

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Have you ever noticed how busy everyone is all of the time? Life goes by at a frantic pace and it seems like we have no time to do anything. It is ironic that this is the case - and becoming more the case - despite all of the electronic gadgets that we produce to save us time! They often end up taking up *more* of our time, because we have to learn, tweak, and maintain them. Well one of the things that is so refreshing about gathering together to worship God in his house each Sunday morning is that it gives us an opportunity to slow down and forget about our busy overloaded schedules for a while. When we come together to offer to God our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist our hearts and souls are turned to the eternal things that are truly meaningful and matter most in life. We temporarily leave behind the hectic schedules and pressing concerns that so often cloud our thinking and crush our spirit so that we may turn our entire *being* - our souls and bodies - to him who is our Lord and maker. This refreshes us like nothing else. For when we worship God we are most human and most natural, because in this act of communion we are engaged in the the very thing for which God made us. So, when we gather together each Sunday to worship God I would encourage all of us to try to think of it as life-giving, transcendent, and awesome. Think of Sunday morning - and *every* celebration of the sacred liturgy, and *every* moment we spend intentionally and entirely with God - as a time to spiritually rest and recharge, and as a time to reacquaint ourselves with God, and thank him for the blessings of this life, and as a time to offer ourselves to him anew. Think of it as a time *outside* of normal time! Let yourself be carried away by the gorgeous and profound words of the hymns, Psalms, and prayers. When we come to church let us try to leave our worldly cares and anxieties at the door. Don't worry about the roast cooking in the oven at home. It will be fine. Don't worry about the football game on TV later. The best team will win. Don't worry about the big meeting on Monday. God will get you through it. If we sing a hymn that has nine verses don't worry about it being "too long." Meditate on the verses instead of fretting about time. If the organ voluntary seems unduly long just mellow out and relax! Close your eyes, soak it in, and let the notes carry your soul into heaven. If the proper scripture readings are too long and confusing don't get frustrated and annoyed. Instead read along with them in the Prayer Book as they are being read aloud so as to *enter into them*. The point is, when we come to worship God *we should try to drop everything else so that we may focus entirely on him who made us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us, and offer him our prayers and thanksgiving*. When we do that we will find worship to be life-giving and spiritually transforming.

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

June 2015

IN THIS ISSUE:

Theology, p. 2

Hearts and Minds

Sacraments, p. 3

Instructions by Fr. Knowles

Parish News and Updates, p. 4

Check out the important notices!

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

June 10th - St. Barnabas

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

June 24th - St. John Baptist

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

June 29th - St. Peter

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

July 4th - Independence Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

July 25th - St. James

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

August 6th - Transfiguration

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

August 24th - St. Bartholomew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**September 16th, 18th, 19th -
Autumnal Ember Days**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

September 21st - St. Matthew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

September 29th - St. Michael

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

THEOLOGY: *Hearts and Minds*

Lately I have been struck by how often the service of Holy Communion refers to our thoughts, minds, and related concepts. Consider the following:

The Collect for Purity (BCP page 67): *“ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the **thoughts** of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord.”*

The Summary of the Law (BCP page 69): *“Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith. THOU shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy **mind**. (& etc.)”*

The General Confession (BCP page 75): *“ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By **thought**, word, and deed...” (& etc.)*

The Benediction (BCP, page 84): *THE peace of God, which passeth all **understanding**, keep your hearts and **minds** in the knowledge and love of God...” (& etc.)*

All of this is just a small sample of how the service of Holy Communion bids us to worship God with our minds and understanding. Not included this very brief list are many other references in the service to “remembrance” and other activities related to thinking and understanding.

Why does the Book of Common Prayer have all of this stuff about minds, thinking, understanding, and remembering in it? *Because it must be very important for our faith in Jesus Christ and our relationship with God!* He wants us to approach him not only with our hearts - or as we today might call it “our feelings” - but also with

our minds and understanding. In short, God wants us to *think* about our relationship with him, and use the faculty of our minds - our reason - in addition to that of our feelings/heart.

Our hearts and feelings are indeed a real part of who we are. But if we are honest with ourselves we must confess that they often mislead us. Our “heart” gives us great insight into many things, but it is not perfect in itself. As it says in Jeremiah 17:9, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* In other words, our heart and feelings must always be balanced by our thoughts and minds... our *reason*.

We need to *think* about our faith in God, and our relationship with him, and do things to grow in *knowledge* of God. Growing in *knowledge* of God, and thinking more about our faith - what we believe, why we believe it, etc. - can not only greatly help us increase in *love* for him, but also help us avoid the pitfalls of an excessively emotional and sentimental religiosity. While knowledge of God in and of itself does not automatically lead to love of God (if it did the devil would be the greatest lover of God there is) it does indeed assist the person saved by grace through faith in the path to eternal salvation. Our feelings and hearts can often lead us down the wrong spiritual path. Here’s an example:

We think that God is mad at us because of some awful sin we committed years ago. Even though we have confessed it to God - even in private, sacramental confession - we think that God still hates us or is mad at us, and that we are not forgiven. Our heart is telling us that the sin we committed was very bad - and it was. But somehow we get hung up on that, and can’t move on from that. This is our heart and feelings/emotions completely *taking over* and clouding

our thinking. That is a bad thing, and yet it is more common in the spiritual life than one might think. All of it however is *nothing more than our feelings and hearts getting in the way of our mind and intellect!* The Bible, and the Church assure us that when we confess our sins we are forgiven! Thus, we need to believe what *they* say and move on, and be wary of trusting our *feelings* too much.

This is just one practical example of how our thoughts and minds can balance our feelings and hearts, and other things (words, deeds, etc.) so that we might attain a true and accurate knowledge and understanding of ourselves and God.

The question for us is a simple one: what do we do to increase our knowledge of God? There are many things we can do to develop the faculty of our minds as it relates to the spiritual life. It goes without saying that we should avail ourselves of the sacraments in regular Sunday worship, and study the word of God throughout the week, and pray to him, and do good works. That much is certain. But we should also *explore* our faith through reading and study. The writings of the saints are excellent resources for exploring our faith in God and deepening it... one need only think of C.S. Lewis, St. Augustine, and others. Christian classics such as “The Imitation of Christ” (a’Kempis) and even modern ones such as “The Seven Storey Mountain” (Merton) are very useful in developing the spiritual *mind*. Also useful is attending the occasional Lenten study, adult forums, and bible study. People who come to these find them very helpful.

So let us strive to develop our spiritual minds, and make all of our thoughts captive to Jesus (2 Cor. 10:5). May God help us to not only worship him in our hearts, feelings, and emotions.. but also with our thoughts and minds. ☩

SACRAMENTS: *Brief Instructions on the Seven Sacraments by Archibald Campbell Knowles (1911)*

The Sacraments are not empty signs or mere forms, but are Holy Mysteries instituted of God to confer Grace and effect the purpose for which they are administered. There are generally accounted to be Seven Sacraments in all, two of them, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, sometimes being called the Greater Sacraments, or Sacraments of the Gospel, because they are “generally necessary to Salvation.”

Holy Baptism is the Sacrament of regeneration, making the recipient “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

At the Fall man lost his original righteousness and came under the dominion of sin, inclining to evil, meriting God’s wrath and punishment. Baptism remits original sin (or the penalty of the Fall), and in the case of an adult also absolves from all sins committed before Baptism, providing there is penitence.

Baptism is the “new birth unto righteousness,” and by it one receives Divine Grace and the “Character” of a Christian. Its supernatural gifts enable one to follow God’s commandments. Baptism is administered by prayer and the pouring on of water in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the sign of the Cross, sometimes being accompanied by other ceremonies.

It is known as “Christening” from the giving of the name, which should always be a reminder of our Christian profession, which is to follow Christ and to be made like unto Him. It is also the “Christian Covenant,” because the Sponsors or Godparents promise and vow in the name of the child: 1) to renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; 2) to believe all the articles of the Christian Faith; 3) to keep God’s holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of this life.

A child should be brought to be baptized as soon as possible after Birth. Care should be taken have proper Sponsors or Godparents. In the case of an adult, the rubric orders a preparation of prayer and fasting. It is expected that persons baptized shall be confirmed as soon as possible. An unbaptized person cannot love God except in a feeble way. An adult dying unbaptized cant enter the Kingdom of Heaven or see God, as Our Lord said, “Except ye are born of water and the Spirit, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” If however such an one’s life is otherwise good, he will not go to Hell but have “natural beatitude.”

Holy Communion, well called the *Blessed Sacrament*, is the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, and the Memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Under the forms of Bread and Wine we receive Our Lord Really and Objectively Present but after a Spiritual, Mystical, and Supernatural manner. By this Offering we commemorate and show forth the “One, Full, Perfect, and Sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the sins of the whole world,” made by Our Lord on the Cross. The Sacrifice of the Altar is one with the Sacrifice on the Cross, Christ being the Priest and Victim on Calvary and in the Eucharist.

It is the only true Sacrifice one that honors God as God, one that satisfies the holiest aspirations of the soul. In it we plead Our Lord’s Death and Passion, worship and adore Him Supernaturally Present, and receive Christ unto Everlasting Life.

In the Holy Communion, or Eucharistic Sacrifice, it is Christ Who offers, consecrates, and gives His Body and Blood unto Everlasting Life, through His Priest on earth presenting the same Sacrifice which in Heaven Christ offers or pleads in Glory before the Throne of God.

The very names of the Mass bring out its wonderful privilege for us: *Holy Eucharist*, that is, the Church’s Service of praise and thanksgiving; *Holy Mysteries*, that it is above our understanding; *Sacrifice of the Altar*, that it shows our Lord’s Death till He come again; *Holy Communion*, that we receive Our Lord in His Body and Blood; *Blessed Sacrament*, that it is the holiest of all Spiritual joys.

The Holy Eucharist being a Sacrifice as well as a Sacrament is offered both for the Living and the Dead. To pray that the departed may “rest in peace,” that “light perpetual may shine upon them” and that they may soon have their perfect consummation and bliss, is a custom ancient and Scriptural. To remember them in the Sacrifice of the Altar seems the most fitting way to fulfill this duty.

These are the first two of seven instructions on the sacraments by the Rev’d Archibald Campbell Knowles, D.D., who was once rector of St. Alban’s Church in Olney, PA. They are taken from his classic book on Anglican devotion “The Practice of Religion.” written in 1911. ✠

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

Diocesan Synod:

This year our annual synod will be held in Charlottesville, VA from July 28th-31st. The host parish is All Saints'. Fr. Anderson and Fr. Edelmann will be heading down along with our official delegate, Frannie Flatau. Anyone else who would like to attend is most welcome! You have to cover your own travel, room, and synod registration. If you'd like to join us let Fr. Anderson know and check out more details about the synod at www.anglicanprovince.org

Art Show:

Father Anderson will be having an exhibition of his paintings at the Liriodendron in Bel Air from July 12th - August 9th. The show will feature icons and large scale oil paintings of various biblical themes. The oil paintings will be the large ones on display at the church, but the icons will be almost all brand new. The Liriodendron Gallery is open on Sundays from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Please come out on the opening day and check out the work and spread the word!

New Music for Trinitytide:

During Trinity we will be transitioning to new musical settings for the Mass at our 10:00 a.m. service. The old "First Communion Service" (Merbecke) will carry us through from June - August. Most of us know this one, as we always sing it during Advent. *The only difference will be that we will be singing the "Gloria" that Merbecke actually wrote for the Mass... not the "Old Scottish Chant" that we've sung with it in the past.* (NOTE: Musical integrity is important. Just as no one would want to have a symphonic movement by a classical composer such as Mozart inserted into a symphony by a modern composer such as Mahler, so no one wants to listen to bits of one Mass mixed in with bits of another, because the styles clash. We used to - very oddly - sing the Merbecke *Agnus Dei* with the Willan Communion Service, and it didn't sound good. So that was finally stopped. Singing the right *Gloria* with the Merbecke Mass is the last step we need to take to have complete musical integrity! From September to Advent we will sing a new Mass setting, the so-called "Folk Mass" by British composer Martin Shaw. Rest assured, by "folk" is not meant Peter, Paul, and Mary and guitars. This is actually a very singable, yet very musically rich, setting used by many Anglo-Catholic parishes in America and England. Everyone will love it! (Note: It can be found in some hymnals where it is known as the "Eighth Communion Service.")

Giving to the Church and Diocese:

Two parishioners who recently passed away, Elizabeth "Mayo" Bryan and Suzanne Foster, each left bequests to the church. We thank them, and we bless God for their generosity. Anything that is left to the church upon death is most appreciated, and much needed, so we may continue to survive and prosper and fulfill the special mission and vocation that God has given to us. There are many ways to leave bequests to the church. The following ideas and suggestions were developed by our diocesan treasurer, D.J. Fulton, as a reminder to parishioners of our 1928 Book of Common Prayer admonishment "to remember the Church in your will." D.J. may be contacted if you have any questions on these at djfcpa@mindspring.com

- 1) Give appreciated property. You get a tax deduction for the full market value of the property and you do not pay any gain tax on the disposition of the property.
- 2) Donate a life insurance policy. Many people outgrow their need for life insurance as they age. So name the church as beneficiary. If continued premium payments are required by you, they are counted as charitable contributions.
- 3) Name your church or diocese as a beneficiary in your will.
- 4) Create a trust to the church or diocese. There are several different types of trusts, including:
 - 1) *Charitable Remainder Trust:* You fund a trust, you become the income beneficiary, the assets devolve to the church or diocese upon your death. You get an immediate tax deduction upon funding the trust. If this takes your charitable contributions for the year in which you make the donation above 50% of AGI limit, those excess contributions carry forward five years.
 - 2) *Charitable Lead Trust:* You fund a trust, and the church or diocese becomes income beneficiary. The assets devolve to your estate upon your death, and you get an immediate tax deduction upon funding the trust. It is the same as above for excess charitable contributions.
 - 3) *Charitable Gift Annuity:* You give assets to the church or diocese and the church or diocese agrees to pay you a percentage for life. ☩