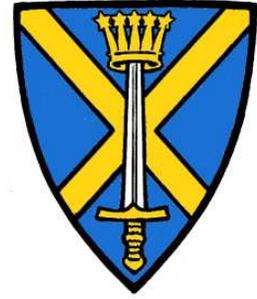


# The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

One of the many things I am thankful for is the generosity of the people of Saint Alban's. Your faithfulness in supporting the Lord's work is to be commended. Over these past few months and years you have given of your time, talent, and treasure to help support not only the daily operations of this parish, but two seminarians, CancerLife Net, and various diocesan fundraisers (e.g. the school for Dalit children in India, domestic missions, missions in Haiti, etc.) to name but a few. In addition there are many people who support the work of the church in ways we take for granted. Paper products for kitchen and restrooms are all given to the parish by parishioners, as are the supplies for coffee hour. Thank you for supporting your parish! I want to make sure, however, that everyone knows something very important. That is that we at Saint Alban's own our own property and assets. Those of you who came to us from the Episcopal Church may be aware of the so-called "Dennis Canon" of the Episcopal Church, which states that all parish church assets and property is held "in trust" for the "national" Episcopal Church. They developed that canon in the late 1970's to keep parishes from leaving the Church and taking their property with them. So when the continuing church was begun we enshrined in our canons the law that each parish owns its property and assets. This means that the bishop can't decide on a whim to "shut us down" and seize our assets, indeed as the Episcopal Bishop of Maryland did in the last few years to St. George's Church a few miles from here. All of that is to say you need not fear giving money and other assets to Saint Alban's and worrying about whether or not the bishop may close the church someday and everything be lost. The other thing related to this topic is the way parishes pledge to the diocese in the Anglican Province of America. In the APA each parish offers to the diocese what it can to help support the bishops and their work. Some small missions offer the minimum of \$500/year, while some large parishes in wealthy communities give over \$20,000/year. Most others are somewhere in the vast in between. (e.g. We have pledged \$3,600 for 2019.) Each parish pays in good faith what it can. In contrast to this, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland *tells* each parish what it *must* pay each year. This draconian "assessment" has some parishes in comparatively modest circumstances paying upwards of \$50,000/year. And needless to say if it does not cough of the dough the bishop will be on its back faster than one can say the word "episcopal." So don't be afraid to generously support YOUR church, Saint Alban's Anglican Church. We are not going anywhere, and no one can take anything from us. And no one can force us to give beyond what we are able. Of course we look forward to being around for many more generations (over 35 years and counting), and to grow so that we can give even more to support our diocese and other missions and ministries that are near and dear to us. Thank you again for your generous support of our beloved little country church!

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

July 2018

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UPCOMING SERVICES:

**Jul 4th - Independence Day**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Jul 25th - St. James**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Aug 6th - Transfiguration**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Aug 15th - Assumption of 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.

**Sep 19th & 22nd - Ember Days**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Sep 21st - St. Matthew**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Sep 29th - St. Michael**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Oct 18th - St. Luke**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Oct 29th - Ss. Simon & Jude**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

PARISH LIFE: *Are Your Church Facilities an Obstacle to Growth?* by Charles Arn

Check out the interior of any national chain store in your neighborhood (a grocery store, pharmacy, clothing store, restaurant, etc.). On average, retail businesses remodel their facilities every 4-7 years, and with good reason. There's something about "new": new additives to toothpaste, new vitamin potency in cereal, new models of cars, new versions of software. "New" attracts. By contrast, most churches renovate their facilities every 25-40 years, and some go even longer without an extreme home make-over. If your church building is over 15 years old, it is probably a growth-restricting obstacle. When it comes to church visitors, you don't have a second chance for a good first impression. And one of the first impressions visitors have of your church is its building; first the outside, then the inside. Visitors don't need to be professional architects to sense that the ceiling is too low, the halls too narrow, the windows outdated, or the color schemes from a different generation. As Marshall McLuhan once said, "the medium is the message." And your building is your medium. The design and architecture of your church has a much bigger influence on your visitors than it does on your regular attendees. Why? The longer a person is at your church, the less he or she is able to see the building through the eyes of a newcomer. Members don't notice the rain marks in the ceiling, the chipped paint on the wall, the hole in the carpet. And those things don't really matter to long-time attendees, because they are coming for the people, the relationships, the fellowship, the spiritual growth; not the facilities. But for visitors with none of these reasons to attend, other things shape their first impressions...and your building is one of them. Facilities also have an effect on a church's corporate self-esteem. The effect is similar to the way your house or apartment subtly influences your own self-esteem. If you live with junk in the backyard, unwashed dishes in the sink, dirty clothes on the floor, rooms in need of paint...it affects how you think of yourself, whether you realize it or not. And, with such an appearance, do you want company dropping in unannounced? Probably not. When you are expecting guests you probably pick up your clothes, clean the kitchen, and put on your house's best face. Why not have the same attitude about your church facility and the guests who are coming to visit God's house? While nice facilities won't cause your church to grow, poor facilities can prevent it from growing. What can be done about an outdated building? An outsider's perspective is quite valuable. Invite a friend or neighbor who has never been on your church campus to walk through the facility with you. The "visit" need not be on Sunday. First, drive by and around the church. Then park and walk toward, and

eventually into, the building. Ask the person(s) to "free-flow" about their impressions, sharing what catches their attention, what they like, what they don't like, what they aren't sure about. Either take notes or use a recorder to document their comments. Tell them not to worry about hurt feelings—you want their honest first impressions. Conduct this exercise at least three times with three different people. That way you don't end up putting too much stock into one person's opinions and taste. See if different people notice the same things. Finally, compile your notes into categories and review them. You don't need to make every suggested change, but you do need to know how visitors and newcomers see your facilities. A Christian architect recently told me that the more an interior elements of a church looks like those that surround people during the week (i.e., decor, restrooms, lights, paint, doors, classrooms), the more likely the facility will present a positive first impression. Conversely, the more out-of-date that facilities appear, the more negative are their first impressions. When a visitor enters a church building that is 50+ years old—and it looks it—he or she is subconsciously wondering: Is the message of this church as outdated as its building? Here's a starting checklist to evaluate your facilities. Grade each item on a 1-7 scale (1 = "poor" 7 = "excellent"). Perhaps have different people share in this exercise and then compare notes; it's a great conversation starter!

**Building:** Ease in finding the location ... First impressions from the outside ... First impressions of the inside upon entering ... Impressions after walking around. **Parking:** Appearance ... Adequacy of spaces ... Proximity to entrance. **Signs:** Directions from parking area to appropriate building entrance ... Where to get information ... Directions to the sanctuary/worship center ... Directions to the restrooms ... Directions to the nursery. **Nursery:** First impressions upon entering ... Confidence in security ... Confidence in nursery staff ... Impressions upon leaving nursery. **Sanctuary/Worship Center:** First impressions upon entering ... Visibility of platform... Sound/acoustics ... Ease in finding a seat ... Seat comfort ... Lighting. **Restrooms:** First impressions upon entering ... Adequate number to accommodate everyone in 15 minutes ... Cleanliness. **Classrooms:** First impressions upon entering ... Adequate furniture for age level ... Room decor.

The story of the paraplegic who was brought to Jesus (see Mark 2:1-5) presents us with several pointed questions: "Are our facilities keeping people from Jesus?" And, if so, "Are we willing to tear up our roof (and, perhaps other parts of our building) in order to let them be healed?" ❖ *(Reprinted from Christianity Today)*

THEOLOGY: *The Meaning in the Mass, by the Rev'd Canon James R. Daughtry (ed. Fr. Anderson) Part Two*

**The Second Stage of the Liturgy:** *(continued from last month's issue of The Centurion)* The next liturgical reading requires of us quite appropriately our deepest reverence and attention, for we now hear from the Gospel what Jesus did or said on the theme we are contemplating today. It is entirely appropriate that the utmost ceremony attend the presentation of the Gospel, as the Book is reverently and ceremoniously carried down the nave, among the congregation, signifying the bearing of the good news to the whole world. The deacon of the Mass reads or intones the Holy Writ.

At the finish of the Gospel we make our corporate affirmation of our beliefs in accepting the Word of God by reciting (or sometimes singing) together the Nicene Creed.

Now that we have heard from the experience of the people of the Old Testament, the writers in the Epistle and Gospel, and have confessed our belief in God the Holy Trinity, the preacher takes the theme of the prayers and readings and in his sermon explains and applies this theme to our contemporary lives. Thus ends the second stage of preparation for the Holy Communion.

**The Third Stage of the Liturgy:** We now prepare for the offering of the Body and Blood of Christ. This begins at the Offertory, where a brief verse of the Psalms or another scripture is read. The priest takes bread and wine from the acolyte and presents them to God by placing them on the altar in preparation for the Prayer of Consecration. They represent not only our physical offerings, but also our whole being, our intercessions, and the intentions of the Mass. The alms, which are sometimes mistakenly considered the synonym for offertory, are also offered as symbols of our labors and all that we have. After the priest announces the intentions of Mass, and he bids the prayers of the Church that God would accept her offering, he offers a solemn prayer "for the whole state of Christ's Church" where among other things we ask God to accept our alms (financial gifts) and oblations (bread and wine), and to "receive our prayers." At St. Alban's this prayer is immediately preceded by a prayer "proper" to that particular Mass, called the "secret" prayer.

Next follows the so-called "Communion Devotions." These consist of the Invitation to Confession, Confession, Absolution, and Comfortable Words. One should be in a state of grace when making his or her communion. This part of the Rite allows us to confess our sins and be forgiven before receiving so great a mystery as the Body and Blood of Christ. For as we approach the altar with our concerns, intentions, and offerings, we must remember our Lord's Admonition:

Matt: 5:23-24: "If you are offering your gift at the altar and then remember your brother has something against you, leave your gift before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Having then confessed our sins and received absolution we are now in harmony with God and our neighbor and are ready to offer the Holy Sacrifice.

**The Eucharistic Sacrifice - A Four-fold**

**Action:** Dom Gregory Dix has pointed out in "The Shape of the Liturgy" the four-fold action of the Eucharistic Sacrifice by excerpting from the liturgy itself the very phrase that contains the four actions: "For in the night in which he was betrayed He took bread (offertory) and when he had given thanks (Consecration) He brake it (Fraction) and gave it to His disciples (Holy Communion)."

Having already covered the **Offertory** we move on to the Consecration. The special "Prayer of **Consecration**" is preceded by a "preface" that is proper to that particular Mass. In the Eucharistic Prayer God receives and accepts our offering, because it is mystically joined with Jesus' one, full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice. God touches it, as it were, in blessing, and returns it all to us renewed and transfigured. The Bread and Wine are now the Body and Blood (and will, personality, soul, mind, the whole) of Christ. As his body had to be broken before He could be known and shared by all mankind in all places, for all time, so in the **Fraction**, the Bread is broken that we might know Him, share Him, and receive Him truly present, just as the two disciples in Emmaus and the Apostles on each first day of the week knew Him and had him present in the Breaking of the Bread.

As the faithful approach the altar for **Holy Communion** He comes to each and affects a common union with all. He is in us and we are in him.

The Offering has been made, accepted, and returned that we might not only share in this sacrifice but also share one Life.

We have now done what we came to do. In grateful humility we say brief prayers thanking God for this great opportunity and gift, receive his blessing, and wait to be bidden to go forth in the name of Christ.

As we begin with a personal private preparation, we end with a personal and private thanksgiving. We go forth, carrying the gift of Christ, prepared to manifest that common union with Christ and with each other in our day-to-day life throughout the week. ✠

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

### **Seminarian Update - Mr. Mason Waldhauser**

Dear Friends in Christ,

It has been such a blessing to be home and back at St. Alban's with you all this past month. Thank you for the opportunity to preach twice already, and for your warm input on the sermons. As you may have been able to tell from the direction I took those two passages, questions of identity, the inner self, and centering prayer have been on my mind lately. These considerations were sparked by my time last month at that retreat center out in Denver, where I spent my first week of the summer. I've been reading a lovely little book on these questions which has tied together much of what I read last semester about prayer. This author is making the case that our thoughts and emotions are the most immediate opportunity to practice surrender, which she considers the most fundamental spiritual act, and the expression of faith, hope, and love. That when we have thoughts which bring discontentment or anxiety or envy or anything, this is the chance to practice the prayer of *surrender*, letting go of them to re-center the self not in them, but in God. I don't know how this sounds to you, but to me, this has been a revolutionary realization, that I don't have to mix *me* up with the feelings or the thoughts which I experience: *I* lie underneath those experiences. This practice, especially concentrated in times of silent prayer, has born some fruit in my life, by making me feel more flexible and less concerned about outcomes and all.

Or perhaps I should just chalk that inner calm up to vacation time. I got a few days of work caddying at the golf course in before I hit the road with my sister and my aunt, uncle, and cousins for Ocean City. It's been an awesome time so far. I'll see you all when I'm back next Sunday. Until then,

In all Christian Love,  
Mason

### **Diocesan Synod - July 16th -20th**

Fr. Anderson and Mr. Waldhauser will be at diocesan synod in Charlotte, NC the week of July 16th. If there are any pastoral needs while they are away please call, text, or e-mail Fr. Anderson so he can make appropriate arrangements. At the synod Fr. David Haines will be consecrated as provincial missionary bishop, serving our people in Haiti and Ecuador. Please pray for Bishop-Elect Haines as he embarks on this new phase of his ordained ministry.

### **Charities and Mercy Ministries:**

Don't forget to bring in food and paper good items for some of the local charities that we support: Welcome One Emergency Shelter and Char-Hope Foundation. More information about these important ministries is available at the church and from Fr. Anderson.

### **2019 Pledge to the Diocese:**

On June 24th at their monthly meeting the vestry voted to increase the church's giving to the diocese by \$200 for 2019, making the total \$3,600 for the year.

### **2018 Yard Sale:**

Our yard sale will take place on Saturday, October 6th. You may begin bringing in appropriate and salable items to be sold. Please try to place your items on the appropriate table in the basement. Look for the placard to see what items belong on which tables. Remember that all items will be sold for \$0.50. Half of the proceeds will go to Cancer LifeNet of Harford County. Lest anyone think we won't make any money, or raise any money for charity, from this event, we will be asking people to pay whatever they can extra over and above the listed price since we're doing this raise money for a good cause. Most people will gladly do that. If you have any questions please see the Senior Warden, Kristi Sjöholm-Sierchio, or Fr. Anderson. Thank you for your support.

### **Invite Someone to Church:**

We do a great job of inviting people to church for special Sunday services and for special events throughout the year. But why wait till those times to invite people? We can invite people year round! Please remember to invite your friends and acquaintances to check out St. Alban's. We might be just church they're looking for. Yes, we are a small church, but we can always find room for a few more people!

### **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) ☩