

# The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Last month the family and I went to Florida for Fr. Tyler Phass' ordination to the priesthood in Melbourne, and to visit St. Alban's former rector, my dear friend and mentor, Fr. Ray Unterburger, who has since died and gone home to be with the Lord. We based out of Vero Beach, a wealthy resort and retirement community about an hour south of Melbourne. We lived there twelve years ago as a newly married couple and when I was a newly ordained priest. I served as curate of St. Mark's Church, which is a beautiful stone church that looks like a small cathedral. I was blessed to work under a very good priest named Fr. Michael Ward who is still rector of the parish. After a few years we moved from Vero Beach to Blacksburg, Virginia where I became priest-in-charge of my own parish. But that's another story for another time. So, getting back to our recent trip, it was great to be back in Vero. While there we went to old haunts and met up with friends from the church and the community. I kept telling people that even though we'd been away from the town for ten years it still felt like home. Vero is just that way. During the trip I was overwhelmed with gratitude. It was amazing to go back to where we had been ten years earlier, and think about the good times, bad times, trials, and triumphs, and see how God took care of us the entire time. We were able to buy a nice little house that we fixed up and loved dearly, but that we later had to sell at a loss because of the crash of the housing market. We wondered if we'd ever recover from that financially. Valerie got pregnant a couple of times but they both sadly ended in miscarriages. So we wondered at one point if we'd ever be able to have kids. There were lots of other "nail biting" moments down there as well. (Someday I'll tell the story about the killer bee nest that we discovered in our backyard!) But God got us through each and every one of them. God, indeed, always gets his beloved children through the tough times. In fact, I cannot think a a single time in my life when God did not provide what I needed when I need it. We certainly cannot avoid trials and tribulations in this life, but we can be given strength to endure them and come out as better people in the end. I hope that each one of us takes time on a regular basis to be alone and to reflect on what God has done in our lives, and to consider how he's guided us, provided for us, used us for his glory and honor, taught us, loved us, and the like. So many people today are unhappy with life. Some folk indeed are so miserable that they lash out towards others in hatred and violence. Gratitude is one of the best medicines for anger and bitterness. But to have gratitude we need to stop what we're doing for a bit and look back... look back where we've been, what we've accomplished, how we've been blessed, and so on. The constant noise and distractions of our electronic age are certainly not conducive to recollection and reflection, but still we must try. Otherwise gratitude and thanksgiving will always elude us.

Faithfully, your priest,

*J. Gordon Anderson*

June 2018

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UPCOMING SERVICES:

**Jun 11th - St. Barnabas**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Jun 15th - Feria**

Requiem Mass at 10:00 a.m.

**Jun 29th - St. Peter**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Jul 2nd - Visitation of the BVM**

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 Day**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Sep 21st - St. Matthew**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

PARISH LIFE: *A History of Saint Alban's Building*

For the past few years we've spent time and money upgrading and restoring the exterior of our historic church building. We had the entrance ramp into the church redone, had the entire building professionally painting, did repairs to the slate roof and wood siding, fixed the gutters, enhanced our sign, and more. Ironically, all of that started when we began talking about doing work on the *inside* of the church. The rationale was: get the *outside* taken care of first, and *then* worry about the inside.

Now, as we begin to consider what renovations need to be done on the interior of the building it is worthwhile taking a look back at how our building and property came to be in the first place, and then how it developed and expanded over the years.

St. Alban's Church and building has an interesting history. We were formed by a number of parishioners from the now-defunct Prince of Peace Episcopal Church in Fallston. Prince of Peace was always a small church, and was a chapel of ease for St. John's Church in Kingsville. When the Episcopal Church adopted the 1979 Book of Common Prayer some parishioners from Prince of Peace asked the bishop if they continue using the 1928 Prayer Book. When he said "no" a number of people left and decided to form St. Alban's Church. They called the Rev'd Jack Cooper, a former rector of Prince of Peace, out of retirement to serve them.

For about a year they met in people's homes, and in other churches in the area. Eventually the church was given a piece of land by the Howard family, the owners of Olney Farm, so we could build our own church. An old two-room school house called Wilna School was generously donated to our fledgling church by the Seventh Day Adventist congregation across the street from our property. In 1981 the building was moved across the street and renovated for Anglican liturgy and worship. One of the nicest things about the church building is the sacristy—the area behind the altar. For such a small church we have a very nice and large sacristy. Other clergy who've toured the building always comment on how lucky we are to have such an excellent space as this.

For almost ten years St. Alban's Church consisted only of the school house building: the church, kitchen area, and restrooms. They did not even have a kitchen on the premises at the time because there was no parish hall where coffee hour or other events could be held.

Eventually it was decided that a parish hall was needed, so the area where we gather for coffee hour was constructed. A basement for storage was constructed with it. For some reason the contractor could not get the

addition on the same level as the church, and so a (dangerous) little ramp had to be installed to connect the addition with the old building. At this time our present kitchen was also added. What is one to make of this addition? While the church got a small fellowship space and some room for storage they also got an incredibly awkward entrance that is vexing and troublesome to this day. To this day there is confusion as to where one enters the church as the new addition didn't look like a main entrance. And apparently no one considered how strange and unappealing it would be to have to walk through a small dark hallway—and between an outdated kitchen and two inadequate restrooms—to get into the church itself.

Almost ten years later, under the leadership of Fr. Mark Clavier, another addition was added. This is the area of the parish hall where Sunday school is held, and where the office and vestry are located. For some reason a basement was added as well. That has always been a boondoggle. It's never been useful for anything except storage, and it often floods... so everything that is stored there gets ruined. The upstairs space is fine for dinners and for large group meetings (e.g. the quilt guild), but that's about it. And while the office is a nice size, but the vestry is just too small.

Since then no major renovations have happened to the church building. Back in 2007 or so Fr. Unterburger and the vestry had a excellent feasibility study done to see what we could do with our property. They are to be lauded for going to a *professional* design/build architect to have this done. The architect gave the church several options on expanding the building. All of them included adding an additional wing, reconfiguring the interior of the church and parish hall(s), and turning the basement into classroom space. Unfortunately this project went nowhere, as the economy tanked and a few families moved away.

So here we are today. The question is where do we go from here? It has been universally agreed upon for years that we need to expand our facilities. Poor and outdated facilities are a hinderance to growth. We need separate Sunday School space. We need a nursery. We need a room for the vestry to meet and for adult education programs. We need better restroom facilities. We need space to have a choir. We need to upgrade our kitchen. We need more room in the church for events such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. All of that (and more) is a given. But how do we do this? How are we to approach this? That is a question that we will be prayerfully exploring over the next few months. ☩

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

**Introduction:** For many worshippers, particularly those visitors from the Episcopal Church or from other faiths where the liturgies are altogether different, there may be confusion, lack of understanding, even bewilderment, as the Mass as celebrated in the Anglican tradition moves from beginning, through various stages, to the Consecration and Communion itself, and so on to the rightful ending of the ceremony.

The interpretation which follows is for those who have not learned the meaning of the Mass, as well as for Anglicans so accustomed to the liturgy they need to be reminded of, even re-educated in, the whys and wherefores of each part of the ceremony. We set forth here both the sequence and reasons for each logical step in celebration. There is not a wayward, or false step. Each word, gesture, and tone in the Mass has a meaning rooted in the well-trying earth of tradition.

The liturgy is not merely word and gesture, that is, rite and ceremony. In its fullest expression all the human senses are used. The colors of the vestments convey to us the significance and mood of each church season or special event, such as white for joyous festivals, red for the blood of the martyrs and the fire of the Holy Ghost. The bells not only make a beautiful sound but also draw our attention to significant words and actions. Incense provides a pleasant aroma in addition to being an offering to God completely expended with each use, and symbolizing to us his all-pervading presence. All of the outward and visible manifestations of the Mass signify deep truths of the invisible and spiritual.

**Preparation:** To participate wholly and reverently in the liturgy of the Mass requires of each person, before the corporate communion, and individual and private preparation. If you were an invited guest to someone's house, you would not deliberately have a full meal beforehand; nor would you go as a guest with anything but goodwill in your heart towards your hosts. Though the analogy may be a simple one, the comparison is just. You prepare yourself physically by some degree of fasting before attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion. You prepare yourself spiritually by arriving well in advance to have time to make a self-examination of your spiritual health and readiness to receive Holy Communion, and by prayer. You may already have made your initial preparation at home. Nonetheless, it is incumbent that at church we briefly repeat that private preparation.

**The Liturgy Begins:** As the choir and clergy enter at the signal of a bell, the congregation rises to pay respect to the celebrant and all who assist at the liturgy. We have now entered upon the phase of corporate

preparation for the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. This whole chapter, or section, begins with the entrance hymn and ends with the Kiss of Peace, which will be described a little later on.

Here, then, are the steps or phases that lead us through this communal preparation. The celebrant begins, most fittingly, with a brief greeting of praise to Almighty God, in which he acknowledges for us our sinfulness and his omniscience and his loving care for us. A brief portion of the Psalms called the *Introit* is read responsively. The Mass is often named for the Introit (e.g. "Gaudete" Sunday — the 3rd Sunday in Advent). Next follows the *Summary of the Law* which reminds us of our duty to love God with our whole being, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Knowing that we fail in both of those, we sing or say the *Kyrie*, wherein we ask God for mercy. Then (except in Advent, Pre-Lent, and Lent) follows the *Gloria*. Thankful that we are forgiven in Jesus Christ, we burst into song singing praise and glory our loving God and Father. When the Gloria is concluded the *Collect* of the day is read or sung. This prayer "collects" the thoughts and aspirations of God's people. It is both a prayer and a statement of our corporate intention, and it sets the tone for that celebration of the Mass. There is almost always in the wording of the address to God expression of praise for His mercy and lovingkindness towards us.

**The Second Stage of the Liturgy:** Having set the theme of the day's Mass, we expound appropriate passages from biblical literature to illustrate our day's concerns. The first liturgical reading is called the *Epistle* because it almost always is taken from one of the epistles (letters) of the New Testament. Occasionally Old Testament passages which are not, strictly speaking, are read here, and in that case the Prayer Book introduces them as "For the Epistle." (e.g. Ash Wednesday, where "that which is for the Epistle" is a reading from the Prophet Joel.)

The next liturgical reading is the *Gradual and Alleluia*, or in certain seasons of the Church Year, the *Tract*. These are almost always passages from the Psalter. On rare Sundays throughout the year, such as Easter Day and Pentecost, and for certain services such as a Requiem Mass there is a special reading called the *Sequence* that is appointed to be read or sung. If one of these happens to be appointed we always sing it as the "Gradual Hymn."

Next month we will continue with our look at the Meaning in the Mass. ✠

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

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am writing to you halfway through a spiritual retreat I am taking this week in Denver, Colorado. I am staying at a Jesuit retreat center and using this time to process this past year of seminary and get a sense of direction for what's next in my prayer life. This place has been awesome! The grounds are absolutely stunning, the weather is very comfortable, and the retreat house is quite homey. I love my retreat director, and we have been talking mainly about trust in God for his plan, rather than trying to make things happen on my own in the spiritual life.

Today I finished reading a biography of a certain Fr. Bede Griffiths and thinking about the transcendence of God beyond our ability to understand him, and how he simply calls us to love and trust him. I have also been realizing the importance of centering prayer in moving beyond our personalities and habits and limited views and approaches to life, to the place of the Spirit and union with God. My director and I are working through passages in the Gospel of John together. Yesterday was chapter 13, and today is 14. Paying attention particularly to the themes of Christ's apparent absence and yet his spiritual presence with us. I love the vibe that I get from these Jesuits here and from their spirituality. Their spirituality is very gentle and reassuring, and not harsh or strict in any way.

It was a really good school year. We just had commencement this past week, which was very bitter sweet. Each of the graduates had a very strong presence here in the community, and I'm really going to miss them, and especially Fabien, who was the head sacristan, and oversaw my work. We had a lot of alumni on campus, and it was fun to hear from them what the school used to be like, and of the days when seating in the refectory was assigned by class, and a hundred student were packed in on campus. The school's new addition to the faculty was there, Dr. Hans Boersma, a big name in theology today, and he and I played ping pong together on Friday night.

I think finals went really well, though I haven't gotten my grades back yet. Feeling very grateful to be a student at Nashotah. Excited to see you all next week when I return home.

In all Christian Love,  
Mason

### **Clergy Update - Fr. Tyler Phass**

Thank you for your generous support of our former seminarian and curate, Fr. Tyler Phass. Through your generosity we raised over \$800 for his priestly ordination fund. Because of the kindness of some parishioners Valerie and the kids and I were able to attend his ordination by Bishop Grundorf to the priesthood at St. Paul's Church in Melbourne, Florida on May 26th. The rite of ordination, with all of its amazing history and symbolism, is always a marvelous liturgy. I was honored to present him for ordination and chant the Litany for Ordinations during the service. Several diocesan clergy from the Florida deaneries were also present. After the service a glorious reception was held in the parish hall. We stayed on the next day, Trinity Sunday, for his first Mass. He did a fine job as one expect. There is an unbelievable amount of details and nuances that one must know when celebrating the sacred mysteries. He also preached a great sermon on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. With the sudden passing of St. Paul's rector, Fr. Unterburger, Fr. Phass is in a difficult position, so please keep him and the family in your prayers. Thankfully, he has the support of nearby clergy and the bishop himself, all of whom have decades of pastoral experience. He is also, in my opinion, mature beyond his years, and already, at his young age, has a lot of pastoral experience from several different parishes. But we still need to pray that God would give him guidance and strength as he transitions from curate to interim-rector of the church. May God richly bless Fr. Tyler, Holly, Solomè, and Naomi, and the people of St. Paul's Church in Melbourne, Florida.

### **Yard Sale - Saturday, October 6th**

You may now bring in items for our 50/50 yard sale scheduled for October 6th. *Everything will be sold for \$0.50* so please bear that in mind in terms of what you bring in. Half of the proceeds will go to Cancer LifeNet.

### **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) ☩