

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Summer has been flying by. This has been the funnest summer for me in years because I have been doing things with the kids several days a week. This is to help Valerie who works at home as a freelance graphic designer. It is very difficult for her to focus and get work done in our microscopic home with the kids home from school all day, running around acting crazy. So they sometimes come to church with me to “help out”, or just run around and play. Other times we take day trips to museums, visit family, or go to other interesting places. And then sometimes we go swimming at a parishioner’s house. I am also teaching Evan to play guitar and drums this summer and a few other things as well. Since I still have all of my church work to do this means that I have to cut back on my own personal leisure activities. For example, my reading schedule and artistic schedules are greatly reduced, and I am not able to do as much work around the house. Well to me cutting back on those other activities so I can do more stuff with the kids is all worth it. One of the things that we realize as we age is how quickly time passes by. So I decided a long time ago that I would try not to grouse about the kids when they break something, interrupt, wake me up too early, hover around me when I am trying to read the Wall Street Journal, and etc. Why? Because time passes by so incredibly fast, and they are growing up so quickly, and one day I won’t feel that soft little tap on my back to wake me up in the morning. One day I won’t hear their silly jokes and funny comments. One day they will be grown up, and off living their own lives, perhaps far away. And one day I am going to miss all of that, and all of these precious times and unique moments, that we have shared together. Time is fleeting! So we must make the most of it with our families and friends, and of course in other areas. To me this speaks of gratitude. Understanding that life is a “shadow and a dream” (from *Song for Athene* by composer John Tavener) helps us better appreciate each moment that God gives to us. We should try to take time each day to stop and smell the proverbial flowers and appreciate the wonderful life that God has given to us. That doesn’t mean that life is always a bed of roses. Often it’s quite the opposite. But sometimes we look back even to those times... those times of angst and loneliness... with a poignant nostalgia and a certain sense of longing. So I exhort us all to cherish every moment of life. Give thanks to God for them, even the hard moments. Don’t take the seeming drudgery of day to day life for granted because one day it is going to end. Sooner or later God will call us to a new situation and stage in life complete with new sets of challenges and blessings. For now, enjoy the moment.

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

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UPCOMING PRAYER BOOK

HOLY DAYS:

Aug 15th – Assumption of the BVM

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Aug 24th – St. Bartholomew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 8th – Nativity of the BVM

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

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Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 14th – Holy Cross

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 20th - Ember Wednesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 20th - St. Matthew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 29th - St. Michael and All Angels

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

CHURCH HISTORY: *Religious Communities in the Anglican Churches – by the Very Rev'd J. Gordon Anderson*

One of the books I am reading this summer is “The Call of the Cloister” (1955) by Peter Anson. It is a history of religious communities in the Churches of the Anglican Communion. Anson, who is not only an excellent writer, (I’ve read several of his books... I highly recommend his work.), was a noted authority on this subject, as he was once a lay brother in the early Anglican Benedictine community known as Caldey. (Anson was also a well known artist whose books on church architecture, furnishings, and maritime art are still highly cherished today.)

When one thinks of monks, nuns, friars, hermits, and other people who live “the religious life” the Roman Catholic or perhaps Orthodox Churches of the east usually come to mind. The Anglican Church, and her daughter churches, along with the various ecclesial communities that came out of the Protestant Reformation, are typically thought to have rejected religious life completely. As the great Princeton historian of English Christianity, Horton Davies, commented in his magisterial five volume work “Worship and Theology in England”, after the Reformation the *family* came to be seen as the primary religious community of the Church.

Still, there was, at least in England, a constant “call to the cloister.” People were yet drawn to England’s monastic past. It was the Book of Common Prayer, Anson says, that helped preserved the foundations of Christian monastic prayer and kept the memory of the ancient communities alive. There is also, he adds, something fundamentally human about wishing to withdraw from the world, and live a life dedicated to prayer, worship, and work. That many other religions – Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. – all have religious community life in their histories indicates there is something about this way of life that appeals to man in his innermost being.

Anson begins by sketching out some very early attempts in the decades and centuries following the Reformation to reestablish religious houses. (Interestingly, even Henry VIII provided for the restoration of many of the houses he once destroyed, and they were indeed reestablished, only to be suppressed later under Elizabeth.) He goes on to describe how various Anglican divines – theologians, bishops – each in their own way began bringing various elements of monastic tradition back into the life of the Church. This begins as early as Bramhall and Hooker in the mid-sixteenth century. This includes the use of devotional books that brought back the seven canonical hours of prayer, the celebration of daily services (especially at Cambridge and Oxford), and the increased practice of confession, and communion. The

“Little Gidding” community established by Nicholas Ferrar around 1625 was perhaps the earliest post-Elizabethan “proto” religious community to be established on English soil.

It was not until the early to mid-19th century that serious and sustained efforts were made by various people such as the eminent Oxford theologian John Henry Newman, Frederick Faber (of “Faith of Our Fathers” fame), and the strange but visionary Brother Ignatius, to establish new communities. These men faced lots of persecution, as the Church of their day was suffused with a bitter anti-catholicism. Lay and ordained agitators failed to understand that monasticism was a tradition going back to the most ancient days of the undivided Church. They incorrectly thought that these men (and women) were trying to slip *Roman* Catholicism into the English Church through the back door. Invariably the earliest attempts at community ended in failure. Some simply collapsed while others converted *en masse* to the Roman Church. But each one made a contribution to the slow advancement of the reestablishment of religious life in the English Church.

They were very shortly to be vindicated, as new foundations were formed that survived and prospered, and in many cases are still around. Some of the more famous ones include the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (1865) founded in Oxford, the Order of Saint Paul (1889), the Community of the Resurrection (1892), the Society of the Sacred Mission (1894), the Benedictines of Nashdom (1914). Most of these early orders were modeled along Benedictine lines. But there were also a few communities modeled along Franciscan lines and ideals, such as the Society of the Divine Compassion (1894), and the Society of St. Francis (1936). Later some communities were even founded along Dominican and Carmelite lines! (Those are not covered in this book.)

Where the Anglican Communion was the religious orders went. So sister houses of these and other orders sprung up in Asia, Africa, and North America. Later on indigenous religious communities were founded in those places (such as the “Order of the Holy Cross” in America in 1884). Anson has a huge index of many of the religious communities founded between 1850 or so and 1950. Anglican religious did and continue to do, what orders have always done: pray, live in community, serve the poor, evangelize the people, teach, and worship, to name but a few activities. Each community has its own emphasis and “charism”. Sadly, in the 1960’s vocations to the religious life began falling drastically in both the Anglican and Roman Communions. So let us pray that the Holy Ghost will issue a new “call to cloister” very soon! ✠

CURRENT EVENTS: “*Religion and the Problem of Violence*” Part 2 – by The Rev’d Tyler Phass

Nowadays, Man is in need of some sort of salvation; this too is a belief shared by the major world religions. It is even present in the mind of the atheist, although it is considered a need for natural evolution and not spiritual enlightenment or healing. Therefore, the question that should be at hand is not whether or not man needs religion, but rather, “what is salvation and where is the true religion in which I can find it?”

According to some religions, salvation is the obliteration of the self. It is the giving up of individuality and personhood for the sake of being absorbed into the oneness of the universe. For others, it is simply the attainment of immortality. And yet for others it is freedom from the physical body and matter. Lastly, for some it is union with the God of theism. These are just a few of the various ways that major world religions define salvation, but which is true and how is one to know?

One approach that has become popular in our time is to give up the search for truth and instead confess Universalism (the belief that all men will be “saved” regardless of the religion one practices). This theory claims that all religions are equally true and that no matter what happens in one’s life, he will find eternal bliss on the other side of physical death. It does not take much time or effort to see that this is a foolish, inconsistent, and illogical ideology. Although it bears a different name and ethos from the “atheism of anti-religion,” it can be identified as being essentially the same thing. As Pope Leo XIII has said,

To hold, therefore, that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism, however it may differ from it in name. Men who really believe in the existence of God must, in order to be consistent with themselves and to avoid absurd conclusions, understand that differing modes of divine worship involving dissimilarity and conflict even on most important points cannot all be equally probable, equally good, and equally acceptable to God (Quoted from *Immortale Dei*).

As Christians we believe that salvation is freedom from sin and that this freedom can only be found in Jesus Christ. Our faith teaches that man is indeed infected with sin and, without the cure, he will destroy himself, those around him, and the entire world. Jesus has revealed himself as the Way for all men to be saved from the sin that makes our human nature sick. He accomplishes this for us by grafting us into his perfect human nature. He

heals us by making us partakers of his divine and sinless life. He invites us to be in communion with both Him (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) and all those who have entered into his divine life by spiritual regeneration.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace who will, at his second coming, save us from our violence. He is the Great Physician who will heal all those who call on his name. Although there are many religions that promise peace and actively pursue it, there is only one religion that is actually able to provide true peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7). It is in the Christian Church alone that man can find the peace that he is seeking. It is in the Christian religion alone that man can escape death and truly partake in the life of the One True God.

As Christians, we understand violence to be the result of sin, especially when referring to a violent act between two human persons that leads to the death of the other (Murder, a violation of the 7th Commandment given to the people of God on Mount Sinai; Exodus 20:1-17). We also recognize violence as being contrary to the love (charity) that we are called to express towards both God and neighbor. For a time, the people of God thought that they only had to express love towards their friends and neighbors (cf. Matthew 5:43). But as Our Lord has revealed to us, we must “...love [our] enemies, bless them that curse [us], do good to them that hate [us], and pray for them which despitefully use [us], and persecute [us]” (Matthew 5:44).

Because the Church understands violence to be a manifestation of sin, the Christian should also take great comfort in the knowledge that in God, there is no sin. Our greatest example for living a holy life, free from violence, is found in the life of Our Lord, who, for our sake, suffered a great deal of violence at the hands of sinful men. Our Lord was afflicted by the actions of violent men, *all in the name of religion*. This violence ultimately resulted in his execution by crucifixion. Even in light of all of the terrible and painful things that were done to Our Lord, he spent some of his very last breaths praying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Before he was violently arrested, beaten, and hung upon the cross, Jesus had preached his famous Sermon on the Mount. In this teaching, Jesus explicitly commanded man to forsake violence, especially those sinful actions related to revenge. Because of Our Lord’s Passion, we can be assured that when he gave this teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, he was not merely speaking hypothetically.

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When Jesus said that whenever someone "...shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," he truly meant it (Matthew 5:39). We know this because of the way Jesus "practiced what he preached." As the prophet Isaiah predicted, Our Lord "was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

It can be overwhelmingly depressing to be bombarded by violent news stories on a daily to weekly basis (or even hourly for those of us who use social-media on our smartphones). Having our minds perpetually fixed on the dark reality of sin, as it is manifested in violent acts between persons, can lead us to question the very goodness of God. It can lead us to question the value of religion. It can do damage to our very souls. This is not to say that we ought never face the ugly reality of the various manifestations of sin that confront us in this life, but rather, that we should not dwell unhealthily upon them. This is true for both the personal sins that we commit and the sins committed against us by others. God has given us the great Sacrament of Penance to provide us with the grace needed to have the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. Likewise, he has taught us to pray (Our Father), so

that we may daily forgive the sins of others and find comfort in his Kingdom that is to come.

As Saint Paul urged the Church of Colosse, we ought to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). Instead of dwelling upon our own sins or the sins of others, especially those related to violence, we ought to "put on...bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, [and] longsuffering" (Colossians 3:12). If we are constantly dwelling on the depressing state of the sinful world, it will be very difficult for us to "put off" the sins of "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, [and] filthy communication out of [our] mouth[s]" (Colossians 3:8). Therefore, we ought to pray for the world and convert those who would do us harm by following in Our Lord's example. If we forgive those who trespass against us, our charity will fall upon them like burning coals, leading them to repentance and freedom from sin through Christ (Romans 12:19-21).

"O Lord Jesus Christ, who satest unto thine Apostles, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; Regard not our sins, but the faith of thy Church; and grant to it that peace and unity which is according to thy will, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen" (BCP, 49). ✠

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

New Vestrymen

Due to health concerns vestryman Dora Nyborg (8:00) had to offer her resignation. Replacing her will be Edwin Okoye (10:00). Special thanks to Edwin for filling Dora's term. Please keep Dora in your prayers. Also, vestryman Chikwelu Umeh (10:00) and his family are relocating to Texas! So we will need a replacement for him. Please let Father Anderson know if you would like to serve on the vestry.

Going Away Receptions for Departing Parishioners

On Sunday, August 6th we will have a special cake at coffee hour in honor of Chikwelu, Adaeze, Nede, Kaima, and Esther Umeh as they move to Fort Hood, TX. Chikwelu has gotten a job with government and will be working at the military base. Then, on August 13th, we'll have a going away reception for Kiki Okoye and Mason Waldhauser. Kiki is going to college in the fall at Towson University, and Mason is going to seminary in the fall at Nashotah

House in Wisconsin). Please be sure to be here and bid them a fond farewell!

Outdoor Parish Work Day

We need help on Saturday morning from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to weed and prune trees around the church. The place is getting overgrown by the bushes, and there are some particularly naughty weeds that need to be dealt with. Lunch will be served after the work day ends. Please sign up in the parish hall. Thank you in advance!

Standing Notices:

"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) ✠