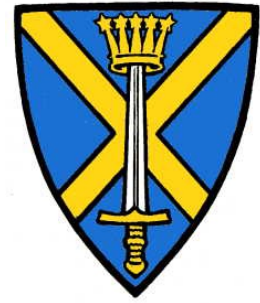


The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Passiontide —the last two weeks of Lent— is almost upon us. How are you all doing with your lenten devotions and disciplines? Most of us mess up here and there throughout the forty days of Lent with our increased regimen of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. If you do don't get discouraged and throw in the towel! Just get back in saddle and give it another shot. Lent is a great time for us to face our humanity and embrace our weakness, and to recognize how much we need God and his divine grace and power in our lives.

I saw a brief but interesting video conversation on Facebook recently. It was about the idea that "God sends people to hell." There is a popular notion out there among the misinformed and non-believers that God randomly sends people he doesn't like, or who do things that he doesn't like, to hell. What the guy in the video —a young, African-American NYC cabbie and Christian— was trying to explain to his interlocutor was that God saves people from hell... he doesn't send them there. Hell, which may basically be defined as eternal death and separation from God, is where man is already going anyway due to his fallen and sinful nature. So, the cabbie explained, it is incorrect to say that God sends people to hell because that's where man is going anyway naturally. What God does is offer salvation from hell by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for the gift of eternal life!

Remember that confessions are heard by me or Father Edelmann anytime during the year before or after services or by appointment. Lent is an especially appropriate time to make a sacramental confession. If you've never done so before the clergy will happily teach you what this beautiful sacrament of reconciliation is all about. I myself make my confession to another priest every six weeks or so, and have done so for many years.

Easter will be here before we know it. And with it often comes TV specials about the resurrection of Jesus where so-called "experts" attempt to explain away the bodily resurrection of our Lord as a myth, or that he was "resurrected" in his followers' hearts and minds, not "in the flesh." Just remember if you come across programming like this that simply because an "expert" pontificates about this and other matters on TV it does not necessarily follow that he or she is right. Too often we abandon our critical thinking skills whenever we hear a supposed authority talking about matters of great importance. And many of the media outlets on which these people appear often have something of a bias against traditional interpretations of the Christian religion. So always be a critical thinker and be careful not to believe whatever new fangled idea comes down the pike with regard to Church doctrine... and all other ideas as well!

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

March 2021

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UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

Mar 25th - Annunciation of the BVM

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Mar 31st - Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday before Easter

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 1st - Maundy Thursday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.,
Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m.

Apr 2nd - Good Friday

Solemn Liturgy at 12:00 p.m.,
Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m.

Apr 3rd - Easter Even

Morning Prayer at 10:00 a.m.

Ante Communion at 12:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer at 1:00 p.m.

Apr 5th - Easter Monday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 6th - Easter Tuesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 1st - Ss Philip & James

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR: *Brief Explanations of the Services of Holy Week & Holy Week in General*

We are now almost half way through Lent. Sunday, March 21st, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, is known as “Passion Sunday” because it signals the beginning of “Passiontide” which is the last fortnight (two weeks) of Lent. The last week of Passiontide and the Lenten season is commonly called “Holy Week.” During Holy Week we commemorate our Lord’s passion and death. Holy Week ends on Easter Sunday when we commemorate his glorious resurrection from the dead. Each of the services of Holy Week are unique in the Christian Year. This makes it the busiest time of year for most clergy.

The first service of Holy Week is **Palm Sunday**, the Sunday next before Easter. On this day we remember our Lord’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The “Liturgy of Palms” is celebrated at the beginning of Mass. The basic element of this service, which can be more or less elaborate depending on the church and setting, is the blessing of palms. The story of the Jesus’ triumphal entry is read, and palms are blessed and distributed. Because these are blessed it is important that they not be discarded after the service. They should be kept on display somewhere in your home throughout the year to remind us of this day and then brought back to church to be burned into ashes for use on Ash Wednesday. After the blessing and distribution of palms the Mass begins. Alas, since we have no room for processions and no choir we can never have the customary Palm Sunday procession with its accompanying liturgical chants. Though we do always sing the customary hymn of the day: *Gloria, laus, et honor*. (All Glory Laud and Honor to thee Redeemer King) The Mass is noteworthy for the reading of the Saint Matthew Passion, during which it is customary for the faithful to hold up their palms. Traditionally it is sung in parts by different “Passion Deacons.” Since we do not have men in Holy Orders trained as singers to function as “Passion Deacons” a priest always reads the entirety of the Passion. The contemporary custom followed in some churches where the congregation and clergy divide up the reading as though it were a play is interesting but not theologically or liturgically correct, as only a man in Holy Orders is permitted to read the Gospel at Mass.

The next services of Holy Week are **Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Easter**. These are noteworthy for the reading of the other Passion Narratives. On Monday and Tuesday we read Saint Mark’s Passion, and on Wednesday we read Saint Luke’s Passion. Reading the Passion Narratives in their

entirety is one of the most interesting aspects of Holy Week because one gets to hear and compare the various nuances of each evangelist’s account of our Lord’s passion and death.

The next service of Holy Week is **Maundy Thursday**. This is the beginning of the so-called “Sacred Triduum” —the last three days of Holy Week. On this day we commemorate the institution of the Lord’s Supper (and with it the sacred priesthood), though the name of the day has to do with the tradition of foot washing (the “maundy” —the “new command” or “mandatum” given by the Lord) that is sometimes done on this day. (John 13:1-17) The liturgical color of Maundy Thursday, in contrast to the other days of the week and season, is white. The Gloria is sung at the beginning of the Mass and a bell is rung, and then neither are heard until Easter Day. During the Mass extra Hosts are consecrated for use at the “Mass of the Pre-Sanctified” the following day. At the end of the service these are carried in procession to an “Altar of Repose” where they remain until Good Friday. Then follows the beautiful ceremony called “The Stripping of the Altar.” Psalm 22 is read (or sung) while everything is removed from the altar and sanctuary, which symbolizes the Lord being captured and stripped of his garments so he can be crucified. Afterwards it is traditional to keep a vigil before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Altar of Repose.

Good Friday is the day we commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. This unique service is one of the most ancient in the western Church, hearkening back to the earliest recorded accounts of Christian worship. It consists of four parts: the Lessons (scripture readings, especially Saint John’s Passion); the Prayers of the Faithful; the Veneration of the Cross and Reproaches; and the Communion of the Pre-Sanctified. The liturgical color is black and no instruments are used. A formal celebration of Holy Communion is not held on Good Friday. Rather, communion is given in one kind —the Body of Christ— which was consecrated the day before for this purpose. Immediately after communion the services ends and the faithful leave in silence.

The last service of Holy Week is **Easter Even** which is called Holy Saturday in most contemporary churches. The traditional liturgy for this day is the Easter Vigil. After Evening Prayer and the Altar Service (the Ante-Communion from the Prayer Book) a fire is lit (the “new flame”) that represents the resurrection

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of our Lord Jesus Christ. From this fire is lit the Paschal Candle, which represents Jesus himself. It is solemnly processed into the sanctuary to the chant "Light of Christ." Once there, the candles on the altar are lit from it, and a long hymn of praise called the "Exsultet" is chanted by a deacon (or in his absence a priest). After this comes a series of lessons (traditionally twelve) called "prophecies" (of the resurrection, obviously) that are interspersed with chants. More commonly, there are four readings, as the old lections were incredibly long. Next the baptismal water in the font is blessed according to an elaborate ritual because traditionally this is the night in which converts are baptized into the church, and therefore baptisms would follow this part of the rite if anyone was there to be baptized. (Interestingly, until the liturgical changes of the 1960's, the water blessed this night was used all year, which is pretty gross you think about it!) If no one is to be baptized the rite continues with the Litany of the Saints, or sometimes the Prayer Book Litany. After this follows the service of Holy Communion with all of it's traditional majesty and pageantry restored.

At the time of the Reformation, after Henry VIII died, most of the traditions surrounding these services (e.g. blessing palms on Palm Sunday, Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday, the Paschal Candle on Holy Saturday) were suppressed because the people in charge thought them superstitious and unbiblical. Although curiously (and inconsistently) they kept other "superstitious and unbiblical" traditions in other parts of the Prayer Book, such as the giving of the ring in Holy Matrimony, kneeling for Holy Communion, and blessing water at Holy Baptism. (It turns out a lot of the English Reformers, like a lot of people both then and now, were very selective in their moral and theological indignation!)

But eventually the traditions associated with these services were gradually reintroduced by Anglicans. Although they are not found in our 1928 Book of Common Prayer, and in other pre-1970's Anglican Communion Prayer Books, rites for these traditions could be found in supplemental service books which were approved for official use. The Altar Missal in use at Saint Alban's is a good example of one of these. (It is known as "The American Missal.") Most of these copied Roman Catholic forms, though naturally they had their own unique Anglican flavor. (e.g. Prayer Book prayers, biblical passages in the KJV version, moderate ceremonial, etc.) This trajectory culminated in the United States with the 1979 Book of Common Prayer

for the Episcopal Church which codified these ceremonies and made them part of the life of the entire Church and not just a few parishes or dioceses. Other provinces of the Anglican Communion did similar things.

For centuries and centuries these services were pretty much the same in terms of their features and forms. But in the 1950's Pope Pius XII simplified the Holy Week services in some significant ways that are unfortunately too much to go into here. A decade or so later, his successor, John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) into session where all "liturgical" hell broke loose. (This council was a mostly failed attempt to get back to the spirit and practice of the early Church. The Roman Catholic Church is still reeling from it today.) At this council the Holy Week rites were substantially revised into what they are today. Anglicans, as well as some of the Protestant denominations, ended up aping Rome's liturgical changes, thus proving the old adage, "When Rome gets a cold Anglicans get pneumonia." So contemporary Anglican forms used by the "official" provinces of the Anglican Communion are modeled after post-conciliar Roman Catholic Holy Week liturgies.

All of this is different at Saint Alban's. Because we are a traditional parish we still follow the old pre-Vatican II Holy Week forms modified to conform to the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. We still use the old supplemental books to draw up Holy Week services that are both faithful to the best of catholic practice and the classical Prayer Book tradition. This actually works better for us because it enables us to form services that fit the unique life and needs of each individual parish while at the same time providing enough structure so each parish is not doing something completely different. All of this in contrast to the rigidly prescribed forms of the modern denominations.

Appendix on the Office of Tenebrae: Tenebrae is the evening services of Matins and Lauds for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday in Holy Week. It corresponds to our services of Evening Prayer and is very similar, with a number of Psalms being read responsively interspersed with scripture passages relating to the death of Christ. The unique feature of it is a series of candles that are extinguished one-by-one at the end of each passage. The service ends in darkness which is what *tenebrae* means. Then, at the very end, a loud noise is made and a single lit candle is brought out to symbolize the resurrection of Jesus. ✠

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

The Bishop's Epistle

Don't forget to check out Bishop Grundorf's "Epistle" which is posted in the parish hall and e-mailed out to everyone. If you are not receiving it in your inbox please let the rector know. In this quarterly our diocesan bishop gives updates on his ministry, the life of the diocese, birthdays and anniversaries, ecumenical news, and many other things. So please give it a read!

Update on Fr. Mason Waldhauser

Fr. Mason is doing quite fine out in Denver, Colorado where he serves as curate of the historic Saint Mary's Anglican Church. <https://www.saintmarysacc.org> He has been very well-received by the church and community. In addition to preaching and serving at Sunday Mass, and visiting shut-ins and the sick, he offers a daily Mass and leads the daily Offices at the church. He is also doing a lot of teaching in the form of Sunday school, book studies, and Lenten studies. On rare occasions he fills in on the organ when the organist is on vacation. Fr. Mason is doing a great job and making us all proud. Please keep him in your prayers!

The pandemic... at least *some* good has come out of all it!

This month it has been a year since the pandemic became fully known and the lockdowns began. And what a challenging time it has been! Thankfully we now see a light at the end of the tunnel. Despite the difficulty, there was a lot of good that came out of this madness. This is certainly true for us as individuals, but it is also true for us as a church. One of the best things for the church has been increasing our online presence. We now have people all over the country and world who watch our services and other activities online. We never would have gone online had the pandemic not occurred. These online services have been a great way for people to be exposed to the classical Anglican tradition and find out about us and our sister churches. When this is all over we will stay online so people all over can continue to check us out. Thanks for your support during this trying time!

What is the Anglican G4?

If you have been online searching for information about the classical and continuing Anglican tradition you might have come across the name "G4." On

Facebook there is a "G4 Anglicans" group. What does G4 mean and what's it all about? This refers to the four main continuing Anglican jurisdictions that have entered into full communion and effectively work together as one united church. It includes us (the APA - Anglican Province of America), the ACC (Anglican Catholic Church), the ACA (Anglican Church in America), and the DHC (Diocese of the Holy Cross). A fifth church —APCK (Anglican Province of Christ the King)— will hopefully join us soon, making us the "G5." These jurisdictions were the original church that left the Episcopal Church in the late 1970's but later — sadly— splintered over rather trivial matters. Now we have patched things up and are united in ministry and worship. We cooperate and help each other out, sharing clergy and resources both here in America and abroad. So if you ever hear or see references to the Anglican "G4" that's what it is.

G4 Discussions with the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC)

One of the the more interesting undertakings of the G4 in the last two years has been opening up ecumenical talks with the Polish National Catholic Church. This is a body of Roman Catholics who, through various historical circumstances, are not under the authority of the Roman pope, but nonetheless in communion with him. Centered in Scranton, PA, they basically broke away from the Roman Church in the 19th century and aligned themselves with the Old Catholic "Union of Utrecht", which was a collection of national Catholic churches that did not accept the teachings of the the First Vatican Council. That group of churches eventually came into communion with the Anglican Communion and participated in the consecrations of bishops throughout the 20th century. The Union later splintered over theological issues, as did the Anglican Communion, and the PNCC left the Union and her relationship with Anglicanism to seek an alliance with Rome. The G4 is, in a nutshell, now trying to work to restore the earlier relationship Anglicans once had with the PNCC and share resources and ministries for the Kingdom of God. A number of very successful dialogues have been held in the last two or three years, and when the pandemic subsides there will be more. You can find more information about this online here and elsewhere:

<https://anglicanprovince.org/2019/01/union-of-scranton-anglican-joint-synods-dialogue/> ✠