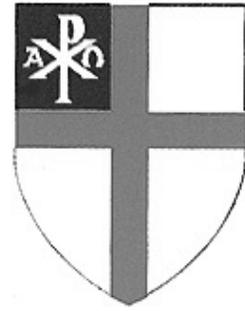


The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

In my office right by the door is a worn little plaque that shows a picture of the Grand Canyon. There is an inscription on it that says, "God's work takes time." It hung in my grandmother's room when she lived with us when I was a little boy. I used to love going into her bedroom and looking at it. After she died I took it from among her personal affects. It has hung in my office ever since. It not only reminds me of her. It also reminds me that "God's work takes time." The work of the ministry takes prayer and patience. God's Spirit works in people's hearts secretly and slowly in many cases. He is indeed working! But his work takes time. It takes time to become mature believers. many hours must be spent on our knees in prayer, studying the scriptures, praising God, and doing "all such good works" that God has prepared us to walk in. It takes time to overcome the sinful habits by the grace and power of God. It takes time to learn what God's will is for our lives. And on, and on. *God's work takes time!* This obviously does not always sit well with us in our instant-gratification culture. We want him to bring about some big, positive change in our lives or perhaps in someone else's life. But then we become discouraged when we don't see any "progress." When I was rector of Saint Francis Church in Blacksburg, Virginia, which was a church that had been declining for years, I was expecting to see a major positive changes immediately, including lots of new people. When that did not happen – we did make progress in many areas, but not as quickly or substantially as I wanted – I became discouraged. Then I remembered those words on the plaque in my office: "God's work takes time." I realized that the church did not dwindle down to twelve people overnight. It was a long, slow process. Likewise, revitalization of the parish would be a long, slow process as well. Since God called me here, that work of revitalization is still going on at Saint Francis (now called Saint Phillip's) under the able leadership of a new rector. I believe that God is calling Saint Alban's Church to bigger and better things. He is calling us to grow and expand, and for more people to join our fellowship so they might find the Lord Jesus Christ, and eternal salvation in him. He is calling us to grow in grace and holiness. God wants to work in our hearts and indeed he is, and he wants to work in our church, and again, indeed he is. *But his work takes time.* Let us not be discouraged if we do not see "instant results" from some program or special service. Let us instead faithfully continue to put our hands to the plow and do the work God has called us to do, and follow him where he leads us. Let us never give up on God in desperation. For as Saint Paul tells us, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6) May God bless and keep you.

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

June 2016

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Important News and Other Items

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

Jun 10th - St. Barnabas (eve)

Holy Communion at 12:00 p.m.

Jun 24th - St. John Baptist

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jun 29th - St. Peter

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

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 BVM

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 21st - St. Matthew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

CHURCH HISTORY: *The Henry VIII Divorce Controversy was Much More Nuanced Than Some Wish to Admit*

In a recent issue of the Witherspoon Institute's online journal, *The Public Discourse*, Dr. Chris Kaczor, a professor of philosophy at the (Roman Catholic) Loyola Marymount University, reviewed a book by John Witte, Jr. called *The Western Case for Monogamy Over Polygamy* (Cambridge, 2015). While the review was good overall insofar as it makes one want to read the book there was one little aside in it that was quite irksome. It is where Dr. Kaczor accuses Henry VIII of being a polygamist. He writes, "Henry VIII considered polygamy a way to solve his desire for an heir." Kaczor believes Henry was a polygamist because of the traditional Roman Catholic jibe that Henry VIII married Anne Boleyn while he was still married to Catherine of Aragon. But is Dr. Kaczor correct to reduce the entire Henry VIII affair to polygamy? Historians would say no.

First let us consider some background information. By the time of the Reformation the western Church had come to hold that marriages were indissoluble. An annulment is not a divorce. Rather, it is the a declaration that a *sacramental* marriage never existed in the first place because of some impediment (e.g. being forced into marriage, already being married, etc.). The only way one could remarry in the Church was if the previous spouse was dead, or, if still living, he or she had been granted an annulment. Henry VIII, who among other things was a brilliant amateur theologian, came to believe that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon should be annulled. Unfortunately for him, Pope Clement did not agree.

The Roman claim goes that Henry VIII was not granted an annulment of his first marriage by the pope because he had been granted a special dispensation (permission) to marry Catherine, his late brother's widow, in the first place. The pope, then, was just standing up for traditional marriage, godliness, the Bible, and orthodox Christian teaching. But, the legend continues, the evil sex-fiend king Henry would have none of that! So he got his own Archbishop, Thomas Cranmer, to illegally and illicitly issue an annulment so he could marry Anne Boleyn. He then proceeded to "start a new church" with himself as the head, all because the good, godly, pope would not give him what he wanted. That is the traditional, uncritical Roman Catholic bit on Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn. It may be filed in the same bin where information about the Loch Ness Monster, Bigfoot, and UFOs is kept, because its got about the same amount of legitimacy.

The reality, as David Holmes, a professor of religion at the College of William and Mary, points out in his excellent and highly acclaimed book *A Brief History of the Episcopal Church*, (Trinity Press, 1993) is that "To depict

Henry's desire for an annulment as stemming from lust, and to view (pope) Clement's failure to grant it as stemming from a higher righteousness, is to maim history." (p. 197) There were many other factors at play in that stage of world history that controversialists and their useful idiots willingly ignore. For as Holmes points out, "Succession to the throne, not passion for a woman was the principle problem." (p. 184)

As Holmes explains, royal marriages in that day and age were highly complex matters. Marriages were largely arranged – often by parents when the parties were still infants – for dynastic and political purposes. Love and sacramental integrity were usually afterthoughts. Because of this state of affairs the men and women in these marriages usually had lovers on the side, and everyone looked the other way. After the political things worked out the way everyone wanted these "marriages" were frequently annulled (due to some "newly found" impediment) by the relevant ecclesiastical authorities and everyone went on their way. Holmes writes that some people, knowing they would eventually face this moment, intentionally withheld impediments so as to make the inevitable annulment process easier!

Along these lines, a marriage was arranged between the teenage daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Catherine, to Arthur, the teenage heir to the English throne in order to bring the two kingdoms closer together. Arthur however was a sickly person and died shortly thereafter. Still desiring an alliance between the two kingdoms, the Spanish and English monarchs pressed the future Henry VIII to marry Catherine. Unfortunately for them no canon lawyer at the time would allow such a union, because of what they perceived to be a biblical injunction that a brother should not marry his brother's wife (Lev. 20:21). Thus a papal dispensation – an exemption from church law – was required. Many prominent theologians at the time, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and the pope himself, however, doubted that the pope had the authority to overrule what they thought was the clear teaching of the bible. But, under pressure from England and Spain, Pope Julius granted the dispensation in 1503.

While their marriage was happy, Henry began considering an annulment, perhaps as early as 1514 and eventually actively sought one. The reason for this was that he wanted to secure the English throne with a strong, male successor. Though he fathered six children by Catherine, only one survived (Mary Tudor... later known as "Bloody Mary"). He did have an illegitimate son through a mistress, but such a person would not have been allowed to inherit the throne. (*continued on page 4*)

THEOLOGY: *A Reflection on the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity by the Rt. Rev'd J.W.C. Wand*

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. (Collect for Trinity Sunday, Book of Common Prayer, page 186)

Does it really matter what a man believes? So long as he does the right things, can we justifiably probe into what goes on in his mind? The answer is that normally actions derive from thought, and unless the thoughts are right the actions are likely to be wrong.

This reflection is aroused in one's mind by the ancient collect for Trinity Sunday, which, in accord with the observance of the day, stresses the importance of a 'true faith.' Here it is evident that the word faith applies not merely to an attitude of mind but to a statement of accepted fact. It is not only trust in a person but right belief about him that is important. What is in view is not only personal allegiance but a creed.

It is fully recognized that you cannot *force* anyone to believe. The capacity to believe is a grace, a free gift of God. As Jesus himself taught, it is the special work of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction. All we can do is to open our minds, try to step outside the range of ingrained prejudice and inherited tradition and put ourselves in a receptive attitude. We can prepare the altar, spread the wood, and provide the offering, but the fire must fall from heaven.

The effect in this case is to enable us to accept as a revelation from God a truth which we should have found extremely difficult to believe if it had been presented merely by our own reason, namely the glory of the eternal Trinity. Only the other day a very glib speaker on television was saying how impossible the doctrine of three persons in one God seemed to him.

Yet if one can accept it, this teaching redounds to the glory of God more than another description of him could do. Of course, it is far from perfect and the truth remains a mystery. Granted that we can only describe God in human terms and that no human conception can be sufficient to express the majesty of the eternal Godhead, yet we must do the best we can with the only material we have.

We inevitably then use the highest category known to us, and that is personality. But if God is personal, we are conscious that he is certainly much more of a person than we are. That consciousness chimes in exactly with what we know of the teaching of Jesus, who described himself as

one with the Father, and also with the Spirit as being, so to speak, a replica of himself. We therefore express this threefold character of God in the doctrine of the Trinity.

That it is a mere adumbration of the ultimate truth everyone knows, but it is the best that can be done in human terms, or Jesus would certainly have gone one better. It means that God is, like ourselves, not a mere abstract ideal, but actually personal: only his personality is infinitely richer than our idea of a person. He can only be described as multi-personal, vaster and more sublime than anything of which the human mind can possibly conceive.

The paradox of the Christian faith is that while we thus acknowledge the Trinity we also worship the Unity. We insist that although there are three Persons they are not so separate as to make three Gods. We adhere to the belief in only one God, and agree with Saint Paul that his everlasting power and deity have been manifested through all ages to the eye of reason in the things he has made. The whole created universe reveals the majesty of its Creator and, like Isaiah in his vision, when we catch sight of no more than the skirts of his clothing, we can only bow down and adore. (Isaiah 6)

In this faith, issuing in such worship, we pray to be kept steadfast. We would not lose our feet in the shifting sands of theological fashion, though we would like to be open to every phase of new knowledge that can illuminate the character of God. But we would hold that whatever change may be found suitable in the expression of our faith, he himself remains the same, yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

We would wish to be like the old pupil of Saint John, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, in the middle of the second century. When brought before the magistrate and bidden to deny Christ, he said: 'Eighty and six years have I served him and he has done me no wrong. Shall I deny my King who saved me?'

It is proper that we should pray that we may be kept evermore steadfast in this faith. ☩

From "Reflections on the Collects" (Mowbrays, 1964) by J.W.C. Wand. John William Charles Wand (1885-1977) was an English Anglican bishop. He was Archbishop of Brisbane in Australia before returning to England to become the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and later, Bishop of London. He was the author of many theological and historical books.

(Continued from page 2)

Henry and his advisors were afraid that if Mary assumed the throne rebels and troublemakers would use her accession as an opportunity to incite violence, and that civil war would once again break out, which civil war – the “Wars of the Roses” between the Houses of Lancaster and York – his father had finally brought to end years earlier by (surprise, surprise) marrying a princess of the House of York. Civil war would most certainly endanger the young “House of Tudor” of which Henry was head. He was also afraid that if she was queen Mary would marry a foreign monarch, which would result in England being controlled by a foreign power. This did happen, Holmes writes, when Mary eventually assumed the throne. She married Phillip II of Spain and was goaded into going to war with France, Spain’s mortal enemy.

After many miscarriages, still births, and early deaths, the now forty-year old Catherine’s doctors were sure that she would not produce a male heir. Henry was advised to plan for an annulment. The king began to wonder if he had been cursed by God for marrying his late brother’s wife. So, being the scholarly king that he was, he immersed himself in the study of theology and canon law and came to the conclusion that the pope never had the authority to grant him a dispensation to marry Catherine. Holmes writes, “While the world viewed Henry as married, Henry believed that God viewed him as a bachelor.” (p. 185) That securing the throne and preserving the Tudor dynasty, and not sexual gratification, were Henry’s main concerns is clear. For if he were only interested in sex he would have just taken mistresses as most nobility of those days did.

In making his petition to Rome to give him an annulment Henry had some powerful weapons on his side. Beside the biblical and theological arguments summarized earlier, Henry had recently won favor with the pope by writing a theological defense of the seven sacraments against Martin Luther, the famed German reformer. Because of this the pope gave him the title “Defender of the Faith”, which British monarchs have kept ever since. Henry also was favored by the pope because he provided military support for him and his predecessors against the Holy Roman Emperor. Further, Henry was the king of one of Europe’s most powerful countries. The pope would fear that if he alienated Henry the country might be taken in to the ever-growing Protestant camp. And finally, Henry had strong legal precedents on his side. Popes had been handing out annulments like Halloween candy for years and years - even centuries - because of political expediency. One pope even granted his own illegitimate daughter an annulment so that she could marry into the royal house of Naples! Holmes lists many examples of the

freewheeling way Rome granted annulments (pp. 187-189) and how people with far weaker cases than Henry were given them. Everyone therefore expected Henry to be given his annulment. But the pope balked and would not grant it.

When the pope, known even in his own time as a serial procrastinator, got the paperwork he sat on it for several years. Pope Clement was reluctant in this case to overturn the ruling given regarding Catherine and Arthur by Julius II even though he recently overturned another one of Julius’ dispensations given to a person who married a close relative (the case of the Duke of Suffolk)! Why was the pope being so obstinate?

The reason was because of the political situation. Catherine of Aragon was no minor English aristocrat. She was the daughter of king and queen of Spain, and aunt to the Holy Roman Emperor. The pope knew that if he treated her badly there would be hell to pay with her powerful family. Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, who was the most powerful monarch in Europe at the time, had earlier sacked Rome (the worst sacking since the Fall of Rome) in response to Clement joining a military campaign against him and was now occupying the city. The poor pope was basically being held prisoner in one of his castles. Therefore there was simply no way that he would do *anything* that would make Charles V more angry. It was one thing to annul a marriage between some lesser nobles in a the corner of a far off country, but quite another to do so for people whose powerful relatives are holding you hostage and threatening to further destroy your city! So the pope stalled.

Henry finally grew impatient and gave up waiting for the pope. Thomas Cranmer, a Cambridge don, argued that Charles V’s occupation of Rome took away the freewill of the pope and so it was impossible for him to make a decision. Henry in the meantime sent emissaries to the major theological faculties of Europe, asking them to pronounce on his marriage to Catherine. They all agreed that it should have been annulled. Finally, in 1529, Henry decided that the pope had no more authority over the English Church than any other foreign bishop, so he declared himself head of the Church in England. Shortly thereafter, Cranmer, his new Archbishop of Canterbury, granted Henry an annulment so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. Holmes writes, “If Henry fails by the moral standards of later centuries, so do most popes of his time. It is indisputable that other Christians requested annulments in the 16th century and received them on far flimsier grounds than those presented by Henry. His plight was unique; few other petitioners before or since have been caught in such a web of complications.” (pp. 196-197) ❖