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Forward in Christ

The magazine of Forward in Faith North America.

In this issue:

*The Lusty Month of May
The Immaculate Conception
Religion in Politics
Inspiration for Evangelism*

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Assembly Teaching Topics

Creation and the Incarnation of our Lord

Presenter: Alice Linsley

St. Gregory of Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, wrote: *"The incarnation of the Word of God was the method of deliverance most in keeping with our nature and weakness, and most appropriate for Him Who carried it out, for this method had justice on its side, and God does not act without justice."*

The Holy One loves matter and, though He is uncreated, He deemed to take the form of a created being, being fully human and fully God. The Incarnation of our Lord is mysterious and essential to our Faith. God becoming flesh, restores the dignity of flesh. When God in the flesh stepped into the Jordan waters, all the waters were renewed. Water is no longer simply water. Wine no longer ordinary wine. Bread no longer ordinary bread. In His resurrection the corruption of death is overcome. No dust and ashes were found in the tomb. He is living Flesh and the guarantee of immortality for those who trust in Him.

The Incarnation: Threat to and Therapy for Sin

Presenter: Bishop FitzSimons Allison

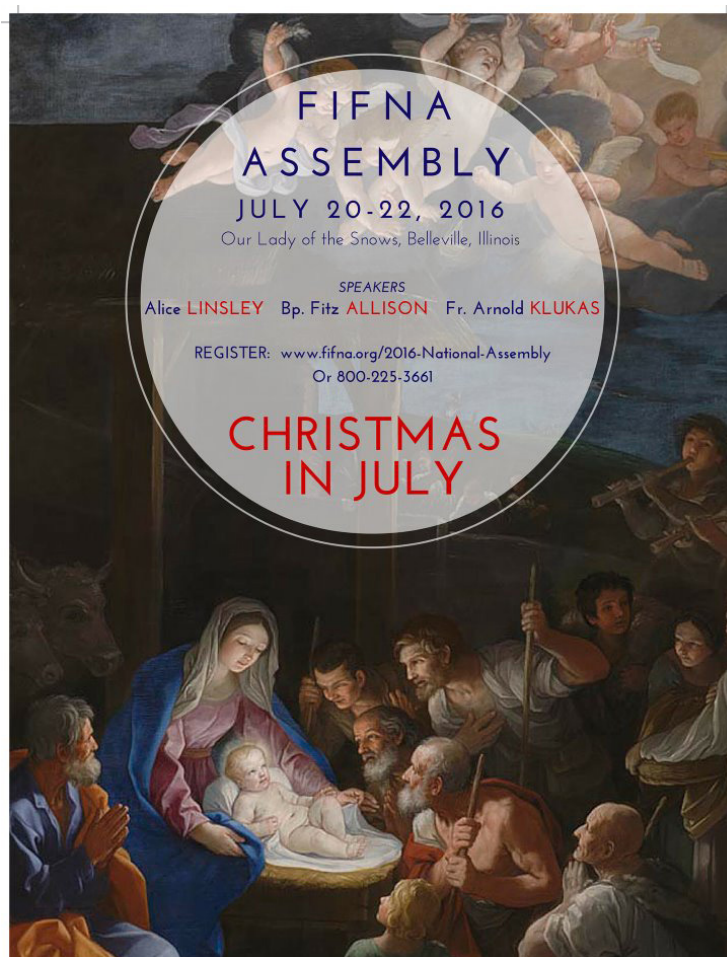
The vulnerability to hurt and suffering following God's becoming flesh is an abiding threat to human nature but, at the same time, the only hope for health, joy, and freedom. All gnostic heresies seek to avoid suffering by denying the full humanity of Christ and the opposite heresies place their hope in the power of the human will. These dynamics are shown in scripture, the Ecumenical Councils, and in contemporary belief and unbelief.

The Incarnation in Liturgy and Life

Presenter: Father Arnold Klukas

Early in my Christian walk a spiritual director gave me a wise and wonderful overview of what various Christian denominations have contributed to the wider Church: "My son, worship with the Lutherans if you want to enter into Christ's Passion, worship with the Orthodox if you want to enter in to Christ's Resurrection, or experience Christ's Incarnation among the Anglicans." From the earliest days of Christianity in the British isles there has been an ongoing emphasis on the significance of the incarnation in the worship and life of the Anglican Communion. But why is this so, and how is it expressed in our liturgy and life today?

Building upon the theological presentations of professor Linsley and Bishop Allison, Father Klukas will explain how deeply intertwined how Anglicans pray is with what Anglicans believe. Our public worship and personal devotion are "lived theology," and we identify ourselves by a Book of Common Prayer rather than a book of common dogmatics. While institutional history has its part to play in the development



of the Anglican Communion, it is the foundational belief in the Incarnation that gives us our unique contribution to the Church universal. In the Incarnation God became human, so that humans could be in relationship with God. The importance of this is two-fold; relationship implies knowing and loving the 'other,' and loving the 'other' means accepting in love what the 'other' loves. The Holy Trinity is a communion of persons bound together in love, and the Son draws us into that intimacy of the Trinity because he has brought our very humanity into that unity.

The Church continues Christ's incarnation in the midst of this present world, even as the presence of Christ's ascended body brings our humanity into the presence of God. Our earthly worship is both an anticipation of the glory of Heaven, and Christ renews his presence among us in each Eucharist we celebrate. The Incarnation also challenges us to co-operate with the Trinity in creating a community of love that becomes a conduit of the holiness of Heaven for the healing of the brokenness of earth.

This presentation will move from the theological to the practical, and from the spiritual to the physical. God became a human being, and we as embodied persons must come to know God in and through our bodies. The Incarnation has implications for our common worship, but it also has far-reaching applications to our life in the here and now. Through visual aids and physical demonstrations we will hopefully 'incarnate' within ourselves what the Incarnation holds out to us.



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In the News

Anglican Consultative Council Meets in Lusaka: One of the Anglican Communion's four "Instruments of Unity," the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), met in Lusaka, Zambia, in April. The event was controversial because of Episcopal Church (TEC) representation at the conference, causing a number of conservative Primates from Provinces including Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and Jerusalem and the Middle East to boycott the meeting.

The boycott followed on from the Primates Meeting in January, which sanctioned the Episcopal Church for a period of three years for promoting same-sex marriage. During that time, the Episcopal Church was not to represent the Anglican Communion ecumenically, doctrinally or in terms of polity and governance.

The Episcopal Church's invitation to full participation at the Lusaka conference, which spoke to the doctrine and polity of the Anglican Communion, was seen by traditionalist Anglican leaders as breaking the terms of the sanctions imposed by the Primates Meeting.

The Episcopal Church pays the Anglican Consultative Council \$400,000 a year, 18% of its budget.

The Episcopal Church Claims Victory: Episcopal Church delegates to the ACC meeting in Lusaka claimed victory over the Primates of the Anglican Communion, stating in an open letter that restrictions imposed by the Primates Meeting earlier this year were of no effect:

"Because this ACC meeting was held in the shadow of the January Primates Gathering and Meeting that sought to restrict our participation as members from The Episcopal Church, we want to assure you that we participated fully in this meeting and that we were warmly welcomed and included by other ACC members."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who gave a report to the event, disagreed with this assessment, saying, "The ACC received my report, which included those consequences. The consequences stand."

Forward in Christ wonders at the transparency of these consequences; apparently TEC is unable to see them.

GAFCON Responds to ACC: Conservative Primates of the GAFCON movement have issued a response to the ACC, From Canterbury to Lusaka, which states:

"The recent meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Lusaka, Zambia has again highlighted the inability of the current instruments to uphold godly order within the Communion. Delegates from the Episcopal Church, by their own admission, voted on matters that pertained to polity and doctrine, in defiance of the Primates. This action has damaged the standing of the Anglican Consultative Council as an instrument of unity, increased levels of distrust, and further torn the fabric of the Communion."

The communique goes on to say that the future of the Communion does not lay with "manipulations, compromises, legal loopholes, or the presentation of half-truths" and

pledges GAFCON to work for the renewal of Anglicanism.

The Diocese of San Joaquin Loses Lawsuit: On April 5, the Fifth District Court of Appeal in Fresno, California ruled in favor of the Episcopal Church, ruling that the property of the disputed church belonged to TEC plaintiffs. The Diocese of San Joaquin broke away from the Episcopal Church in December 2007 and was sued for its property by a remnant group of Episcopalians, backed by the national Church, in 2008. The traditionalist diocese, led by Bishop Eric Menees, has filed for a rehearing.

Fort Worth Litigation: The Second Court of Appeals in Fort Worth heard oral arguments in April from both sides regarding the appeal of last year's trial court ruling in favor of the Diocese and Corporation.

The appeal was filed by Episcopal Church parties after the trial court ruled diocesan properties held by the Corporation of the Diocese of Fort Worth are held in trust for the Diocese and the Parishes and Missions in union with it, and not The Episcopal Church. The Texas Supreme Court ruled in 2013 that the trial court should apply neutral principles of property law to the assets in question rather than deferring to TEC. It also declared that the Dennis Canon, which states that parish property is held in trust for TEC, has no force or effect in the state.

There is no time period for the court to hand down an opinion and judgment, but the Diocese of Fort Worth believes "a ruling can be expected within a few months' time."

Diocesan Merger: The Reformed Episcopal Church's Diocese of the West has merged with the Anglican Church in North America's Missionary Diocese of All Saints (MDAS) lead by Bishop William H. Ilgenfritz. The Diocese of the West will be renamed Convocation of the West and will be served by Bishop Winfield Mott under the title of Vicar General. "The Convocation format will enable us to continue as a community," Mott explained, "which is important to us, as we have been a strong support for each other and have our own style and customs. The Missionary Diocese of All Saints context allows us to be a missionary presence in the western U.S. in the Anglo-Catholic tradition in which the Diocese of the West was formed."

North Carolina Bishops Back Trans Bathrooms: The Episcopal Church Bishops of North, West and East Carolina have blasted a North Carolina law, HB2, that forces transsexuals to use bathrooms assigned to their biological gender. In an open letter, the Bishops state that this "discrimination... prohibits, us from respecting the dignity of another human being. It inhibits our very capacity to care for one another and to work for the common good."

The Carolinian Bishops are not alone in their protest. World-renowned pop star, Bruce Springsteen, cancelled a performance in the Tar Heel State.



Not Their Kind of Homosexual

Brian Pickard takes on the Communion wreckers

Recently a prelate asked me if I'd be willing to write something in article form. He had seen the as-yet unedited and unpublished autobiographical/topical book I had already written contextualizing this subject (at the time of this writing, I am still in prayer and discernment for a publisher). For five years that book project had gone from a seed idea to full fruition—and it wasn't easy. It went at an ultra-careful, uphill, in the rain snail's-pace. It finally got to the point of getting myself to a quiet location and finishing it "on retreat", so to speak, in August 2015. I felt compelled and dragged my feet all at once, if that makes paradoxical sense.

It's not that I couldn't do it, but it meant that I had to press in and hunker down. Our Lord Jesus was very generous, comforting, and patient with me through the entire book process, as processes like that are like orange squeezing, bringing all manner of things to the surface. I can say the same for my as-yet unreleased art exhibition on related subject matter that I mostly completed back in 2013. It was an interior roller-coaster as well.

The kindly prelate I mentioned above, one of my greatest supporters, wanted to see the book happen, suggesting it might be time to go ahead and take the leap with a smaller preliminary piece. This immediately made sense and felt right, as much as it scared me. Getting some of the general concepts into an article, aiming them to a current event, making it work forced me to become an amateur editor—not my strong suit. It is quite obvious I am not a professional writer. Incidentally, the book is much broader -- not as pointed as this article. Even if I tick you off in the latter, you may still like the former and find it encouraging and useful. I am actually quite sweet and non-ogre.

So, why all this inner drama to get to the point? Why did the book, the art exhibition, this article, and other projects require so much emotional energy and feet-dragging? Why was I so secretive and careful the whole time? Because this is my life experience, distilled into



words. I am a sexually continent and maritally celibate 37 year-old man, finally sharing publicly that I am attracted to men. This is essentially my "coming out article", if you will. Once it's out there, there is no going back. I can never go back to keeping this mostly private in the age of social media. Everyone has an opinion, whether they want to or not. But, don't let the subject matter put you off. I want to bring a nuance to the conversation. I do understand that it cannot be helped if readers may unfairly project what they think this article is going to say and mean. We have been conditioned by a click-bait, sound-bite media to do this. I often have to be careful not to do that myself. And if you are Anglican like myself, you know what it is to see "homosexuality" in an article and think, "Oh good grief, what now?!" In the Western world right now, in church and state, homosexuality is part of an obsession. It is on the clip-

board list of the ever-evolving intersectional LGBTQIRSTUVWXYZ political grievance industry. I have seen when opinions and beliefs go against most media narrative, which throws in with the former, and it is a bloodbath. This especially goes for "bad little homosexuals" that stray from the progressive path of enlightenment. Radicals don't like wrenches being thrown into the wheels and gears of their machines. Nobody is safe anymore—there is usually hell to pay, one way or another. The libertarian artist streak in me detests censorship; so when I see these so-called "hate-speech" laws making it into courtrooms across the Western world, it makes me want to vomit. This goes for Machiavellian "codes of practice" and kangaroo courts in private arenas, as well. We know these rules are often subjective and have the potential to be tyrannical—the weapons of crybullies. And if you don't possess

any of a recommended list of “oppression points”(ironically and actually privileges in this system), you are treated with no mercy and thrown to the wolves. The soft-tyranny of gloved iron-handed feelings takes no prisoners in an age where conscience clauses don’t protect you anymore, where everyone gets a trophy, and where adults have apoplectic tantrums to secure their echo chamber of “hug boxes” and “safe spaces”.

Now, in my case, there is the nuance and difference I rarely ever see discussed anywhere: Ask me if I am gay and I will honestly tell you no. Ask me if I am homosexual in orientation and I will tell you yes. Confused? Most people are. “Gay” is actually a social-political identity that one may embrace and purport, along with the baggage that that identity usually entails. I do not identify with that social-political sphere—and never did. If one claims to be gay, one is almost certainly going to be homosexual. But one may be attracted to the same sex, and NOT be gay at all. That’s right; you heard me. The latter is my case. It befuddles me why so many conservatives in my situation still cling to that word “gay”, even if that is not where they align socially or politically. (I can sort-of understand why some might, but it doesn’t make sense for me.) I will go even further and say that “homosexual” is not the greatest descriptor in the world. For lack of simpler and more succinct terms, we will just go with that for now. I am really not interested in adding to the lugubriously inane lexicon and pronoun charts of identity politics. You’re reading the words of a dissident. Incidentally, I do go into much more detail in the book about this journey of discovery, and what I see to be a subtle but important difference in my approach vs. how a myriad of others in the marketplace of ideas are

continuing to approach it. I have been deeply dissatisfied with how a great many Christian writers and ministries have handled homosexuality, from both sides.

Here comes the stern part, some Anglican housekeeping. For those of you not keeping up with events in the Anglican world -- my condolences, but it is still very relevant to the larger Christian conversation. I understand that this article will not be published by the time the Primates (archbishops and presiding prelates of the Anglican Communion provinces) meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury in January 2016--for what could amount to a make or break time of decision. It will be a “kairos moment”. I did not grow up Anglican, but in an ultra-protestant evangelical tradition. I brought with me a confident belief in the truth of Sacred Scripture--from cover to cover. That remains intact. As with some on the so-called “Canterbury Trail”, I was drawn to the Catholic Faith and capital “T” Tradition that gives us the Bible as we know it, the Ecumenical Councils, the Church Fathers, the Liturgy, and Church Order. Incense and candles are never enough, unless all one wants is to ‘feel nice’, which is where too many evangelicals end up exiting the Trail. That scenic turnout is where a lot stagnate or become “open and affirming”, some of the most ridiculous misnomers in Anglicanism. I’m infinitely grateful that I initially got to know Anglicanism in a traditional Anglican-Catholic diocese within The Episcopal Church (TEC). In the end I actually came into TEC through a neighboring diocese (another story) with what I thought were open eyes. I wanted to be a part of the orthodox wing of the Anglican Communion. I wanted to be a part of the active movement to reform the Communion away from the zeitgeist under which it had suffered for

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The Rev. Canon Lawrence D. Bausch, President, Forward in Faith North America.

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so long. Ironically, I was confirmed the year AFTER the infamous TEC General Convention in 2003, when many were already leaving. But it only took about three years of intensive observation to learn how things actually worked. I can honestly say that TEC gave me the best intensive education in how progressivism (actually regressive) and identity politics work. The leadership and establishment in TEC ended up giving me a crash course in just how hypocritical the “generous, inclusive, open, affirming, welcoming, equality” movement of change-agents really is.

From the time I first heard the words “conversation” and “listening process” in 2005-2006, I quickly discerned them to be tools of delay, shaming, isolation, and wearing down of conservatives and traditionalists. The leadership left me deeply disappointed and disillusioned. Leaders often have their price for peace. To avoid intimidation and public shaming tactics, otherwise good leaders, lay and ordained, seemed to pull back and say “Well, we will stay since it’s not in MY diocese, not in *my* parish... well, not at OUR 8AM Eucharist anyway,” and so on. For a great many others, that was and is an untenable proposition. There is a potential cost, make no mistake, when one commits to putting one’s money where one’s mouth is.

My parish at the time eventually and overwhelmingly voted to leave TEC. In the end, we had to leave all property behind, and in very short order. Keeping it did not work out for us. Before and since, I have seen endless

and unnecessary lawsuits and punitive measures multiply across North America, for people that, unlike that parish, tried more assertively to come to arrangement (I think fairly) to exit with their church property intact. Tens of millions of dollars are still being spent a decade later—including suits against others that left—including my present diocese, and by extension, my parish. It is wretched, sinful, and a scandal how much money has been wasted and how many lives ruined. It is a horrid witness.

It does not stop there. I saw the same tactics operating from the other wealthy progressivist and “moderate” Western provinces of the Anglican Communion. It was as if the Communion Establishment all had one another on speed dial, comparing notes for a common playbook—to keep people “at the table” as long as possible, only to open the trap door. It isn’t surprising at all, and they definitely do not represent me. I am deeply ashamed of them and find their lack of repentance and reparation for shredding the Communion disgusting. How is marginalization of traditionalists “generous”? How is this “inclusive”? It is dirty politics and goal-post shifting. Identity politics and “intersectionality” are basically meant to categorize people into groups, a proven way to divide and conquer. The leaders of the more conservative Global South provinces, which represent the vast majority of Anglicans around the world, have been very patient with these games, even when Western leaders deserved to be taken to the wood-

shed, so to speak. The Global South has taken the constant patronizing colonial insults and offensive money-dangling strategies from their supposedly liberal brothers and sisters with grace. Yet they remain much more orthodox than their Western counterparts, despite all that—despite the financial pressures in many of their own troubled lands, which can leave them vulnerable. Thankfully they have become savvier about these subtle deceptions by progressivists. Interminable meetings with worthless statement after worthless statement gave them nothing in return and got us as a Communion nowhere. This Primates Meeting in January 2016 should be unlike anything we have seen so far, at least I hope so.

The West needs to be disciplined. The Western leaders deserve it. I don’t feel sorry for the discomfort the West is having, because it brought it on itself by unilaterally imposing bad behavior and its consequences on everyone else—with no willingness to truly take steps of repentance. The non-aggression principle of classical liberalism does not play well in the present West, as Western provinces are not truly liberal. They are progressivist. There is a difference. Lambeth Palace has a lot of explaining to do. The US, Canadian, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, English, Australian, Brazilian, Mexican, Southern African, New Zealand and European jurisdictions, for example, have a lot of explaining to do as well. Why would parishioners bother with churches that pander to the soft bigotry of low expectations? If it is just warmed-over populist self-esteem-massage moralism coming from the pulpit and vicarage -- the same way that a mainstream talk show, social media PSA video, or solipsistic meme would -- then I don’t blame folks for subconsciously rejecting it by staying home and skipping the Offertory that pays for the Establishment’s beautifully polished thinning veneer of viability.

Why pay for excuses and the soft-ball moralistic therapeutic deism that you can get from your very own “Church of the Bedside”? I would even contend that GAFCON provinces need to reevaluate some their own potentially problematic innovations and policies borrowed from that same failing system and past mistakes, innovations and mistakes that fall flat in face

of the cumulative Conciliar wisdom of the Church.

In my own way, on a personal level, I am rebelling against the progressivist/mushy-moderate ruling class in the minority that has had a death grip on the Anglican Communion. I do not trust them. From what I can tell, they do not care about people like me. I am not their kind of homosexual. I don't reinforce their narrative or parrot their talking points. I am still a virgin (have never even been kissed, believe it or not). I have no same-sex partner that I want to marry secularly or in church—so I am of no political use to them in their noisy, angry, crocodile-tear-stained campaigns. I don't want free condoms, dissident government agents fired, or punitive measures against clergy and leaders that refuse to go the next step beyond the secular—solemnizing those secular unions with sacred rites. I don't want to live outside the bounds of Holy Mother Church's teachings on the Sacrament of Matrimony and sexual intercourse. Since I don't recognize that the Sacrament of Matrimony is ontologically possible with same-sex relationships, one won't see me with placards going on a protest with the local ecumenical lavender velvet mafia chapter—or adorning myself with victim sashes, ribbons, patches, and bracelets—to whine at the local Roman Catholic cathedral about how “mean” and “problematic” the Vatican is.

I think that traditional, fundamental, Church Order is integral, too— it affects things in a trickle-down way. Countless persons in the more sapphically-inclined communities, for example, so I have heard, may be finding people such as I to be intolerable and unnecessary. I don't rank high enough on their “progressive stack” to have voice and vote. Homosexual isn't enough, a Y chromosome is a privilege point too far and cancels the other out, unless I vote lock-step with them and do as I am told. Social Justice Warriors in church leadership do not want to hear what people like me have to say at their Crab-Cake and Pinot Gris cocktail parties. It's inconvenient. It is safe to say that the gospel of good taste and feigned niceness, which has held sway for longer than we care to admit, has gone full stupid. It is not a substitute for the Gospel of Jesus Christ or for Sacred Tradition. What I see are a lot of

leaders that flit around trying to earn “social justice points” with platitudes and trendy task forces. It's called “virtue signaling”. They model and suffer from this sanctimonious, holier-than-thou desire to appear morally superior. They encourage the endless Oppression Olympics: “My three oppression cards trump your two!” Woe be unto you if you don't have the assigned Progressive Stack of Cards to give you speaking cred permissions. But fear not—their captains are all too happy to graph your intersectional slot and allowances on a chart. These folks truly avoid the unpleasant earthiness of the silent majority, or of common sense, in favor of the luxuriousness of social engineering from on-high. It's smug, it's condescending, and it stinks.

Only spoiled societies have the time and money to sit around and gender-theorize all day in thick-rimmed “problem glasses”, “inner complexity” hair colors, and hipster lumbersexual trends for the guys -- uniforms of choice on college campuses. Spoiled societies are the type that strategize about how to sue bakeries and photographers into financial ruin by absurd damseling and faux tears over wedding cakes and albums. Shame on them. Those people truly bore me with their illiberality and cause nothing but pity in my heart for them. I will not become a tool or photo-op for Social Justice Hierarchs and their lawyers. It is just sad that many of these revisionist bishops and leaders that trade in the victimhood grievance industry, intersectional politics, and heresy constantly get away with it. Many deserve to be disciplined canonically and/or excommunicated. It is expected that those who propose to teach are to be judged more harshly, so I don't know why they go for their smelling salts when that is suggested, except for show. I think it's a willful agenda on their part to continue as wolves in fluffy sheep's clothing. A lot of our heresy problems started from the top-down. Many so-called reforms happened that way—to “educate the common people” in the hope that they would eventually “come around”.

We as laity have been too patient with this snobbery. We have got to stop with this pretended “above the fray” attitude we sometimes have—that it is somehow an exalted virtue to stick our heads in the sand. We are responsible

for our permissive part in all this.

As a traditional Anglican-Catholic, I am deeply suspicious of where our Anglican churchmanship “parties” have gone in the West. I outright reject the so-called “Affirming Catholicism” that has taken over some of the once venerable “Catholic Societies” along with many cardinal historic parish churches and seminaries. Every few months I hear of another of those institutions falling in a series of dominoes. I am not foolish enough to believe that Anglican-Catholicism didn't have its share of “preciousness”. It always did. That is obvious. Many with homosexual inclinations were desperate for places of safety, and Mother Church provided it. But, it is now enshrined, over-validated, and institutionalized. The question is: are you being shaped by the Faith or are you projecting your own stuff on the Faith? Like many men with same-sex attraction, I thoroughly enjoy being on the Altar and Flower Guild—but will only serve where a robust traditional faith and catechesis is taught. Mere window-dressing is tedious to me. I am disheartened by a movement that now revels in the “sugar” of Anglicanism—the “pretty-pretty”—but does not uphold the Faith Once Delivered. It is a shortcoming of Anglo-Catholic and High Church circles that is lamentable.

Evangelicalism isn't immune, either. I am constantly disappointed by “Open Evangelical” friends lured into orbit by Mainline Protestant nebulosity. Lots fell for the “Emergent” fad, are still upset with the things said by the preacher at their “Meemaw and Pawpaw's church”, or are looking desperately for more permissive denominations that will excuse their pet issues under the misnomer of “generosity”. I have otherwise thoughtful evangelical friends that totally gloss over how TEC and Mainlines have treated conservative dissidents. They pass the buck and say, “Well, it's not my tribe.” or “We don't have a dog in that fight.” Well, how convenient; to ignore how the events of one part of Christendom massively affects the others. That is not a catholic way of thinking. I am convinced it is because they want to take the same battles to their own churches that TEC and other Mainlines already fought in the past 30 years--exporting and rehashing those strategies in their own communities in the name of be-



we feel is not necessarily productive. Our Lord Jesus Christ wants our hearts. If our directionality is not “to the left or to the right” -- but toward His Altar and His Blessed Sacrament, if we seek the unchanging wisdom of His Church and Sacred Scripture, if we take comfort in the Communion of Saints, if we avail ourselves of the Sacraments, if we seek to be joyful more than to be made “happy”, if we seek to be Jesus’ hands and feet in service to others, then other cares will fall into place in their own good time. This may not happen how we think it ought. That white-picket fence may not happen. Conversely, we may not get to have the kind of sexual intimacy we’d like. Sometimes Mother Church says ‘No.’ to us like any good mom. That is okay. I have had to be told ‘no’, too—on some very important occasions. I didn’t have to like it. My counsel to others and

ing “change-agents for justice”. GenX/Millennial clergy and church leaders are especially prone to this misplaced need to appear as magnanimous virtue trumpeters. I see progressivist Roman Catholics and Orthodox wanting to do that as well. I am often tempted to ask them: “How are you people *not* Episcopalians?” It is obvious. They also see themselves as those same “change-agents for justice”. They don’t know how to build, but only how to tear down. It is a very iconoclastic, deconstructionist, and puritanical tendency. Change-agents that go on “Patriarchal Tradition” hunts seem very unhappy. I believe there is an addiction to anger and unhappiness that permeates these Social Justice Warrior communities. I am convinced they do not wish to be happy. When people do not wish to be happy, they dismiss, for example, the wrong kind of homosexuals, as purveyors of “wrong think”. Apparently, we don’t vote right, feel right, or do right. We are just “self-haters” and “self-loathers” suffering from Stockholm Syndrome. We couldn’t possibly be fair-minded or have the agency to desire to persevere in the traditional Catholic Faith. That’s “crazy talk”! In the end, the onus and burden of proof is on the innovator. The innovators have not convinced me of their case for these “new revelations” or for their “clearance of suffocating hindrances and roadblocks to progress” in the past decades. I won’t be thanking them for that. I choose the unchanging Creeds, Councils, Church Fathers, Traditional Liturgy, and Church Order received for eons. I choose the substantive safety and lasting comfort of the cumulative Wisdom of the Church. I can depend on that. Stuff like, “Well...muh feelins.” and “Well... because... you know... reasons.” are not good enough.

On a high note after all of this consternation, I do hope that some positive things come from this article. I hope someone is encouraged. I am sure there are persons like myself with same-sex attraction that have also come to a place of serenity with it. While our sexual leanings may not have changed or might never (some do experience levels of movement on that scale over time for various reasons), we understand that the direction we face is the most important thing, rather than how we feel. Constant freaking out about how

to myself is not to allow those boundaries to give birth to bitterness, which leads us away from perseverance and our own highest good. Welcome the boundaries. Mess-ups and falls will also happen, to be sure. I don’t promise that they will never happen to me. That would be foolish hubris. But, our Catholic Faith is earthy and robust; it anticipates rises and falls... getting dirty... skinning our knees, so to speak; it can handle it. There is nothing new under the sun. We’re not that unique.

If this has been of service or use to anyone, good. If any of this makes a difference, great! Lay or ordained, whatever my circumstances, in a book, at a lectern, on a canvas; whatever the Lord ultimately clears the path for me to do specifically, I hope to serve in some way. It sounds a bit grandiose—but for those that are treated by the Progressivist Movement as “Not Their Kind of Homosexual” (they may not say that, but it’s truly what their actions say), or for those that the Conservative movement has let fall through the cracks (a whole other article) for their friends, families, churches, and anybody that needs encouragement, I hope I can be of help in some way. Pray for me, as well. I definitely need the grace of God every day. Grace to you and yours. Blessed, praise, hallowed, worshiped, and adored be Our Lord Jesus Christ unto Ages of Ages.

ADDENDUM & UPDATE

Since the above article written in December is being published in April, I believed it was necessary to include a codicil to the piece. The conversation in the Anglican Communion (and the other parts of Christendom observing us) continues, albeit in with some new twists and turns. Since the above was written, the Primates Meeting of the Anglican Communion has come and gone. I will briefly offer a few thoughts. I chose to walk in cautious optimism and to give benefit of the doubt, as I have tried to do over and over in my dozen years as an Anglican Christian. The Primates, for the most part, came to some strong conclusions. Censure and measures were supposed to be exercised against the erring parties in the Communion, and others on the precipice of

stepping all the way over the line were warned. Unfortunately, the history of the Western Establishment in the Anglican Communion in recent decades has not been very generous to orthodoxy, and it appears that the same narrative continues. On the immediate heels of the meeting—even in the initial media press conferences—the signs were not good. A phalanx of bishops and clergy from mostly Western provinces immediately treated the vast majority of Anglicans with an attitude of unrepentant defiance. Others more subtly, and I'd say more problematically, served a platter of "Anglican Fudge". One after the other, they droned on with the same playbook, employing intersectional political shaming tactics. I will note that a handful of valiant and loyal bishops and clergy have been in the thick of this and are swimming upstream against the odds. They are to be

commended. We shall see what happens with them. Conversely, some are saying the Western Establishment could be using select leaders with Global South origins for their own convenient use. Things are not sounding pretty. The Anglican Consultative Council—one of the Four Instruments of Unity of the Anglican Communion -- has now been resurrected. In the eyes of many, this is to sidestep the Primates and the mind of the vast majority of the Communion. This seems like yet another episode of what I mentioned above—keeping people "at the table" at all costs, to delay, to play games, to goal-post shift, to concern troll, to wear down, and to come up with interminable statements that don't end up being worth the paper they are written upon. The Western-centric Establishment has a lot of explaining to do. I pray that the Global South leaders, GAFCON lead-

ers, and other various conservative leaders in the West and across the world take note, see through deceptions, and walk in discernment. May they be granted wisdom from the Holy Spirit as this saga continues. May those in error cease leading people astray, come to repentance, and be reconciled to the Great Tradition of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, Sacred Scripture, and the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints. Christendom needs to be strong and unified in love and Truth as much as ever. To facilitate this, Holy Mother Church is generous, but she has boundaries for the highest good of everyone.

FC

Brian Pickard is a layman in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas.

An Interview With a Bishop

Forward in Christ interviews Bishop Dan Martins

The Bishop of Springfield, Dan Martins, is one of the few remaining catholic-minded, traditionalist bishops in the Episcopal Church (TEC). Forward in Christ interviewed him in the hope that his words will give some measure of encouragement to Anglo-Catholics in TEC. The opinions expressed in the interview are the bishop's own and do not necessarily reflect those of Forward in Faith.

FC: The Diocese of Springfield's website states, "We are Catholics" and you are known as an "orthodox Anglo-Catholic." How would you define these terms?

As the term "Catholic" is used on our website, it's part of a nested group of descriptors, moving in specificity from the broad to the particular. So it's in a context--the broader category being "Christian," and the two more particular ones being, successively, "Anglican" and "Episcopalian." Beyond its literal meaning ("according to the entirety"), "Catholic" can be approached from several angles. The one I find most helpful, perhaps, is that Catholic Christians take their cues--theologically, spiritually, and liturgically--from the ancient and organic tradition, rather than from some nodal point in history that has given rise to a "confession" or "statement of faith."

If the label "orthodox Anglo-Catholic" has been affixed to me, I have no objection, though it might not be my first choice for self-description. I'm "orthodox" in that I say the creeds and espouse the faith enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer without crossing my fingers or hedging my bets. At this moment in time, it also means that I defer to consensus of the Catholic tradition with respect to matters of Christian anthropology--sex, gender, and marriage, in particular.



There as probably as many definitions of "Anglo-Catholic" as there are those who claim to be one! I am robustly committed to the the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements, to a spiritual imagination unabashedly "populated" by Our Lady and the Saints, to the practice of Rule of Life, and to the externals of the western liturgical inheritance (though, in my case, with a Rite II, post Vatican II "accent").

FC: What practical effect does Anglo-Catholic orthodoxy have with regards to your ministry as a bishop and in particular, towards same sex marriage and the ordination of women?

Anglo-Catholic orthodoxy, as I have just explicated how I understand the expression, is the lodestar for my episcopal ministry. It affects the sort of liturgical and spiritual culture I endeavor to foster, and constrains me to articulate the kind of sacramental discipline with respect to marriage that recent General Convention decisions have made necessary. (I have withheld permission to use any of the newly-minted rites, in any venue associated with the diocese and by any priest of the diocese anywhere else.) As for the ordination of women (to presbyterate and episcopate) I am personally theologically agnostic on the issue. I could make a substantive and fairly compelling argument both for and against the practice. In the spirit of the sandlot baseball tradition of “tie goes to the runner,” however--the “runner,” in this case, being the weight of tradition--I am not in a place where I can in good conscience lay hands on a female ordinand and offer the petition, “Make her a priest...”. But I also know myself called to serve in the Episcopal Church, which has clear non-discrimination canons, so I must walk right up to the line of my conscience and then lean in good faith even a little further in that direction without actually crossing it. On my watch, there has so far been only one such occasion that I have had to face. I invited a colleague from a neighboring diocese to come and assist. I was present, and presided at the Presentation and the Liturgy of the Word and, later, at the Eucharist. But for the Examination and Laying-on-of-Hands, I stepped back and the neighboring bishop took over. This arrangement was not a completely happy one for anyone involved, but it seemed (and will probably seem in the future) to be the “least bad” solution. With respect to deployment, I am committed to upholding both the letter and the spirit of the non-discrimination canon. As I try to be faithful both to my own theological conscience and to the discipline of the church in which I serve, the venerable notion of *oikonomia* looms pretty large for me.

FC: Your stand against gay marriage clearly puts you and the Diocese of Springfield at odds with the prevalent teaching and practice of the Episcopal Church (TEC). How would you describe your relationship with TEC?

First, a small pushback on the phrasing of the question. The “prevalent practice” in (not of, and I do believe that’s a distinction with a difference) the Episcopal Church is certainly more than a little bit problematic. But the clear teaching of the Episcopal Church remains--for the time being, at least--that of the preface to the marriage rite in the Book of Common Prayer (p. 423), which is clearly orthodox. That said, I sometime tell people (only half-jokingly) that my decision to be an Episcopalian is renewable daily! So the main reason I’m in the Episcopal Church is because I know this is where God calls me to be, so it’s a matter of obedience. Is it a comfortable place? Outside the diocese, and beyond the relatively small group of bishops and dioceses with whom I make some common cause, no. But discipleship is rarely comfortable, is it?

FC: Many argue that the Episcopal Church is a “heretical church,” which in practice promotes false doctrine and has

broken with Scripture and Apostolic tradition. Is this an accurate description and if so, to what extent is it possible for an orthodox Christian to be in communion with such a church?

My touchstone on these matters has for many years been the work of a somewhat obscure nineteenth century Church of England priest and ecclesiologist named William Palmer. (I had a series of four articles in *The Living Church* in 2010 breaking open his thought.) For Palmer, the only valid reason for breaking communion with the instantiation of the Catholic Church in which one finds oneself is if it actually ceases to be, in fact, an instantiation of the Catholic Church. And he sets the bar pretty high for making such a judgment: Perduring in formal heresy for multiple generations (a good measure for which is perhaps the biblical “forty years”). And mere false teaching, even grievously false teaching, does not constitute formal heresy. Formal heresy must be located in the questionable church’s core liturgical formularies. My contention is that this has not yet taken place in TEC, and will not until the Prayer Book is revised. Worst case, one could argue that the heterodox rites approved for trial use in 2015 start the forty year clock. But that still leaves 39.5 years, during which time, at my age, I will, may it please the Lord, have been called to glory!

FC: Do you see yourself as a missionary with regards to the Diocese of Springfield and the Episcopal Church itself?

Of course. It comes with the territory. My job is to ceaselessly proclaim the Good News of God in Christ, in deed and in word, primarily to the baptized faithful committed to my charge, equipping them, in turn, to proclaim the gospel to the people committed to their charge--the entire population of central and southern Illinois--and, secondarily, to the church and to the world beyond the bounds of the diocese. Mission may not be strictly synonymous with evangelism, but they overlap so much as to render any distinction between the two meaningless.

FC: Many Anglo-Catholics have left the Episcopal Church, leaving those who remain in a minority. What encouragement can you give them?

There is no encouragement other than the encouragement of the cross, and the glory that is revealed in and through the cross. En route to that glory, there is suffering. Be sure that you suffer for doing good rather than evil, and pray that your suffering may be at the disposal of God’s amazing redemptive purposes.

FC: Is it realistic to work towards an Anglo-Catholic revival? What would that look like?

Realistic? Since when is that part of the calculus for Christian ministry and mission? I’m not entirely sure that “Anglo-Catholic” revival is, in itself, a worthy aspiration. And I say that as someone who is rooted in and daily nourished by the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Given the cultural landscape--not just the ecclesial landscape--in which we live, I rather think some broader and more fundamental move of the Spirit might be a worthier object of our spiritual energy. My suspicion is that Anglo-Catholicism would have a substantive role to play in anything that brings about revival in Christianity as a whole (developed-world Christianity, at any rate; it seems to be robust enough in many other

areas), but not the principal role. In any case, revival cannot be confected. It is a sovereign work of a sovereign Holy Spirit. We can't control it. We can, however, control what we pray for. And no revival on record was not preceded by the concerted prayer of God's people.

FC: Looking beyond Anglicanism, it seems that Christianity itself is under increasing attack from aggressive secularism and Islam. This argues for church unity in the face of a common threat. What are your thoughts on the ecumenical movement?

Church unity, in every way and at every level, is, without any doubt, and by far, the single most important issue facing global Christianity at this hour. Put another way: Church disunity--both between churches/communions, and within them (Anglicanism being a painful example)--is a scandal of such immense proportions that, shamed by its enormity, Christians have tamed it

by institutionalizing it and calling it "diversity." This is why I am so committed to reconciliation. Reconciliation is not just an aspect of the gospel, or a fruit of the gospel; reconciliation is itself the gospel. And if we cannot make it work (by the grace of God) at the smallest levels--within and between parishes, within and between dioceses, within and between provinces and "national churches"--then we have little to bring to the ecumenical table. And if, at an ecumenical level, we cannot lay aside all vestiges of triumphalism and acknowledge our incompleteness and brokenness, then we have no compelling witness to the world. We cannot sing "Christ is the world's true light," when we ourselves are walking in darkness and shattered into thousands of pieces.

FC: Christ tells us that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" against the Church (Matt. 16:18). Can you comment on that?

You're asking me to "comment" on something Jesus says?! Well ... uh ... yes. I agree. Seriously, I'm a "high churchman" in the purest sense, in that I have a "high" view of the Church. Some argue against the phrase "the mission of the Church" by saying, "God's Church doesn't have a mission; God's mission has a Church." I don't buy that. I would say that God's mission is the Church. The Church is the crucible in which God's mission of reconciling all people to Himself and one another in Christ is made concretely manifest. And since we know that, in the end, "God wins," and Hell is vanquished, I'm rather inclined to take heart from Jesus' words quoted by Matthew.

FC: Thank you, Bishop, and may God bless you in your ministry.

FC

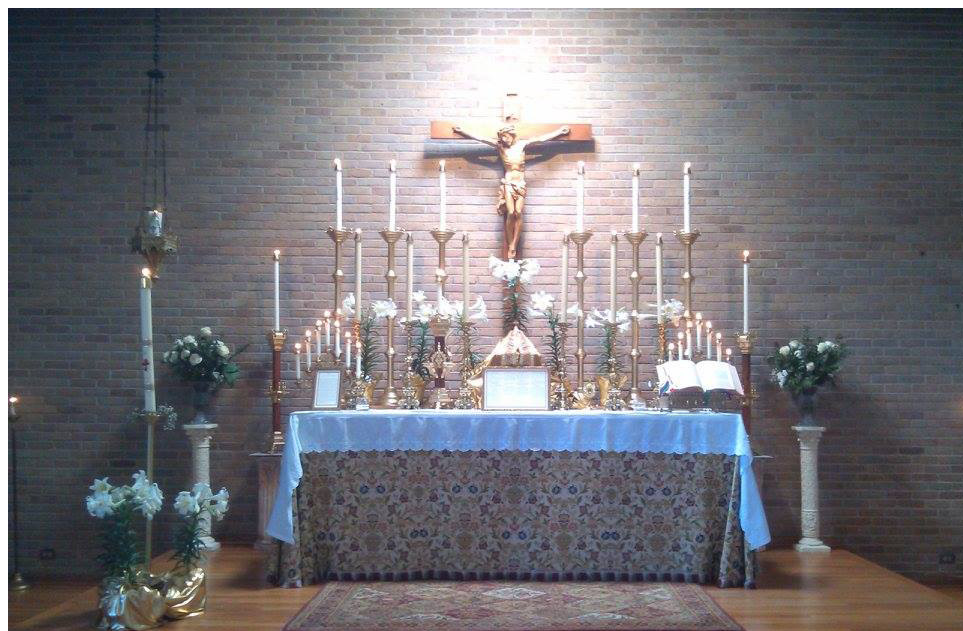
Parish Highlight

St. Timothy's, Fort Worth

"I like to refer to St. Timothy as 'The little church that could... and did' thanks to the efforts of a dedicated few." Olivia Pinkston Robinson, Parish Clerk.

For 60 years St. Timothy Church has been a witness of the Faith of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Under the several decades-long leadership of Fr. George Acker, St. Timothy's grew from a mission to a vital parish, only to see a decline in numbers not long after his retirement. Returned to Mission status, St. Timothy's never altered her witness, but struggled financially with the continual deterioration of its buildings. In 2011, the majority of the parish left St. Timothy's and the Diocese of Fort Worth to become a part of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. In January 2012, 19 people gathered at St. Timothy to celebrate, without interruption, the Catholic Faith.

As her Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker, the Third Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth, says, "I've always considered St. Timothy's to be a kind of 'shrine church' in the Diocese of Fort Worth. By that I mean, it is a special, holy place, full of the devotions and spiritu-



ality of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. It is an old-style Missal Mass parish, with the full ceremonial and reverence of a Solemn High Mass found in few other churches these days, featuring "smells and bells" and all the rest! I am glad to say that St. Timothy's has experienced a revitalization in the last couple of

years, thanks to the love and pastoral care of Bishop Keith Ackerman, who serves as Vicar. It is a good place to be."

Although in many ways it has become a destination parish, with people driving great distances to attend Mass on Sunday's, weekdays and Holy Days, it is truly a blended parish with new

members coming from the neighborhood. Baptisms, Confirmations and Weddings far exceed the number of funerals, and the average age of the parish in the past several years has decreased radically. Very few have transferred from other parishes, and quite a few families have returned after periods of absence.

In the words of Senior Warden, Brian Pickard:

"St. Timothy's Church is an exceedingly rare jewel. My first Sunday was right after Epiphany 2012. I have been there ever since. To be frank, while countless congregations in revitalization (of all denominations) are seeking tepid consumer-focused methods and gimmicks, I believe that our mission's desire to consult the vast cumulative Tradition of the Church as a way forward is a vastly important witness and counter-cultural. That value cannot be underestimated. I didn't stay for the coffee. I stayed because the Catholic Faith is taught and expressed lavishly."

St. Timothy's now looks back to her remarkable history without looking back at conflict. Christian Education, Youth groups, Sunday School, Vacation Church School are all once again a central part of the life of the church, along with weekly Confession hours, weekday Masses, and during Lent,

Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Long noted for her Palm Sunday Procession and Mass, with all of the holy pageantry instituted by Fr. Acker, St. Timothy's continues her ministry and seeks to be a beacon of light, love and truth to the surrounding neighborhood. As several neighbors said recently, "I've lived here all these years, and I never knew what this church and parish hall looked like inside. A glorious Mass and then breakfast after Mass every Sunday - this is home."

Bishop Ackerman is assisted by two Deacons and virtually all members are a part of the ministry of the church. And now instead of 19 - there are 100. St. Timothy's is also home to "The Parish Press" and the "International Catholic Congress of Anglicans."

Solemn High Mass is celebrated every Sunday at 9:30 A.M. followed by Breakfast and Christian Education for all ages.



For more information see our Page on FaceBook and our Website www.sttimothyacc.com.

The Lusty Month of May

By Fr. Timothy Matkin

Throughout the world, May is the month of Mary. And at least in this country, May is the month of Mothers. But it wasn't always this way. Once upon a time, May was... well, one song from the Broadway musical Camelot offered a window into early medieval Europe and what May was like on the Christian frontier. Julie Andrews played Queen Guinevere. In one scene she takes her court out to the meadows to pick flowers and sings:

*Tra la! It's May! The lusty month of
May!*

*That lovely month when ev'ryone
goes blissfully astray.*

*Tra la! It's here! That shocking time
of year*

*When tons of wicked little thoughts
merrily appear!*

*It's May! It's May! That gorgeous
holiday*

*When ev'ry maiden prays that her
lad will be a cad!*

*It's mad! It's gay! A libelous display!
Those dreary vows that ev'ryone
takes, ev'ryone breaks.*

*Ev'ryone makes divine mistakes
The lusty month of May!*



At that time, May was a celebration of fertility. It would seem the natural time for such a celebration to occur. As the harsh winter comes to an end, everything becomes lush and green, the weather becomes warm and the flowers are in bloom. It is a time for getting outdoors, picking flowers, and finding mates. In fact, the month is named for Maia, a Roman goddess of fertility, as it is the beginning of nature's mating

season.

May festivals were commonplace, beginning with May Day. Parades were held. There was dancing and courting. Some see the decoration of the May Pole as an ancient fertility rite, decorating a representation of the reproductive power of the male. It was a suggestive, but just innocent for polite society. But it wasn't always so. There is some suggestion in British folklore that a young

girl chosen to be the May Queen was actually sacrificed at the end of the festival by pagan Druids.

In May, it was common for teens especially to slip off into the woods at night for late-night partying and more than a few romantic rendezvous. None of this was frowned upon. At best, people looked the other way. At worst, fornication and adultery were actively celebrated . . . at least, during the “lusty month of May.”

So, what to do? When the Christians arrived and the gospel began to spread and people were converted to the new faith with its biblical moral code, they brought renewed values of love and chastity with them. And yet, local customs and traditions (even pagan ones) die hard.

If the gospel was going to transform the culture, it had to “baptize” pagan customs. What did the Christians have in their arsenal of spiritual weaponry with which to combat this celebration of fertility detached from virtue? How does one Christianize the lusty month of May?

One merely had to pose the question in order to see the answer. May would be the month of blessed Mary, the ever-Virgin Mother of God. Here you have a model of chastity for both singles and married couples. She was a Virgin who remained so for the love of God and for the sake of the kingdom of his Son. Yet, she was also a faithful wife and Mother. Mary could be an example for all—a model for chastity in continence and chastity in fecundity.

The Queen Mother of ancient Israel had a unique role as an intercessor, an advocate, and an example. The Bible takes notice of the special way Bathsheba is treated when she appears before Solomon to advocate on behalf of Adonijah. “And the king rose to meet her and bowed down to her. Then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right.” (1 Kings 2:19) As the

Mother of the King of kings, Mary was crowned with heavenly glory at the end of her earthly life and took her place as Queen Mother in the Kingdom of God. She intercedes for us, advocates our cause, and gives us an example to follow.

May is a time to honor Mary as the true Queen of May and model of virtue. A virtuous woman, especially a mother, is always worth bowing before. Solomon wrote in his Proverbs (31:10), “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts in her, so that he shall have no lack of gain.”

We need to hold up examples of virtue whenever and wherever we find them. In some ways we have come full circle to the culture of pagan Europe that Christianity found when the gospel spread northward. We have a society that is sexually obsessed and detached from its grounding in a culture of virtue and tradition.

We need more than ever, like the church of their day, to use every opportunity to honor the Mother of God and all the saints as models of grace and virtue. But more than that, we need to be shining examples in our own day. We cannot transform the lives of future generations if we are unwilling to let God transform our own with the values and virtues of the gospel.

Each May, we give thanks that the Lord has honored the blessed Mother with a crown of heavenly glory, and we pray that all mothers and their children may be so honored—in this life and in the next.



Fr. Timothy Matkin is Vicar of St. Matthew's, Comanche, Trinity, Dublin, and St. Mary's, Hamilton, in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas.

The Immaculate Conception

By Fr. David Allen

In my experience of all the Marian Dogmas it is the Immaculate Conception which most disturbs Anglican minds. That she is the Mother of God is simply the teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council and is the simple consequence of the truth of the Incarnation. That she is Ever-Virgin is what the Church has taught “at all times and all places and to all men.” Even the Assumption makes sense, if not on theological grounds, then on sentimental intuition: if Mary is not with her Son, then where is she? But the Immaculate Conception rests only on papal authority, so they say. Actually this is the one Marian dogma which is not only permitted but demanded by the XXXIX Articles. So argued Fr. Ronald Knox, while still an Anglican.

IX. Of Original or Birth-Sin.

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil,

so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, φρονιμα σαρκος, (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh), is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

If we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not only God but man, then according to this article, as it stands, we must also believe that Jesus Christ, being man, was born into the world deserving “God’s wrath and damnation.” But Article XV tells us: “Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit.”

This presents us with a range of options. We could con-



clude that the Son of God was not actually made man and that his humanity was apparent, not actual. That, however, would contradict the other Articles, to say nothing of Christianity itself. Or we might maintain that at the actual moment of Jesus' conception the womb of his Mother was cleansed. Something like this was taught by St. Thomas Aquinas but even he agreed that Mary was kept from all actual sin, and you cannot cite him against the Immaculate Conception unless you are willing to accept with him Mary's sinlessness. However, as Fr. Knox points out, a last minute intervention of divine grace is unscriptural and is not included among the promises the Angel relates to Mary or, indeed, in the Angelic salutation. Mary is already full of grace.

With that in mind, we can say that divine grace broke the inevitable contagion of original sin at the moment of Mary's conception. The early Protestant reformers were no strangers to this, here's Martin Luther:

"It is a sweet and pious belief that the infusion of Mary's

soul was effected without original sin; so that in the very infusion of her soul she was also purified from original sin and adorned with God's gifts, receiving a pure soul infused by God; thus from the first moment she began to live she was free from all sin." (Sermon: "On the Day of the Conception of the Mother of God," 1527)

Again, from Luther's *Little Prayer Book* of 1522:

"She is full of grace, proclaimed to be entirely without sin, something exceedingly great. For God's grace fills her with everything good and makes her devoid of all evil."

Luther's contemporary, Ulrich Zwingli, is perhaps more enthusiastic, "I esteem immensely the Mother of God, the ever chaste, immaculate Virgin Mary," and, "Christ... was born of a most undefiled Virgin."

In our own time, notable Evangelicals, including J.I. Packer, Cornelius Plantinga and Thomas Oden, were able to state:

"The concrete manifestation of divine favor occurred through the descent and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), whose sanctifying activity enabled Mary's response of faith and thus inaugurated the renewal of all creation in her womb (Luke 1:38). Calvin affirms this point by stating that "to carry Christ in her womb was not Mary's first blessedness, but was greatly inferior to the distinction of being born again by the Spirit of God to a new life" (Commentary on the Harmony of the Gospels, 42). By divine grace alone Mary was enabled to give birth to the Son of God, and from her alone he received his human nature. It is not to be doubted that this was wrought by the power of God in a way no less miraculous or mysterious than the virginal conception itself." (*Evangelicals and Catholics Together First Things*, 2009)

If Protestants like Luther and Zwingli could affirm the Immaculate Conception, and their latter-day descendants its principle, how much more, then, should we Anglo-Catholics embrace it. As Knox points out, the logic of the Articles suggests no less.



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Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ

From the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission

Intercession and Mediation in the Communion of Saints

67 The practice of believers asking Mary to intercede for them with her son grew rapidly following her being declared Theotókos at the Council of Ephesus. The most common form today of such intercession is the 'Hail Mary'. This form conflates the greetings of Gabriel and Elizabeth to her (Luke 1:28,42). It was widely used from the fifth century,

without the closing phrase, "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death", which was first added in the 15th century, and included in the Roman Breviary by Pius V in 1568. The English Reformers criticized this invocation and similar forms of prayer, because they believed that it threatened the unique mediation of Jesus Christ. Confronted with exaggerated devotion, stemming from excessive exaltation of Mary's role and powers alongside Christ's, they rejected the

“Romish doctrine of ... the Invocation of Saints” as “grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God” (Article XXII). The Council of Trent affirmed that seeking the saints’ assistance to obtain favours from God is “good and useful”: such requests are made “through his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our sole Redeemer and Saviour” (DS 1821). The Second Vatican Council endorsed the continued practice of believers asking Mary to pray for them, emphasizing that “Mary’s maternal role towards the human race in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power ... in no way does it hinder the direct union of believers with Christ, but rather fosters it” (Lumen Gentium 60). Therefore the Roman Catholic Church continues to promote devotion to Mary, while reproving those who either exaggerate or minimize Mary’s role (Marialis Cultus 31). With this background in mind, we seek a theologically grounded way to draw more closely together in the life of prayer in communion with Christ and his saints.

68 The Scriptures teach that “there is one mediator between God and human-kind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). As noted earlier, on the basis of this teaching “we reject any interpretation of the role of Mary which obscures this affirmation” (Authority II 30). It is also true, however, that all ministries of the Church, especially those of Word and sacrament, mediate the grace of God through human beings. These ministries do not compete with the unique mediation of Christ, but rather serve it and have their source within it. In particular, the prayer of the Church does not stand alongside or in place of the intercession of Christ, but is made through him, our Advocate and Mediator (cf. Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25, 12:24, 1 John 2:1). It finds both its possibility and practice in and through the Holy Spirit, the other Advocate sent according to Christ’s promise (cf. John 14:16-17). Hence asking our brothers and sisters, on earth and in heaven, to pray for us, does not contest the unique mediatory work of Christ, but is rather a means by which, in and through the Spirit, its power may be displayed.

69 In our praying as Christians we address our petitions to God our heavenly Father, in and through Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit moves and enables us. All such invocation takes place within the communion which is God’s being and gift. In the life of prayer we invoke the name of Christ in solidarity with the whole Church, assisted by the prayers of

brothers and sisters of every time and place. As ARCIC has expressed it previously, “The believer’s pilgrimage of faith is lived out with the mutual support of all the people of God. In Christ all the faithful, both living and departed, are bound together in a communion of prayer” (Salvation and the Church 22). In the experience of this communion of prayer believers are aware of their continued fellowship with their sisters and brothers who have ‘fallen asleep,’ the ‘great cloud of witnesses’ who surround us as we run the race of faith. For some, this intuition means sensing their friends’ presence; for some it may mean pondering the issues of life with those who have gone before them in faith. Such intuitive experience affirms our solidarity in Christ with Christians of every time and place, not least with the woman through whom he became “like us in all things except sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

70 The Scriptures invite Christians to ask their brothers

and sisters to pray for them, in and through Christ (cf. James 5:13-15). Those who are now ‘with Christ’, untrammelled by sin, share the unceasing prayer and praise which characterizes the life of heaven (e.g. Revelation 5:9-14, 7:9-12, 8:3-4). In the light of these testimonies, many Christians have found that requests for assistance in prayer can rightly and effectively be made to those members of the communion of saints distinguished by their holy living (cf. James 5:16-18). It is in this sense that we affirm that asking the saints to pray for us is not to be excluded as unscriptural, though it is not directly taught by the Scriptures to be a required element of life in Christ. Further, we agree that the way such assistance is sought must not

obscure believers’ direct access to God our heavenly Father, who delights to give good gifts to his children (Matthew 7:11). When, in the Spirit and through Christ, believers address their prayers to God, they are assisted by the prayers of other believers, especially of those who are truly alive in Christ and freed from sin. We note that liturgical forms of prayer are addressed to God: they do not address prayer ‘to’ the saints, but rather ask them to ‘pray for us’. However, in this and other instances, any concept of invocation which blurs the trinitarian economy of grace and hope is to be rejected, as not consonant with Scripture or the ancient common traditions.



ARCIC, 2004.



Lifting High the Cross

By Fr. Gene Geromel

In his commentary on the Gospel of John Raymond Brown discusses the concept of lifting up. In John 3:14 Our Lord said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." Dr. Brown tells us that this really refers to the Christian season we have been living – Good Friday through Ascension Day.

Normally when we think of lifting high the cross remember how Christ was nailed to the cross and then it was lifted up and the end dropped into a hole in the ground; all of which was excruciating. Three hours of hell. Then three days later Christ was lifted up in the Resurrection. He was changed yet recognizable. He could walk through doors but had a body. Lastly, forty days later he ascended into heaven where he sits on the right hand of the Father where he will judge the quick and the dead. It is from that throne where he will also be our advocate.

Several events in my life have led me to believe that some people cannot see these three events as being distinct (although interwoven). I remember preaching at an ecumenical service on Good Friday. I spoke in great detail on the horrible death on the Cross. Then a bell choir got up and played ode to joy. You have friends who have no services Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. They go straight to Easter. When I had arrived in my present parish I told the people that at the end of the Maundy Thursday service there would be a loud noise. They could stay in the church in prayer – wait one hour – or go home.

As I was praying I heard a great deal of noise coming from the parish hall. Not being able to concentrate I went to the parish hall to investigate. There were a group of parishioners who were having a party, complete with a lamb cake and other refreshments. The Altar had been stripped, the church was dark, bleak and empty, like the world without Christ. But they only wanted a faith which celebrated the resurrection, forgetting the suffering which had to come first.



Remember, the Passion of Christ is called that precisely because of his suffering. Yes, it is Good Friday because Christ died for us but we cannot ignore the fact that he was betrayed by those he loved, was beaten and crucified for us. For the disciples the world changed that day.

Their world changed and so did ours. But is change always happy? My son, Fr. Peter, wrote a book on incense (which, as a proud father I can say you should read). I was struck by his recollections of our early years at this parish especially since he was only three when he got here. He refers to it as a religion of Butterflies. Change is seen as going from an ugly grub to a beautiful butterfly. The faith is like a beautiful butterfly where "everything is wonderful, it's ok".

I did my doctorate in the late 80's and early 90's. My area of concentration was on organization change and leadership development. It, change, was the in thing. The government gave grants to schools and organizations to change (there was no money for the tried and true, only for innovation). The church, said many, had to change her structures and focus. There was something wrong with those who could not embrace change. The world should be full of butterflies.

But the world isn't a butterfly house, the world is full of difficulties and pain.

Why else would we speak of this life be as a vale of tears. We cannot, without serious and permanent damage, gloss over the pain of life. We continually experience death and resurrection. You have a child. It is wonderful but life will never be the same again. Not only will you have sleepless night after sleepless night but your life, even married life will be different. It is a death but also a resurrection. Think about when you went away to college or entered the armed forces. Did you feel weepy that first night in the dorm or barracks? Whenever you returned home did it feel the same? Probably not, because that life was over. The same happens when we marry, choose a profession, children leave home or we lose our employment, even retirement has its painful side. There is a death and eventually a resurrection.

The real problems occur when there is an actual death. Mary loses John to cancer. They have always been active in the church. At the funeral she tells you that it is ok because John is with Jesus where there is no pain or sorrow. If we avoid the cross (death) and go straight to the resurrection we will grieve incompletely. All of us in loss tend to focus on something other than the fact that loved one is gone. We find something to blame the doctor for or we blame ourselves for not doing something differently. It is all a way to avoid

looking into that deep dark abyss of I will never see them again in this world. Life is not a game of monopoly with get out of jail cards. We must walk every station of the cross.

Fortunately, there is also Ascension Day. This is the final stage of the lifting up process for the Gospel of John. Jesus ascends into heaven where he sits on the right hand of God the Father to judge both the quick and the dead. St. John also reminds us that “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.”

Christ is our judge and our advocate. What does this mean on a practical level? Pure and simply put, we shall be judged. But we shall be judged by he who lived as we lived. We shall be judged by him who knew temptation but did not sin. Think about the things

you did wrong during those times of change or death. When you returned home from college or the service and no longer felt at home did you strike out in anger? Did you think that your parents were just not with it and treat them like idiots? When you married and gave up the “single life” did you still want to go back to your former ways? When you retired, were you a grump because you could not be in that respected position? (I remember when I first moved here I visited a man in the hospital who had been chief of surgery in that very hospital. The nurse kept on calling him “Billy”. All fame is fleeting.) When your spouse or Father was dying did you lose your temper at them? The answer is probably yes.

Now, if you had actually allowed yourself to feel the grief, the loss, then you could go to the resurrection for

that event. One hopes that you worked those feeling with your spiritual director or priest. Perhaps some are still too painful. Yet there is time. Just remember you probably did more good than you ever thought. We all have been wounded and scarred, but Christ our defense lawyer is there to advocate for us. Death, Resurrection, Ascension; they go together. Try always to remember those lines in the blessing after confession, “May the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ make whatsoever good thou hast done or evil thou hast endured be unto thee for the forgiveness of sin, the increase of grace, and the reward of eternal life.”

FC

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Thinking Out Loud

William Murchison on freedom of religion

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...

Amendment 1, Constitution of the United States

Roofs, we all agree, are good and useful things; hardly noticed on a daily basis, nevertheless, save by professional folk – architects, for instance. When nature, in some form or other, breaches a particular roof, letting in the elements, that is when we cry out in alarm. A protection once taken for granted has ceased to protect. The time for intense notice has arrived.

Very much like a roof over our national identity the First Amendment has kept away challenges to the right of religious belief (and of course to the additional rights the amendment takes note of: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right of peaceful assembly; the right to petition for redress of grievances). True, religious rights have been at the center of public controversies for quite a long time: increasingly so since the early 1960s and the Supreme Court's decisions on prayer in public schools. And yet the roof-like characteristics of the amendment – pitch, design, quality of materials – have kept out the rain with commendable efficiency: some leaks here and there, some shredded shingles; nothing terribly dangerous to the right of religious exercise in an age less and less attuned to questions of divinity.

Until rather recent times, shaped by a disposition unimaginable in the culture of half a century ago: the disposition to re-invent sex while sweeping away objections to the aims and process.

It's one thing to try and improve on God's handiwork in creation: cf., same-sex marriage. It's another thing to try

and enforce political and cultural conformity to the improvement.

Yet that is what seems afoot in the numerous court cases levied against wedding-service providers – bakers, for instance – with an embedded religious understanding that

the Lord has reserved marriage for the joy and fulfillment of opposite-sex partners. The proponents of same-sex marriage never worked through all the implications of opening the holy estate to partners of the same sex. They rarely felt the need to do so. The purpose of same-sex marriage was personal liberation, never mind what religious bluenoses might say!

But as the (unfortunately) late Justice Antonin Scalia warned, the great transformation didn't stop with same-sex marriage. It's on now to affirmation of the transgendered state – sexual identities allegedly switched by surgical miracle. The transgendered know their rights, and they want 'em. They want discrimination against them stifled. They want to use whatever public bathroom they see as conform-



ing to their choice of sexual identity. The objections of others regarding this cherished right are of no interest to the transgendered and their apostles, such as the *New York Times*. What they want they want. What they want, furthermore, various corporations have decided they should have, levying commercial threats against states whose legislatures want to let bakers refuse on religious grounds to service same-sex customers and preserve women's restrooms for women. The likelihood is that courts are going to put the kibosh on such instances of roof repair, in the name of our new understandings about sex.

Another such understanding, apparently, is that there's a constitutional right to obtaining government-financed condoms. The government may come down with full force on the Little Sisters of the Poor for their desire not to participate, directly or indirectly, in birth control purchase for employees

under Obamacare.

The First Amendment roof that long protected religious expression is wearing out. The old assumptions of safety for the dwellers below hardly exist amid today's cultural hurricanes. You can have your religion, yes; you just better not cross the growing numbers who see religion – especially religion of the traditional sort – as an obstacle to their personal fulfillment.

Repairs? What sort might be possible to fix the First Amendment roof and preserve for Americans with religiously informed consciences the protections they once took for granted?

It might be best to begin the job by acknowledging that a religious war of sorts is going on around us, and that the old assumptions of security for religious conscience are showing wear and tear. The reason is that older, even more basic assumptions no longer hold, such as the one John Adams expressed in 1798; to wit, “[We have no government,

armed with power, capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge and licentiousness would break the stronger chords (sic) of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

If we don't know that now, we are likely to get some good sense of the matter before much longer. Whereupon – maybe – we can repair, rebuild, reconstruct the deeper truth on which Adams grounded his observation: that God might know, better than the courts, better than the *New York Times* what goes on in this wacko world, and why.

FC

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Religion in Politics

Shane Schaetzel asks if there is a different way

It's an election year, and in times like these people who don't like thinking about politics are often forced to. Every four years, especially during a presidential election, politics become unavoidable, and the disdain of the average American is palpable. What Americans have desperately tried to ignore for the last three years has now reared its ugly head again, in the most nasty and vile way. The partisanship reaches a climax. The negative campaign ads saturate the airwaves. Neighborhood yards are littered with campaign signs. The bumper stickers, oh those bumper stickers; they're everywhere! Long ago my wife forbade me from putting them on our family car, for fear of finding the paint job keyed or the tires slashed. You can hear the disdain of it all in the often repeated comment; “Oh I wish it were over already”. This early in the game I often reply with; “Buckle up buttercup, we've only just begun, and Election Day is still months away.”

Man is a political animal. It's undeniable really. As much as we try to bury it

in professional sports and pop culture, the painful truth is; politics is just an extension of who we are. Take a man's (or woman's) core beliefs, and apply them to the laws we choose to live by, and the leaders we choose to govern us, and what you have is politics. The visceral battle that plays out on the airwaves, internet and campaign signs is really nothing more than an extension of the visceral battle that is playing out in American souls. Yes, our country is divided. It always has been. Tell me something new. At the heart of this divide, which plays itself out in political elections, is the deeply held religious convictions of Americans. Whether you go to church or not, whether you call yourself a Christian or just “spiritual but not religious”, religion is at the heart of it. It always has been, and it always will be.

In America, we've created a kind of self-delusion. We like to fool ourselves into believing that religion has nothing to do with politics, but really it has everything to do with it. Maybe the religion of some Americans is in-

formal. Maybe it falls under the banner of secularism, atheism, agnosticism, or just “spiritual”, but whatever it's called, it is a religion of sorts. Our political masters, the ultra-rich who donate to political parties in the tens of millions of dollars, they understand this all too well. They use it to their advantage. This isn't some dark smoke-filled room conspiracy theory. This is common knowledge. Everyone has heard the names of these people: Soros, Gates, Buffett, Koch, Zuckerberg, Bloomberg, etc. Everyone knows these men give to political parties and campaigns in ungodly amounts, and each has his own pet political agenda. They're not alone either. These men are joined by numerous multi-billion dollar corporations, banks and investment firms. There's no secret here. Democracy is run by money, and money controls democracy.

In America, religion has always played a pivotal role in politics. So how do you control the masses this way, and harness the power of religion to push agendas that people might not normally back? It's simple really, all you need

to do is pit religion against religion. I'm not talking about a sectarian thing, such as Catholics versus Protestants. That would be way too obvious. Besides, it's been tried in America before, back in the 19th century, with little success. Rather, you pit one religious principle against another, and let the division come from within churches. For example; Christian religion usually upholds the rights of the weak and oppressed, while simultaneously working to suppress greed and vice. So if you can get one political party to defend the rights of the unborn, while simultaneously promoting greed and war, you'll get a certain number of religious people to follow that party for the sake of the unborn. Then if you can get the other political party to defend the rights of the poor and working class, while simultaneously promoting lust and vice, you'll get a certain number of religious or "spiritual" people to follow that party for the sake of the poor and working class. Then you can just let those parties go at it, and effectively harness the power of religious fervor without any religious balance. This creates a political system that both kills the unborn, and simultaneously promotes greed, vice, lust and war. Sound familiar? That's exactly what our political masters have done to us, because it benefits them, and they have no intention of stopping any time soon.

The question is, for Christians, is there any other way? I think the questions every Christian American should be asking right now are these. Since when did being pro-life and believing in traditional marriage equate to being a Republican? Since when did helping the poor and working class equate to being a Democrat? Do these parties have some kind of monopoly on these issues? Hasn't Christianity always taught some of the principles that both parties stand for?

I think we live in a time in American history when people are not only putting party before country, but a growing number of Christians are starting to put party before religion. That's a dangerous trend. Recently, on my personal blog, I described my view of political parties. I view them like paper towels. You use them for the job at hand, and when you're done mopping up the mess, you throw them away. Wouldn't it be great if all Christians thought this



way? Our loyalty should be to God, church and country, not party, candidate and ideology. To measure just how deep the sickness in American politics has become, look at how many Christians on the political Right promoted the writings of Ayn Rand (Rand was virulently anti-Christian) some years back, and look at how many Christians on the political Left have supported the ideas of Margaret Sanger (militant atheist and founder of Planned Parenthood). Both of these women were ideological monsters in their day, each of a different kind. Yet their influence was slipped in, under the radar so to speak, and sold to Christians on the political Right and Left as ideologies to govern ourselves by. What a disaster! To think that Christians would support, promote, or even condone such things. Nevertheless, it is our political reality today. These are the times in which we live.

Is it anything new? No, not really. In antebellum America religious views were used both to defend and attack the institution of slavery. Some Christians took the despicable position that slavery is Biblical, therefore it should remain. Other Christians took the morally higher position that slavery is an abomination, but then infused it with radicalism, stating it should be abolished by any means necessary -- including bloodshed. Today we tend to side with the abolitionists, and rightly so, but if we were to apply their full position to the abortion debate today, would we be so enthusiastic? Abortion should be abolished. I agree. Should it be abolished by any means necessary? Including bloodshed? I don't think so. I

bring this up only to point out that this isn't the first time in American history when Christians have let political ideologies eclipse their religious sensibilities.

So where do we begin? My father was in the Navy, and one of the biggest things he taught me while growing up is the old Navy acronym "KISS". It stands for: "Keep It Simple - Stupid." I think one of the things our religious leaders like to do is give common lay people too much information about voting. This kind of information overload complicates things. You just can't expect fifty-million voters to act like moral theologians at the ballot box. It just doesn't work. You've got to keep it simple, and if you can't keep it simple, you're wasting your time. I think there are three basic (and very simple) principles that most Christians can and should agree on. They are as follows...

- 1.) Pro-Life
- 2.) Pro-Family
- 3.) Pro-Worker

That's it, following the KISS acronym, we keep it simple. This is something that people can remember at the ballot box, and it's something they can remember in everyday life too. What is a Christian voter? A Christian voter, in his/her most simple manifestation is: (1) Pro-Life, (2) Pro-Family, and (3) Pro-Worker. We stop there. Any more than this is information overload. Now we elaborate.

Pro-Life means that killing innocent people (especially pre-born babies) is an intrinsic evil, and it is always wrong. It is never right. Under no circumstances

es can we condone it, and we can never vote for politicians who condone it. The only time we can ever vote for a politician who advocates the shedding of innocent blood is if there is no other politician running who doesn't advocate it. Case closed. This is a non-negotiable issue.

Pro-Family means that it is wrong to vote for issues or politicians that disrupt or undermine the traditional family unit: father, mother and children. This covers a variety of things. For example; it is wrong to vote for laws or politicians that allow for people to "marry" people of the same sex. It is wrong to vote for laws or politicians that allow for governments to deprive parents of their parental rights. It is wrong to vote for laws and politicians that attack states, organizations or churches that help families live decent and wholesome lives.

Pro-Worker means that human beings should have the dignity of work and the dignity of a living wage. Now this means many things. It means that people have the right to start their own business, and have fair laws that give them equal access to the open market. It also means that employees should have the right to own a piece of the company they work for or at least participate in the decision making process in some way. It also means that employees should be paid a wage they can live on, and support a family on. It also means that people who can't work (elderly and infirm) should be cared for with some kind of social safety net.

Now I could go into a host of a whole lot more issues here, but I promised I would keep it simple. So here it is. These three points above are what I believe to be the three "essential" issues that should be at the forefront of every Christian voter's mind. Of course in America, we have a two-party system that likes to split these issues up. The Republicans take issues one and two, claiming they have a monopoly on them, but pretty much ignore issue number three. Meanwhile, the Democrats vigorously champion issue number three while actively attacking issues number one and two. Is it any wonder why Christian voters in America are so confused, conflicted and divided? It all goes back to the strategy I outlined above. How do you harness religious fervor without having to deal with religious balance or sensibility? Simple, you introduce internal conflict.

Republicans argue that if you don't defend issues one and two, issue number three doesn't matter. You can't protect workers if they're never born, or if their families are too broken to produce healthy and well-adjusted adults that can hold down a job. Guess what. They're right. However, Democrats argue that you won't be able to afford babies and family at all, if workers aren't being paid enough. Guess what. They're right too. Now we are faced with a diabolical and sadistic choice. Do we vote for the Democrats to help the worker, at the risk of harming the family and the unborn? Or do we vote for the Republicans to help the family and the unborn at the risk of harming the worker? Hmm. Decisions... Decisions...

It would be nice if a party existed that prioritized all three issues. One does exist, and I happen to be a member of it, but it's currently too small at this time to get any notice in America's two-party system. It's called the American Solidarity Party (www.solidarity-party.org) and I'm a proud card-carrying member. It does give me something to financially support, and it also gives me some people to identify

with, but for the time being, that's about all. When it comes to Election Day, I'm just like the rest of Americans. I must choose between the lesser of two evils in the Republican and Democrat parties. In recent years I have found myself voting in a more strategic way, even switching parties and pulling the lever for candidates I dislike in primaries for the sole purpose of hurting candidates I dislike more in the same party. I've also found myself voting split ticket in some general elections, putting Republicans in positions where they could make the most difference on issues of life and family, and putting Democrats in positions where they can only help workers, without touching issues of life and family. It's a challenging prospect. I know. Sadly, it's all we have to work with for the time being, until something changes in the political spectrum.

It is that political change that we all have to work for, and it really comes down to what we do on non-election years. I'm talking about those three years between presidential elections when most Americans just want to tune out and forget it all. We need to start by putting our money where our mouth is. I'm doing that. I don't have a lot to give political parties, but when I can muster twenty bucks I send it to the American Solidarity Party, because it really is the only party out there right now that I can honestly give to in good conscience. Then I start with the emails. I'll write to my state Democratic Party headquarters, regularly reminding them that if they would only run some real pro-life and pro-family candidates, I would be inclined to vote for them. Likewise, I'll do the same with my state Republican Party headquarters, regularly reminding them that if they would only run some pro-worker candidates, I would be inclined to vote for them. I'm just one man, but just imagine what kind of effect it would have if millions of people were doing this, week after week, month after month, between presidential elections cycles. I don't know how big of an impact it would make on the national level, but I bet it would have a big impact on the state and local level.

It's easy to give up. In fact, too many Americans have. Too many Christians have as well. However, I am writing to tell you that no matter how bleak things may look right now, it's not over yet. As long as there is breath in my lungs it will never be over for me. I want to put that kind of resolve in you as well. I suppose if we look at things in terms of political parties, and victory for one candidate or another, it can be quite discouraging. As Christians, we need to remember that the only thing that matters is the Social Kingship of Jesus Christ. These democracies and republics we currently live in are just earthly things. The Church is a Kingdom, and the rule of our Messiah-King is absolute. In heaven there will be no voting booths, no campaigning and no elections -- ever! This is why the Church is governed in a similar way. Our citizenship in America is temporary, it only lasts until we die. In the Church, both on earth and in heaven, we are subjects of the King, and that status is permanent and everlasting. There should be no question where our loyalties reside. Membership in a party is just a tool. It's a means to an end, and in the end, it isn't even necessary. Personally my membership in the Solidarity Party is designed to make a statement and send a clear message. That I have done. However, what really matters in our time, right here and right now, are the three essentials I outlined above. Only when those three are rea-

sonably satisfied can we move on to other issues, and then of course be divided by something else.

FC

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On Planting an Anglo-Catholic Parish

By Fr. Christopher Culpepper

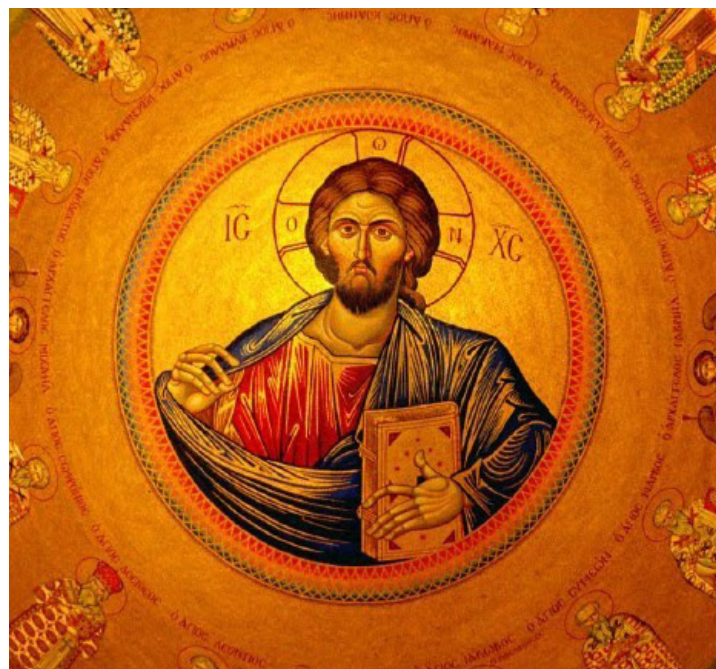
Of late, I have been asked by at least three different people, all of whom are friends and colleagues, who run in different circles, to write an article addressing why I am planting an Anglo-Catholic parish. To this point, I have resisted answering the call(s) because of my own internal perception of how this article will be received: arrogant by some, and deficient by others. So, perhaps ironically, this is why I have now put the proverbial pen to paper and make this offering with all humility.

But before I go any further, it seems appropriate to offer a little of my background and experience. I grew up at St. Andrew's parish in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Most are aware of Fort Worth's reputation as an Anglo-Catholic diocese, and those who are familiar with the inner-workings of the diocese know that St. Andrew's is a 1928 Prayer Book, 39 Articles, Morning Prayer, Evangelical, "low-church" congregation, though I have grown a certain distaste for that last phrase, given that (at least among Evangelical parishes) St. Andrew's has anything but a low view of the Church.

And not only did I grow up at St. Andrew's, but I also served on the staff there for five years as its youth minister, learning to appreciate and respect the Anglican Communion as a whole, naturally with a bent toward Cranmer, Jewel, Luther, and Calvin, given the ethos of the parish, even though the latter two were not Anglicans. It was during my time on staff that my interest grew in church-planting. With my first career being in retail leasing and development, planting seemed a natural fit for my skill set, so I regularly found myself attending church-planting workshops, when and where available.

However, from there I went to Nashotah House where, as I had hoped I would, given the trajectory I was already on toward the early Church, I "grew through" the Reformation, soaking in the rest of the Church's history, as it were. There, I drank from the waters of Aquinas and Augustine, understood Hooker in a new light, and gained a deeper and abiding appreciation for the Oxford Movement. What is more, I also developed an appreciation for the Conciliar Church, and in particular, the Undivided Church of the first 1,000 years including, of course, the Ecumenical Councils. It was through this journey that I found the deepest place of theological integrity one can find – the belief and practice of the Undivided Church, which is commonly called catholic Christianity. This occurred from the years 2002 – 2005. Upon graduating, I was ordained priest on Holy Cross Day, 2005.

Fast forward from there to 2008, when the unfortunate, if logical, result of TEC abandoning catholic faith and prac-



tice, precipitated in large part by the centuries-long, still on-going internal and unreconciled divide between Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals, ironically yielded a kairos moment, at least for me. What to do? Rome, which I believe remains in theological error due to its Magisterium acting in an un-catholic manner concerning the establishment of its doctrine, was and is not an option. Orthodoxy, of course, is an option. Protestantism cannot be an option. Curiously, I found that I could maintain orthodoxy – and catholicity – within the Anglican Communion, because, quite frankly, no one has yet to tell me I can't, which provides an impetus for planting within the Anglican Communion.

So, for the last 8 years of my life, I have been invested in planting Anglo-Catholic parishes. First, and still, I am planting Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church in Fort Worth, where I serve as Rector. Along the way, I was given the delightful task of also planting Christ Church, Waco, where I spent the first five years as its Vicar, before yielding the congregation into the capable hands of Fr. Lee Nelson.

Therefore, I suppose, on to the why: why am I doing this? Specifically, why am I planting Anglo-Catholic parishes? Given all of the above, I suppose the short answer is that to do otherwise would be unfaithful. But, unfaithful to what, is the critical question: to my own opinion of myself, to my bishop, or to the Faith? The answer must ultimately be to

the Faith.

It plagues me, and I think that is a good word for it, that we speak of Anglo-Catholicism as though it is a “stream” or a “strand” of theology. This implies that catholicity is deficient, or somehow incomplete, which it cannot be by definition. And, it implies that there are other equally valid streams of theology that, though they contain irreconcilable differences and even deficiencies, we are free to pick and choose from. Catholicity, as we know, means of the whole. Or, said another way that I have come to enjoy – here comes everyone! And that is what I want my planting exercise to be, participating in what has been believed at all times, in all places, by all, to paraphrase St. Vincent of Lerins. Even Abraham Lincoln understood our Lord’s words which tell us that a house divided against itself cannot stand. It is catholic Christianity that gives the evangelical life its full converting force. And it is catholic Christianity that expresses the fullness of the gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit, grounded in the fullness of Truth. Those who understand Anglo-Catholicism as “smells and bells” have simply missed the mark. While I appreciate and employ many of the rituals that accompany catholic theology, rituals cannot be confused with theology. Rather, ritual is but a faithful expression of catholic theology. In the end, it is theology that matters.

Said another way, clearly what we Anglicans have been doing – remaining doctrinally-divided over a set of Articles that has still not yet been submitted to the whole of the Church to prove their catholicity (or lack thereof) - has not worked, as the sweep of Anglican history, with its present, tragic downfall, plainly shows us. Neither will repeating the past by doubling-down on it get us any further. Therefore, I simply want to be counted among those who preached and practiced the Christian Faith with the highest degree of integrity, and the only place I can see the existence of that Faith is in what the Scriptures say, and what the Undivided Church says the Scriptures say. How can we say we believe and trust Holy Scripture but not the teaching of the undivided Catholic Church that gave us the canon of Scripture? This, in short, is my substantial motivation for planting, for it is within catholic Christianity that we have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved.

So, I ask myself, how could I do anything else? Could I be faithful and do anything else? In other words, my deepest hope is that the Anglican Communion will prepare itself for full communion with both Orthodoxy and Rome, which requires catholic-minded clergy preparing catholic-minded Christians properly formed in catholic parishes. Is not this what our Lord intercedes for us, the unity of His Church? Perhaps, it just so happens, that I am among those who have been given the opportunity to help the Anglican Communion have a fresh start, so to speak, as it undertakes necessary internal reforms to correct its errors. Perhaps, even as I pray for my brother clergy who are working diligently within existing congregations for their welfare and renewal, I am simply among those who have been called to plant, to pioneer, to make a new place for people to hear catholic Christianity in a fresh way, that one day, we might truly be able to say as united Christians contending as one Body, with Christ himself as our Head, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, “Here comes everyone!”

And, in the end, as a sort of postlude, two things will happen, which give me great concern as a priest. First, I will leave parish life some day. God forbid that there would be any slack or lack because people were more given to my personality than to the Faith. Therefore, it is my duty to practice and preach catholic Christianity – it doesn’t depend *on me*. Secondly, one day I must give an account to Jesus for the work that I have done. What will I say? I take comfort knowing that the Faith I dispensed to my flock will be judged as being part of the whole, rather than being in some way apart from it. This, I believe, is the essence of catholic Christianity. This, I believe, is the comfort of the Undivided Church. This, then, is where I take my stand as a priest and the reason I have given my ministry to the planting of catholic parishes in the Anglican Communion. May Christ grant us all the wit and the will to work for the fullness of the Faith and the growth and unity of His Church.

FC

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Inspiration for Evangelism

By Fr. Donald Richmond

The priority and power of evangelism, that is the Great Commandment as expressed through the Great Commission, is not found in programs but through a personal experience of the Paraclete. A person who has truly encountered the resurrected and ascended Christ, who has seen his own ruin and experienced God’s redemption, does not need to be told to share the Faith. The “saved” and “sanctified” want to share our Lord’s good news. If we have no interest in communicating Christ, we must seriously consider the state of our communion with Christ. No evangelistic inclination means, quite bluntly, no spiritual inspiration. Encounter, catharsis, communion and confession stand together.

This inspiration for evangelism is clearly presented in

the final chapters of The Gospel According to John and the Acts of the Apostles (who, with us, advance “all that Jesus began to do and teach”), and are rooted to at least four gospel experiences. These are:

The Inspiration of Spiritual Sight and Assurance
The Invitation of Functional Forgiveness
The Insistence upon Ascension Authority
The Infusion of Pentecost Power

The Inspiration of Spiritual Sight and Assurance

In St. John 20: 18 we read these words, “Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord.’”

Mary's sharing was predicated upon two experiences. With the other disciples, Mary was devastated by the suffering, death and burial of our Lord. Her dreams, with theirs, were dashed. But, early on the first day of the week, Mary went to the garden and was amply rewarded. She saw and, as a result, she shared.

Although the story is familiar, the application is easily overlooked. Having encountered the risen Christ, Mary wanted to share her vision and went and did so. There was no program. There was no structure. There was no training. She simply saw, was assured, and went to share this good news.

Though this might be dismissed as an historic illustration, it highlights a profound spiritual principle. When we encounter Christ we want to share. When we have not encountered Christ – through a lack of spiritual regeneration or because of spiritual stagnation – we live in darkness and have very little to share. Encounter naturally results in evangelism. Do we have the assurance of this sight? Are we living in resurrection light and life?

The Invitation to Functional Forgiveness

In spite of the disciples' hiding (St. John 20: 19), Jesus appears to them and offers them peace (St. John 20: 20–21), the priority of proclamation (St. John 20: 21–22) and a purpose in proclamation (St. John 20: 23). The progression of these texts suggests that when we are freed from fear (cf. Genesis 2: 17; Luke 1: 68–75; Hebrews 2: 15), the fear of death being primary, we have a message to share that is simultaneously rooted in regeneration (vs. 22) and reconciliation (vs. 23).

In the words of St. Paul, we who are alive in Christ are now called and challenged and commissioned to be "ambassadors of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5: 17–21). Both texts are clear: Having been regenerated and reconciled, we are now called to exercise the ministry of reconciliation. We have experienced this mercy and grace, and so we must express this mercy and grace. In fact, and importantly, it is the love of Christ which compels us to do so (2 Corinthians 5: 14). Without this experience we have nothing to express.

This form of evangelism cannot be manufactured. It cannot be exported or imported. It cannot just be catechistically communicated, denominationally envisioned, emotionally contrived, formally outlined or artificially imposed. Although evangelism can (in some small ways) be taught, experienced and evaluated, anything less than evangelism through encounter with Christ and the commendation of love will fall miserably short. The love of Christ experienced is the foundation of the love of Christ expressed. *Caritas* is the foundation, focus and function of communication. *Caritas* is the commission. Although "the keys" may have ritually religious overtones – a perspective we neglect at our own peril – the keys in fact are offered because Christ has passed through the walls of our own fearful hearts, offered us peace and reconciliation, and commissioned us to do the same.

The Insistence upon Ascension Authority

Upon showing his disciples his hands and his side, Jesus sends them into the world (St. John 20: 20 – 21). It is, in all honesty, an odd sending. When broadly and briefly analyzed, our Lord's words and actions in this text are a com-



mission before the Great Commission and a reception of the Holy Spirit before the sending of the Holy Spirit. It is Acts 2 in John 20.

Whatever our theological perspectives may be, however, Christ's authority is made absolutely clear. He has the authority over death. He has authority over fear. He has authority over the natural world. He has authority over the disciples' sending and the disciples' staying, and our Lord exercises both prerogatives. He sends (vs. 21) and urges them to stay (Acts 1: 2–4), or, more precisely, he commends their going by commanding their staying. Living in, or between, Christ's prerogatives is what is required. And it is this living between - between the sending and the receiving, between the Ascension and the Place of Prayer, between the promise and the fulfillment - which is so sublime, so productive and so perilously difficult.

Jesus needed to ascend before his commendation to proclamation could be fulfilled (Ephesians 4: 7 – 10). This is crucial to our understanding of evangelism. When I was looking for a full-time parish posting I was astonished by how many people asked about how I would exercise the Great Commission in their community. It is, in my thinking, a ridiculous question reflecting a production-minded and numbers-oriented perspective. While certain broad principles and priorities could be discussed, the practice of evangelism requires a far more careful and prayerful approach. What they were asking, as I saw their inquiries, was tied to personalities and programs instead of focusing upon the evangelistic intersection of where Paraclete, spiritual gifting, and the obvious socio-psycho-pneumatic needs of the community meet. Evangelistic strategies, if any exist, cannot be discerned without identifying each assembly's gifts as they intersect with the community in which the assembly exists. Evangelism, at its best, is the experience of the resurrected and ascended Christ as dynamically expressed, both individually and corporately, within and beyond the com-

munities to which we are sent -- the Holy Spirit being crucial.

The Infusion of Pentecost Power

Saint John 20:22 and Acts 2 are intimately connected. The “breath” of the Genesis account is received by the Apostles in the Gospel according to Saint John 20:22. Mary, having returned to the garden to tend to her Lord, sees and shares the risen Christ. Now, some days later and with fresh breath, the other disciples (now having also seen!) could be sent to share. Similarly, the account of Pentecost is an obvious correction of a refusal to be fruitful and multiply as outlined in Genesis 10. Instead of spreading out and sharing, they gathered together out of fear (note the similarity between this account and the account in St. John!) and decided to build themselves a tall tower of self-promotion, self-protection and self-worship. God said *go* and they decided to stay (cf. Genesis 10: 32; 11:2; 11:8 and Matthew 28: 18–20). In the transition between St. John 20 and 21 and Acts 1 and 2, the commissioned disciples, men and

women alike, tarry in Jerusalem for power from on high. Once received, their speaking in tongues, a clear reference to the confused-yet-corrected tongues of Babel, results in a diffusion of dialects and languages by which everyone can hear, receive and heed Christ’s message. Once communicated, heard, convicted and received, these multitudes return to their own countries carrying the gospel within their hearts and upon their tongues. Babel, now corrected, is beautiful and bountiful. Returning to the earlier illustration: the garden of sustained prayer resulted in being appointed, anointed and sent out in order to “be fruitful and multiply.”

Our Lord’s words are as important to us as it was to the early disciples: Tarry! Wait! The calling of Christ is extended to every Christian, we must go...preach...make...teach. It is an imperative, as imperative as the need to receive the Holy Spirit. And yet, importantly, so is the need to wait and pray patiently and persistently.

Risking misunderstanding, and without in any way wanting to artifi-

cially impose any pneumatological imperatives (beyond those of Scripture), we must wait until the Spirit descends and we are compelled to communicate Christ. The Christ and the Fire must burn within us. We must be mad as drunken fools.

The cause of Christ is advanced through holy madness.

O Madness, holy and divine,
our hearts and tongues incline
our lives and lips to Thee,
Most Blessed Trinity.
And with most stuttered speech
And with our limping
REACH
the languished and the lost
through fiery Pentecost.



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The Gospel Tree Phenomenon

By Bishop Ray Sutton

*Dearest, bury me,
Under that holy oke, or Gospel Tree,
Where, though thou see’st not,
thou mayst,
Think upon Me,
When you yearly go’st Procession.*

So wrote the English poet Herrick of Dean Prior, a village in the county of Devon, England. The rhyme is about a kind of oak appearing all across Britain called a Gospel Tree. A yearly procession was made to this tree every Rogation Sunday. The Gospel Trees of England tell of a liturgical journey not only on Rogation Sunday, but a journey to the Feast Days of Ascension and Pentecost, and ultimately from God’s altar to the spread of the Gospel into the world.

Gospel Trees dot the landscape of Britain in places like Dartmoor, site of Arthur Conan Doyle’s legendary, Hounds of the Baskervilles, of Sherlock Holmes fame. The Old Knobbly Oak

Gospel Tree stands in Sherwood Forest in Nottingham dating to over 800 years in age. One of the most famous Gospel Trees goes back to the time of William the Conqueror in the 11th c. in Alredsford in Avington Park. William the Conqueror appointed Walkelin, Bishop of Winchester, in 1079, to build at that time the largest mediaeval cathedral in Europe, Winchester Cathedral. Wood needed for the cathedral roof became scarce. The Conqueror eventually agreed to let Walkelin have as much wood as he could cut in four days and nights from Hampage Wood. Within the allotted time the wood was as bare except for one tree. The one tree left standing was an aged oak under which the history of this story reveals that Saint Augustine Canterbury preached. He was the one sent by Pope Gregory the Great to bring Christianity to Britain, only to discover the Faith was already there when he arrived.

Nevertheless, the story within the story of building Winchester Cathedral in the 11th c. is the place of the Gospel Tree in the liturgical and Gospel life of the English Church. Even the great 18th c. Anglican preachers John and Charles Wesley began one of their monumental preaching missions at the famous Gospel Tree in now Greater London (Hampstead). The history of this Gospel Oak can be traced as far back as AD 986 when Ethelred the Unready mentions it in a letter to the Abbot of Westminster.

These ancient Gospel Oaks therefore have historically played a major role not only in the great processions of walking the bounds on the holy day of Rogation Sunday to take us to the feast days of Ascension and Pentecost. They have also become the sites of historic preaching by legendary saints and even the places from which great revivals began. This practice probably

followed from the customs of the Druids who met in mighty Oak groves and beneath old Oak trees. Their meetings and teachings were outside in the open and closely connected to the tree dryads. One etymology of the word Druid derives from “dru-wid”, meaning “knower of oak trees”, but “deru” also means truth or troth and so could also give the meaning “knower of the truth.” When the Druids converted to Christ to become those early Celtic Christians, they turned those mystical trees into legendary places for preaching the Gospel, especially on Rogation Sunday.

Rogation comes from the Latin *rogare* meaning to pray. The Church prays for God to uphold His boundaries established in creation, the provision of rain and the abundance of the earth. But this alone does not explain the other great tradition of walking of the bounds of the parish on Rogation Sunday. Not only do we pray for the fulfillment of the natural boundaries of the earth. Even more importantly we are to pray for and work toward the upholding of the boundaries formed by the Gospel. The procession walking the bounds typically concluded at a specially designated oak called a Gospel Tree.

The Gospel Tree symbolized the new boundaries of Grace over the world. The tree in the Scriptures is the image of Christ. The cross in the New Testament is literally called a tree. Christ is the Tree of Life. Thus, the deep roots, tall strength, expansive canopy, and duration became the perfect symbol of Christ and the Gospel.

The giant oak called the people of God to extend the Lord’s Gospel boundaries. The parish in England is not only the church building. It was also the area around the church including the villages, towns and cities. It was often called God’s Mile, since the parish boundaries typically extended a mile. If they went farther the phrase God’s Mile was still applied as a symbolic description of the people and land around the church. As such, Church and the land around it formed a kind of redemptive boundary reached by and to be extended by the Gospel. This is the true and certain way to provide future generations. Young children were involved in the beating of the bounds or boundaries. They were a vital part of the whole ceremony because they represent the future of generations to come proclaiming the Gospel to God’s mile.

Finally, what happened at the Gospel Tree provides the content of the message that spreads the Gospel. Specific Scriptures were read from Psalms 103-104. A sermon was typically preached on them. Significantly, the theme of these great Psalms is, God’s Great Love for Us. The context is Israel’s return from exile in Babylon. They have been estranged from Jerusalem for seventy years. Then the unexpected happened. God restored and forgave them. The opening verses of Psalm 103 are the following: “Praise the LORD, O my soul; . . . forget not all his benefits who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.”

The psalmist then adds the following astounding statements about God’s love for us: “The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east

is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” God’s love forgives us such that He actually forgets our sins. He puts them as far as the East from the West. Amazingly this powerful psalm says that God has so forgiven us out His love that He no longer deals with us in terms of sin. It is His love that is the basis for all of His dealings with us.

Pslam 104 follows with a tour de force of the boundaries of the natural world. He writes of the boundaries of the earth, the sky and the sea. God sets up these boundaries of rain, growth and provision of the earth to feed us. In the end we are supposed to realize that God knows no bounds because His great love breaks all boundaries. God’s boundaries are boundless because He rules from the heavens. He is sovereign as this psalm declares. He created the world. He also redeems it. All of this is done by His enormous love for you and me. It is the proclamation of this love of God and the realization of it to which the Gospel Tree calls us at this time of the year. A poem by the 16th c. saint, Francis Xavier, summarizes it best:

*My God, I love Thee; not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love Thee not
Are lost eternally.
Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me
Upon the cross embrace;
For me didst bear the nails, and spear,
And manifold disgrace,
And griefs and torments numberless,
And sweat of agony;
Yea, death itself; and all for me
Who was thine enemy.
Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
Should I not love Thee well?
Not for the sake of winning heaven,
Nor of escaping hell;
Not from the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward;
But as Thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord.
So would I love Thee, dearest Lord,
And in Thy praise will sing;
Solely because Thou art my God,
And my most loving King.*

FC

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Consider Your Call, Brethren

A Bishop Reflects on Ordained Ministry
Jack Leo Iker



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