

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

In the Fall 2013 issue of the Towson University alumni magazine there is a fascinating article about an experiment conducted by Andrew Reiner, a lecturer in the English department. He asked his students to spend somewhere in the amount of 24 hours disconnected from social media and electronic gadgets and to eat two meals in public entirely by themselves with no pens and paper, books, and (again) no social media or electronic devices. The students were surprised at how spending time in silence and solitude - even for such a short amount of time - opened them up to new ideas and made them look at themselves and the world in a deeper, more thoughtful way. One of the lessons learned was that having social media, gadgets, and entertainment do not necessarily make for more meaningful lives. The full essay on experiment, as well as discoveries made by the student, may be read online at <http://magazine.towson.edu>. This article made me think about how much our lives may be influenced for ill by an unfettered use of technology. It can make us less human. Today man is the equivalent of the "Terminator" from the old Arnold Schwarzenegger movies: he looks human on the outside, but on the inside he is a robot. We become so used to interacting with machines that we become one ourself and view - *and treat* - others that way as well... not as humans, but as objects... as machines to be taken advantage of and used. But the Bible teaches that man is made in God's image and likeness, and that each person is unique and valuable in God's eyes. More important, we were created to be in fellowship and communion with God - to walk with him in the garden and be in a relationship with him through his Son, Jesus Christ. In this alone we find true and lasting fulfillment and happiness. But it is precisely the constant stream of communication and busyness - of being "plugged in" - that can become an obstacle to finding intimacy with God and that can ruin our relationship with others. So it is a good practice to limit our use of social media and electronic gadgetry and other stimuli and take time each week to be alone and quiet, and so we can commune with God and spend time in introspection and recollection. Even driving to and fro without the radio on can be helpful in encouraging the development and growth of the interior life. It is often in total stillness and quietness that we can really hear God speak to us. Want more intimacy with God? Let's start by turning off some of the media and computer stuff and opening our hearts to him.

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

NOVEMBER 2013

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UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

November 1st - All Saints

Holy Communion @ 11:00 a.m.

November 28th - Thanksgiving Day

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

November 30th - St. Andrew

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

December 18th & 20th Ember Days

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

December 21st - St. Thomas

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

December 24th - Christmas Eve

Holy Communion @ 6:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m.

December 25th - Christmas Day

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

THEOLOGY: *What is the Holy Eucharist?*

If we want to learn in a nutshell what the Church teaches about the Holy Eucharist one of the best places to begin is by reading the Prayer of Consecration on pages 80-81 in Book of Common Prayer, because in our tradition we abide by the maxim *lex orandi, lex credendi* - or, *the law of prayer is the law of belief*. Or put another way: what we *pray* is what we *believe*.

So what do we believe about the Holy Eucharist? In studying the prayer two very important aspects of it immediately jump out at us. It is the Body and Blood of Christ *given for us*, yet at the same time it is our *sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving*.

The Church - and St. Alban's parish in particular - has done a very good job over the years of teaching the so-called "Real Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist. This doctrine teaches that the bread and wine, by the power of Jesus Christ the great high priest, and through the instrumentality of the ministerial priesthood of the Church, *become* the sacramental Body and Blood of Jesus, so that when we receive the consecrated bread and wine we are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ himself.

Note that in the Anglican tradition we do seek to explain how this change takes place. This is in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church which teaches the dogma of *Transubstantiation*, which is an attempt to explain in the language of Aristotle the mechanics of how the mystical change takes place, or *how* the Real Presence of Christ comes about.

While no one really questions whether or not in the bread and wine of Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of Christ there remain many who do not understand the *sacrificial nature* of the Holy Eucharist. The Body and Blood of Jesus is not only something that we *receive* for the spiritual strengthening of our souls, it is also, at the same time, something that we *offer to God*.

While we see this throughout the Prayer of Consecration, such as in the phrase at the top of page 81 "our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," we see it perhaps most vividly in the section of it marked *The Oblation* at the bottom of page 80. In the Holy Eucharist we plead the Body and Blood of Christ to God the Father for the atonement of our

sins. This is done in union with Christ, our great high priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. The Holy Eucharist is our sacramental participation in the eternal oblation of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father, so in that sense the Holy Eucharist is sacrificial, and it is appropriate to speak of it as the "Sacrifice of the Mass." (Note that the Article XXXI of the Articles of Religion condemn "sacrifices of Masses" [plural] *not* the concept of the sacrifice of the Mass [singular].)

The reason why it is important to reflect on this dual nature of the Holy Eucharist - that it is something we *receive* as well as something that we *offer* is because it is all too easy for us to forget that we don't come to church only to *receive* Christ, but also to *offer* him our prayers and thanksgiving. We do this - both of these, actually - most effectually and perfectly in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is sacrifice and offering of the Church.

When we absent ourselves from worship not only do we not receive Jesus, or have that deep spiritual communion with him, we also do not render him thanks and praise for all that he has done for us. Rather, we act like spoiled, entitled kids who can't even bother to say thanks to God. Refusing to say thanks to God is dangerous because it makes us spiritually impoverished people.

We at St. Alban's need to rediscover the sacrificial nature of the Holy Communion. Let us take a look at our lives. We no doubt have much for which to give thanks: good health, homes, family, jobs, spiritual blessings and salvation, etc. Only fools think they have gotten these blessings by their own strength. The reality is that all blessings come from God. (I Chron. xxix.14)

The primary way to offer God thanks for these and all of his blessings is by joining in each week with the mystical body of Jesus - the Church - of which we are part to offer to God the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament of the altar. Conversely, the way to show God that we take him and his blessings lightly, and that he means little to nothing to us is to consistently absent ourselves from worship for no good reason. But may that not be the case with us. Rather, let us be truly thankful people. ✠

PARISH NEWS: *Mark your calendars for these important events*

Welcome Father Don

Edelmann: Hopefully everyone has gotten a chance to meet Fr. Edelemann, who attends the 10:00 a.m. service. Father has recently relocated to this area from North Carolina to live with his daughter and son-in-law and their family. He has been a priest for well over 35 years and has ministered all over the country. In addition to his priestly ministry Father served in the Marine Corps. Welcome To St. Alban's Church, Father Edelmann!

Annual Parish Meeting, Sunday November 17th immediately after the 10:00

a.m. service: Join us after refreshments for our annual meeting. At the meeting we will be electing three new vestrymen to replace out going vestrymen who are rotating off of the vestry and/or moving away. We will hear about news from this past year and see where we have been and gaze into the future to see what's ahead and where we are going. Please plan to stay on at church, or if you go the 8 a.m. service return, for this brief but important annual meeting! *Note: the vestry will meet immediately after this meeting.*

Nominees for vestry: Our nominees for the vestry this year are Daniel Kelly, Tom Dixon, and Karen Novakoski. They will be replacing Bob Marshall, Chikwelu Umeh, and Roy Siegel who are rotating off or, in Roy's case, moving away. We thank these men for their faithful service over the years and hope that they enjoy a

well-deserved break from the vestry. As for the nominees, Dan has been a member of St. Alban's for many years but has never served on the vestry. He faithfully attends church - two services - each Sunday! He serves as lector at Morning Prayer Sundays at 9:30 a.m. and then often serves variously as lector, chalice bearer, crucifer, and thurifer at the 10 a.m. service. Dan also attends Holy Day services and weekday Christian Faith classes from time to time. He recently retired from teaching English in the Baltimore City school system. In his retirement he does some teaching at various community colleges. He is married to Susan. The other nominee is Tom Dixon Tom is relatively new to the parish. He works for NASA and faithfully attends Sunday services as well as our Tuesday Evening Prayer service and Christian Faith class. Soon he will be serving at the altar. In addition to his interest in theology and church history he is very interested in local history. Tom is married to Beth, and they have three kids, Andrew, Holly (a member of St. Alban's), and Sarah. Karen Novakoski needs no introduction. She has been a pillar of the parish for many years and has recently served as assistant treasurer. She will be nominated to complete Roy Siegel's term on the vestry. As always nominations for the vestry can be made from the floor on the day of the meeting as well. For information on who is eligible to vote please see the parish bylaws which are posted on our website.

Liturgical Vesture Update:

This year we will begin using the color blue during the Advent season, as the parish was recently given a gorgeous set of silk damask blue vestments. The use of blue during the Advent season in the English tradition goes back to the Medieval "sarum" use. This was the liturgy that was used at Salisbury Cathedral in England. As we do not yet have a blue frontal or pulpit fall, we will use white, which is an acceptable alternative. But should anyone wish to donate money towards a blue frontal or pulpit fall please let Father Anderson know. We are also still trying to raise money towards our rose set. We are, at this point, nearing the halfway mark. We need about \$1,500 more for the seven piece set (pulpit fall, altar frontal, chasuble, maniple, stole, burse, and veil). Rose vestments are worn on the the third Sunday in Advent and the fourth Sunday in Lent. Like any other appointment vestments may be given as memorials.

Quote of the month: "To buy books would be a good thing if we could also buy the time to read them; as it is, the mere act of purchasing them is often mistaken for the assimilation and mastering of their contents." Schopenhauer, 'On Reading and Books', *Parerga and Paralipomena*, 1851.

Rowan Williams to speak in Baltimore: On April 3, 2014 the Ecumenical Institute of Theology
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at St. Mary's Seminary & University will be hosting the former Archbishop of Canterbury and current Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Lord Williams will be delivering the 2014 Dunning Lecture. He is the author of more than two dozen books on subjects ranging from patristic history and systematic theology to Teresa of Avila, C.S. Lewis, and Dostoevsky. The lecture is free, but you must arrive early to get a seat!

New Tuesday Night Series on the Bible Beginning in Advent:

This Advent season we will be meeting at the Tillinghast and Dixon homes on Tuesday evenings to watch a DVD series on the Bible produced by Focus on the Family. We will have Evening Prayer and "BYO" dinner as usual and then watch the DVD series. More details to come in the

bulletin and at announcement time during Sunday services, but please plan on attending!

Join us for our Thursday Morning Bible Study: Every Thursday at 11:30 a.m. we meet at the church for Morning Prayer followed by a Bible study on the scripture passages that we read. This sort of study accomplishes numerous things: 1) We learn how to pray the Daily Office of the Church, and how to use the Book of Common Prayer as part of our rule of life. 2) We study a focused passage of scripture but in the larger context of the book in which it is found. So in reading about the Prophet Elijah and King Ahab, we not only get to study that story in depth, but also get to see it in its larger context in the Book of Kings. 3) We bounce around the scriptures, thus getting a greater familiarity with the Bible as a whole and how the different books relate to each other. Thus far the response to the newly

structured Bible study has been very positive. Please come out every Thursday for this special time to grow in knowledge and love of God and in the faith and discipline of the Church.

Remember that we need to increase participation in these weekday events and our attendance at Sunday services. Spotty attendance on Sundays and little to no participation in weekday services and activities, if it continues, will eventually spell the end of our parish!

Please remember St. Alban's in your estate planning - "*The Minister is ordered, from time to time, to advise the People, whilst they are in health, to make Wills arranging for the disposal of the their temporal goods, and, when of ability, to leave Bequests for religious and charitable uses.*" (BCP, p. 320) ☩

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HUMOR: *The Anglo-Catholic Alphabet*

A is for Angels flying o'erhead,
 B is for Biretta worn on priest's head;
 C is for Chasuble always at mass,
 D is for Deacon sometimes at mass;
 E is for Evensong we pray at night,
 F is for Fasting to make the soul bright;
 G is for Gremial keeping a lap clean,
 H is for High an expression mean;
 I is for Incense which reeks on our clothes,
 J is for Jingle Bells, for ear not for nose;
 K is for Kalendar spelt as in Latin,
 L is for Lowder in sanctity not lacking;
 M is for Mary, the Queen of May,

N is for Nuns, who bring joy or dismay;
 O is for antiphons said in Advent,
 P is for Penance, sins to circumvent;
 Q is for Quires and places where they sing,
 R is for Ritualism, just part of the thing;
 S is for Subdeacon, the third of the three,
 T is for Thurible, whose smoke we can see;
 U is for Use, Western not English,
 V is for Vestments of dress the top finish;
 W is for Walsingham, the pilgrim's goal,
 X is for the Sacred Monogram, followed by Rho;
 Y is for Year's Mind, we pray for our dead,
 Z is for Zuchetto, in purple not red. ☩