it.

Moral theology does not explore every action of man but rather only genuine *human* actions. A human action is an act that proceeds from knowledge and choice (or freedom). Thus, actions that proceed from a person that are involuntary, such as breathing, are not the sort of human actions that concern moral theology because they do not proceed from choice. The same goes for an action that we might call a “quick response to a stimuli” – a sudden explosion of anger seemingly out of nowhere because it does not proceed from knowledge and deliberation. It is, however, part of the purview of moral theology to determine if an action was done out of outvincible or invincible ignorance. Our level of knowledge certainly influences how culpable we are for our actions. It is also part of the scope of moral theology to determine if the will was truly involved in an action. Coercion, for example – being forced to commit an act – takes away our free will and choice.

Another huge aspect of moral theology is the conscience. The conscience is “the reason in an individual that forms a moral judgement.” Man is under strict obligation to follow the dictates of his conscience at all times, because the conscience is the voice of God speaking to us. (see *Gaudium et Spes, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican Council II*) But the key is that our consciences have to be informed by faith and reason. If we are convinced that it is okay to murder people of a different race, for example, that does not absolve us from the action. It is much easier than some people consider to take time and reflect and think so as to have better informed consciences.

Bearing all of that in mind (and that hardly scratches the surface and nuances of this branch of theology) we can come to some idea as to how to determine the morality of an action. Three things have to be considered: 1) the object, or the act itself; 2) the circumstances; and 3) the intention. The act itself is the chief determining factor. Theft is always theft. No circumstance can make it right. Circumstances can alter, however, the way in which an action is wrong. Sex between two unmarried people is wrong. But if one of the people is married to someone else then that circumstance makes the act additionally wrong. Intention may make 1) “an action that is indifferent good or bad”; 2) an action which is good more or less good, or even bad; and 3) an action which is bad more or less bad, but never good.

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CHURCH HISTORY: *The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation – The Second Article of a Three Part Series*

It is perhaps better to speak of “reformations” than the “Reformation.” As we saw in last month’s *Centurion*, in the 16th century many different “reformers” rose to fame in the Western Church. There was John Calvin in France, Martin Luther in Germany, Zwingli in Switzerland, and Thomas Cranmer in England. Each of these men, as well as the many others, had different theologies and agendas, and they differed with one another on important points such as eucharistic doctrine and ecclesiology (the nature of the Church). Around this time the Roman Catholic Church also attempted to “reform” itself. It did so at the Council of Trent, and the result of it was called the “counter-reformation.” All of that is to say that to speak of THE Reformation is perhaps a bit anachronistic because it conveys the incorrect notion that there was one uniform, monolithic movement of reform in the Church when clearly there was not.

The English Reformation was very different from the Reformation on the continent. Typically Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury of the period, is represented as the leader of the English reform. He was a very different man from Martin Luther and John Calvin with a very different agenda. One of the ways in which he was most different is that he did not produce mountains of theological literature (tracts and books like Luther, or the massive treatise *Institutes of the Christian Religion* like Calvin). While he did write books on theological topics (most notably perhaps on the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist) his output in that area paled in comparison to that of his continental brethren.

That for which Cranmer is most remembered and appreciated is the Book of Common Prayer. When Henry VIII died Cranmer set out to reform the liturgy and worship of the Church in England. At the time, in England and abroad, there was little uniformity in the various rites and ceremonies used by the Church. One diocese in England might have one “use” of the Mass (their own variation on the service) while another might have its own “use.” Furthermore, the Mass was said mostly silently in Latin, and many of the ceremonies and traditions had, to Cranmer, become irrelevant, and unifying ends in themselves.

So what Cranmer did was take the best of the best uses of all of the different clergy books (e.g. the missal for the celebration of Mass, the breviary for the saying of Morning and Evening Prayer, the Manual for the celebration of sacramental rites like baptism and matrimony, the ordinal for the ordaining of men, etc.) and translate and edit them and compress them all into *one* book that would be used for everyone. He called this

“common prayer” because it was prayer to be used in common by all. The Prayer Book came into use on Whitsunday in 1549 and has been in continual use by Anglican churches ever since.

In looking at the Prayer Book, especially the first Prayer Book of 1549, one sees Cranmer’s purest liturgical and theological vision. Cranmer was the only reformer who was truly successful in reforming catholicism, and restoring to the Church its biblical and patristic foundation. Thus we find people even today who refer to the Anglican tradition as a “reformed” catholicism. It is truly catholic, because it proclaims the faith of the ancient, undivided Church and the seven ecumenical councils, and because it maintains an unbroken succession to the apostles themselves through the laying on of hands. Yet it is reformed in that extra-biblical doctrines and traditions are not part of the public liturgy of the Church. Truly, in reforming the liturgy of the Church, Cranmer reformed the theology of the Church... but not in the drastic way that Luther and Calvin did.

It goes without saying that Cranmer was no doubt *influenced* by these men. But in areas where that influence became too strong the Church saw fit to pull back, and hold Cranmer in check as it were. For example, while Cranmer’s own personal understanding of the nature of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist eventually became very extreme and virtually heterodox, the Church itself never accepted where he went with his theology. Cranmer’s revision of the Prayer Book again in 1552, which took it in this more starkly Protestant direction, was later, in 1559, revised to bring back more of the catholic elements that Cranmer had expunged from the previous book. So whereas Cranmer’s later doctrine of the Holy Eucharist was surely reformed, it was not catholic, and so for that reason it was rejected by the Church, and the liturgy of the Church reflected that. What this means in part is that we as Anglicans do not adhere to Cranmer’s opinions and eccentricities as other Christians adhere to the teachings of Luther and Calvin. The Anglican tradition has no seminal theologian, and not even any faith of her own. Her primary theologians are the Fathers of the Church and the decrees of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, and her faith is that of the undivided Church.

A good, classic book to read on the subject of the English Reformation and the catholic nature of her theological and liturgical reforms is *The Old Religion* by J.L.C. Dart. Check it out! (Fr. Anderson has copy he’ll loan you.) ☩

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In the study of moral theology, once the preliminary principles of man's nature and purpose are grasped, and once the basics of law and revelation are understood, and actions and conscience are grasped, one studies the virtues. A virtue is a good habit, and it is in growing in virtue that we become good moral people properly oriented to our end. These are the Three Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity and the Four Cardinal Virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. The former are called "infused" virtues because they are given to us by God entirely by divine grace. The latter are called "acquired" virtues because we grow in them by constant practice. When we think about it the two sets of virtues work together in concert to elevate us to the divine

life. While it is possible for a pagan to grow very much in the acquired virtues, it takes the infused virtues to transform those acquired virtues and take them to the next level as it were. Or, put another way, to magnify them so much that they make not only this life blessed, but make us fit for eternal life. The virtues are a subject for study entirely in themselves. (See the March 2013 issue of *The Centurion* for an article on the Four Cardinal Virtues.)

If you would like to continue the study of this important topic check out our textbook for the class "The Elements of Moral Theology" by R.C. Mortimer. it is a short but clear and very systematic presentation of the main principles and elements of moral theology in the catholic tradition. ✠

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES: *Please note these important items!*

Char Hope Foundation: A New Ministry to Support

As we all know addiction is a major problem in Maryland right now. So Karen Novakoski has recently made contact with a ministry called Char Hope (www.charhope.org) which helps women who are getting clean from drugs. They are located in Street, Maryland. We can support them by donating cleaning supplies, paper goods, health and beauty items, and personal items. We will continue to support Welcome-One in Belcamp by giving them food. But these other goods can be given to Char Hope. In the meantime, please put donations into the same box in the parish hall that we use to collect food for Welcome-One. Please see Karen for more information.

Ascension Day Spaghetti Supper

Mark your calendars for our Ascension Day Spaghetti supper on Thursday, May 25th at 7:00 p.m. Mass for Ascension Day will be held at 10:00 a.m. that day. A service of Evening Prayer will be held at 6:30 p.m. immediately before the dinner. The entire night will be an Italian extravaganza! Bring a friend. Any questions? See Linda Tillinghast.

Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who donated towards our 2017 Lenten Appeal. We will let you know how much we raised when we have the exact amount that we raised added up. The funds are going to support the wonderful work of St. Philip's Church in Blacksburg, VA.

Deanery Gazette

As most of you know our diocese is divided up into administrative subsets called "deaneries." Fr. Anderson serves as "dean" of the Mid-Atlantic Deanery. The website is www.midatlanticdeanery.org. The deanery now offers a monthly two-page news gazette called "The Mid-Atlantic Deanery Gazette." Copies of it are posted on the bulletin board in the parish hall. The gazette has news from other churches in our small but far-flung deanery. Check it out!

In times of illness...

Please remember to call Fr. Anderson so he may pray for you, and, if you so desire, visit you. It is important when we are sick to pray for God's grace and healing and to be anointed with oil and take Holy Communion. It is also a good time to make one's confession if that need arises. Also, when you let the Fr. Anderson know that you are sick not only will he pray for you... the *whole parish* will pray for your healing! There is lots of power when prayers are multiplied. Please let your parish church minister to you when you are in need. Thank you!

Standing Notice:

"The minister is ordered, from time to time, to advise the People, whilst they are still in health, to make Wills arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, and, when of ability, to leave Bequests for religious and other charitable uses." (BCP, p. 320) ✠