

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

One of the number one keys to the strength and success of a parish is good "lay" leadership. The word "lay" is short for "laity," which refers to those who are unordained. Thus, anyone who is not ordained is "laity" or a "layman." We must always remember that the Church consists not only of her ordained ministers - bishops, priests, and deacons - but also of her unordained laymen. God accomplishes his will in the world through *everyone* in his Holy Catholic Church... both "lay" and "ordained" people. So for the Church to accomplish the will of God in the world *all* Christians - both lay and ordained - need to step up and exercise their spiritual gifts. And for our parish to continue to grow and more effectively minister to the community we need active and involved laity - men and women - to think up ways to exercise their gifts. What gifts has God given to you? What interests and talents do you have? Have you ever thought about how you can use those to help expand the ministry of the Church and then taken steps to turn those thoughts into actions? St. Alban's is a place where people should feel free to exercise their spiritual gifts. Many churches operate on the "Father Knows Best" principle. In other words... the *priest* has to control every single aspect of parish life, no matter how minute it may be while the laity cower in submission to his "almighty" will. That is *not* how St. Alban's works! That mentality in fact kills churches, because as soon as the one in ultimate control is maxed-out *everything* stops. St. Alban's needs the laity to take an active involvement in planning and executing ministries and events so the clergy can be free to do what they are supposed to do: preach the Gospel, celebrate the Sacraments, visit the sick, etc. We are definitely heading in this direction at St. Alban's. Many folk have stepped up to do jobs that need to be done. But we need more people to get involved and think of things that need to be changed and done, and *in consultation with the rector*, get them done. This will help us to grow, which we need to do simply in order to survive. I am thankful for the many people who help and participate in the running of the parish. But again, we need more! What can *you* do to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the ministry of your parish church? Dream. Think big. What needs to be done that I and everyone else am missing? Think about, and then take steps to go ahead and do what needs to be done!

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

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Mark your calendar for these important upcoming events.

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

August 6th - Transfiguration

Holy Communion @ 6:30 p.m.

August 22nd - St. Bartholomew (trans.)

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

September 18th - Ember Day

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

September 23rd - St. Matthew (trans.)

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

October 17th - St. Luke (trans)

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

October 28th - St. Simon & St. Jude

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

November 1st - All Saints

Holy Communion @ 11:00 a.m.

Prayer Book Holy Day Masses last a little over half an hour and, when celebrated in the morning, always include the office of Morning Prayer. Please make time to come out for these

CHURCH AND CULTURE: *“Secularism” is the defining characteristic of our age.*

If there is any theme that is dominant in our culture it is *secularism*. Secularism is not so much a philosophy as it is a particular outlook on life. The word itself comes from the Latin word *saeculum* which means “generation” or “age,” and is often translated as “world.” Generally speaking “secular” denotes something that is man-centered and concerned primarily with *this* world, as opposed to being primarily concerned with God and the things of the *next* world. In its most extreme cases secularism is the attitude that views human life and the world apart from God.

In his book *God and Secularity* (Westminster Press, 1967) renowned Anglican theologian John Macquarrie lists some of the defining characteristics of secularism and the secular man. He writes: 1) The secularist is the man who affirms the temporal, this-worldly character of existence. 2) The secular man sets his worldly existence in opposition to religion and the spiritual life. He is taken up with the everyday activities of working, producing, buying, selling, etc. Religious activities are a waste of time. 3) Secular knowledge gained by human effort, especially the hard sciences, are held in the highest regard, and seen as the key to true knowledge. Religious knowledge and teaching is seen to be at odds with secular knowledge, and also entirely subjective. 4) The secularist sees man as independent and autonomous. No other being is higher than himself, and he can create his own value system and truth.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that the secular worldview, as described by Macquarrie, characterizes our culture, and has infected every area of human life. In the television programs we watch, and the books that we read - even those for children - God and religion is noticeably absent from them. Whenever there is a successful program based on Christianity (such as the recent “Bible” series on the History Channel) everyone is shocked and amazed that it is *there* and that anyone could possibly be interested in it! And in addition to dominating the contemporary culture the secular mindset has even infected Church. Many Christians are very secular in their way of thinking and living. One example of this is that God and the Church are relegated to one hour on Sunday morning, while the rest of the week is

consumed by constant work and/or pleasure. Another example of how secular thinking has polluted Christian minds is with regard to moral matters. Guided more popular culture than by scripture and tradition, many Christians see nothing wrong with living together before marriage, dating and marrying non-believers, and the like. Yet another example is the “my way or the highway” attitude that is often embraced with regard to church. If the church teaches a biblical truth that is hard to accept lots of folk choose to leave the church instead of repenting of their sin and turning to God!

Made up as they are of individuals, many Christian denominations have also embraced secularity. They have determined that the bible is no longer the word of God, and that the tradition is something that man has invented rather than something that developed by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Certain denominations have - mostly since the late 1960's - radically altered the content of the Christian faith, creating a new religion in its place. In 1992 the renowned English theologian, E.L. Mascall (1905-1993), asked a very important question: *“For the question which faces every Christian body today and which underlies all practical issues is this: is the Christian religion something revealed by God in Christ, which demands our grateful obedience, or is it something to be made up ourselves to our own specification, according to our own immediate desires?”* (Saraband, p. 380) The secularist would say that the latter is true.

What is a Christian to do? How is he to face this onslaught of secularism that is attacking the foundations of faith and culture from both inside and outside the gates? *The answer is to immerse himself in the scriptures and traditions of the Church!* We must put God first in our life and carefully scrutinize everything by under the lens of the teaching of the Church, which is based not only on revelation but also most assuredly on human reason. We need to cultivate a deep, abiding, and zealous faith, and view all of reality through Christian lenses. If we do not then the juggernaut of secular humanism will run over and destroy not just the Church but everything else that is civilized and rational; and true, beautiful, and good. May our lives be guided by God the Holy Spirit, and may we approach all of life with a Christian worldview. ✠

DIOCESAN NEWS: *Rector's Report from 2013 Diocesan Synod in Annapolis, Maryland*

Every year the Diocese of the Eastern United States (DEUS) of the Anglican Province of America (APA) meets in synod to discuss old and new business, elect officers, approve a new budget, and hear about news from the past year and plans for the upcoming year. In addition to this we have numerous fellowship activities, a few workshops, and of course, inspiring worship services. As usual, it was good to see a number of familiar faces at the synod whom many of us here at St. Alban's know quite well, such as Bishop Grundorf, Bishop Jones (former rector of St. Alban's), and Father and Mrs. Unterburger. They all send their greetings and love to St. Alban's.

The delegates from St. Alban's were me and Frannie Flatau. Unfortunately, due to some health issues, Frannie had to bow out at the last minute, so I was the only official representative from the parish. Frannie comes to synod every year, and has served on the diocesan standing committee and in many other official capacities over the year, therefore it was quite strange to not have her there in our midst. By God's grace we hope to see Frannie back on the synod floor next year.

We did, however, have a few other folk present. On one particular evening, Tevin Okutoyi was asked to serve as torch bearer at the synod eucharist, which, for all of you liturgy geeks out there, is always a solemn high pontifical Mass. Tevin did a masterful job and received many compliments from laity and clergy. I know it was an honor for him to serve at the Mass celebrated by the bishop and senior diocesan clergy. With Tevin was Tyler Phass, a new parishioner and senior at Montreat College who is currently in the diocesan discernment program for Holy Orders. Tyler gave Tevin a ride down and back, and was able to meet a number of clergymen who are involved in the discernment and formation process. It was a joy to have Tevin and Tyler at the synod eucharist and at the fantastic feast that followed. Besides Tevin and Tyler, my family came out one day so everyone could meet the children and say hello to Valerie.

Unlike many of the larger denominations, the APA does not pass resolutions on the contentious

political matters of the day. Looking at other churches, it is amazing to see the sorts of (often empty) resolutions they sometimes pass! The APA is nothing like that. We do indeed pass resolutions, but only related to church business. One of these this year was the resolution to form a committee to explore the possibility of dividing the diocese upon Bishop Grundorf's canonical retirement.

As it stands now our diocese covers a very large geographical area: basically the entire eastern seaboard to the Mississippi River. Even though we are a small church we are large enough and spread out enough to make managing the affairs of the diocese pretty tricky at times. The bishops (one ordinary, one suffragan) are stretched very thin with diocesan, parish (in Bp. Jones' case), and ecumenical activities, not to mention their own personal lives and families. Diocesan officers are also stretched thin. In our diocese just four or five clergy - mostly in Florida, because that is the headquarters of the diocese - seem to run everything in the entire church. All of this responsibility is too much physically, mentally, and spiritually for just a few people. And it no doubt hinders the growth and effectiveness of our diocese and church. Therefore many people think that the time has come to seriously explore the question of dividing in the name of a healthier Church.

Needless to say a great deal of thought and prayer will have to go into this undertaking, as there is much to consider. Will it be determined that it is a good idea to split? If so, where will the lines be drawn and why? What will the process be to elect officials? How will this impact our ecumenical relations with other Anglican jurisdictions? These and similar important questions will have to be addressed in this process.

It is a daunting proposal, to be sure. But it has to be faced. If not now, later. And it is probably best to begin exploring it while we are still under the steady, godly leadership of our beloved Bishop Grundorf. We may be confident that God will guide us along the way and in his own perfect time lead the diocese to divide in a suitable way for greater help and for the furtherance of his kingdom. ✠

PARISH NEWS: *Mark your calendars for these important events*

Baby Shower - Sunday, September 8th: We will be having a welcome baby Hannah party (shower) on this day. A list of suggested gift items will be distributed ahead of time, or if you would rather, there will be a money tree that you can pin your gift to (using diaper pins, of course!). Goodies will be served and all are welcome!

Church Yard/Rummage Sale - Saturday, September 21st from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.: We will need lots of help with this event, so mark your calendars now. We still need your unwanted items. Please bring donations throughout the summer and place them in the basement. If you have large items please DO NOT bring them now. Contact Beth Siegel to find out if and when we will be accepting larger items (preferably the morning of the sale)

Bake Sale: There will also be a bake sale the day of the yard sale. So please start going through your favorite recipes and think about making some yummy things to sell that day!

Sunday, October 6th - Jewelry Sale: Starting Sunday, October 6th we will be having a custom jewelry sale, from 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. following the 10:00 a.m. service. This is a fundraiser (similar to the way a Tupperware Party is run). The items are affordable, so please plan on attending. We are asking everyone to bring a friend, or two, to this event. Booklets will be available at

the end of August/September. If you would like to see the products now go to www.origamiowl.com. We will also keep the party open for two weeks so that we can go out and get outside orders for those who can't make it on the 6th, or so people can take the booklet to work and get some sales. We will have some snacks at the party, and all are welcome! This would be a great place to



start your Christmas shopping.

Sunday, November 3rd - Episcopal Visit and Confirmation:

On this day our diocesan bishop, the Most Rev'd Walter H. Grundorf, D.D., will be here to preach, celebrate, and confirm. Please plan to attend as we welcome the chief pastor of the Church to our parish.

Check out the new book written by former rector of St. Alban's, the Rev'd Dr. Mark F.M. Clavier: *"Rescuing the Church from Consumerism"* is Fr. Clavier's first book. He has this to say about it: "As you may or may not know, my first book is due to be published on August 15th through SPCK. Entitled *Rescuing the Church from Consumerism*, it argues that consumerism has become the all-pervasive religion of today, incorporating even the Church into its worldview, and suggests ways that churches might better become alternative communities that can challenge consumer culture and form and nourish Christian identities. So far, it has received very positive feedback from those who've read it." The Bishop of Oxford, John Pritchard says of the book, "...a fascinating book, full of both warning and promise. It pours light onto the open unrecognized death traps of some forms of church culture and offers deep wisdom by which churches could reorientate their lives. Read this book, wince at its truths, and then be encouraged by its hope." Fr. Clavier currently serves as dean of residential training at St. Michael's College in the Diocese of Llandaff, Church of England.

Please remember St. Alban's in your estate planning - *"The Minister is ordered, from time to time, to advise the People, whilst they are in health, to make Wills arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, and, when of ability, to leave Bequests for religious and charitable uses."* (BCP, p. 320) ☩