

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Grace and peace be with you. It has been an eventful and exciting summer here at St. Alban's! As most of you know we had a financial scare due to increased costs and parishioner transitions. But thanks to your generosity it appears that we may make it safely through those turbulent waters after all! Please keep it up. Thanks be to God, may our Lord bless each of you for your love for Him and His Church.

This fall we will be changing our service times. Simply put, our current schedule of 8 a.m., 9 a.m., and 11 a.m. is not working for us. In fact, I would argue that it is doing our church more harm than good. Or to put it more bluntly: it is killing us. Among other things, it costs too much money; it prevents our parish from growing in fellowship and community; and it paints an inaccurate portrait of the church... e.g. a late service with a mere 10 people in attendance (or with clergy and organist, 13) makes it look to visitors as though we are moribund and dying, which is far from the case! So what do we do?

Essentially, we need a service without music and a service with music. We also need an early service and a later/mid-morning service. So, the 8:00 am service will remain as it is, unchanged, while *the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services will be combined into one 10:00 a.m. service of Holy Communion*. Thus, our new service schedule will be 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Holy Communion. Incidentally this was St. Alban's original schedule years ago. Combining the later services will make both of them more energetic, and will better integrate the parish. We will be able to have more people sing with the choir, more opportunities to serve, and more fellowship. There will time between and after services for Christian education, fellowship, parish business, and more. The new services times are going to be a great thing for the parish in so many ways, and will set us on the course for continued growth and prosperity!

Needless to say, if there are any questions about this feel free to ask me. I would like to thank the vestry for their understanding and support on this matter, and will thank you all in advance for the same. At this point we are still deciding when to implement these changes. I will keep you posted. May the Lord bless and keep you.

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

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UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

September 19th - Ember Wednesday

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

September 21st - St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist

Holy Communion @ 8:00 a.m.

September 29th - St. Michael & All Angels

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

October 18th - St. Luke the Evangelist

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

November 1st - All Saints' Day

Holy Communion (only) @ 6:30 p.m.

Prayer Book Holy Day Masses last a little over half an hour and always include Morning Prayer! Please make time to come out for these important days as you are able!

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE: *On the Great Goodness and Love of God in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar*

The following is excerpted from "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas Á Kempis. This book dates from the early 15th century and is one of the great masterpieces of western spirituality. After the Bible it is the most highly translated and read devotional work.

Trusting wholly in Your goodness and great mercy, Lord, I come sick to my Savior, hungry and thirsty to the Fount of Life (Ps. 36:9), needy to the King of Heaven, a creature to its Creator, desolate to my loving Comforter. Yet whence is this favor, that You should come to me? (Lk. 1:43) What am I, that You should give me Your very Self? How dare a sinner appear before You? And how is it that You deign to visit a sinner? You know Your servant, and see that he possesses no good thing in himself that could merit this blessing. Thus do I confess my worthlessness; I acknowledge Your goodness, I praise Your kindness, and I offer my gratitude for Your boundless love. (Eph. 2:4) You do this of Your own will; not on account of my merits, but solely that your goodness may be more evident to me, Your love more richly imparted to me, and that You may more perfectly commend humility to me. Therefore, since it is Your pleasure and You have commanded it, Your will is my delight; may no wickedness in me obstruct it.

O most kind and loving Jesus, what profound reverence, gratitude, and eternal praise are Your due when we receive Your sacred Body and Blood; for none on earth can rightly extol its majesty. What shall be my

thoughts as I approach my Lord in Holy Communion? I cannot pay Him the honor that is His due, and yet I desire to receive Him with devotion. What better or more salutary desire can I have than to humble myself completely before You, and to praise Your infinite goodness to me?

Therefore, O my God, I offer You my praise, and will glorify You for ever, while in the depths of my insignificance I despise and abase myself in Your presence.

Lord, You are the Holy of Holies: I am the worst of sinners. Yet, O Lord, You stoop to me, who am not worthy even to raise my eyes towards You. Lord, You come to me, and desire to be with me; You invite me to Your Table; You wish to feed me with the Heavenly Food, the Bread of Angels. This food is none other than Yourself, The Living Bread, who came down from Heaven to give life to the world. (Ps. 78:25)

See, from whom this love proceeds! See the Source whence this high glory shines! How deep a gratitude, how high a praise are Your due for all these blessings! How greatly to profit and salvation was Your counsel when You instituted this Sacrament! How sweet and delightful the Feast in which you give Yourself to be our food. How wonderful are Your ways, O Lord; how mighty Your power, how infallible Your truth! You spoke the word, and all things were made; (Ps. 148:5); You commanded, and it was done.

It is indeed wonderful to consider, worthy of faith, and transcending the mind of man,

how You, my Lord, and God, true God and true man, are wholly present under the simple forms of bread and wine, and are eaten without being consumed by whoso receives You. O Lord of all things, who stand in need of none, and who yet are pleased to dwell in us by means of this Sacrament; (2 Macc. 14:35) keep my heart and body spotless that with a glad and pure conscience I may be enabled to celebrate Your holy Mysteries, and receive to my eternal salvation those things that You have hallowed and ordained to Your own especial honor and for Your perpetual memorial.

Be glad my soul, and thank God for the noblest of all His gifts, for this unique comfort bestowed on you in this vale of tears. For as often as you consider this Mystery, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ, you set forward the work of your redemption, and become a sharer in all the merits of Christ. Therefore, continually dispose yourself to the renewal of your mind, and ponder deeply the great mystery of salvation. Whenever you celebrate or hear Mass, it should be as great, as fresh and as joyful to you as if on this very day Christ had come down for the first time into the womb of the Virgin, and was made man; or, hanging on the Cross, suffered and died for man's salvation. ✠



 BOOK REVIEW: *“God’s Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible” by Adam Nicholson.*

Beginning on September 11th this month we will be doing a study of the King James Bible. A great way to prepare for this study is to read the book on which it will largely be based *“God’s Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible.”*

The author does an excellent job of situating the book historically within the reign of James I and Jacobean England. He carefully explains the circumstances leading up to it, the rationale behind it, how it was influenced by its age, and its legacy to later generations. The reader learns much about the religious conflicts of the age between Protestant and Catholic, Anglican and Puritan. Interesting vignettes are included about the fascinating and often controversial personalities who did the translating.

One of the most striking aspects of this translation is the amount of careful work that went into it. The King James Version was translated by about 50 people of varying degrees of churchmanship divided into 6 groups who checked each others’

work, made recommendations and changes, revised each others’ work, etc. The early English Bible translation by Tyndale was consulted as well, as were the earlier *Bishop’s Bible* and *Geneva Bible*. One would indeed be hard-pressed to find even a modern translation that was done as thoroughly as the King James. Today we appreciate the King James Version not only for its accuracy, but for its beauty and tradition. Along with the Book of Common Prayer, the King James Bible is the most important work of English prose ever written.

If you are interested in learning more about how this Bible came to be and the fascinating and sometimes controversial history surrounding it check out this great book by Adam Nicholson, and then come on join us on Tuesday nights in September as we learn about this cornerstone of our faith and worship! In addition to this book for our study, we will be using a book about the KJV written by Anglican priest and Oxford professor Dr. Alister McGrath. ☩

 FILM REVIEW: *“Au Hasard Balthazar” by Robert Bresson (1966, French with English subtitles)*

Au Hasard Balthazar (1966) is a film by one of the most highly regarded French directors, Robert Bresson. Many prominent film critics consider this to be his finest film.

It tells the story of a donkey named Balthazar and his owner Marie. The film traces both of their lives as they pass from an idyllic childhood to having to deal with the travails and misery that life can sometimes bring. While both Marie and Balthazar suffer from the sins of man, it is the donkey - the simple beast of burden - who most nobly bears his cross. Thus, at the heart wrenching conclusion of the movie, Balthazar is declared to be a saint.

The religious imagery and spiritual allegories in the film are stunning, and a hallmark of Bresson’s work. In the beginning of the film, for example, Balthazar is “baptized.” Later he is made to carry a statue in a procession from a church. And then there is the obvious connection between Christ riding into Jerusalem with a donkey so He could give up his life to die on the cross. At the end we see Balthazar

numbered among the sheep, safe with the flock and its shepherd.

Ultimately, it is Bresson’s Catholicism that form the underlying thematic structure of this work. In it we see the themes of salvation, redemption, and metaphysical transcendence. It cleverly portrays how salvation is brought about through pain and suffering... Christ’s suffering for us, and our suffering in union with Him.

Though highly minimalistic and rather brief (1.5 hours) the film manages to convey the nature of the religious life in a vivid, powerful, and unforgettable way. This movie has been consistently praised by top film critics. Filmmaker and critic, Jean-Luc Godard, wrote of this film, *“Everyone who sees this film will be absolutely astonished, because this film is really the world in an hour and a half.”* And the late film critic, Andrew Sarris wrote of this film, *“No film I have ever seen has come so close to convulsing my entire being. It stands by itself as one of the loftiest pinnacles of artistically realized emotional experience.”* That just about says it all. Rent it today. ☩

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

**Tuesday Nights in 2012-2013**

Beginning on September 11th our Tuesday night service of Evening Prayer followed by dinner and our adult forum will resume. It will run through June 2013.

This year there will be a number of interesting topics including: the *King James Bible* (September); the *Doctrine of the Holy Trinity* (October); the *Theology of Marriage* (November); the *Incarnation* (December); *Miracles* (January); the *Theological and Cardinal Virtues* (February and March); the *Atonement* (April); the *Church* (May); the *Creed* (June).

For our studies we will be using classic texts not only from well-known figures such as C.S. Lewis and St. Athanasius, but also from some lesser known but very influential and important Anglican and Roman authors such as Leonard Hodgson, Yves Congar, R.C. Mortimer; Rene Latourelle, E.L. Mascall, and Oliver Quick.

The evening begins with service at 6:30 p.m. and always ends by 8:30 p.m. If it is a Holy Day we have Holy Communion instead of Evening Prayer. A delicious meal is usually provided. These sessions are always a fun time of fellowship with other parishioners as well. Please join us for some of these this year! ☩

PARISH NEWS

Do you have parish news that you would like to publish here? Please let Fr. Anderson know.

Episcopal Visit & Confirmations - Sept. 16th

Join us at 10 a.m. this day as we welcome our suffragan bishop (and former rector of St. Alban's) the Rt. Rev. Chandler Holder Jones, SSC. He will receive new members, administer the sacrament of Confirmation, and preach and celebrate the Holy Eucharist. Mark your calendars now!

Parish Work Day - Sept. 29th

We will be having a parish work day to clean up the grounds, trim bushes, etc. on *Sept. 29th*. Please sign up on the sheet in the parish hall to participate.

Come learn to pray! - Oct. 11th

In October we are starting a new intercessory prayer group at the church that will meet once a month in the evenings to share concerns and pray for those in need. Meeting time is 7 p.m. Please see Fr. Anderson for more details.

Thank you!

As you know, due to parishioner transitions and increased costs we had a financial deficit. But thanks to a couple of generous donations and increases in giving we appear to be reining in the deficit. Thank you ALL for your generosity in giving to help us get through this. Please remember that just as your expenses increase each year, so do the church's, so please give accordingly and as you are able to the general fund on a regular basis. ☩

FOR ALL THE SAINTS

St. Michael - September 29th

One of the most important saint days in medieval England was so-called *Michaelmass*, the feast day for St. Michael the Archangel. This is the only feast having to do with angels that the English Reformers retained in the Prayer Book calendar (p. 251). It was probably retained because it was simply a very popular feast day... getting rid of it would have been like getting rid of Christmas!

Traditionally there are four archangels. Michael (which means "Who is like unto God") is one of the two archangels mentioned in the canonical books of the Scriptures (the other is Gabriel, the angel of the Annunciation). The two other archangels, Raphael and Uriel, are mentioned in the Apocrypha.

In the Old Testament we read about St. Michael in Daniel 10:13 ff. and 12:1. In the New Testament we read about him in Jude 9 and Revelation 12:7-9. St. Michael comes to mind at each service of Holy Communion when the preface to the Mass is read: "Therefore with angels and archangels..."

The Bible portrays angels as being messengers of God. The Greek word "angelos" whence we derive "angel" means "messenger." Because of this they are depicted in art as having wings. St. Michael is often shown killing a dragon, fighting Satan, or (less commonly) weighing souls.

Join us for Holy Communion on Saturday, Sept. 29th at 8:00 a.m. as we celebrate his feast! ☩