

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

At the end of this month, at our annual diocesan synod and triennial provincial synod, an historic event will have happened in the life of our small province and diocese: our bishop co-adjutor, the Right Reverend Chandler Holder Jones, SSC, will be elevated to bishop ordinary of the diocese, and archbishop of the Anglican Province of America. From then on he will be styled, "The Most Rev'd." We wish Bishop Jones (or "Bishop Chad" as he prefers to be called) all the very best as he assumes the leadership of our diocese and province. He has been a priest and bishop for over 25 years, and has been studying under our retiring bishop, the Most Rev'd Walter H. Grundorf, D.D. So Bishop Chad is, by the grace of God, ready for the task before him. Our retiring bishop and primate, Bishop Grundorf, has done a stellar job over the years serving the Lord. As a result God has blessed us with a small but stable and growing diocese that proclaims the gospel in word and deed here in America and the world over. While other traditional "continuing" Anglican jurisdictions were busy fighting with one another, Bishop Grundorf stayed off by himself and with his people — lay and ordained — slowly building the Church and spreading the Kingdom of God in its traditional Anglican expression. I have known Bishop Grundorf for twenty years, and I never once heard him complain about anything or speak badly of another person. He is a true man of God who striven to be faithful to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in all matters. As he steps down from full time, active diocesan ministry we say what we trust the Lord will say of him in the end: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Mt. 25:21) Stepping into his shoes will be Bishop Chad Jones, a man whom I've known for almost thirty years. I was the very first man he sent to seminary who went through with being ordained to the priesthood. I served as an acolyte at his wedding, and years later nominated him for the office of suffragan bishop for the diocese. He is like a brother to me, and I know that our diocese will be in good hands under his pastoral care. He known (literally) *around the world*, and held in the highest esteem for his godliness and incredible intellect. And yet he's a just cool, normal guy with whom you'd love to sit and have a beer, go fishing, or discuss books and culture. Bishop Chad gets along with everyone. He has been happily married to Megan for over twenty-five years and they have two boys and two girls. He studied theology at Duke Divinity School in Durham NC and at the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception (aka "Dominican House") in Washington DC. He has served as a parish priest as curate or rector at least six churches in his ecclesiastical career. Indeed one of the churches where he served as associate priest and later as rector was right here at Saint Alban's in Joppa, Maryland! Please pray for +Walter as he retires, and +Chad as he begins his ministry as diocesan bishop of our diocese and archbishop of our church.

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

July 2021

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Christian Year, p. 2

An Independence Day Sermon

Current Events, p. 3

Christians and Race

Parish News, p. 4

Updates from St. Alban's

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

July 2 - Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Aug 6 - Transfiguration

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Aug 24 - St. Bartholomew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 8 - Nativity of the BVM

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 15, 17, 18 - Ember Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 21 - St. Matthew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sep 29 - St. Michael & All Angels

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Oct 18 - St. Luke

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Oct 28 - Ss. Simon & Jude

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 1 - All Saints'

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

 THE CHRISTIAN YEAR: *An Independence Day Sermon by the Right Rev'd Chandler Holder Jones, SSC*

Happy Independence Day! For what are we thankful this day? The reason for our gratitude on this July 4th is not that we are free of Great Britain – the United Kingdom is our best friend internationally, our father culturally and linguistically, and our mother religiously. The reason for our gratitude is that we are in a country in which we are still free to come to Church without having a policeman take down our names. The reason for our gratitude is that no government official checked this sermon before it was preached. The reason for our gratitude is that people have been willing to give up their lives to make certain that all this remains true. It is an indescribable blessing to live in the United States of America.

But today is not a day for triumphalism. According to Pew Research, although 70% of Americans still sometimes identify as being some form of Christian when the mood strikes them, the percentage of those with no religious faith has skyrocketed in recent years. When folks report their actual beliefs, 46% of Americans are nons, agnostics, atheists, unbelievers, almost half the population. To be blunt, secularism and materialism are eroding the fabric, morality, and foundation of American society. What made Western civilisation possible is slipping away – our Christian faith, as a nation, a culture, a society. We are living in a post-Christian, or more true still, a pre-Christian society now, an age more like the first century than the eighteenth when America became its own nation. The mission field is outside our front door. America can no longer be said to a Christian country in any meaningful sense. The challenge for us is – what are we going to do about it? How seriously do we take the call to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ as the true King and bring all people under His allegiance and the sway of His gracious dominion? Dare we serve as witnesses of Christ in this generation? Do our lives reflect the love, the goodness, the beauty, and the truth as it is in Jesus?

We are at the end of Christendom. Not the end of Christianity or Christ's Holy Church, but Christendom. Christendom is economic, political, social life as inspired by Christian principles. That is ending — we have seen it die. We see the litany of symptoms: the assault on traditional marriage, the disintegration of the nuclear family, fatherless homes, the scourge of abortion and euthanasia, substance abuse, sexual immorality, the attempted overturn of God's order in creation through gender ideology, record-breaking violence and crime, homelessness and poverty, economic, political, and racial discrimination, general corruption. In short, it looks like

a culture devoid of genuine love, love of God and love of neighbour.

What caused all of this? Three assumptions. 1. Man has no other function in life than to produce and acquire wealth. 2. The idea that man is naturally good and has no need of God to give him rights, or a Redeemer to save him from guilt, because human progress is automatic and will one day make man a kind of deity. And 3. the idea that reason is not for discovering the meaning and goal of life, namely the salvation of the soul, but merely to devise technology to make on this earth a city of man to displace the city of God. Sounds familiar doesn't it? As a result of all of this, people are indeed looking anew for absolutes, for objective truth. Our struggle in America today is for the souls of men. The conflict is about truth. It is between the absolute who is the God-Man Jesus Christ and the absolute which is the man-god; the God Who became Man in Christ Jesus and the man who makes himself his own god; brethren in Christ or followers of anti-Christ. It's really that simple.

The gates of hell will not prevail against the Holy Catholic Church. We know that in the end Christ will ultimately prevail and draw the human race to Himself. God loves every human being, and His love, His truth will overcome evil. Truth is vindicated by the ruin that follows when it has been repudiated. The chaos of our times is the strongest negative argument that could ever be advanced for Christianity. The collapse following an abandonment of God becomes a triumph of meaning, a reaffirmation of purpose. Adversity is the expression of God's condemnation of evil, the registering of Divine Judgement. Catastrophe reveals that evil is self-defeating; we cannot turn from God without hurting ourselves. The only way out of the 21st century American crisis is spiritual, because the trouble is not in the way we keep our politics or finances, but in the way we keep our souls. The time of reckoning is nearer than we think. The most important problem in the world today is your soul, for that is what the struggle is about.

It's time to make the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrament of Penance the centre of our lives. Conversion must be a daily turning to God. Tend to your soul. Repent and believe the Gospel. Stay close to Jesus. Love God. Love your neighbour as yourself. Proclaim and share the love, mercy, and grace of Christ with everyone. *Ye* are the light of the world. This nation needs God. Let us pray for the United States of America, for her peace, protection, and prosperity – and above all, for her deepest and most profound conversion to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. God bless America. ✠

CURRENT EVENTS: *Christians and Race*

A little over a year ago the nation and world watched in horror as George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer. The fallout from that event was felt across the country, as people rose up in protest and riots, and demanded changes in policing, among other things. Legacy media and other organizations and people then sought to frame the George Floyd murder and its aftermath as a referendum on race relations in America, declaring that America always was, and still is, a racist nation. Ever since then (and actually going back a number of years before then) Americans have been forced to view all of life through the lenses of “race.” Racialism is now injected into sports, food, academics, graduations, corporate life, church, and more, with the result being more bitterness and resentment among people. Woe to the legacy media, politicians, and other cultural leaders here in America for fanning the flames of division! Sadly, this behavior —this enthronement of racial identity politics over everything else— is par for the course for secular, postmodernists.

Christians, however, are called to a higher understanding than “race” of the human person. The scriptures teach that all people are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). And Saint Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28, *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”* What we learn from Genesis that every single person, no matter his sex, race, intelligence level, physical fitness level, etc. is a very reflection of his creator, God the Holy Trinity. We show forth his image most especially in our rationality and freedom which are the primary characteristics which differentiate us from the lower things of the creation. What we learn from Saint Paul is that Christians — those who have faith in Christ and have been baptized into him— are not to view themselves primarily as part of an ethnic group (Jew or Greek), a social standing (slave or free), or even a sex (male or female) but as members of the Body of Christ... as Christians.

Our loyalty to Christ trumps all other loyalties in life. We must be faithful to him, and align ourselves with him over any other creed, calling, or person. In Matthew 10:37 Jesus says, *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”* We also note in the Gospels how the disciples abandoned their earthly vocations (fishing, tax collecting, etc.) in order to follow Jesus. *“Come, follow Me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’ And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.”* (Matthew 4:19-20) Any Christian whose

primary loyalty is to a movement, a race, a political party, or a person is not being a faithful to Jesus Christ.

Our loyalty to Christ compels us to love all people. *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”* (Mark 12:30-31) We are not allowed to only love people that look like us, act like, and share the same interests and culture. God loves all people (John 3:16) and therefore we ought to strive to love all people too. Jesus goes even further, by the way, inasmuch as he says, *“I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”* (Matthew 5:44) Any Christian who hates a person for their race, or any other reason for that matter, is not being faithful to Jesus Christ.

Our incorporation into the Mystical Body of Christ —the Church— is an incorporation into a “catholic” body. In the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds we say that we believe the Church to be “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” The Book of Common Prayer says that the Church is called “catholic” *“because it is universal, holding earnestly the Faith for all time, in all countries, and for all people; and is sent to preach the Gospel to the whole world.”* (BCP, p. 291) That the Church is catholic naturally means that it is interracial and multi-ethnic. The Body of Christ is not for “whites” only, or “blacks” only... it is for everyone, and made up of everyone.

This is something that we see clearly in the scriptures. In the Acts of the Apostles we read of a controversy in the ancient Church where it was thought that one had to become Jewish in order to become a Christian. Put another way, some thought that the Church was destined to be a sect of Judaism, and that Gentiles could not join her and get involved in her life. But the Lord gave a vision to Saint Peter that showed him otherwise. (See Acts 10-11) We remember from the story of the Presentation of Christ in the temple (Luke 2:21 ff.) the words of the aged Simeon, who lifted Jesus into his arms and said that Jesus would be *“a light to lighten the gentiles.”* (2:32)

Christians, we see, are called to transcend the racist narratives of the day and give themselves wholly to love of God and neighbor. The Church is our family. Our identity is as children of God through faith in Christ, and it is to him that we owe our primary obedience. ☩

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

Holy Water Vat

The church has acquired a large, five gallon holy water vat in memory of the late Kim Rutledge that will soon be placed in the parish hall. This is where you can go to fill up your bottles of holy water that you use to bless yourself, your families, and your homes. Holy water is what is called a “sacramental”, which is a symbol that is used to remind us of God’s grace given to us in the Holy Sacraments. The most obvious association with holy water is the sacrament of Holy Baptism. When we bless ourselves with holy water, we remind ourselves that we have been cleansed by Christ, and are the children of God. And when we bless objects with holy water we are saying that those objects are now “holy” unto the Lord, and to be used for his glory and honor. As a gift in honor of our dear sister Kim, we remember what holy water means, and how important it is, to those who are ill and in need of healing. What the vat means for the church practically is that people do not have to come to rector to ask for holy water and wait for him to bless it for you... everyone can get it whenever needed.

Bishop Jones Appoints His New Episcopal Staff... and a bit about titles, and more

On a conference call this month Bishop Jones announced the following appointments. Frs. Mike Ward and Mark Menees: archdeacons; Fr. Matt Harlow: canon to the ordinary; Fr. Erich Zwingert, SSC: prebendary; Fr. Glenn Spencer: canon theologian; Charles Miller, Esq.: chancellor; Lisa Ulrich: executive secretary; Fr. Wade Miller: canon missionary; and Fr. J. Gordon Anderson: canon for arts and liturgy. The archdeacons are styled as “The Venerable” while the other clergy are styled as “The Rev’d Canon.” Inasmuch as Fr. Anderson is “area dean” of the Mid-Atlantic Deanery he will continue to be styled as “The Very Rev’d.” But should another dean be appointed by the bishop Fr. Anderson would then be styled “The Rev’d Canon.” A “canon” is a person who is on the staff of the bishop and diocese, so technically even lay persons can be made canons. Clergy canons typically carry that title with them throughout their ministry. Archdeacons assist with managing the affairs of the diocese, and stand in for the bishop in various aspects of church order and liturgy. A prebendary is sort of like a combination of an archdeacon and canon. Our prebendary will assist in all diocesan functions —run the synods, the publishing house, the communications, and more, as well as act as an advisor to the

archdeacons and new bishop ordinary. All of these men are married fellows with families, and have been pastors of parishes for many years, and therefore have probably 200+ years combined of ministry experience. In terms of our “cathedral” (the “seat” or headquarters of the bishop) we will have two co-cathedrals: our original one in Oviedo, FL (St. Alban’s), and our new one in Atlanta, GA (St. Barnabas). Note that this is not unlike the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore here in our own town, which has not one, but two cathedrals: the older Basilica of the Assumption, and the newer Cathedral of Mary our Queen.

Me Witness?

If Christ’s love has warmed your home, tell someone.

If in worship you have come close to God, declare it.

If prayer has shown you the power of God, say so.

If through Christ you have found forgiveness and the power to forgive, let someone know.

If the church has given you a chance to serve the God you love, tell someone.

If God has worked a miracle in your life, say so.

Say so... in your business, to your friends, in your home, as you travel and while you play, through your church, with your lips, by your life.

Whenever and wherever God gives you the chance, say so!

No one else can be as effective a good news teller, an evangelist, to your friends as you can.

With a genuine Christian you cannot tell where religion stops and living begins or where living stops and religion begins.

Anonymous

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) ✠