

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. October brings with it not only a change of weather to the area but also a couple of significant changes to our parish. One regards the building, the other some longtime parishioners. First, following the parish yard sale, the basement underneath the parish hall was completely emptied of contents, and locked and sealed shut. The reason for this is so we may be in compliance with code and, Lord willing, get our long awaited certificate of occupancy for the parish hall. Because there is no outside entrance to the basement we are not permitted to store anything in it. Junior warden, Rich Burt, is already in touch with the proper officials to have them come and inspect the space and find out what remains for us to do to get our certificate. Once we get the certificate, we will be aggressively pursuing a modest, but significant, interior renovation of the nave to accommodate up to 50 more at each service. Note that the expansion will be such that the simple beauty and charm of our parish will not only be completely preserved but also enhanced. Incorporated into the new design will be the gorgeous marble baptismal font from our predecessor parish, Prince of Peace Episcopal Church, which we recently acquired through the generosity of some friends. There will also be space for the choir, and the organ will be relocated to allow for more room in the sanctuary. I hope to get an architectural rendering of what the space will look like once we complete these renovations. Please pray to our Lord Jesus that he would guide us and bless us in this process. The other big change is that longtime members, Roy and Beth Siegel, are moving to South Carolina! It is certainly the understatement of the year to say that they will be missed. They have given *generously and tirelessly* of their time, talent, and treasure over the years, and touched many hearts and lives with their love for God. Thanks be to God, they will still be in town from time to time, as their children and grandchildren are here, so we won't be seeing the last of them forever. Their SC and local addresses and contact information will be in the directory to help us stay in touch. But we will sorely miss their regular presence here. That said, let us all rejoice with them and glorify God for his hand of blessing upon them, and that they are able to move to their idyllic new home on the beach and reap the fruit of their labor. Their last Sunday is October 13th. Please come and wish them well at the 8:00 a.m. service!

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

OCTOBER 2013

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Mark your calendar for these important upcoming events.

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

October 18th - St. Luke

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

October 28th - St. Simon & St. Jude

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

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.

Prayer Book Holy Day Masses last a little over half an hour and, when celebrated in the morning, always include the office of Morning Prayer. Please make time to come out for these important days!

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR: *A Meditation on St. Luke the Evangelist (October 18th) by the Rev'd Lesley Wilder*

In this twofold vocation of doctor and missionary we learn the secret of the Christian life and faith. Somewhere along the line, in the history of our religion, a great divorce took place. It was the divorce between the material things of life and the spiritual things. I shall not attempt to probe into the background of this divorce or to examine all the causes which brought it about. Suffice it to say that the divorce did take place and the break was so strong and deep that people began to think in terms of two separate worlds of reality - one of them concerned with physical things, things like our bodies, our food, and our money. The other had to do with spiritual things - things like our prayers, our worship, and our souls.

I can think of no greater tragedy in the history of mankind than this divorce, for the results are evident all around us. God has been separated from his material creation. Religion has become a Sunday affair, something that has to do with special clothes, with hymns and sermons and prayers that we say for an hour or so in church. The body has been separated from the soul, and as a result both the body and soul are restless and starved, and they walk through dry places seeking rest. This they can never find until the divorce has been healed, and there is a reunion - a remarriage of body and soul.

It is strange that this could ever have happened in the Christian religion, for the central fact of our faith is the Incarnation - that great pronouncement of the marriage vows between the spiritual and the physical. The whole point of our Lord's life is that the divine and the human are met and married in his Person. And as we watch our Lord in the days of his ministry we never see him departmentalizing that ministry into either physical or spiritual needs. He came to make men whole, and to be whole involves body and soul. He knew that many of man's physical ailments are the result of spiritual disorders, and vice versa, so that often in his healing we hear him say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or "Thy faith hath made thee whole."



St. Luke was a doctor and a physician, and therefore he was concerned with the diseases of mankind. But he was also an evangelist and missionary, so that when he tried to heal someone he ministered to the man's whole being - not just his body, but also his soul. The two are so closely related as far as health is concerned. When you walk about the streets of any town in this country, you see many offices with neat little signs that say, John Jones, M.D. Wouldn't it be wonderful if now and then you came upon a sign that said, John Jones, Physician and Evangelist! But instead, you go to see your doctor for your physical ailments. Then you cross the street and go to a minister or to a psychiatrist for your spiritual ailments. More of our doctors should also be evangelists, and more of our clergymen should also be physicians and psychiatrists. This might help somewhat to heal the great divorce, and bridge the gulf between the body and the soul.

Religion is concerned with the totality of life. It has as much to say about the material world as it does about the spiritual world, because both are God's and therefore they are really one. Our Lord was always concerned with and spoke to every area of a man's life - the material as well as the spiritual - for he was concerned with the whole man. He came to make them whole. And may I say, there can never be wholeness in a person's life where God does not come first! It is just as simple as that. I'll leave it to your own conscience to decide where he stands on your list of priorities.

"Almighty God, who didst inspire thy servant Saint Luke, the Physician, to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of thy Son; Manifest in thy Church the like power and love, to the healing of our bodies and our souls; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 253) ☩

From "The Great Days and Seasons: Meditations for the Christian Year" (1961, Seabury Press) by the Rev'd Lesley Wilder

BOOK REVIEW: *“Rescuing the Church from Consumerism”* by the Rev'd. Dr. Mark F.M. Clavier

In his new book published by SPCK the Rev'd Dr. Mark F.M. Clavier addresses the problem of consumerism. This phenomenon is presented as not only the *spirit* of the age, but also as the *religion* of the age, complete with its own value system, sacraments, and rites of passage. In beautiful prose, Fr. Clavier laments the effects of consumerism on individuals, society, and the planet. Unfortunately, the one body that can offer a real, viable alternative to the religion of consumerism, namely the Church, has, according to Fr. Clavier, *succumbed* to consumerism by adopting practices and techniques that cater to consumeristic culture rather than correct it. But far from being merely *descriptive*, “Rescuing the Church from Consumerism” is also, as implied in the title, *prescriptive*. It not only diagnoses one of the main problems afflicting the Church and the world today, but also offers suggestions for the Church to free itself from the consumeristic spirit and reclaim its true identity so it, in turn, may be a viable prophetic witness to a world lost in the mire and hopelessness of consumerism. The solution, according to Clavier, is for the Church to reclaim its true identity as the “household of God.” The Church should strive to be a body where people immersed in the throw-away, narcissistic culture of consumerism can come and find a true home and identity that is rooted in the love of God. In the final chapter of his book Clavier gives some principles for Christian communities to develop into a truly “domestic” church. These include such things as being faithful to its own tradition and being a community that is truly rooted in worship and liturgy. All in all the main body of “Rescuing the Church from Consumerism” is interesting and thought-provoking.

The reader should be aware that the book assumes a familiarity with the concept of consumerism. This is evident by the fact that Fr. Clavier never really defines what consumerism is. Opening the book with at least a working definition of consumerism would have been very helpful to avoid ambiguity. The book is also more sociological than religious in content and outlook. Indeed the Bible is quoted hardly at all in the entire book. And rather than locating the problem of consumerism in, say, “greed” - one of the

traditional ‘Seven Deadly Sins’ - or even in human sin in general he instead blames consumerism mostly on evil “corporations.” Though he does quote the occasional Church Father, Anglican Divine, and Medieval theologian here and there, one would think that a book written by a priest who did a doctorate in St. Augustine, and who is involved in clergy training and pastoral ministry would be more biblical and theological - religious - than sociological in outlook. Indeed one has to wonder exactly how a person who did a doctorate in an early Church Father from North Africa is even qualified to write a book that is essentially sociological in nature. So while it is a very interesting and even timely book, the reader should note that this is not a devotional work but more of a scholarly “religious sociology/social commentary” type of book.

Anglicans of the “continuing” tradition should also be aware at the outset that Fr. Clavier is *very* critical of us in his preface. This is perhaps the most perplexing part about the entire book. Even though it has little to nothing to do with his thesis Fr. Clavier decides to drag the church of his birth and ordination through the mud in his autobiographical preface. He states variously that continuing Anglicans are “backwater” cave-dwelling Anglicans who are not interested in evangelism, or contemporary trends in theology, and who are fundamentally misguided. Interestingly, however, he did not hesitate to promote his book to us so we could buy it and get our people to as well. His bizarre comments about how we have not taken seriously or been affected by the liturgical movement are easily proven wrong, as is his suggestion that continuing Anglicans do not read anyone writing after C.S. Lewis or Dorothy Sayers. While that may have been true of him, it is certainly not true of the rest of us. Case in point: he references the famous University of Pennsylvania philosopher, Philip Reiff’s seminal work *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. Does Fr. Clavier know that the Rev'd Dr. Clarence “Chip” Sills, Ph.D, a priest of our diocese, and former university level philosophy professor, is an expert on Reiff and was responsible for getting him to lecture at the U.S. Naval Academy

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a number of years back? Probably not. What is further very strange is how Dr. Clavier contrasts the current demoralized state of the Church of England with the excitement and exuberance of the church of his birth, and how he does not seem to connect the dots between the former's wholesale embrace of modernity and its current state of deadness with the latter's continuance of the classical Anglican tradition and its exuberance and excitement. And for all of the criticism that he dishes out for us reading "out of date" theologians and using older liturgical forms he does a great job of quoting those out-of-date writers and referencing the Prayer Book throughout the book. If they are out-of-date and part of "backwater Anglicanism" then why does he reference them throughout his book? Finally, the very type of solutions he proposes to turn back the tide of consumerism in the Church and the world seem to characterize what we in the continuing Church are and try to inculcate: the household church; worship that is both accessible but also transcendent; fellowship; ministries; etc. So it seems to me that despite the bleak and horribly inaccurate picture he paints of continuing Anglicanism in his preface (which, by the way, may be read for free on Amazon.com) that according to

his own reasoning we are a Church that is getting things more right than wrong with regard to the problem of consumerism.

On a personal level, one can only feel hurt at having promoted in good faith a book on a timely subject by a former rector of the parish when asked by him so to do without any warning of the antagonistic content of the preface. Is he pleasing his overlords in the Church of England, or does Dr. Clavier merely have a bone to pick with the continuing Church, perhaps because of his father's well-known dismissal from the ordained ministry years ago? I would tend to think that the latter is the case, and therefore that Dr. Clavier abides by the motto "Revenge is a dish best served cold."

I remember when Fr. Clavier addressed diocesan synod years ago just before moving to England to begin his doctoral work. Choking up, he spoke of how wonderful the Church was and how it would always hold a special place in his heart. He was sent off with a standing ovation by everyone present. How very odd that now, years later, and from halfway around the world he decides to mount a mean-spirited and unwarranted attack that is full of inaccuracies and relates not one bit to the thesis of a book that he wrote to us to promote! How very odd indeed. ✠

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

Episcopal Visit & Confirmations, Sunday

November 3rd: Join us as we welcome our diocesan bishop, the Most Rev'd Walter H. Grundorf, D.D., to St. Alban's to preach, celebrate, and administer the sacrament of Confirmation and receive new members. If you have any questions about being received or confirmed please see Fr. Anderson. And note that we will be having a reception for the bishop and new members immediately after the 10:00 a.m. service. We will need people to sign up to bring things, so please

get in touch with organizer Beth Dixon if you'd like to participate.

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!

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)

Quote of the Month: "It is the test of a good religion whether you can make a joke of it." ✠

G.K. Chesterton