

# The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

June 19th is Father's Day. I am blessed to have a great dad. He's just a really cool, compassionate guy who is generous to a fault, and always ready to listen and help people out. He's got a wicked sense of humor, and is super talented—I swear the man can fix anything. My dad always worked hard to provide for the family, made sure we went to church every Sunday, and taught us all a lot of important lessons. Alas, life was not always easy for him, though. His own father—a WWII veteran—died suddenly in his 30's, leaving behind a wife and three kids. My grandmother never remarried. She had a career as a nurse, and was able to hold the family together for a while. But eventually she fell ill and the kids had to go live with relatives. So when my dad was about eight he went to live with his aunt and uncle and their family in Fairfield, CT. He lived with them until he went to college and started his own life. While living with his relatives he went to their church—Blackrock Congregational Church—and came into a living, personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. It was his faith in God that got him through the trials and tribulations of his early life and has sustained him ever since. Even though his own dad had died, he knew from the Lord's Prayer that he had a Father in heaven. Indeed, Psalm 68:5 says that God is "*a father to the fatherless.*" His faith in God enabled him to never complain about being given a rotten deal in life. In all of his years I never once heard him whine about being a victim. He always taught me and my sisters to work our hardest, not give up, and to take responsibility for our actions. He has always been active in our home church, and while on the session (which is something like the "vestry" in the Presbyterian Church) was known for pushing the church to step in faith on some particular matter, such as funding missionaries, or starting some new ministry. His faith and trust in God, which he learned at a very young age and which came to sustain him, was something that he passed on to others... to people at church, friends, and of course to family. A father could leave his children millions upon millions of dollars, but if he does nothing to help them come into a living relationship with God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ he has left them nothing. (Of course, if he leaves them millions *and* helps lead them to faith in Christ then those kids are doubly blessed! But I digress...) The most important legacy we can leave to our families, friends, and loved ones is our Christian faith. No one but God can help us through the difficulties of life, and provide for all of our needs. The Lord has never abandoned my dad, and so I know he will never abandon me. And I hope and pray that I will be a good father to my kids like my dad has been to me, and also that I will be a good father to you all—my spiritual family—here at Saint Alban's Anglican Church. Please pray for me as I pray for all of you, and God bless all fathers!

Faithfully, your priest,

*J. Gordon Anderson*

June 2022

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UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

**Jun 6th-7th - Monday & Tuesday in Whitsun Week**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Jun 16th - St. Barnabas (Tr.)**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Jun 24th - Nativity of St. John Baptist**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Jun 29th - St. Peter the Apostle**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Jul 4th - Independence Day**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Aug 6th - Transfiguration**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Aug 15th - Assumption of BVM**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Aug 24th - St. Bartholomew**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Sep 8th - Nativity of BVM**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

THEOLOGY: *The Christian Mind (Part 4) — Its Acceptance of Authority*

This month we continue our look at Harry Blamires' famous book "The Christian Mind" (SPCK, 1963) in which he argues that there is a specifically Christian way of thinking about and approaching life. Last month we looked at the Christian mind's conception of truth. This month we look at its acceptance of authority. Blamires writes, "By the very nature of the Christian Faith, as hitherto represented in this book, the Christian mind has an attitude to authority which modern secularism cannot even understand, let alone tolerate. It follows from all that has been said about the God-given nature of the Christian revelation and the Christian Church that they must command a whole-hearted allegiance from Christians; for Christians are, by definition, men who accept the revelation and the Church for what they are, the visible vehicles of God's action in the world." (p. 124)

The record of God's revelation of himself to humanity is the Holy Bible. We as Christians accept the authority of the scriptures because we believe that they are the word of God. Although they had a long winding path of development from oral tradition all the way down to written texts, and although they were obviously written and compiled by people, we believe that God the Holy Spirit guided this whole process, so that what we have is really and truly the word of God and therefore an accurate testimony of his revelation of himself to humanity. The scriptures contain all of the information necessary for man's salvation. Article Six of the 39 Articles of the Church of England states in part, "Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This is affirmed in the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer. In the rite of ordering deacons, ordaining priests, and consecrating bishops, the ordaining prelate asks the candidates: "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all Doctrine required as necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?" (pp. 533, 542, 554)

Notice that it does not say that the scriptures contain truths about calculus, genetics, evolutionary psychology, etc. Neither does it tell us what color, or beverage, or meal is the best, etc. Why is this? Because that is not what they are for. Going back to Article Six and the Prayer Book, what they are for is to lead us to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. This means that the nature of their authority is moral and spiritual, not scientific or technological as we understand those things today. What does this mean for us? Take, for example, evolutionary thinking, which is based on

natural selection and the survival of the fittest. That mindset may tempt us to put ourselves first in everything and to lie, cheat, and steal to get ahead. But the word of God tells us to humble ourselves, and that the meek shall inherit the earth, and that lying, cheating, and stealing are sins. Therefore, since by God's grace we desire to be saved, we submit ourselves to the authority of God and live our lives according to the way he reveals, not according to our base feelings and desires, or to certain current scientific theories. The Bible is of zero authority in determining things like what color tie to wear with what color shirt. But it is the ultimate authority in what is of real and lasting importance in life; namely, how to pass through death into life eternal.

The Holy Catholic Church is the other vehicle of God's action in the world. In the Creed we say "I believe one, Catholic and Apostolic Church." We do not say, "I believe IN one, Catholic..." as though we only believe that the Church exists. Rather, we BELIEVE one, Catholic and Apostolic Church. This means that we believe what the Church teaches. She bears the authority of Christ because she is his mystical body. The authority of the Church is not to be held in opposition to the authority of Holy Scripture. Rather, they are two sides of the same coin. The Church wrote the scriptures, so all we know about God and Jesus is what the Church has told us. As the author of the scriptures the Church has the authority to properly interpret them in a way that is normative for God's people. Yet at the same time, because of her sacred tradition, she has no authority to jettison the scriptures or alter and change them way. She cannot allow a so-called 'new movement of the Holy Spirit' to come in and completely contradict her received tradition. What the Church does is articulate and clarify the meaning of the scriptures as needed in each day and age. We see this in history in the Ecumenical Councils of early Christianity, which did the job of defining the person of Christ based on what was recorded in scripture, and using the categories of Greek philosophy.

As Christians we are people under authority, and that authority is the revelation of God, which is recorded in scripture and lived in the Tradition of the Church. Our lives are to be conformed first and foremost to this authority, not to that of the world — some political party, social movement, or the latest cultural fad. God himself has revealed to us how we should live our lives and what our priorities should be. May we accept his authority over us and obey his will. ✠

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 THE CHRISTIAN YEAR: “*Trinity Sunday*” by the Rt. Rev'd William Wand, Bishop of London (1945-1955)
 

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“This is Trinity Sunday,” said Mr. Churchill in his broadcast after the French defenses had been broken; and one can remember vividly the thrill of that recall to the final certainties. It rallied faith in the sovereignty of righteousness and the victory of life over death. At the heart of the universe there is a Throne — that is the last word about human history. The world and its history belong to God and not to blind faith.

It is when the Throne seems to be left empty that men lose their sense of purpose and direction, and drift into apathy and despair. Mr. Robert Birely remarked in a recent lecture that “the most obvious symptom of the spiritual disease of our generation is the widespread feeling among men that they have lost all control of their destinies.” Our deepest need today is the liberation which comes from the vision of the Living God and his purpose for the life of man. It is this faith, enshrined in the Bible, verified and enriched by Christianity, to which Trinity Sunday bears its witness. The true and enduring message of this festival is not the validity of an ancient formula, but the reality of the Living God. Its proper use is not speculation nor the attempt to rationalize a dogma, but the hallowing of the name of God in worship.

This conviction of the Living God lies at the heart of biblical religion, and confers upon it a distinctive ethos, making it unique among the religious traditions of mankind. A Living God is a self-revealing God; and only thus can he be known to men. For “no man hath seen God at any time.” (John 1:18) No finite mind can comprehend him, no logic can define his being. Yet because he is the Living God he is self-communicating to the world. We can know him through his self-revelation, in nature, in history, and in the mind of man.

Primarily, according to the Bible, he reveals himself in action — in “doing things.” Christian faith and experience affirm that the decisive moment of revelation comes through these historical events on which Christianity is founded and to which it is permanently anchored. But the God made known to us “in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6) is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. Thus Trinity Sunday comes as the climax of the more familiar festivals which lead up to it; for the God who is the Beginning and the End is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because he is thus made known to men, they are allowed to come into his presence no longer as servants but as sons. He is the God to whom persons are dear. An attempt is made to convey this Christian insight through the modern phrase “a personal God.” To say God is “a person” would be just silly; but no recognized Christian teaching has ever said this. Yet the claim that there is that in God which is least inadequately described as personal because he admits persons to communion with him — and the claim is based on Christian experience — is the one guarantee of personal life amid the flux of history and the time-process. If God is revealed in Christ it cannot be true that what is impersonal or abstract is “higher” or more real than what is personal. That recognition would cut very deep into contemporary thought and practice. ✠

Ed. Note: Trinity Sunday falls on June 12th this year. This article is taken from “*Religion Through the Year: A reprint of Articles published in The Times during the year 1948*” (Times Publishing House, 1948)

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 LITURGY: *When to make the Sign of the Cross during Holy Communion*

At Saint Alban's the Sign of the Cross is generally made at the following places during Holy Communion: At the beginning of the Introit (10 a.m.); the end of the Gloria in Excelsis; the end of the Creed; the beginning and end of the sermon (when the priest says, ‘In the Name...’); the Absolution after confession; the Benedictus qui venit (‘Blessed is he that cometh...’); during the Prayer of Consecration after the Words of Institution at the elevation of the Host and Chalice (NB: It is customary to adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and whisper the words of St. Thomas — “My Lord and my God” — at this time.); later during the same prayer at the words “be filled with

thy grace and heavenly benediction”; at Ecce Agnus Dei (‘Behold the Lamb of God...’ 10 a.m.); after making your Holy Communion (once after receiving the Body, and once after receiving the Blood); and finally at Benediction (‘Blessing’) at the end of the service. Once in a while there will be another place where the Sign of the Cross is made (such as if an object if being blessed), but basically these are the typical places where it is made. ✠

## PARISH NEWS &amp; UPDATES:

**Building Project Update**

Good news! Our storm water management engineer, David Taylor, just received County approval on the complete set of preliminary plans. We are in the process of retaining an architect, Julie Tice, to assist the engineer with finishing the plans for final approval. Please keep our building project in your prayers!

**Yoga Update from Beth Dixon**

Thank you everyone at St. Alban's for your participation in Christ-centered yoga classes these past eight weeks. June 11th was the last scheduled class at 11:00 a.m., but I am canceling it since I feel there is little interest with summer now in full swing. I will evaluate and determine what future yoga schedules will look like. Thanks and Blessings! *Beth Dixon*

**Parish Hall Flooring Update**

The church received a quote from the Mike Whitehurst to cover the parish hall flooring with a new, durable flooring system that looks like wood but is made of recycled material. This flooring is eminently suitable for commercial environments and will last us for many years. The quote is broken down into two parts. Part 1 (\$3,525) is the reception area where we have refreshments after service, and part 2 (\$4,995) is the parish hall where we have the rectors forum and set up tables for dinners. It does not include the office or vestry at this time. The current flooring is 30 years old, and is dilapidated and falling apart and in dire need of replacement. It looks awful and reflects poorly on us, so we really need to get this done. And Mike is the man to do the job! His company did the flooring in the sanctuary, hallway, bathrooms, kitchen, and entry porch. They are reliable and highly skilled at their craft. If you would like to contribute to this project please let the rector or someone on the vestry know.

**Grace, Grit, and Thanksgiving**

On the last Tuesday of every month we have a prayer and fellowship group that meets to discuss a topic and pray together. Food is always served. It is an intimate and relaxed time to share our lives together as we journey towards everlasting life. Why not come out and join us sometime? We would love to see you!

**Good Books**

One of the best books to get to supplement the Prayer Book where you can learn more about the Anglican tradition is *The Practice of Religion* by Archibald Campbell Knowles. You can buy it here: [https://www.amazon.com/Practice-Religion-Instructions-Devotions-Illustrated/dp/B000HXIQO0/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?m=AG93LYAYKTRWG&qid=1655028598&s=merchant-items&sr=1-5](https://www.amazon.com/Practice-Religion-Instructions-Devotions-Illustrated/dp/B000HXIQO0/ref=sr_1_5?m=AG93LYAYKTRWG&qid=1655028598&s=merchant-items&sr=1-5). This excellent little devotional/primer was produced by a priest of the American Church in the early 20th century and has gone through many editions because it has proven so popular. It contains devotions and instructions on the Catholic Faith in its Anglican expression. A parishioner recently bought a copy and said of the book, "It is worth its weight in gold." So if you are looking for more instruction that you can do at home check out this book!

**Thank You For Your Support**

"The minister is ordered, from time to time, to advise the People, whilst they are still in health, to make Wills arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, and, when of ability, to leave Bequests for religious and other charitable uses." (BCP, p. 320) ✠

