

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Happy Easter! The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed. I hope you all had a spiritually fruitful Lent and Holy Week, and that your Easter celebrations with family and friends was wonderful. Holy Week and Easter is a lot like the Christmas season in the sense that it is easy for us to allow secular activities to overshadow the true, spiritual meaning of the days. In the spring, for example, a lot of families take vacations during Holy Week or Easter because the kids are off of school. This is fine so long as we keep up with our religious obligations. Some people grumble about how holidays are “ruined” by having to attend church services. Usually one hears this from the spiritually immature, such as children. But unfortunately it is not limited to them, as there are vast multitudes of spiritually immature adults dotting the landscape. To hear Christians complain about holidays being ruined by the church services that commemorate the very events that make these days holidays in the first place (N.B. “holiday” comes from the word “holy day”) is a sad commentary on the spiritual tenor of our hearts and lives. If Christians have that attitude then is it any wonder the world is in the state that it is? That attitude is indicative of hearts that have grown hardened to the things of God, and if we can't love God right, then it is impossible to love our neighbor right. Remember the order of the “Summary of the Law.” The first and greatest commandment is to love God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength; and the second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself. We have to get the first part right to truly fulfill the second part. Attitudes like the one I am describing, as found among Christians, stem in large part from ignorance of God. It is impossible to study the scriptures and have a life of prayer and fellowship with almighty God—a living relationship with him—and not be bowled over by his gracious love and mercy... the greatest example of which we see in the person of our Lord in his incarnation and earthly life, and finally in his passion, death, resurrection, and glorious ascension. The converted Christian internalizes these events. He sees that Jesus didn't do them in the abstract, or for only certain people who lived a long time ago, but that he did them for *him!* Jesus died on the cross, rose again from the dead for *me*, so *I* could have forgiveness of sin and eternal life. There are many reasons why people do not do this... their home life; the church they grew up in; or just general intellectual and spiritual density. But the fact is that until people actually begin to cultivate a personal relationship with God through prayer, worship, and fellowship, and begin to internalize what Jesus did for them on the cross, the dynamics and meaning of the religious life will remain at best a mystery to them, but more likely an afterthought... and that with devastating consequences. Stay close to our risen Lord and make time for him in your life!

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

April 2021

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UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

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.

May 10th, 11th, 12th - Rogation Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 13th - Ascension Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 24th, 25th - Monday & Tuesday in Whitsun Week

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 26th - Ember Wednesday in Whitsun Week

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

FOR ALL THE SAINTS: *Pope St. Leo the Great and St. Anselm of Canterbury*

This month we commemorate two of the most influential saints of the western Church: Pope Saint Leo the Great (April 13th) and Saint Anselm of Canterbury (April 21st). This month *The Centurion* looks at these two men and their incredible impact upon the Church.

Leo lived from about 400 - 461. Born in Tuscany, he was ordained a deacon when he was about thirty years, and ten years later he became the patriarch of the west, popularly known as the pope. One of his major political accomplishments as pope was meeting Attila the Hun in 452 and persuading him to stop his invasion of Italy.

He is best known, however, for his theological work, especially his participation in the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the Council of Chalcedon in 451. At this council the so-called “Tome of Leo” —a letter he wrote to Flavian, the Patriarch of Constantinople — was highly influential.

This letter explained to Flavian the Christological position of the papacy in reference to the controversies of the day which had to do with the person of Jesus... who he really was and how to understand him. Was he fully God or was he fully man? Who is he really? How do we understand him?

Those were the questions floating around at the time of Pope Leo, which questions the earlier councils addressed and defined as best they could. But at the Council of Chalcedon they were finally addressed for the catholic (universal) Church for all ages. The question raging was this: who was Jesus? was he God or was he man... or was he some combination of the two, and if so how and on what level?

Pope Leo explained that (to use modern terminology) since Jesus was 100% God and 100% man, he therefore, by definition, had two complete natures: a divine nature and a human nature. These two natures were not subsumed into one another, making another entirely new nature (the matter at hand at the Council of Chalcedon). Rather, they were united in one person... Jesus of Nazareth. This is the doctrine of the “hypostatic union”.

At the council people were so pleased with Leo’s explanation that they shouted “Peter has spoken!” (N.B. The pope is considered the successor of Saint Peter.) Leo’s doctrine is spelled out for us liturgically in the Creeds that we recite at Church: the Apostles’, Nicene, and (very rarely) Athanasian Creeds.

The other extremely influential saint we commemorate this month is Saint Anselm of Canterbury. Anselm lived from 1033-1109. He was born in France into a wealthy but somewhat dysfunctional family. The very religious Anselm desired to enter a monastery at 15 but was turned away because his father would not support the decision. Around the time he was 27 his father died, and so Anselm was finally able to enter a Benedictine monastery.

In 1079 he succeeded Lanfranc as Abbot of Bec, an important abbey in the Normandy region of France. Under his leadership Bec became one of the foremost centers of learning in Europe. There he wrote important theological and devotional treatises on a variety of subjects. In 1093 he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, a position he held until his death on April 21, 1109.

Although he was involved in a major political controversy of the day (the “Investiture Controversy”) which was quite important historically, here in the pages of *The Centurion* we want to save what little space we have to look at his most important contributions to western theology. Two of these stand out: the “Ontological Argument for the Existence of God” and the “Penal Substitutionary Theory of the Atonement.”

The ontological argument for God’s existence goes basically something like this: If God is the greatest and most powerful being that can be imagined (e.g. the creator and sustainer of all that is, etc.) then he must, by definition, exist. Because mere existence is far more simple than everything else —any other quality— that one can attribute to God. While various philosophers and theologians have poked holes in this argument over the centuries, it is still studied by students of those sciences, and even sometimes reformulated for contemporary use.

The “Penal Substitutionary” theory of the atonement (also called “Satisfaction Theory”) has to do with Christ’s death on the Cross for the salvation of humanity. It is the notion that man owed to God a debt for sin and that Jesus paid that debt on the cross. Put another way, God’s “justice” —the penalty for sin— has to be satisfied. Jesus provided this satisfaction on calvary. It was the universal theory in the west in the Middle Ages and was adopted and refined by the Protestant Reformers, especially John Calvin. But we really owe this idea almost entirely to Saint Anselm, the great medieval doctor of the western Church. ✠

CHURCH HISTORY: *Some Famous Alcoholic Beverages Made by Monks*

Now that Lent is over those who gave up alcohol can enjoy a nice drink or two. Did you know that there are many famous alcoholic beverages that were devised by monks? In many cases they are still made by monks and the recipe is a secret that has been handed down for many centuries within the community. In this issue of *The Centurion* we will look at a few notable beers, wines, and liquors that were devised by monks.

Chartreuse is a liquor made since the mid-1700's by the Carthusian monks of Le Grande Chartreuse monastery near Grenoble, France. It is the only naturally occurring green liquor. Its unique color and flavor comes from a proprietary blend of 130 herbs, plants, and flowers along with other ingredients. Only two monks know the secret recipe. The Carthusian Order was founded by St. Bruno in the mid-11th century. The name "chartreuse" means "charter house" which is what Carthusian monasteries are called. The Carthusians live a unique monastic life where each brother has his own hermitage, but each cell is connected to form a large community. So they live by themselves as hermits... yet within a larger body that gathers together almost exclusively for the reading of the office and celebration of the liturgy. In 2005 a documentary film about the order and their life at the Grande Chartreuse called "Into Great Silence" was released. It is a fascinating film to watch.

Benedictine is also a French liquor. As the name implies it is (according to legend) Benedictine in origin, and comes from a recipe from the Benedictine Abbey of Fécamp in Normandy where it was used as a medicine. Alas, this story cannot be verified. Some people think that the original maker "romanticized" a bit when he claimed to know whence the elixir came. Regardless of its origins it is a very good liquor, especially when mixed with brandy. In fact, there is a premixed version that you can buy called B&B, for "brandy and benedictine." The Benedictine Order was founded over 1500 years ago by Saint Benedict, the father of western monasticism. The order devotes its life to prayer and work. ("ora et labora"). They are responsible for many great cultural and scientific achievements. "The Rule of Saint Benedict" which he composed to govern the religious communities that he founded has been in constant use and adapted by other religious orders for centuries.

Leaving the world of liquor we go to the world of beer. One of the most famous beers made by men in the religious life is **Chimay** which is made by the

Trappist monks of the Scourmont Monastery in Belgium. It is part of a larger class of beer called "Trappist Ale" that is produced by Trappist monks and recognized by the International Trappist Association. An "ale" is a sweet, full-bodied beer with fruity notes. Monks produced ales (and other alcoholic beverages, as well as many other things, such as cheese) so they could support themselves. Although they drank some of it from time to time, it was mainly produced to generate income so they could live their monastic life and be independent. The Trappists are a subset of the Cistercian Order which was a reform of the Benedictine Order. So, to put it another way, Trappists are "extreme" Benedictine monks. They are known for their austerity. In fact there is a group of Trappists whose abbreviation is O.C.S.O. which stands for "Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance." The famous author and theologian Thomas Merton was a member of this order.

As far as **wine** is concerned there are far too many orders of monks that produce wine to mention here! One need only search on the internet to find religious wine makers in Germany, France, America, Italy, Austria, and elsewhere.

Keeping with the theme of Trappist Ale, there is an order of Trappist monks in California at the New Clairvaux Abbey who produce a number of excellent wines. The tradition of winemaking goes all the way back to the beginning of the Cistercian Order in France. As the abbey's website says, "*In 1098, a group of Benedictine monks broke off and established a monastery in a swampland called Citeaux in Burgundy, France. With vows of poverty and labor, they prospered. Soon they constructed an Abbey, drained the swampland and planted what is now one of the most famous vineyards in the world-- Clos De Vougeot. This new order of monks became known as Cistercians, and their legacy of winemaking would become renowned. Cistercian vineyards were planted throughout Europe; the monks were responsible for propagating varieties common to this day such as Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Tempranillo and Riesling. They also developed the viticultural practices of trellising and leaf thinning, and they determined that certain locations gave different grape varieties unique characteristics -- a term known to this day as "terroir."*

Do try some of these excellent products sometime and while doing so remember the words of Saint Paul to Saint Timothy: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5:23) ☩

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

New Monday Teaching Series

Join us each Monday on our parish Facebook Group for a half hour teaching session. This time of catechesis will feature a new topic each week. You can watch live on Facebook or you can view the video later that day on our YouTube channel.

Church Attendance

While our in person attendance is only at one third of what it was a year ago we many parishioners—and new people— watching us online each week! Just last week one of the videos of our Sunday service on Facebook had over 200 views. The latest Monday teaching series has (at last check) over 350 views on Facebook! Through technology we are able to reach more people than we have ever before. When we expand the interior of our building we will make sure to have studio quality lighting and make the space suitable not only for in person worship but also for online/video worship at the highest possible quality.

Building Plan Update

We are currently working with our neighbors and the engineer and our attorneys to come up with a plan to run a drainage pipe through part of their property. Please pray that it works out well for all of us! This will alleviate the occasional flooding of the field separating our properties and help with storm water management.

2021 Diocesan and Provincial Synod

Our synod will be held July 20th-23rd in Atlanta, Georgia, and will be hosted by St. Barnabas Church. At this synod Bishop Jones (former rector of this parish) will be elevated to primate of the Anglican Province of America and Bishop Ordinary of this Diocese. The Most Rev'd Walter Grundorf will be retiring from his office, as he has reached the canonical retirement age. But he will not be put out to pasture! Bishop Grundorf will still be assisting in the diocese and be very much a part of our lives. But do pray for Bishop Chad Jones as he succeeds +Walter in this important office and pray for the diocese and province as we transition.

Congratulations to Fr. Don Sackett

Former parishioner, Fr. Donald Sackett, has been made area dean of his deanery in the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth (ACNA). Fr. Don and his wife Paulette and

their lovely kids were very active members of this parish a number of years back. He eventually discerned a call to ordained ministry and matriculated to Nashotah House seminary in Wisconsin. He was ordained in our diocese by Bishop Grundorf and served parishes in North Carolina and Illinois before eventually entering the ACNA and taking a parish in Fort Worth. Congratulations to the Very Rev'd Fr. Don!

Spring and Summer Travel

Are you taking a trip anywhere this spring or summer? Vacation does not absolve us of our obligation to worship the Lord! If you need a recommendation for a church to attend when you are traveling please let the rector know and he will gladly assist you in finding one.

Shout Out

Thanks to Beth Dixon for creating a gorgeous replacement “apparel” (a piece that goes around the wearer’s neck) for one of the dalmatics for our black solemn high vestment set. The original had been lost. The set was given to the rector some years ago by a priest friend of his who was longtime rector at a venerable Anglo-Catholic parish in Baltimore City.

Thank You For Your Prayers

The Anderson family thanks everyone for the prayers and support during Valerie’s recent illness and surgery.

Thank You for Supporting Saint Alban’s

Thank you for supporting Saint Alban’s Anglican Church! We are entirely self-funded and not propped up by the diocese or a massive endowment. The biblical standard of giving for which we should aim is the “tithe” which means “10.” A tithe to the church is 10% of our income. Please give as generously as you are able to our work and ministry so we may continue to grow and worship the Lord and share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Standing Notices

“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) ☩