

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

I am sometimes asked by people how they can make their Sunday worship more spiritually fulfilling and meaningful. The answer I usually give is two-fold. First, on Saturday night, before going to bed, get your Prayer Book and read the proper Collect, Epistle, and Gospel appointed for the next day. Studying these prayers and texts, and praying over them, before the Holy Communion the next day will greatly help our receptivity to God, and allow the Holy Spirit to move in our lives in a greater and more vivid way. Put another way, when we know what is coming, we are better prepared to deal with it, think about it, and relate to it when it comes. One can expand on this by reading additionally the Morning and Evening Prayer lections appointed in the Daily Lectionary for that Sunday. The people who organized our daily lectionary in the early 1940's (because the lectionary contained in our Prayer Book is not the original 1928 daily lectionary) made the Sunday Morning and Evening Prayer lections thematic, centering them around the Epistles and Gospels appointed for that Sunday. So all that means is that there are *additional* scripture readings we can look at in preparation for the Sunday service that relate to the proper Epistle and Gospel for the Sunday, and which help "unpack" their deeper meaning. We do well to study them ahead of time, in addition to the Sunday eucharistic readings themselves, if we feel we need better preparation for Sunday Holy Communion. The second thing I recommend is having a daily Rule of Life that involves a schedule of prayer and scripture reading. If Sunday is the only day we turn our hearts and thoughts to God then we will remain spiritual babes and not grow into maturity the way that God wants. Forming a daily Rule of Life — a plan to follow to facilitate our spiritual growth — is not at all hard of you are Anglican, because we have the Book of Common Prayer as our guide. The best thing to do is get into the habit of reading the daily services of Morning and Evening Prayer. In these brief liturgies we pray for ourselves, the nation and its leaders, the clergy of the church, and all of God's people, in prayers that go back to ancient Judaism (the Psalms) all through the early Church and Middle Ages and Reformation right up into modern times. So in a fifteen minute "service" in the comfort of home we can literally pray 2,000 years of prayers! And then on top of that we read through the Old and New Testaments in daily ordered readings, which carry us through most of the Bible in a year. What, one might ask, could better prepare us for Sunday worship, where we offer ourselves to God in thanksgiving for all that he has done for us, then spending intentional time with him each day in prayer and study? Very little, indeed! I am always happy to help people learn how to pray the Daily Offices and better use the Prayer Book in daily devotions. Please let me know if you need help!

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

February 2020

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UPCOMING SERVICES:

Feb 24th - St. Matthias

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Feb 26th - Ash Wednesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Mar 4th - Ember Wednesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Mar 6th - Ember Friday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Mar 7th - Ember Saturday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Mar 25th - Annunciation

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 5th-11th - Holy Week

Services to be announced

Apr 25th - St. Mark

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 1st - Ss. Philip & James

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 18th-20th - Rogation Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

LITURGY: *The Silent Devotional Prayers the Priest Says During the Mass*

Perhaps you have noticed that when the priest is celebrating the Holy Eucharist he sometimes appears to be whispering to himself. What he is doing is saying special devotional prayers appointed for specific parts of the liturgy. These prayers are part of the tradition of the Western Church. They are not found in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer but rather in the Missal, which has the Prayer Book service of Holy Communion along with these and other additional devotions with which we are all familiar. For example, the “Ecce Agnus Dei” —Behold the Lamb of God— is found in the Missal, not the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

It is important to note that while the Missal is authorized for use in the canons of the Anglican Province of America under Article X of our Constitution all of the devotions therein are optional for the priest. So in terms of these silent prayers that means that a priest may say all, some, or none of them. A lot of this has to do with how he was trained, and the general customs of the diocese and parish. After a while a priest usually memorizes these prayers and doesn't have to look at the Missal or an Altar Card to say them. Here at St. Alban's the clergy have historically said most of these silent prayers... probably about 90% of them. Let's quickly take a look at some of these silent prayers that are in regular use at our parish.

The first prayer that one notices the priest mumbling is a prayer over the incense as he places it on the burning charcoals at the 10:00 a.m. Mass. He is saying, *“Be thou blessed by him in whose honor thou shalt be burnt. Amen.”* The later blessing of incense at the Offertory uses a different set of prayers.

The second prayer comes before the reading of Gospel. As the Missal is being moved from the Epistle to Gospel side of the altar he says, *“Cleanse my heart and my lips, O God, who didst purge the lips of the Prophet Isaiah with a live coal, and of thy great mercy vouchsafe to purify me that I may worthily and rightly proclaim thy Holy Gospel. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”* He then he gives a blessing to the deacon who reads the Gospel saying: *“The Lord be in thy heart and upon thy lips that so thou mayest worthily and rightly proclaim his Holy Gospel in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”* (If the priest himself is reading the Gospel he says this prayer to himself, changing it to the first person.) Once the Gospel is read the priest kisses Gospel book and says, *“By the Gospel words today, may my sin be done away.”*

The next set of prayers come at the Offertory. This is the part of the service where the clergy prepare the altar for Holy Communion. (“Offertory” refers not only to our “alms” but also to our “oblations” —the bread and wine that we offer to God in union with Christ our Lord, and which, by his power, are transformed into his sacramental Body and Blood.)

The first prayer is at the offering of the Host (bread). The priest receives the bread and prays silently to God as he offers it, *“Receive, O Holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, this spotless Host, which I thine unworthy servant do offer unto thee, my God, the living and true, for my countless sins and wickedness, for all the faithful in Christ, both quick and the dead, that it may be profitable to me for my salvation and for that of the whole world.”* This prayer is called the “Suscipe, sancte Pater.”

Next, in preparation for offering the wine, and after having poured wine into the chalice, the priest blesses the water that is to be mingled with the wine saying, *“O God, who didst wonderfully create and yet more wonderfully renew the dignity of the nature of man: grant unto us by the mystery of water and wine, that we may be sharers in his divinity, who vouchsafed to be made partaker or our humanity, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end.”* The blessing and co-mingling of the water and wine signifies the two natures of Jesus Christ... that he has both a divine and a human nature. This prayer is called the “Deus, qui humanae substantiae.”

The chalice having been prepared he now goes to the center of the altar and raising it offers it to God saying, *“We offer unto thee O Lord the cup of salvation, humbly beseeching thy mercy, that it may go up before thy divine majesty for a sweet savor, for our salvation and for that of all the whole world.”* This prayer is called “Offerimus tibi.”

Now the priest bows down and offers himself and the whole congregation to God the Father through Jesus Christ saying, *“In a spirit of humility and with a contrite heart let us be accepted by thee, O Lord, and so let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, that it may be well pleasing unto thee, O Lord God.”* This prayer is called “In spiritu humilitatis.” He then raises himself and makes the sign of the cross over the elements while praying the “Veni, sanctificator” which goes, *“Come, O Sanctifier, almighty, everliving God, and bless this sacrifice made ready for thy Holy Name.”*

At this point, at the 10:00 a.m. service, the incense is blessed. The thurifer or the (please turn the page)

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deacon hand the priest the incense boat —the small vessel containing the incense— so he can spoon some of it onto the hot charcoal in the thurible. After the priest does that he blesses the incense saying, *“Through the intercession of blessed Michael the Archangel, who stands at the right hand of the Altar of incense, and of all the Elect, may the Lord vouchsafe to bless this incense, and accept it as a sweet-smelling savor. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.”* This prayer is called the “Per intercessionem.” As the priest incenses the altar he says the following three prayers at various points: *“Let this incense, blessed by thee, O Lord, rise up before thee, and let thy mercy come down upon us. Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips. O let not mine heart be inclined to any evil thing; let me not be occupied in ungodly works with the men that work wickedness. May the Lord kindle in us the fire of his love, and the flame of his everlasting charity. Amen.”* If incense is not being used then these prayers are skipped. They each have a separate name which, in case you haven’t noticed, is a Latin translation of the first few words of the prayer.

At the washing of the hands (the “Lavabo”) he prays all of Psalm 26, *“I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord...”* ending it as the Psalms are almost always ended in our tradition with the “Gloria Patri.” (“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, etc.”)

Finally, as the liturgy of the offertory draws to a close he says the “Suscipe, sancta Trinitas” which reads, *“Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation which we offer unto thee, in memory of the passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honor of Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and of all thy saints, that it may be to their honor and our salvation, and that like as we remember them on earth, so in heaven they may plead for us. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.”* From here on out the service continues as normal in the Prayer Book manner with no specially appointed silent devotional prayers.

The silent devotional prayers resume at the “Our Father” where the priest says the “*Libra nos*” beginning at the phrase “deliver us from evil” in the Lord’s prayer, and as the people finish it. Making the sign of the cross on himself with the paten and kissing it he says, *“Deliver us, we beseech thee, O Lord, from all evils past, present, and to come, and at the intercession of the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with thy blessed Apostles Peter, Paul, and Andrew, and with all thy saints, favorably grant peace in our time, that by the help of thy mercy we may be ever kept free from sin and safe from all disquietude,*

through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God...” then he says aloud “world without end” to which all respond, “amen.”

At the “Pax” (“The Peace of the Lord...”), as he mingles a small piece of the the Host with the Precious Blood (a symbol of Christ’s bodily resurrection), he prays, *“May this mingling on consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto us who receive it an approach to everlasting life.”*

As the Agnus Dei is being sung by the congregation, the priest, reading it silently to himself prays after the last stanza, *“O Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst to thine Apostles, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you, regard not our sins but the faith of thy Church, and grant to it that peace and unity which is according to thy will. Who livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.”* This prayer is also found in the Prayer Book as an additional Collect that may be said at Mass. (p. 49) As he prepares to make his own communion he continues, *“I will receive the bread of heaven and call upon the name of the Lord,”* and then says three times silently the *“Lord, I am not worthy,”* prayer with which we are all familiar. He then makes his Holy Communion, first the Body of Christ, after which, in preparation for receiving the Precious Blood, prays, *“What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will call upon the name of the Lord, which is worthy to be praised, so shall I be safe from mine enemies.”* This is based on Psalm 116. After this pray he consumes some of the Precious Blood.

At the ablutions, which is the part of the service where, after all have made their Holy Communion, the priest consumes what remains of the Body and Blood of Christ, he prays: *“Grant, O Lord, that what have taken with our lips we may receive with a pure heart, and that from a temporal gift it may become to us an eternal remedy. Let thy Body, O Lord, which I have taken, and thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave unto my soul, and grant that no spot of sin may remain in me whom thy pure and holy sacrament hath refreshed. Through...”*

There is a short prayer at the end of the service called the “Placeat tibi”, but like some of the fist silent devotions of the Mass the clergy at St. Alban’s rarely say it. In this article we have only seen the devotional prayers that we customarily say in our parish. So now, when you see the priest mumbling at the altar you will have some idea as to what he is saying! He is praying to Lord in whose person he ministers for the people of God, the Body of Christ. ☩

SEMINARIAN UPDATE: *Monthly Update from the Rev'd Mason Waldhauser*

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to you at the beginning of my final semester. Everything has felt so bitter-sweet these last few days, knowing that I'm coming down the home stretch here at the seminary. Since I've been reflecting on my time here, I'm struck by how much of a blessing the relationships here have been to me, with my professors and my classmates. Three years of learning, praying, working, and hanging out together have made me feel really connected with these people; and I think its the closeness of these relationships in which the majority of the formation of seminary takes place. I learn from my professors not only because of their knowledge of the material, but also because of the trust I have in them, seeing from my daily life with them that they are pursuing God during their time here, as well. And my classmates, I think are the kind of people I will be lifelong friends with and will be able to call anytime from the parish to compare notes and get advice or support.

In addition to this time that I have with these friends here, I'm especially thankful for my course load this semester. I'm taking for classes, and let me just share, briefly, what they are.

(They're all second semester classes, so I've taken these as 500-level classes over the last two years.) First is Moral Theology, and we'll be learning about how ethics has as its goal the beatific vision: union with God in heaven—and in light of this, we'll be discussing particular cases and the hard ethical questions being discussed today. Second is Systematic Theology, and we'll be discussing the sacramental system and how it relates to our salvation. Third is Ascetical Theology, and we're going to work through the history of English spirituality and also learn how to hear confessions. And the fourth class is Liturgics, which culminates in two “practice masses,” when we are graded on our ability to celebrate Holy Communion with the proper “ceremonial,” or ritual actions.

Each of these classes so far have struck me with the immediacy of my context of ministry; and I appreciate your prayers as I take these last few months to prepare for my ordination to the priesthood and work as a curate. It was such a wonderful visit to Denver this past Christmas, and it feels like God has things falling into place with my work at that parish, which is very exciting. The trip confirmed what I already felt from previous visits, that the rector out there will be awesome to work under and that the people there will be really easy to love and to serve. I felt like I really connected with them and am

super excited at the chance to begin my priestly ministry in that parish. The exact start date as well as the date of my priestly ordination are both still to be determined, but it seems like things are shaping up for the fall, either August or September, potentially—so you will most likely be seeing me back there at St. Alban's again this summer beforehand. I will keep you posted on these things.

Thank you again so much for your prayers for me. It was really good spending a little time with you over winter break. I am praying for you as we enter Gesimatide, the weeks leading up to Ash Wednesday, that you'd be

well-prepared for a holy Lent.

Best,
Dcn. Mason

Mason is a student at Nasbotah House, an historic seminary of the Episcopal Church. Today, like most seminaries, Nasbotah educates students from many different Anglican and other Christian traditions. ☩

