

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

This month is half Lent and half Easter. So this issue of *The Centurion* will contain articles and entries relative to each season. The last two weeks of the forty-day season of Lent is called "Passiontide." It begins with Passion Sunday and then continues the next week with Palm Sunday and Holy Week. I hope that you all will make it out to worship at our Holy Week services. Most people make an effort to attend church on Palm Sunday, but then a lot less come out during Holy Week, which is the most important week of the Christian year, the last three days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Even being the most important of that week. This low attendance happens despite the fact that we offer both morning and evening services on each day! If we fail to attend these services then there is no logical connection in our hearts and minds between the events of Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem and his glorious resurrection one week later. One day Jesus rides into Jerusalem. By the next Sunday he arose. What happened between all of that?? In other words, we are completely lost and bamboozled. So this Passiontide and Easter, don't be lost! Come out to all of the Holy Week services and journey with our Lord as he died and rose again to save us from sin and death! In the craziness and uncertainty of the world today we can have rest and comfort in our risen Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing that God is in control of the world and all of its events is quite reassuring. He has a mysterious, divine plan for all that is allowed happen on earth and in our lives. That being said, please do not get stressed out about the affairs of the world! Put your trust in the Lord and fear not. As I have said before, and will say again, *get off of the 24 hour news cycle and the endless doom and gloom of social and mainstream media! Almost all of it is just toxic mental and spiritual poison!* At the very least try to be extremely discriminating about what you choose to listen to or watch. I am on Facebook and use it mostly just to see cool pictures about architecture, fine art, and archeology. I also read a few comics ("The Far Side" group), study local history (various "Baltimore History" groups) and view updates from the very few "friends" that I actually follow. (I decided to stop following deranged and neurotic people a very long time ago, and, believe me, it has made life so much more relaxing.) That is pretty much all I use Facebook for personally. I also try to limit my time on other social media platforms as well, and limit how much news and opinion websites and services (mainstream and otherwise) that I consume. As for traditional and cable TV... it is almost a complete waste of time. Instead of doom and gloom let us fill our hearts with good things. In Philippians 4:8 Saint Paul says, *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

April 2022

IN THIS ISSUE:

Theology, p. 2

The Awareness of Evil

Liturgy, p. 3

The Services of Holy Week

Parish News, p. 4

Updates from St. Alban's

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

Apr 5th-6th Easter Monday & Easter Tuesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 25th - St. Mark

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 23rd-25th - Rogation Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 26th - Ascension Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

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.

THEOLOGY: *The Christian Mind (Part 2) — An Awareness of Evil*

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 supernatural orientation of the Christian mind. This month we look at its awareness of evil.

Blamires writes, "*The Church sums up, in the doctrine of Original Sin, the fact that men and women are drawn towards evil by weaknesses in their fallen nature. The magnitude and variety of the evil forces waiting to ensnare the human soul are hinted at in the triple formulation, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. If anyone needs to be convinced that the Church's view of human nature and the human situation is neither sentimental nor a rose-tinted one, let him read through the Book of Common Prayer, and note how often it refers to man's desperate struggle against the powers of evil.*" (p. 81)

The Christian mind is aware of evil. There is evil in the world because the world is inhabited by fallen humanity, which has inherited the weakness known as "original sin" from Adam and Eve. Sinful, fallen people then go on to commit their own sins that make their lives and the world miserable, and for which they will one day be judged by God. The consequence of original sin is called "concupiscence" which is the loss of the ability of our reason to control the desires of the flesh. Or put another way, the flesh is no longer subordinated to reason because of concupiscence, which is the material element of the loss of righteousness, or original sin. (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church)

Strictly speaking, the secular mind does not believe in good or evil because there is no way to account for such things within the secular conceptual framework. To say that something is "good" or "evil" —for example the Holocaust— is to assume that there is a universal standard of good by which that event or thing is judged. In comparison to that "standard" the event or thing is judged to be good or evil, or right or wrong. The secular mind cannot account for moral standards because the secular worldview cannot account for universal abstract entities such as logic, reason, or laws.

Though secular people use the categories of 'good and evil' to (often correctly) describe certain things they are being philosophically inconsistent with their worldview.

The Christian Mind finds the universal standard of good in God the Holy Trinity. Things and actions are good because they reflect the nature of God. They are not good simply because God 'declares' them to be good. In other words, God could not have commanded Moses "Thou shalt DO murder," therefore making murder 'good' and preserving innocent human life 'bad.' Actions are not good or bad just because God says so, but rather because they really and truly reflect his divine and perfect character.

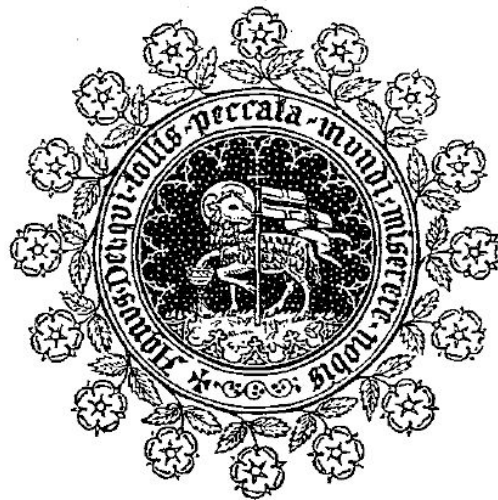
Now when God created the universe he declared every created thing to be "good."

In Genesis chapter 1, as God brought each element of nature into existence it says, "and God saw that it was good." The point that the author of this section of Genesis is trying to make is that all physical things are fundamentally good. 'Evil' is not a thing and does exist in the way that a strawberry or a blue whale exists. 'Evil' exists as a privation of the good. 'Evil' comes about when something good is misused and twisted from its God-ordained purpose.

The Christian Mind, then, is aware of evil. Temptation to sin comes from the world, the flesh, or the devil (or a bizarre

combination of the three). Because of Original Sin and the concupiscence it engenders human beings are constantly drawn towards evil... to ruin God's purpose for themselves and the rest of the created world by taking his excellent gifts and using them to do bad rather than good.

Because in the secular mind there is no God there is, therefore, no good or evil. Alas, all that worldview has done is lead us to the incredible bloodshed of the 20th century and beyond. For as Dostoevsky said in *Brothers Karamazov*, "Without God and immortal life all things are permitted then, they can do what they like." Or put another way, "Without God, all things are permissible." ✠



LITURGY: *Information about the Major Services of Holy Week*

The Anglican Service Book was a liturgical resource put together by the Episcopal, Anglo-Catholic parish, Church of the Good Shepherd in Rosemont, PA in 1991. It sought to combine elements of the old missals and traditional Prayer Book with elements of the new 1979 Prayer Book. Long out of print, this book is still edifying and useful in a lot of ways. In particular it has some wonderful introductions to the Holy Week services that are reprinted here for your edification. Saint Alban's will be having each of these services on Holy Week at 6:30 p.m. Please come out and join us for them!

Tenebrae — April 13th at 6:30 p.m. on “Spy Wednesday” (Wednesday before Easter)

Tenebrae is a Latin word meaning “darkness,” and is the popular name for the special forms of the offices of Mattins and Lauds appointed for the last three days of Holy Week. Because it is now nearly universal practice to hold the liturgies of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in the evening, it has become customary, in some places, to offer Tenebrae in the evening on Holy Wednesday, at times drawing elements from Tenebrae of Good Friday and Easter Even. Perhaps the most striking feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of the candles until only one is left, which is then concealed for a time until a loud noise is made (signifying the earthquake at the time of the Resurrection), whereupon the hidden candle is restored to its place in anticipation of the Resurrection. The congregation departs in silence.

Maundy Thursday — April 14th at 6:30 p.m.

This day receives its name from the *mandatum* or the “new commandment” given by our Lord. At the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples feet and commanded them to love and serve one another as he had done. The service begins with a festal character: white vestments are worn; the *Gloria in excelsis* is sung; additional candles may be lit. This service has been called “a burst of sunshine in the gathering gloom.” We are once remember the joy of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the love and service which Jesus lived and taught, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and the betrayal leading to the crucifixion. The bread and wine of the Last Supper are given a new meaning by the body broken and blood poured out on the cross. Sufficient bread and wine may be consecrated on the stay for the mass of the pre-sanctified on Good Friday. The Sacrament is then taken to an altar of repose where the faithful are asked to “watch and pray.” The

altar, symbolic of Christ, is stripped of its vesture and the building is left bare for the solemnity of Good Friday.

Good Friday — April 15th at 6:30 p.m.

This most solemn of all days should be marked by fasting, abstinence, and penance, leading us to focus on Jesus upon the cross. The bare, stark appearance of the church serves as a reminder of the solemnity and sorrow of the day. The Lord of Life was rejected, mocked, scourged, and then put to death on the cross. The faithful need to be mindful of the part which their own sins played in this suffering and agony, as Christ took all sin upon himself, in obedience to the Father's will. By the cross we are redeemed, set free from bondage to sin and death. The cross is a sign of God's never-ending love for us. It is a sign of life, in the midst of death. The service on this day consists of three parts: lessons and prayers (including the recital of Saint John's Passion); veneration of the cross (a devotion showing our love and thankfulness for the gift of life given us by Jesus' death; and the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified (using elements consecrated on Maundy Thursday).

Easter Even (also known as “Holy Saturday”) and the Great Vigil of Easter — April 16th at 6:30 p.m.

Easter Even and the Great Vigil of Easter is perhaps the most theologically important service of the Church Year. In it the new fire of God is struck, banishing darkness, and showing forth the victory won on Good Friday; the saving acts of God in history are recounted in the *Exsultet* and in scripture; new Christians are made through the sacrament of Holy Baptism; the vows made by all Christians are there baptisms are renewed; and with the end of the Lenten observance, the first mass of the joyful season of Easter is celebrated. The Vigil is not a short service. It marks time in the evening, while people await the announcement of the Resurrection: “Alleluia. Christ is risen!” He is risen indeed, and the Paschal candle burns as a sign of the presence of the resurrected Christ. ☩

(Ed. Note: Please remember to check our complete list of Lenten and Holy Week services online, as we will also have brief morning and noonday services each day of Holy Week.)

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

Special Thanks

We are so grateful to our dear friend Fr. Bill Smith for giving us a pair of brass candlesticks that once adorned Prince of Peace Episcopal Church in Fallston. They are inscribed “*To the Glory of God in Loving Memory of Annie M. Miller.*” Prince of Peace was the parish whence most of our original members came back in the early 1980’s. Although it permanently closed in the early 1990’s its memory lives on here at Saint Alban’s through appointments like these and others that are still in regular use today.

Habits of the Spiritual Life

Sometimes people say, “All that churchgoing is only a habit.” I actually agree. There are, of course, good habits and bad habits. If we don’t brush our teeth, they fall out. If we eat only junk food, we get fat. If we don’t use our brain, we begin to lose it. Habitual church attendance is essential for many reasons but certainly chief among them is the ministry of Word and Sacrament. You can’t receive the sacraments on the computer, TV, or through the mail. If you never receive Holy Communion you begin to discard the most precious gift, we have from God. Conversely, if you go faithfully to church, in sunshine or rain, whether you feel like it or not, you become stronger and stronger in the grace of God.

-The Rev’d John Klein, SSC, Vicar of St. James the Great Anglican Church in Smiths Station, Alabama

Quote of the Month — Fasting

“Do not limit the benefit of fasting merely to abstinence from food, for a true fast means refraining from evil. Loose every unjust bond, put away your resentment against your neighbor, forgive him his offenses. Do not let your fasting lead only to wrangling and strife. You do not eat meat, but you devour your brother; you abstain from wine, but not from insults. So all the labor of your fast is useless.”

Saint Basil the Great (quoted from “The Time of the Spirit: Readings Through the Christian Year”, SVS Press)

The Face of God

The religious frame of mind involves two ‘moments’ - as Hegel might put it. There is the moment of communion, and the moment of gift. The religious person is the one who experiences the deep need to

give thanks; and he experiences this need as a communal impulse, something that he shares and which brings him together with a community, even if only it would-be community, a ‘communion of saints’ whose ‘Holy City’ has yet to be realized on earth. His need to give thanks is not circumstantial but metaphysical. It is rooted in the experience of being itself, in his way of understanding what it is to be. Being, for the religious person, is a gift, not a fact. It is through understanding this that we overcome our metaphysical loneliness, and understanding we require privation and suffering, through which we discard the dross of our own distractions. Hence the world, and the objects contained in it, come before the religious consciousness as the signs of another perspective — the perspective that has ‘given these things to me’. That perspective is hidden from us in the way every other ‘I’ is hidden. But like those other ‘I’s’ it can appear in our world as a *real presence*. The gathering together of the community in the moment of thanks prepares the way for this.

-Sir Roger Scruton, “The Face of God”, p. 171

Superior Touch

Special thanks to Superior Touch Lawn Care for the excellent landscaping job they did for the church recently! Superior Touch mows in the summer, plows snow in the winter, and twice a year does mulching and landscaping for the church. They also do residential work! So if you are looking for a great company to do some work at your house call Superior Touch Lawn Care today.

Baltimore Brass Works

Many people ask where we take our church brass to be cleaned and restored. The church uses Baltimore Brass Works in Essex (1732 Eastern Blvd.). This small, family-owned company is the best place to have your brass restored. They restore any brass items that are in need of a little tender loving care and always have the best prices.

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) ☩