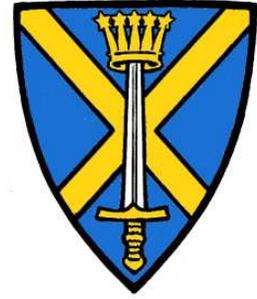


The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

This month marks the 14th year of my ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons and my entrance into the state of Holy Orders. I was ordered deacon by our diocesan bishop, the Most Rev'd Walter H. Grundorf at our pro-cathedral (also called "St. Alban's") in Oviedo, FL on September 24, 2005. It had been a rather long road to ordination. I enrolled in seminary at 24 years of age and graduated a few years later... but for a variety of reasons didn't go through with ordination until I was 31. Though frustrated at times at the slow pace I can in retrospect see that I needed more time to mature. There is so much more to being a priest than studying philosophy and theology and dressing up in fancy clothes. Back when I graduated from college I moved out of my parents' and got a full time job working in the IT industry. I had real life stuff to deal with and paid my own way as much as possible. (Though mom and dad invariably had to bail me out of the occasional messes into which I'd gotten myself!) While in seminary I lived on my own —off-campus— and worked part time for the IT consulting firm. Again, I had to pay my own way and figure out how to get my car running, pay the bills, get my schoolwork done, and all the rest of it. After graduation I continued working at the IT company. Later I taught, and then after that worked with my dad in construction sales. All of that, though admittedly not very romantic or exciting, provided me with great experience for parish ministry. The skills I learned at these jobs have been useful in every aspect of my parish ministry, and, I am convinced, has helped me survive in this vocation. Sadly, many men —men of all ages and backgrounds— do not last in ordained ministry but instead crash and burn... sometimes sooner, and sometimes later. I pray that will not happen to me because I love being a parish priest. I covet your prayers for my ministry which is for Christ and each one of you, his beloved brethren. I feel truly blessed to serve as rector of St. Alban's. I count each of you not only as parishioners but as dear friends. This December I'll have been rector here for nine years. Lord willing, I am looking forward to serving you all for many more years to come. And I am very excited about what lays ahead! The best of St. Alban's is truly yet to come. Tell people about our church! Invite them to come and join our parish family and participate in our common life of fellowship and worship.

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

September 2019

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Updates from the Church

UPCOMING SERVICES:

Sep 18th & 20th - Autumnal Ember Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 21st - St. Matthew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Oct 18th - St. Luke

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Oct 28th - Ss. Simon & Jude

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 1st - All Saints' Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 2nd - All Souls' Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 21st - Presentation of BVM

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 28th - Thanksgiving Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 30th - St. Andrew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

FOR ALL THE SAINTS: *Saint Jerome, Confessor and Doctor of the Western Church (September 30th)*

This month we observe the the feast of Saint Jerome, Confessor and Doctor (“teacher”) of the Church (347-420). Jerome was one of the most famous and important scholars the Church ever produced. He was the greatest biblical scholar in antiquity. Because of his vast literary output and huge influence he is known as one of the four doctors of the Western Church. (The others are St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory.) He is mentioned in passing in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Article VI *Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation*. (BCP, p. 603... where his named is spelled “Hierome”)

Jerome was born in the region of Dalmatia near Aquileia, which is in modern day Italy close to the Slovenian border. He was educated in classics and rhetoric first by his father and then by a prominent teacher in Rome. Later he studied rhetoric. While living in Rome he enjoyed visiting the churches and catacombs. Baptized at nineteen years of age, Jerome later traveled through much of the Roman world, especially Dalmatia (modern day Balkan Peninsula), Gaul (France), and Italy. While in Trier with some friends they decided to become monks. A few of them traveled to Palestine to establish a monastic community but only got as far as Antioch before some of them got sick and died. Jerome himself became violently ill and while sick had a dream where he met God on judgment day who condemned him for being a “Ciceronian” (a follower of the philosopher Cicero) rather than a Christian. This shook Jerome to his core. So he stayed put and lived as a hermit in the desert for about five years.

During that time he avoided studying the classics that he loved and instead studied Hebrew so he could read the Old Testament Scriptures in their original language. He was already an expert in Greek and Latin because of his earlier studies. Little did he know that by adding Hebrew to hie repertoire he was preparing himself for what would

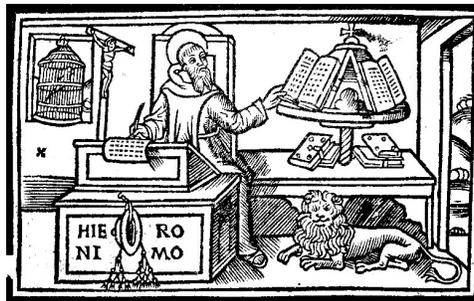
be his greatest accomplishment, the translation of the so-called “Latin Vulgate” bible.

At some point in Antioch he was ordained a priest although rather curiously he had not wanted to be ordained and never said Mass. He moved to Constantinople and studied with Gregory of Nazianzus and continued to engage in scholarly pursuits, such as translating the works of the Church historian Eusebius and the sermons of Origen from Greek to Latin. He also began writing scholarly commentaries on various biblical books. Eventually he moved back to Rome where he continued his scholarly work, writing more commentaries and completing his famous translation of the bible. While at Rome a few widows gathered around him and were inspired by him to enter the religious life. He took the women

to Bethlehem to help them establish a convent and stayed there the rest of his days teaching, writing, and studying. Jerome kept up lively correspondence with most of the important people of his day: Augustine, Rufinus, Damasus and other popes. He died in Bethlehem and was buried under the Church of the

Nativity, though later his remains were translated to the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome.

Like all of the saints what makes Jerome attractive is not just his accomplishments and zeal for the Lord and the Church, but also his very real humanity. Jerome was far from perfect. His major fault was that he could be snarky and combative. He made numerous enemies wherever he went because of his acerbic wit. He was always getting into arguments with people. This aspect of his personality seemed to be rooted in his immense learning. His incredible accomplishments and reputation made him a proud man who did not tolerate people disagreeing with him or opposing him. But one of the things we learn from his life is that anyone can be a saint! God uses people with all types and ranges of personalities and intellects to serve him and accomplish his purpose for the Church and the world. ☩



THEOLOGY: *Musings From a Bookworm on His Summer Readings, Part One*

One of the books I read this past summer was a very engaging and thought-provoking volume entitled *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* by Louis Bouyer (1913-2004). Born into a French Lutheran family and ordained as a Lutheran minister as a young adult, Bouyer later converted to the Roman Catholic Church. Over the course of his life he wrote many important books on a variety of theological subjects. In this particular book (written in 1956) Bouyer makes the argument that the basic teachings of the major reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin —salvation by grace alone and faith alone, the authority of Scriptures, the sovereignty of God, etc.— were firmly rooted in Catholic teaching and tradition. He demonstrates this with copious quotes from various Church Fathers and Medieval Theologians. If his thesis is correct, then why would there have been a huge split in the Western Church at the time of the Reformation? The reason he gives is because as their thought developed the Reformers added incorrect and unnecessary corollaries to these otherwise orthodox teachings. The concept of salvation by faith alone, for example, rather quickly developed into a belief that good works are of no importance in the Christian life. And the concept of Scripture alone rather quickly developed into the notion that Church tradition did not matter at all. According to Bouyer it was these unnecessary corollaries encouraged and invited by some of the Reformers themselves that torpedoed their project to reform the whole of the Western Church. The other problem that both the Reformers and counter-Reformers faced — unbeknownst to either group— was that they were being held in intellectual bondage by the philosophical school of Nominalism. This system of thought, originally expounded by William of Ockham (1287-1347), was an early type of materialism and skepticism. Putting it extremely simply, nominalist philosophy was black and white: if a thing was *this* then it couldn't be *that* at the same time. So to the Reformers if God was the author of salvation, then man could have *nothing* to do with it. And for the counter-Reformers the opposite was the case. Salvation could not be something that God and man both participate in...

that man's works are both his and God's at the same time. A very sad situation indeed, but alas, we are all held hostage to some degree by the intellectual milieu in which we find ourselves. (This is definitely the case today, where many Christians, whether they know it or not, are more logical positivists than they are catholic churchmen!) At some point after finishing this book I read Thomas Cranmer's *A Defense of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament*. Archbishop Cranmer, of course, is known for compiling the Book of Common Prayer, which still forms the basis of our spiritual life as Anglicans. In this particular treatise he attempts to explain his understanding the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. Sadly, it ended up playing an important role in the decision to have him burned at the stake under Queen Mary ("Bloody Mary")... which terrible end was perhaps poetic justice seeing as how he himself had many people burned at the stake under Henry VIII. Bouyer's thesis is verified in reading Cranmer's original work. Cranmer, like the continental Reformers, was also trapped in a nominalist framework, which made reconciliation between the Reformers and the Papists nearly impossible. The main area where the nominalist thesis comes out is in his discussion of the doctrine of the Real Presence. He cannot accept that the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ is both bread and wine (which makes it a sacrament) *and* the Body and Blood of Christ at the same time. He is also obsessed with "names." ("Nominalist" comes the Latin root word for "name.") Nominalist philosophers believed that the things that we experience do not necessarily correspond to an external or substantial reality but rather are just "names." The word "man" is merely an interchangeable name, and does not refer to a particular substance or reality. We see this in Cranmer when he discusses the use of "Body and Blood of Christ" to describe the sacrament. To him these are just "names" applied to the sacramental bread and wine... they do not refer to any reality behind them. But suffice it to say the Church of England ended up rejecting significant portions of Cranmer's theology. Next month I will conclude this column with further reflections on these interesting theological topics. ☩

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

Seminarian UpdateA MEDITATION FOR THE TWELFTH
SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

by Mr. Mason Waldhauser.

When we turn outward, we see ourselves in the mirror more clearly than we do by our own introspection. What we find when we look at ourselves alone is an unspiritual mess; but what we find when we see our true self in Christ, to whom we are united in the sacraments, we find that we are inhabited by his spirit. He says, "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." This is why the glory of Moses's face was fading, and "the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance." Our Lord had to leave us, because for as long as he is with us, our righteousness in him will be external to us, and we will be condemned, for no man can see the face of God and live. But if he departs from us, his righteousness will be discovered to be imparted to us inwardly. The justification which is ours is no longer outside ourselves hanging on a cross or sitting on the right hand of God, but it will be within us, united to us so deeply, growing within us like yeast leavening a lump of dough in the dark. If the corporeal body of our Lord is alongside us, then he can depart from us and we can depart from him; but if his spirit of righteousness is infused into us, then we cry with the psalmist, "Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit? or whither shall I go then from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Look, we can condemn ourselves even to hell and cast ourselves into the sea, and we cannot escape this love of God which is in Christ Jesus! "If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me; then shall my night be turned to day. Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day; the

darkness and light to thee are both alike. For my reins are thine," which is to say, even our most inward parts are intimately united with his spirit. Look, this is complete identification with us which our Lord has toward us, and it is accomplished by the death of his literal body, that his spirit might be imparted to us, that we might have a righteousness which is internal, within us - that our faces would gradually shine. Such is "the ministration of righteousness which exceeds in glory." Look, now the righteousness of God has gone from being external and conceptual, something we've read about, to something internal and experiential. Christ's righteousness is ours, and we cannot escape it, insofar as he has wedded himself to us, body and soul, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as we all shall live. To search for righteousness now outside ourselves is to lose this righteousness entirely. I once heard that it would be like searching around the house for our glasses, just to realize that they've been on our face the whole time. Likewise, to search for the righteousness of Christ is to lose sight of the fact that it is imparted to us already. There is now no longer anything to find, as God's Spirit has found us. There is nothing to experience, as the whole of our experience is characterized by this righteousness already. There is nothing to do, only to rest and enjoy and return and abide. For the Spirit is life, and it is our life to live. We can squander it or invest it, but at the end of the day, we have nothing to lose and nothing to gain. This righteousness within us, is like a flower which is gradually unfolding into full bloom. It is a righteousness which is working naturally within us toward unfoldment in our lives as we "become what we are" as they say. For we have died and are now living a new life, with this principle of righteousness intimately communing with our whole nature in a union which goes far deeper than the physical, being a union through and through in the Spirit. And to our ears and tongue, the only command which our Lord gives us now is "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened."✠