

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

This month the new king of England, Charles III, was crowned. I hope that you all got to see at least parts of the historic the ceremony. You can watch earlier coronations (George VI and Elizabeth II) on YouTube. Each coronation is slightly different from previous ones. For example, in Charles III's the aristocracy, sadly, were not robed in ermine and did not wear coronets. So it can be kind of interesting to view the different coronations and compare details. (If you go The Antiquary channel on YouTube you can find even *more* information about earlier coronations and all of the changes over the centuries!) Now, if you are *not* interested in English culture, or the Royal Family, that is totally fine! A lot of people think that being Anglican means that you have to love all things English... that you have to prefer tea over coffee, watch BritComs and Masterpiece Theater, read Trollope, etc. I can assure you that is *not* true! Years ago I caused a minor scandal among my Anglican friends when I confessed that I really did not care for the plays of Shakespeare... and in fact, that I couldn't stand them! There was this underlying assumption that because I was an Anglican with this gorgeous Prayer Book liturgy that therefore I *had* to enjoy stuff like that, and automatically wear tweed, smoke a pipe, wax eloquent about Beowulf, and the like. Though I do enjoy a pipe every now and then, and like wearing tweed when I can, I'm sorry to have disappointed those people with regard to those other English things! If people like those things, and they happen to be Anglican, fine! But if they don't that's fine too. None of it makes a person more or less Anglican. Anglicanism is not a hobby. It is a reformed expression of the Catholic and Apostolic once delivered to the saints. The key things that make the Anglican tradition what it is are the classical Prayer Books, the Holy Bible (especially in the Authorized Version), and the hymnody of the Church. When we pray, read, and sing, all of that —especially in the light of the tradition of the Church Fathers, and the English Reformation and those which came after it— a theological method and tradition emerges, along with a unique moral and spiritual ethos that has been built upon multitudes of generations that have come before. Surely it arose in a form recognizable to us in early modern England. (e.g. Our liturgy is the only one that has been in *continual use* since the Reformation!) But later the Church spread all over the world, very far from the shores of "Dear Old Blighty." And she was so successful in her missions that today the vast majority of people who are Anglican live in Africa, Asia, and even South America! And in many ways (certainly doctrinally) the Anglicans of those regions are more "Anglican" than your garden variety Anglican (lay and ordained) found in England, America, Canada, etc. The way to be truly Anglican is to pray with your Prayer Book, study your Bible, and participate in the sacramental life of the parish church. May God bless and keep you!

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

May 2023

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UPCOMING PRAYER BOOK
HOLY DAYS:

May 1st - Ss. Philip & James

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 15th-16th - Rogation Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 18th - Ascension Day

Holy Communion at 6:30 p.m.

May 29th-30th - Monday & Tuesday in Whitsun Week

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 21st & Jun 2nd - Ember Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jun 24th - St. John Baptist

No Services

Jun 29th - Ss. Peter & Paul

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Please see the parish website for the complete list of Sunday and Holy Day services offered each month.

www.saintalbansjoppa.org

LITURGY: *The Liturgical Items used in Lent and the Great Forty Days of Easter*

Eastertide ends every year on the Ascension Day. After forty days of fasting and prayer during Lent the Church celebrates forty days of joy, celebrating the resurrection of the Lord. Then, on the Ascension Day—which is always the Thursday after Rogation Sunday (Fifth Sunday after Easter)—she enters into the season of Ascensiontide. On the Ascension Day the Paschal Candle, which was lit at the Easter Vigil, is extinguished after the reading of the Gospel from Luke 24:49 ff. *“JESUS said, Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”* The candle is then put away for the rest of the year, sometimes being pulled out again and used at the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Baptism. This is a good time to briefly consider the Paschal Candle, as well as some of the other liturgical items that make an appearance here at Saint Alban’s during Lent and Eastertide. We will look at them in order of their appearance.

The Stations of the Cross and the Monstrance. It is our custom here to offer the devotions of Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament once a week during Lent, though in fact they may be held anytime during the year, and also held as separate devotions. The fourteen images comprising the Stations of the Cross are always on display in the Church and familiar to us all. They depict the passion and death of our Lord beginning with his trial before Pontius Pilate and ending with his body being placed in the tomb. The look of Stations vary from church to church. Sometimes they are quite grand, and other times they consist of only a small wooden cross on the wall. (This actually required by Church tradition. No matter how magnificent the Stations may be, and no matter how large, there must always be a small wooden cross on them!) At each Station a meditation from scripture is read and prayers are recited. The medieval sequence hymn “Stabat Mater” (Hymnal 76) is chanted while walking from Station to Station. The basic idea with this devotion is that we walk with Christ and meditate upon his passion as he is put on trial, suffers and is tortured, and is put to death for our salvation.

The devotion of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is held after Stations. In this devotion the

priest blesses the congregation with Body of Christ and everyone adores Christ present in the Holy Sacrament. A consecrated Host is placed in a fittingly gorgeous golden receptacle called a ‘monstrance’ (which means ‘to show forth’) and after a short versicle and response and a prayer the priest blesses the congregation with the sacrament contained in the monstrance. Then follows a short litany called ‘The Divine Praises’ after which the service ends. Our monstrance and stations of the cross were given as memorial donations by parishioners many years ago.

The next object we saw was the **Tenebrae Hearse**. This is a large, triangular candelabra that holds fifteen candles. Ours was commissioned by Fr. Anderson and was built by his friend, Mr. Ralph Sutter of Baltimore. It is constructed from old church pews. The stand was a gift from Fr. James Johnson of All Saints’ Church in Lancaster, PA. The tenebrae hearse is used during the office of Matins in the Holy Week services from Spy Wednesday through Good Friday, which services are traditionally called ‘Tenebrae.’ The word itself means ‘darkness’ as Matins was traditionally a service held in the middle of the night (i.e. earliest morning hours of the day). So for us in the parish church tenebrae is what we would call an ‘evening’ service. It is basically a more elaborate celebration of Morning/Evening Prayer, with a lot of extra Psalms and additional scripture readings. As the service progresses the lights on the hearse are slowly extinguished until everyone is left in total darkness. Then, a loud noise is made symbolizing the resurrection, and a single, lit candle symbolizing the resurrection of Jesus is replaced in the center of hearse.

On Maundy Thursday the **Altar of Repose** is set up in the future Lady Chapel (i.e. the porch). After the Mass the Reserved Sacrament is carried in procession to this altar where it remains until Good Friday, where it is used in the service of the ‘Communion of the Pre-Sanctified’ or ‘Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday.’ The altar is made to look very peaceful and floral, as it represents the Garden of Gethsemane. It is traditional to keep a vigil before Christ present in the Sacrament as a way of keeping watch with him for one hour (Matthew 26:40). On Good Friday, the altar party processes to the Altar of Repose to retrieve the Holy Sacrament for Holy Communion, and then there is total desolation until the vigil service of Easter Even.

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One of the most interesting liturgical items used during Holy Week is the **Crotalus** (rattle). This replaces the bells which, after the *Gloria in Excelsis* on Maundy Thursday, cease to be rung until the Easter Vigil. They come in many styles. Ours is made of wood and is held by a handle and spun around. A ticker on the end of the handle flicks a loose piece of wood creating a loud rattle sound. (Note: *Crotalus* is the scientific name for rattlesnakes! Very appropriate for this time of year.) The crotalus is used in lieu of bells to start services from Good Friday until Easter Even.

On Easter Even the **Paschal Candle** appears. This is a very large candle which is solemnly blessed and lit on at the liturgy on Holy Saturday. It represents the risen Lord, and has five grains of incense, which signify his five wounds, placed on it in the shape of cross. It is

carried in procession to the sanctuary by a deacon or priest who chants "Light of Christ" three times during the procession. During the procession vigil or baptismal candles are lit from it. All of the other candles in the church are lit from this candle. Once it is in place in the sanctuary the chant *Exsultet* is sung by a deacon or priest, and the service continues. The candle remains near the altar throughout Eastertide until the Ascension Day. It is traditionally left burning the entire 40 days of Easter, though we cannot do that because ours is an oil candle and the oil runs out and must be refilled.

We hope you have enjoyed reading about these objects and some of the services and traditions surrounding them. It is these special traditions, handed on since ancient and medieval times, that help make our worship here at Saint Alban's so special. ☩

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SPIRITUALITY: *Reflections on the Spiritual Life from Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)*

HIDDEN GROWTH

All gardeners know the importance of good root development before we force the leaves and flowers. So our life and God should be deeply rooted and grounded before we presume to expect to produce flowers or fruits; otherwise we risk shooting up into one of those lanky plants which never do without a stick. We are constantly beset by the notion that we are to perceive ourselves springing up quickly, like the seed on stony ground; showing striking signs of spiritual growth. But perhaps we are only required to go on quietly, making root, growing nice and bushy, docile to the great slow rhythm of life.

When we see no startling marks of our own religious progress or our usefulness to God, it is well to remember the baby in the stable and a little boy in the streets of Nazareth. The very life was there presence which was to change the whole history of the human race; the rescuing action of God. At that stage there was not much to show for it; yet there is perfect continuity between the stable in the Easter Garden, and the thread that unites them is the hidden will of God. The childish prayer of Nazareth was the right preparation for the awful prayer of the cross.

So it is that the life of the spirit is to unfold gently and steadily within us; till at last the full stature for which God designed us is attained. ☩

PATIENCE WITH OURSELVES

Only the peace of God, a constant, turning in our prayers to His abiding tranquility, is going to make us realize that patience with ourselves is a duty for Christians, and the only real humility. For it means patience with a growing creature whom God has taken in hand, and whose completion he will affect in his own time, and in his own way.

"Rest in the lord, wait patiently on him, and he shall give me the hearts desire." (Psalm 37)

The more central this thought becomes the less difficult you will find its outward expression; that is to say, long-suffering and gentleness in all the encounters of every day life...

It is God who gives the conditions. Our part is to accept them with humility, and cultivate the quiet spirit of acceptance; to adjust our will to his great rhythm, and not waste the strength He has given us fighting against the stream.

"In the midst of the waters, I shall be with thee." (Isaiah 43:2) ☩

Ed. Note: Both selections taken from "An Anthology of the Love of God: From the Writings of Evelyn Underhill" (Mowbrays, 1953)

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

The Coronation of King Charles III

Interested in learning about the arcane history and amazing details about the English coronation liturgy? There is no better place to go than the YouTube channel “The Antiquary” by Allan Barton. <https://www.youtube.com/@allanbarton> Barton is a priest of the Church of England and also has a doctorate in art history. He has produced a whole selection of short, high quality videos on various aspects of the coronation service. I highly recommend his channel if you are interested in learning more about this rare and important religious and cultural event.

Annual Spring Clergy Retreat

The diocesan clergy retreat was held on April 24th-26th at the Trinity Center in Pine Knoll Shores, NC, which is at the southern end of the Outer Banks. Bishop Jones lead the retreat with a talk on the writings of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, an early Church Father. You can listen to his talk here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SziF3he8wPQ> Saint Ignatius’ writings established the ancient governance of the Church, which lives on in all of the branches of the catholic church today, and which is most evident in the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, and in the solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist by the people of God. It was an absolutely riveting talk by our bishop, who is truly a great public speaker. There was plenty of time for fellowship as well, and Fr. Anderson even brought his banjo to play music with some other priests who came!

Updated Website

Our website has been updated a bit. It now has a page that highlights our different ministries and events — both current and past. This is to make people looking at the church aware of all of the various ministries that we engage in and support. Just go the website and click on the “Ministries” tab at the top of the page to navigate to it. <http://www.saintalbansjoppa.org/ministries.html> Also note that when we begin the building project (see below) we will add a tab to the menu bar called “Building Project” that will contain information and resources for our expanded parking, new storm water management, and updated facilities.

Building Project Update

Members of the vestry met recently with our engineer, David Taylor, and site work contractor Peter Dacey. Mr.

Dacey, who is incredibly experienced and specializes in small project like ours, supplied the church with a quote to complete the site work for the project, which is the parking and stormwater management phase. The cost is approximately \$350k, which is an incredible price for all of the intricate work that is involved and also the fantastic results that we will see. Still we asked him to break the proposal into two chunks (Phase 1A and Phase 1B) to make fundraising more manageable. He was able to comply and split it almost evenly in two. When the entire vestry approves this proposal we will begin fundraising, and get to work on the project as soon as possible! Very soon, by God’s grace, we will be seeing dirt moved and holes being dug. Thank you for your continued support for this project!

Weekday Intercessory Prayer Group

Our intercessory prayer group meets in the parish hall once a week after the weekday Mass. All are welcome to attend this brief (10-15 minutes tops) prayer meeting lead by Father Anderson.

Summer Series on Prayer

Join us May, June, and July for our new summer series on prayer. The schedule will be as follows: Thursday, May 18th (Ascension Day) — Praying the Rosary; Thursday, June 8th (Corpus Christi) — Praying the Divine Office; Thursday, July 6th (Feria) — Praying with Icons, Medals, and other sacramentals. We will meet at 6:30 p.m. for dinner (provided) followed by instruction on the topic for that day. The goal is to introduce people to the various forms of prayer and meditation that we can use in our devotional life, and teach us *how* to use/do them.

“Grace, Grit, and Thanksgiving” Prayer and Fellowship Group

Join us on Tuesday, June 27th for the topic “How Your Spiritual Journey Brought You to St. Alban’s.” Weather permitting, this will be outdoors with food and bonfire.

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) ✠