

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

A few weeks ago Mr. Waldhauser, Fr. Ellis, and I returned from diocesan synod. It was, as it always is, a wonderful time. One of the main highlights for me was the election of my longtime friend, our suffragan bishop, the Rev'd Chandler Holder Jones, SSC, to the position of bishop co-adjutor of the diocese. That is a fancy way of saying that he will automatically succeed Bishop Grundorf when the latter retires in a few years. Please pray for him and for a smooth transition for the diocese. Another highlight was having Fr. Nana Kwasi Ellis move forward in the process to be received into the diocese. He has just a few more things to make it official. Everyone loved meeting him. He made a fantastic impression as he always does. It looks like in a month or so he'll be moving to Pinellas Park, FL to take over St. Philip's Church, which has needed a priest for a long time. Please pray for a smooth, successful move for him and his family and for the parish, where his advent is no doubt seen as great answer to prayer. The final highlight was Mason Waldhauser successfully passing his oral canonical exams. This two hour exam with five learned priests can be quite an ordeal. He did fine, though, and maintained his calm throughout. He later met with the bishop and standing committee and was approved for ordination to the diaconate in the fall. Six months later or so will be his priestly ordination. In September he'll be back at Nashotah House to finish his Master of Divinity degree. (Ordination typically comes before graduation.) I am so thankful to be able to work with these fine men, as well as other fine, godly men over the years such as Fr. Tyler Phass when he was going through the process. Too many misguided people in other jurisdictions think being a priest is about "dressing up and showing up"... that all it's all about putting on a crazy costume, adopting a weird religious name, and hanging around a church. Sadly, for these disturbed people, fidelity to Christian doctrine and moral teaching usually comes second... if it is even there at all. Things are different in the Anglican Province of America, which is blessed with a steady supply of godly men who have heeded the Lord's call to Holy Orders. But we still need more! We need missionary, bi-vocational clergy to help start new parishes and revitalize old ones. Please pray for the Lord of the Harvest that he will send laborers into his harvest. (Matthew 9:38)

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

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Updates from the Church

UPCOMING SERVICES:

Aug 6th - Transfiguration

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

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 18th & 20th - Autumnal Ember Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 21st - St. Matthew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Oct 18th - St. Luke

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Oct 28th - Ss. Simon & Jude

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 1st - All Saints' Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 2nd - All Souls' Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

FOR ALL THE SAINTS: *The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary — An Anglican Perspective*

This month we celebrate a principal Marian feast day in the tradition of the Church and her liturgical year: the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which occurs on August 15th. In the Eastern Orthodox Churches it is called “The Dormition” or “The Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” Lamentably, this feast, like some of the other major Marian feasts of the undivided Church, is not found in the classical American Book of Common Prayer. (Though it is found in the 1929 Scottish Book of Common Prayer.) But having been informally celebrated for many years, using the liturgical forms of the American, Anglican, and English Missals, the feast became an official liturgical observance of the American Episcopal Church in 1963 when it was added to the book *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. From thence its observance has passed into the use of the Anglican Province of America and that of our sister jurisdictions.

On its most basic level the day commemorates the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary. By the 4th century the tradition was that the apostles were all with Mary when she died. After she died she revived and was then “assumed” —body and soul— into heaven. Eastern Christian iconography on the subject has the whole scene beautifully displayed. There are two characters in the Bible who were similarly “assumed” into heaven: Enoch in Genesis 5:21-24 and Elijah the Prophet in 2 Kings 2:1-11. So it is not out of the realm of possibility that God could or would do something like this. Nonetheless, because this event is not found in the Bible Archbishop Thomas Cranmer excluded it from the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549.

The ancient Church however took it for granted that it was a truly historical event because of the witness of Holy Tradition. That it is not found in scripture has no bearing on whether or not it actually happened. One thing is certain: there are no “relics” of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There couldn’t be because she was bodily assumed

into heaven. Given how the late Medieval Church, in her periods of spiritual decadence, came to traffic in the lucrative business of “relics” one would assume she would jump at the chance to buy and sell relics of St. Mary the Virgin, the greatest of saints. But she did not. Why? Because she could not. Mary had been assumed into heaven.

Scholastic theologians (the theologians of the great Medieval “schools” or universities) spilled a lot of ink trying to articulate the meaning and rationale of Mary’s assumption. One of their starting points was that Mary was “full of grace” (Luke 1:28) by which is understood that the benefits of Christ’s death and passion were applied to her ahead of time (either at the

Conception or at the Annunciation) and so she was free from the general curse of sin and its effects, namely death. Modern theologians point to Genesis 3:15 which tradition understands to look forward to Mary, whose “seed” (Jesus) will one day crush the head of the serpent. Because she had an intimate role in Jesus’ battle against Satan and his victory over him, so she must have participated in his victory over death. When we bear in mind the other archetypes of Mary found

or derived from the scriptures —Mary as the Mother of the Church, Mary as the Ark of the Covenant, etc.— it does not seem that far fetched to believe that her body was preserved from the usual human death and assumed into heaven.

But for Anglicans this ancient and venerable tradition is only a pious opinion. Because it is not explicitly taught in the scriptures we are free to believe whatever we want about the circumstances of Mary’s death (or “Falling Asleep”). Roman Catholics are not so free however, as in the mid-twentieth century Pope Pius XII elevated this ancient doctrine to level of “dogma.” This means that Roman Catholics are bound to believe this doctrine just as they do the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and other articles of the Creeds. ✠



LITURGY: *The Litanies of the Book of Common Prayer*

One of the most distinctive features of catholic liturgy is the litany. A litany is a supplicatory form of prayer (i.e. a prayer where we are *asking* God for something) that is composed in a call/response format, with a leader saying one thing and the people responding with a common refrain. Here is an example with which we are all familiar: “O GOD the Father, Creator of heaven and earth; *Have mercy upon us.* O God the Son, Redeemer of the world; *Have mercy upon us.* O God the Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful; *Have mercy upon us.* O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, one God; *Have mercy upon us.*” (BCP, p. 54)

Litanies are very effective ways to communicate an idea and pray, so much so that one occasionally sees examples of them in the secular world. (e.g. a big box appliance store in Florida that used to run almost non-stop infomercials on television used a “litany” format in their advertising: “Low prices; *Appliance Direct.* Huge selection; *Appliance Direct.* Same day delivery; *Appliance Direct.*” The owner would say the first part, and then his assistant would answer.)

Litanies can be services in and of themselves. Indeed on page vii of the Book of Common Prayer it says, “The Order for Holy Communion, the Order for Morning Prayer, the Order for Evening Prayer, *and the Litany* (emphasis added), as set forth in this Book, are the regular services appointed for Public Worship in this Church, and shall be used accordingly.” (See the the first rubric on page 54 too.) In ancient times litanies often preceded the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and eventually became part of it. But Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) essentially ended this practice when he reduced the use of litanies on non-festal days to the *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy upon us...) with which we are all so familiar. And whereas the Roman Rite came to dominate the liturgical tradition of the west it was only natural that the Book of Common Prayer would follow continue that tradition. (Incidentally the *Kyrie eleison*, which is part of the unchanging “ordinary” of the Mass is traditionally referred to as the “lesser litany.”)

The Book of Common Prayer contains three litanies. The one that we hear most often is simply

called “The Litany” or “General Supplication.” and is found on pp. 54-59. Composed by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1544, this is the oldest part of the Book of Common Prayer and has been altered very little from his original composition, which, though original, was rooted in ancient forms. In colonial days, before the American Church was established and priests were rare, the typical Sunday morning service was Morning Prayer, Litany, and Ante-Communion (the first part of the Holy Communion service). For the most part the Anglican tradition was for the Litany to be read every Wednesday and Friday! We however at Saint Alban’s sing the Litany rarely... at the very least twice a year: on the First Sunday in Lent and on Rogation Sunday. But sometimes we sing it more.

Going in order in the Prayer Book, the next litany to be found is the “Litany for the Dying” on pp.317-318. This was composed specifically for the 1928 American Book of Common Prayer, which means that it is not found in other Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion. It is essentially based on medieval English models. This litany is always said by the priest and family at the bed of a churchman who is dying. It is an absolutely beautiful and incredibly moving prayer that brings the whole Church together to pray for the one who is about to die.

The last litany in the Book of Common Prayer is the “Litany and Suffrages for Ordinations” found on pp. 560-562. This was also composed for our Prayer Book as an alternative to the official “Litany” which the Prayer Books says is to be sung at ordinations. (see the rubrics on pp. 530-531, p. 537, and p. 553) Now it has almost entirely supplanted the traditional Litany for those special events. There is no reason why this litany cannot be said on other days throughout the year, especially during the Ember Days where the Church prays for vocations to Holy Orders.

It is good to study and pray the litanies on our own from time to time so that we can become more familiar with this venerable and tremendous liturgy of Church. When we do we will find ourselves doing what our Christian forefathers did millennia ago, and what Christ’s one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church still does. ☩

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

Seminarian Update

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the warm welcome back to St. Alban's. It's been wonderful to reconnect and be with you again after the summer internship out west. Since I wrote you last, I went with Fr. Gordon and Fr. Ellis to the APA synod down in Orlando and had my oral exam and other interviews for ordination, and I passed and have been approved for ordination! This means that I will be made a deacon this fall. The diaconate lasts for six months to a year, so Lord willing, I will be priested next summer after I graduate.

It's really starting to sink in that I'm coming down the home stretch with this discernment process. For years now, I've been working towards ordination, and for this process to be complete, and for the APA to have discerned in me a vocation to priesthood, feels surreal. I'm excited to realize that I will actually be getting started in ordained ministry very soon.

Fr. Gordon has been a big help in all this. He sat in on my oral exam to observe and be there for moral support. This past week, he ran me through a "practice Mass," and talked through how to use the missal and do all the ceremonial of our service of Holy Communion. I was shocked at how much the priest is doing up there. He's praying silent prayer from the missal pretty much the whole way through; he's intentional about how he holds his hands and wear he looks and how he moves. It's a lot, and it was really fun to see.

And it's been nice being back with my family again. Just last night, we picked my brother up from the airport from his semester in Japan; so we're all back together now and will spend this week together at the beach. At the end of this month, I'll drive back to Nashotah, Wisconsin for my final year of seminary.

God has been making me increasingly thankful for the path that I'm on and for your role in it. I will let you know of my ordination date and whether that will be here in Baltimore or out at school. Thanks for everything, friends.

Best, Mason Waldhauser

St. Alban's Landscaping Committee

Saint Alban's needs landscaping help! We are looking for caring gardeners who have a vision or experience with maintaining a garden, *and* able-bodied people to trim, dig, weed, and generally do yard work, *and* anyone who wants to serve our parish. The plan is to meet on Saturdays periodically for an hour or an hour and half in the morning. This way we can make steady progress and still enjoy our other weekend activities.

Q: When does this start?

A: It has already started!

Q: If I sign up for this will I be expected to come to every work session?

A: Come when you can.

Q: I'm not strong, but I'd like to help. Is there a place for me?

A: YES. You may not be able to wield a shovel, but you may have an eye that will give others a better plan.

Q: How often will we meet?

A: We're not sure. We're thinking maybe 2 or 3 Saturdays a month; perhaps less.

Q: What about rakes, shovels, etc?

A: We'll get the word out on anything special that's needed for a session.

If you are interested contact Junior Warden, John Myers

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) ☩