

# The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

This time of year —the end of September and the beginning of October— is very meaningful to me because it was sixteen years ago that I was ordered deacon and then, one week later, married. Ministry and marriage have been so very rewarding, indeed in more ways than I could list here. But they also have not been without challenge. In the tradition of the Church holy orders and matrimony are each sacraments. They are not, strictly speaking, necessary for salvation —not everyone is called to marry or take holy orders— but they are sacraments nonetheless, meaning they are means of grace and unique states of life to which God calls certain people for the salvation of their souls. On my ten year ordination anniversary, when our friend Fr. Bill Smith happened to be visiting, I said during announcement time that my ten years of ministry and marriage paled in comparison to that of some people... namely, him with his 40+ years of each under his belt! He very generously and wisely quipped, “Uh, ten years is nothing to scoff at. You have already outlasted most people in both ministry and marriage!” And actually he is right. A lot of clergy are luck if they can last five years (the average for Roman Catholic priests), and eight years in marriage (the average in the United States). The grace conveyed to the recipients of these sacraments helps them maintain that state. The laying on of hands at ordination not only conveys a special gift of the Holy Ghost to perform the duties of the office (deacon, priest, or bishop), but also enables the ordinand to maintain in the ministry. Likewise in Holy Matrimony the grace of the sacrament enables the husband and wife to live the married life and make it through the occasional difficulties and trials that arise. The key to God’s grace — whether it is received via the sacraments, or through some infusion of the Holy Spirit— is that it is a gift! And a gift has to be opened for it to be appropriated and used. The gift has to be cultivated and nurtured for it to have its full effect in our lives. Far too many people in these states —clergy and married— fail to nurture the grace given them, and then when the inevitable hard times come they fold like a wet paper towel. God gives us his grace, which is his unmerited favor and power and love, do we make use of it in our lives? Does the seed that is planted in us at Holy Baptism, or the power given in Confirmation grow into something great within us, or do we hardly give it a thought, or hardly ever read the Bible and pray, and so as a result the gift just stagnates? One of the best ways to stir up in our hearts and memories the grace God has given to us in the sacraments is to go back to the Prayer Book from time to time and read the old rites and services of baptism, confirmation, matrimony, ordination, etc., which will help us remember all that God has done and is still doing in our lives. Read through some of those offices in the Prayer Book every now and then, especially when you feel the weight of the world on your shoulders. You’ll be glad you did.

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

October 2021

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Liturgy, p. 2**

*A Reflection on the Collect for the 20th Sunday after Trinity*

**Spirituality, p. 3**

*What is the spiritual life?*

**Parish News, p. 4**

*Updates from St. Alban's*

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

**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.

**Nov 2 - All Souls'**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Nov 25 - Thanksgiving Day**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Nov 30 - St. Andrew**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Dec 8 - Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Dec 15, 17, 18 - Ember Days**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Dec 21 - St Thomas**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Dec 24 - Christmas Eve**

Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.

LITURGY: *The Cheerful Soul — A Reflection on the Collect for the 20th Sunday after Trinity by the J.W.C. Wand*

**The Collect for Trinity XX — Sunday, October 17, 2021**

O Almighty and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (BCP p. 217)

**W**e all know the difference between the person of whom without any hesitation we are prepared to ask a favor and the one whom we would never dream of approaching except under dire necessity. The former is 'good-natured,' the latter surly or selfish. They represent two entirely different, and indeed opposed, dispositions.

The essence of the Collect for Trinity XX is the prayer for a cheerful disposition. We would all like to be of that type if we could: it is obviously much pleasanter for ourselves, as well as for all who are brought in contact with us. But before we can get to that point there is a certain preparation to be made.

We begin by appealing to God's bountiful goodness and asking him to keep us from all that may hurt us, whether in body or soul. This is obviously necessary if we are to do things cheerfully, or 'at the double,' as the soldiers say. If one has suffered some physical injury and can only limp along, one cannot *spring* to fulfill an order.

Jesus urged his disciples not to be afraid of mere bodily injury and only to fear God, who had power to damage both body and soul. Actually in this prayer we ask to be guarded against both kinds of injury. We wish to be ready and willing in every part of our personality so that with our whole being we can leap smilingly to fulfill our Lord's behest.

What then can really hurt us? Only separation from God. It is when we are no longer in contact with him that we become peevish, sulky, impatient. It is then that we are no longer in the right attitude of mind and may become guilty of real moral lapse.

God's goodness is so bountiful, overflowing, and if we ask him, he will guard us against such lapses, holding us more firmly by the hand we have already placed in his. His love, his geniality will flow into our hearts, melt the incipient hardness and coldness of our mood, and induce in us a spirit of willingness and ready cooperation.

So we shall be ready both in body and soul. Our responses will be lively and natural. It is important that our cheerfulness should not be forced. Few things can be more trying than an obviously determined gaiety that ignores realities and insists on smiling in season

and out of season. In the end it becomes sheer hypocrisy and drives more honest people into rigidity and frigidity. No, our readiness to smile must be the natural expression of a right disposition. It is in the very springs of character that our readiness must be felt.

That this relaxation will always be possible is not to be expected. There are times when sheer physical tiredness or actual ill-health may make our faces too stiff to smile. Anyone who has stood at the receiving end of a very long line of guests will know how painful the strain on the facial muscles can be!

More often the stiffness is not in the body but in the soul. The accidie (i.e. listlessness, torpor) of which the old masters of the spiritual life used to complain was a weariness of the whole personality. Often deriving from dullness, monotony, or prolonged spiritual exertion, it might be helped by spiritual or physical change. Always, however, the readiness is the important things. To be on the watch, waiting for the Master's appearance, refusing to be afraid or overanxious, we shall be in the best mood to respond instantaneously to his call.

So we come to the cheerful accomplishment of the things God would wish to have done. In the final resort these are the first to have a proper recognition of his 'glory' and then to prepare the way for the coming of his perfect kingdom. But on the way to this final goal the 'things he would have done' apply to every detail of daily life in which a decision has to be made. We are set about the whole business of life in a spirit of natural cheerfulness.

We are not to be like the guest who surlily refused to put on the ceremonial robe provided for the wedding feast. We are to enter whole-heartedly into the scheme of things organized by the Creator and Redeemer of the universe. God invites our co-operation: we must jump to give it with both hands. ☩

*John William Charles Wand was the Lord Bishop of London from 1945-1955. This is from his book "Reflections on the Collects" (Mowbrays, 1964)*

SPIRITUALITY: *What is the spiritual life?*

Our best friends, the saints in glory and the faithful on earth, are praying that we may be blessed “in the spiritual life.” But what do we mean by the spiritual life?

The spiritual life is a life both of vision and of action. Those who are spiritually alive and not spiritually dead come to see that the life of Jesus Christ is the light of men. Likewise, they come to consider that their primary daily activity is uniting themselves with Him who is the light.

Does this mean that the spiritual life begins with man's efforts? By no means. The spiritual life begins with God. In the Creed we Christians affirm “I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life.” The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Holy Ghost, is the author of the spiritual life for you and for me. He it is who shows us Jesus, the divine Son, who in turn reveals to us the Father. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” was the reply given by our blessed Lord to St. Philip as he impatiently pleaded “Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us.” Unlike St. Philip, you and I may not see Jesus walking about our streets and lanes but we may turn to the Holy Ghost as we pray “Enable with perpetual light the dulness of our blinded sight.” In answer to our prayer the Holy Ghost will give us the eyes of faith with which to see Jesus on His throne in heaven, in the Sacred Host at the Holy Mass, through the pages of the holy Gospel and reigning over the hearts of His loved ones.

Not only does the Holy Ghost show us Jesus, but He gives us that “fire of love” which so enflames our hearts that we *will* to use every means of grace to effect a union with Jesus, whether the means of grace be a Sacrament of Holy Church or an act of self-surrender in vocal or mental prayer. Yes, it is the Holy Ghost who is the author of the spiritual life for you and for me.

Unless, however, we men and women of free wills cooperate with the Holy Ghost, we cannot attain to the joys of the spiritual life. There are so many well-meaning Christians whose life is mainly a response to daily activities such as work, amusements, exercise, and meals. Such life is an outward life. In contrast to this there is an inward life which can be lived only as we respond to the Holy Ghost who will show us Jesus and unite us to Him through the Sacraments of Holy Church, through our prayers, through the pricking of conscience and through the desire to resist the temptation to sin.

May we never be content to live a butterfly type of existence, responding merely to outward things and never looking within! Rather may we by the power of the Holy Ghost live the spiritual life, firmly convinced that the life which the world offers, no matter how pleasant or innocent it may be, is after all, a mere shadow and that the only real life is that lived in the light of Jesus Christ and in union with Him! ✠

*Veni, Creator Spiritus*

“Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire.  
Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.  
Thy blessed unction from above,  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.  
Enable with perpetual light  
The dulness of our blinded sight.  
Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of thy grace.  
Keep far our foes, give peace at home;  
Where thou art guide, no ill can come.  
Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
And thee, of both, to be but One;  
That, through the ages all along,  
This may be our endless song:  
Praise to thy eternal merit,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

(Book of Common Prayer, p. 543-544)



FROM THE VAULT: *Catholic or Protestant?* by the Fr. Jack Cooper

The word “Protestant” is often loosely—and to a large extent inaccurately—applied to Anglican churches. It is unfortunate that many Anglicans think of themselves as “Protestants.” In fact, Anglicanism is “Protestant” only in a most limited sense. It is Protestant in that it “protested” against and rebelled from the supreme authority of the Pope over all other bishops. It is also Protestant in that it “protested” against and set out to reform the many abuses which had crept into the worship and faith of the Roman Church of which the English Church had so long been a part.

In these limited senses, Anglicanism is indeed “Protestant,” and honorably so. However, the objection to thinking of Anglicanism primarily in terms of “Protestant” is that it serves to obscure the fact that, theologically and historically, Anglican churches are Catholic. They retain the full and complete faith of Christianity, in its sacramental form, they are in continuity with the primitive Church, adhere to the ancient Creeds, and base themselves firmly on the Scriptures. These, after all, are the marks of Catholicism, shared with the Eastern Orthodox, the

Roman Catholics, the Old Catholics, some Lutherans, and others.

Catholicism goes back to the beginning. Protestantism stems essentially from the 16th century, and marks a break theologically as well as organizationally with the established, historic forms of Christianity.

Anglicans can honor the Protestant churches, and can agree with them in some points. But Anglicans should never forget those marks of the full and complete Catholic faith which set them apart from Protestantism, such as sacramental worship and ministers who are priests in the line of the Apostles. ☩

*From “Memories of Fifty-Six Years of Ministry” by the Rev’d John R. Cooper. Father Cooper was the first rector of Saint Alban’s Church. Prior to that he ministered in the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland at Christ Church, and Memorial Church (both in Baltimore), and at Prince of Peace Church in Fallston. Father Cooper was a graduate of the Boys Latin School and the Virginia Theological Seminary.*

## PARISH NEWS &amp; UPDATES:

**Ecumenical News**

At their recent synods one of our sister jurisdictions with whom we are in communion, the Diocese of the Holy Cross (DHC), merged with another sister jurisdiction, the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC). This makes the so-called G4 communion of continuing Anglican churches the “G3” communion of continuing Anglican churches.

**Increased Social Media Presence**

You can find Saint Alban’s on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. All of these are updated at least weekly, and some of them five or more times a week. You can find a link to them on our website, and at the bottom of e-mails from church. And don’t forget to check the parish website [www.saintalbansjoppa.org](http://www.saintalbansjoppa.org) from time to time to see a schedule of holy day services and links to past issues of The Centurion!

**Landscaping News**

The massive tree that for years obscured and damaged our sign on Old Joppa Road has finally been removed.

Now people can see that there is a church here. The tree would have to go anyway as we hope to put additional parking in that area. Those who hate to see trees taken down may take heart inasmuch as the county will require us to plant some new trees as part of our parking and stormwater management project. So we lost this tree, but we will gain many more.

**Valley of the Churches**

We have come to a tentative agreement with our neighbors at Union Chapel UMC and Wilna SDA churches to work together to have new sign made for the corner of Old Joppa Road and Route 152. The sign that is there is probably 40 years old and is in dire need of replacement.

**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) ☩