



2026 APA Lenten Devotional

Meditations on the
1928 BCP Daily Office Lessons composed by
Clergy and Special Guests of the
Anglican Province of America

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Edited *by*

Fr. Paul Rivard

Dean of Appalachia

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Cover Image:

Christ Carrying the Cross, by Titian (c. 1560)

Prologue

It was not many years after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven that the earliest Christians made a special effort to acknowledge the anniversary of the death and resurrection of our Lord by hallowing the feast of Pascha with this new significance. It was not long after the custom of observing this anniversary was established that the followers of Christ discerned it would be fitting to use the weeks leading up to that great feast as a time of penitential preparation.

Many centuries later, the forty days of Lent leading up to Easter have retained their original purpose of readying the faithful for a joyous and holy Paschal feast. The season of Lent continues to offer Christians an opportunity to walk with Christ in the desert, to absorb the narrative of His passion, to wonder at the institution of the Holy Eucharist, to sense anew the sorrow and confusion of the first Good Friday, and to appreciate again the resurrection fire of Christ newly-lit in the dark cavern of death. In short, the time of Lent is meant to be a purposeful communal fasting before the glorious and joyful season of resurrection feasting.

This Lenten Devotional is meant to enhance the penitential devotion of those who use it by offering the insights of a number of Anglican clergy and special guests of the Anglican Province of America.

Each day, scriptural passages assigned for Morning or Evening Prayer in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer lectionary supply the biblical material these meditations are drawn from as the writings are meant to enhance the discipline of praying the daily offices.

Devotional compositions offered for the Sundays of Lent are taken from homilies of various Church Fathers and apply to the Gospel selection of the Order for Holy Communion. On these days, Anglican faithful will hopefully find it edifying to hear both a sermon on the passage from their Rector, and then to consider those thoughts along with the thoughts of one of the great theologians of the Patristic era.

It is my prayer that, when the great feast of Easter finally arrives, those who use this devotional could say that something within these pages served to keep them focused on Christ in the midst of their fast. May your Lenten season be one of repentance, prayer, and earnest meditation on Christ so that you, with the whole Church, may enjoy a joyful, holy, and glorious Easter feast!

Fr. Paul Rivard

Rector of St. George the Martyr Anglican Church
Simpsonville, SC

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Evening Prayer - First Lesson - Jonah 3 & 4

“Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”

(Jonah 3:9)

When Jonah preached to Nineveh, a foreign prophet of a foreign God announced judgment against a foreign people. Yet they believed. The Assyrians, with almost no knowledge of the Lord’s character, humbled themselves in sackcloth and ashes, fasting and crying out for mercy. They did not know whether this God could be satisfied or whether repentance could stay His hand. Even so, God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, spared them.

Jonah knew this mercy very well, yet he resented it. He understood Israel’s hardness of heart, and he knew that the same mercy shown to Nineveh would fall on deaf ears at home. His bitterness exposes a hard truth: it is possible to draw nigh unto God with the mouth and honor him with the lips, while the heart remains far from Him (Matt. 15:8). The Ninevites teach us that it is better to tremble before God in ignorance than to know Him clearly and then disregard Him deliberately.

Jesus also told a parable of two sons. A father commands both to go and work in his vineyard. The first son says “no,” but later repents and goes. The second son says “yes,” but never sets foot in the vineyard. Who does the will of the father? The answer is plain: the first son. Yet it would be better still to say “yes” and then obey. The Ninevites are like that first son. They had gone their own way, but when confronted with the word of God, they repented. God

received their repentance, and he delighted in it. God does not rejoice in the death of sinners. He delights in our repentance and in showing mercy to the contrite.

As we come to Ash Wednesday, we must recognize that we stand in the place of one son or the other. No man has ever given God a perfect “yes” and then rendered perfect obedience. All have fallen short of the glory of God. We all stand in need of repentance. Yet we are not like the Ninevites, ignorant of God’s character. We have seen the face of his mercy in Jesus Christ. We know that God desires not the death of a sinner, but that all should turn and live. Therefore we cannot say, “Who can tell?” as if God has not revealed Himself to us in His Son. At the same time, we dare not treat the ashes lightly, as if we were the second son who speaks readily but never obeys, or as if we were Jonah’s Israel, eager to claim God’s mercy as our right while resisting the repentance and obedience that must accompany it.

The great hope of Ash Wednesday is that God’s compassion does not fail those who “truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways.” Therefore, let us take our sin seriously. Let us take our God seriously. Let us refuse both the ignorance that will not listen and the knowledge that will not obey. Let us look to the Lord Jesus Christ with sure and certain hope that He still forgives penitent sinners. Let us receive the ashes, then and go up with Jesus to Jerusalem and the Cross this Lent.

Fr. Brian Oldfield

Rector of St. Paul’s Anglican Church
Melbourne, FL

Thursday after Quinquagesima, February 19

Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 1:1-17

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.”

(1 Corinthians v. 10)

Romanticized views of Christian history ought to disgust every earnest believer. After all, the industry of the romanticist is driven by desire against reason, appetite against intellect, and imagination against wisdom. The romanticist distrusts intellectual debate and Socratic dialogue because either he is full of fear and insecurity, or he is a lazy drunkard or glutton. Mostly, he refuses to think because he is terrified of what might happen to his castle built on sand. Therefore, the romanticist finds validation and authenticity in cheap Grace, an easier, softer way, revisionist history, and the comfort it all brings.

And the Christian ought to be disgusted with such a posture because it is unreal and threatens damnation. For over and against all sentimental protestations to it, romanticism is a refusal to face the truth. In the Christian sense, it means the truth about the Church, her history, the long struggle to articulate her understanding, her divisions and disagreements, and her chief players who, more often than not, were more interested in personal power and riches than in finding the lost sheep of Jesus Christ.

From the standpoint of history then, the Christian is bound to a sober and rational reflection. Insofar as the historical Church was in the business of saving souls for the Kingdom, she was on the right track. Insofar as she wasn't, serious problems were bound to arise. For this reason, then, it is incumbent on the earnest Christian not only to study history, but also philosophical and individual responses to it.

Of course, the model or pattern for Christian piety will only be successful by the imitation of Christ in the lives and witness of true saints. There was nothing romantic about Saul's persecution of Christians and his eventual conversion. There was nothing romantic about Peter's denial of Christ or in his awakening. Thomas' doubt has no hints of any romanticism. John Baptist's conversion was neither easy nor soft. Magdalene's submission was accompanied with a history of sin. Polycarp could have been romantic about the Roman Empire but preferred to die for Jesus. Augustine's journey into the faith was long, hard, and hellish, not the least because he was addicted to fornication. Boethius suffered in a prison cell, awaiting execution because Constantine's romantic solution was a colossal failure. The light of Anselm's brilliance never would have been had he embraced some Medieval romantic vision of faith without reason. Aquinas' great Summas, a determination to reconcile Aristotelian science to revelation, would have been stamped out by cowardly prelates and popes who feared the truth. And what shall we say of Dante, who had to go through Hell and Purgatory in this life, long before he understood in beatific vision how his past sin was made good by God's Grace in his suffering?

Nay, romanticism will do us no good if we hope to be saved. Realism is what is needed. What we need is a realistic assessment of who and what we are in relation to truth. What we need is a realistic approach to reality through Jesus Christ. The Church can't save us, for on the best of days she will disappoint. The Sacraments won't save us if we don't put them to work in our lives. The Church's hierarchy can only save us if we make good use of their offices to help and heal our souls. Christ will save us, beginning in this Lent, if we begin to count the cost of salvation and remember that He paid a dear price for it.

Fr. William Martin, SSC

Rector of St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church
Arden, NC

Friday after Quinquagesima, February 20

Morning Prayer - Psalm 40:1-16

*“In the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfill
thy will, O my God: I am content to do it;
yea, thy law is within my heart.”
(Psalm 40:10)*

Today is the first Friday in this Lenten Season and it is a time for reflection. This morning’s Psalm is a Psalm of David. It is about giving thanks to God for rescuing him from the depths of sin and the distress of his punishment for his sins. And in Psalm 51, David petitions the Lord to: “Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, ...” (v. 14). That petition to God is for forgiveness for having conspired to kill Uriah in order to possess Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:14-27). And those truths evident here in David’s lament for having sinned and his joy for God’s forgiveness are applicable to all of us.

The psalmist speaks of having been brought out of the “horrible pit, out of the mire and clay.” Other biblical texts call this “the pit of destruction” and the “miry bog” or “swamp.” This is also addressed by another psalmist in Psalm 130, as the wretchedness of “the deep.” It is the depths of sin and captivity to sin. In Hebrew, it is called *tohu wa-bohu* and means the formless void of darkness and waste and emptiness at the time of creation (Gen. 1:2).

But then God sets David’s feet upon the rock and orders his doings (v.2). God re-directed David’s life from the path of sin onto a path of holiness. This also prefigures Jesus who is rock (Ps. 18:1 and 1 Cor. 10:4). Jesus is analogous to the rock at Massah and Meribah (Ex. 17:6-7) that issued forth life-saving water for the Hebrews as they wandered in the desert following the Exodus from Egypt. And from the Book of John,

Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that His is a “... well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4:14). Jesus is our rock of salvation.

Then David tells of fulfilling God’s will. He states: “... yea, thy law is within my heart” (v.10). Thereby, David is acknowledging that God’s Eternal Law was written upon his heart to be shared with others (v.12-13). The law within his heart is better known to us as the Natural Law of God (Ps. 37:32). It derives from God’s Eternal Law that was written in stone upon tablets given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. And this Natural Law is written upon all of our hearts at the time of birth. This Natural Law which comes from God to each of us is then manifested in our minds by our consciences. And what is His will for us? Simply stated it is to obey His Commandments, to love one another and to offer praise and thanksgiving for God’s graces bestowed upon us through the Sacraments and by private prayer (Matt. 6:6). But there is more. Just as David shared his faith with all of us through his 75 Psalms, so too is it God’s will that we share our faith with others.

At this Lenten season, we are also like David in that we are or should be remorseful of having sinned. This penitential season is a time for reflection upon what we have done or failed to do that is sinful in the eyes of God. Like David, the psalmist, we should also be asking God for those graces that help us to avoid sin and free us from captivity to habitual sin.

So, pray, as did David in Psalm 40: “Withdraw not thy mercy from me, O Lord; let thy loving-kindness and thy truth always preserve me. ... O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me; make haste, to help me” (v.14.16). And you too shall sing a new song (v.3) of joy and thanksgiving by the cleansing of your soul.

Fr. Vincent Varnas, Rector
Holy Angels Anglican Church
Aloha, Oregon

Saturday after Quinquagesima, February 21

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 22: 1-14, 19

*“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh:
as it is said to this day,
In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”
(Genesis 22:14)*

After God promised Abraham descendants plentiful as the sand upon the seashore; and after everything that aged Abraham and Sarah had been through in waiting for the Lord to fulfill His promise to them of a son; how could the Lord now command Abraham to sacrifice this son of promise, Isaac? It makes no sense and appears contrary to God's ways.

What do you do when God is the opposite of what you expect Him to be? What did Abraham do? He clung to the promise of God even when everything else testified against it, even when God tested Abraham's faith. "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac" (Hebrews 11:18). Remember that. God tests faith! He refines faith in the furnace of suffering and hardship—as gold in a refiner's fire. He closes His hand of blessing and leaves us in the wilderness alone with His naked Word. Then, God dares us to believe that His Word is sure and true.

God will test you. It may come in the form of persecution, poverty, serious illness, financial hardship or emotional distress. It may be in a setting where you must choose between your will or God's will. It could be the betrayal of a friend or the death of a family member. God may seem distant, perhaps even hostile. You may feel

isolated and alone. Even those closest to you may avoid you. But you have this promise from God: He “is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (I Corinthians 10:13).

What do you say when God seems to be your enemy, and He asks you to put your only son on an altar and make a sacrifice of him? Abraham’s reply is one of the strongest statements of faith ever recorded: “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:8). Abraham trusted God’s Word, even when he could not see beyond the wood, the fire, the altar, and his only son. And then came the voice of the angel of the Lord, and the Lord provided the substitute for the sacrifice for Isaac.

Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah give us a picture of our own salvation. God provided the Lamb for sacrifice—His own Son, the Substitute Sacrifice for sinners. Today, on the Lord’s mountain, the Church, it is provided: His Baptism, His absolution, His Body and Blood.

God is working toward your salvation. He awakens your faith in Christ, testing and tempering it. He tests you to take your eyes off this world, so that you know where your true home is. God will provide the Lamb for sacrifice. Abraham believed it. God provided His Son, Jesus. Baptized into Him, believing in Him, you have all you need for eternal life. Believe it. You have His Word on it.

Fr. James Johnson, Jr.

Priest-in-Charge, All Saints Anglican Church
Lancaster, PA

Lent 1 – Sunday, February 22

Homily for Lent 1

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Matthew 4:1-11

by Saint Gregory the Great

(Homily 16 on the Gospels, Anglican Breviary C211-12)

Some are wont to question as to what spirit it was of which Jesus was led up into the wilderness, on account of the words a little farther on, “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy City.” And again, “The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain.” But verily, and without question, we must take this passage to mean that it was the Holy Spirit who led him up into the wilderness. His own Spirit led Him where the evil spirit might find Him to tempt Him. But behold, when it is said that the God-Man was taken up by the devil either into an exceeding high mountain, or into the holy city, the mind shrinketh from believing, and the ears of man shudder at hearing it. Yet these things are not incredible, when we consider certain other things concerning him.

Verily, the devil is the head of all the wicked and every wicked man is a member of the body of wickedness, of which the devil is the head. Was not Pilate a limb of Satan? Were not the Jews that persecuted Christ, and the soldiers that crucified Him, likewise limbs of Satan? Is it then strange that He should allow Himself to be led up into a mountain by the head, when He allowed himself to be crucified by

the members thereof? Wherefore it is not unworthy of our Redeemer, who came to be slain, that He was willing to be tempted. Rather, it was meet that He should overcome our temptations by his own temptations, even as he came to conquer our death by his own death.

“... it was meet that He should overcome our temptations by His own temptations, even as He came to conquer our death by His own death.”

But we ought to keep in mind that temptation beareth us onward by three steps. There is, first, the suggestion; then the delectation; lastly, the consent. When we are tempted, we oft-times give way to delectation and even to consent, because in the sinful flesh of which we are begotten, we carry in ourselves matter to favour the attack of sin. But God, when he took flesh in the womb of the Virgin, and came into the world without sin, did so without having in Himself anything of this contradiction. It was possible therefore for Him to be tempted in the first stage, namely suggestion; but delectation could find nothing in His soul wherein to fix its teeth. Wherefore all the temptation which He endured from the devil was without, for none was within him.

Lent 1 – Monday, February 23

Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - John 9:1-23

“The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Silo’am and wash;’ so I went and washed and received my sight.”

(John 9:11)

This passage from our Evening Prayer reading might make us want to belt out a joyful chorus of the old, familiar hymn, “Amazing Grace.” “Was blind, but now I see!” But what is grace, and what is so amazing about it?

If you have spent even a small amount of time in an Anglican Sunday school, you know that grace is a gift, free and undeserved. If that is not amazing enough, grace is also spiritual, sacramental, and supernatural, given to us by God so that we may be partakers of Him.

In tonight’s reading from John’s Gospel, we can deeply feel the grace given to the blind man by Jesus. Why does it move us so? A man, healed from a lifetime of blindness, sees the light of day by the application of a salve made of clay and our Lord’s own spittle. This dramatic gospel moment reminds us of our own weaknesses and offers a hope that God alone can grant. If we take a moment to meditate on the miracle, we discover a more profound spiritual, sacramental, and supernatural gift of grace. Notice that Jesus sees the blind man, and after correcting his disciples’ wrongful judgment, moves to bring light to a man trapped in darkness. “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Jesus makes a salve of earthly clay and divine spittle and anoints the man’s eyes.

Interestingly, his eyes were not yet open. Jesus sends the man to go and wash in the pool of Silo'am, and the man immediately does as our Lord bids. Only then is his vision restored.

As Christians, we read this miracle and witness the foreshadowing of sacramental graces—anointing, baptism. God and humanity united for our salvation. Amazing Grace, bright shining as the sun! How wonderful if the story ended there—but it does not.

Light came to the blind man, but darkness hates the light. What followed was not a celebration but rather conflict, interrogation, and division. The man's own parents seemed unmoved by their son's miraculous healing and even refused to speak on his behalf. Our Lenten disciplines are a veritable crusade against such hostility. Our world, fallen in nature, seeks to bind us to our sins and entices us to become content with spiritual blindness.

God's grace opens our eyes to the light of the world—Jesus Christ. It is by Him only that we can fully participate in God's mercy. Lent is a season of grace. It is a spiritual, sacramental, and supernatural preparation for the abundance of divine grace poured down on creation during Holy Week and Easter Sunday. A well-journeyed Lent readies us to finally sing out, "Was blind, but now I see." Redemption and Salvation, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound."

Dss. Cynthia Hensley
All Saints Anglican Church
Mills River, NC

Lent 1 – Tuesday, February 24

Evening Prayer - First Lesson - 1 Samuel 16:1-13

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”

(1 Samuel 16:13)

While living in Texas, I become aware of the “Legend of the 12th Man” often cited by friends who had attended Texas A&M University. The story goes that during a critical football game, when injuries plaguing the Aggies had dwindled their numbers early on, the head coach spotted a student in the stands that might possibly fill in if needed. After hearing the coach shout to him “suit up,” the student quickly did as instructed and stood at the sidelines for the remainder of the game, ready to jump into the fray if the time came. For this reason, students to this day stand during games in commemoration of that “12th Man,” showing readiness to offer timely support. Sports fans in general have heard this term, “the 12th Man,” applied across different sports to denote enthusiastic fans cheering loudly in support, as though they would jump in and help if they were asked.

The “12th Man” attitude is evident in our reading for Evening Prayer with the anointing of David by Samuel, echoed later in the account of Saint Matthias being called as the twelfth Apostle (Acts 1:15-26). In both cases, we find no evidence of either man seeking the office for which they were anointed by the Lord. In the case of David, he was selected to become the King of Israel, replacing Saul. In the case of Matthias, he quite literally, replacing Judas, became

the “12th Man” of the Apostles, whose acts would launch the spread of Christ’s Church. In neither case was their selection the result of ambitious politicking or individual effort. On the contrary, we find only a willingness to obey the calling of God when told to “suit up.” For young David, the logical choice, at least to Samuel, would have been the older brothers, not the youngest one. The Lord chooses who he wants, but for his own reasons “for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7b).

The Lent season is ideal for self-evaluation, asking whether our hearts have been at the ready for service to Christ, in whatever capacity He might call us to “suit up.” Penitential times such as this provide an opportunity to look in the mirror and ask, “If called upon, how quickly would I obey? Or would I reluctantly hold back, hoping someone else is chosen?” The examples of David, and later Saint Matthias, are one of willing entry into that service that the Lord called them, without resistance or excuse. Indeed, all that “cheer” the work of Christ must do so with an attitude of the “12th Man,” standing in anticipation of their turn to enter the fray. Let us examine ourselves and our own attitude for being called into service for our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Fr. Aaron Ott
Vicar of St. Matthias Anglican Church
“Church of the 12th Man”
Dothan, Alabama

Lent 1 – Ember Wednesday, February 25

Morning Prayer - Psalm 26

“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me ...”

(Psalm 26:1)

This morning’s psalm, 26 (*Judica me, Domine*), is the earnest supplication of a soul that longs to walk steadfastly in the light of God’s countenance. It is not the cry of self-righteousness, but of humble confidence grounded in divine mercy. The psalmist places himself beneath the searching gaze of God: “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try out my reins and my heart.” Such a prayer springs from a conscience formed by grace, willing to be purified, that it may more perfectly reflect the holiness of God.

We then move toward the altar, the sacred center of communion between God and His people: “I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord; and so will I go to thine altar.” Here we perceive the pattern of the sacramental life. The faithful soul seeks cleansing, not by its own merit, but by repentance and divine absolution, preparing to draw near with thanksgiving. For us Anglican Catholics, this approach to the altar finds its fullest expression in the Holy Eucharist, wherein the Church offers praise and thanksgiving, and receives the grace of Christ’s abiding presence. The last half of this psalm is familiar to all priests (and doubtless many acolytes) as it is prayed by the celebrant as he washes his hands at the offertory.

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.” The sanctuary becomes a figure of heaven itself, where earthly worship joins the ceaseless praise of angels and saints. To love the house of God is to desire communion, holiness, and the beauty of ordered worship.

The psalm concludes in hope: “My foot standeth right; I will praise the Lord in the congregations.” Sustained by mercy,

guided by truth, and nourished at the altar, the faithful soul stands firm, offering continual praise unto God.

This evening we pray Psalm 16, *Conserva me, Domine*, which is the serene confession of a soul wholly given to God, resting in trust, rejoicing in hope, and finding its chief good in the divine presence. The psalmist begins with quiet dependence: “Preserve me, O God; for in thee have I put my trust.” Here is the foundation of all true religion—not self-reliance, but humble confidence in the protecting mercy of the Lord.

“O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God; I have no good like unto thee.” The faithful heart acknowledges that all goodness flows from God alone. Earthly gifts are fleeting, but the Lord Himself is the portion of our inheritance and the cup of our salvation. To belong to Him is to possess a heritage more enduring than any earthly treasure, a fair ground prepared by divine providence.

The psalmist delights in the fellowship of the saints and renounces the false allure of idols, for no rival can share the throne of God in the faithful soul. In watchfulness and prayer, even the silent hours of night become seasons of inward correction and grace, as God instructs the heart.

“I have set the Lord alway before me; for he is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.” From this steadfast gaze springs holy confidence. Joy rises, hope endures, and even the frailty of the flesh is comforted by the promise of life beyond corruption. The psalm looks forward to that victory fulfilled in Christ, the Holy One whom death could not hold. God Himself is the path of life, the fullness of joy, and the everlasting delight of all who trust in Him.

Fr. Richard Bugyi-Sutter

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Simpsonville, SC

Lent 1 – Thursday, February 26

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 25:28ff

“Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”

(Genesis 25:28)

As we move to the conclusion of the first week in Lent we are reminded of who God is in an almost circuitous manner. In the N.T. lesson, the Apostle Paul reminds us that who we are or what we’ve done should have no impact on how we not only view ourselves, but how we are to relate to others. If there was anyone besides Jesus in the N.T. that had the “right” to boast about personal accomplishments, it was the Apostle Paul. Yet he warns us about having an inflated perspective concerning our position in The Faith.

Paul reminds, quite pointedly, that all that we have as Christians is derived from, provided by, and given to us by God. What we have, we have received as a gift from the triune God of the universe. This understanding should give us pause before we begin to crow about who we are and what we have done in The Faith. Christ is all in all, and all that we have is from Him.

The O.T. lesson from Genesis provides an example of this very principle of how it is God who honors His word and His work, regardless of who we are or what we have done. Moses tells us of the deception of Jacob and how he stole Esau’s birthright. From our modern point of view, we immediately shout, “NOT FAIR,” “That’s dishonest,” “He shouldn’t have been rewarded for his deception.” But our ways are not God’s ways, and, in this account, we are taught a couple of important lessons.

Never take for granted our status in relationship to God. Merely being born into a position of status is not how we are judged by God. Just because Esau had the birthright of the first born didn’t automatically entitle him to the privileges afforded that right. What was important was God’s intent for giving someone that birthright. For us, then, merely being born in a so-

called Christian nation, in a Christian home, with Christian parents, who raise us according to the Christian faith, doesn't automatically grant us any special rights over others. The rights we have, as those raised in Christian homes, are to obey God's word, worship God properly—in spirit and truth—and live according to the Spirit of God. This makes us no greater or lesser than anyone else.

How do we view those wonderful gifts that God has given us? Are we, like Esau, flippant? Do we take for granted the graciousness of our Sovereign God? Do we expect to be blessed? Do we feel God is obligated to give us something simply because we claim to be believers? Our entire attitude, hearts, and minds, should be one of unceasing gratitude, humility, and charity. Our position before God is due to God's grace to us through His only unique Son, Jesus Christ.

And finally, both the O.T. and N.T. lessons are neatly summed up in Ps 37. Verse 26 tells us that it is God who is merciful and by that we are blessed. Verse 27 instructs that we are to flee evil and do good, and we will live for evermore. And verse 28 summarizes the remainder of the Psalm. God loves those who are discerning (use good judgment); He therefore will not forsake His saints. Because they exercise good judgment and flee evil and do good, His saints are preserved forever. However, the wicked will be cut off.

Beloved, let us take these exhortations to heart during this Lenten season. Let us flee evil by not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought. Let us do good by exhibiting an attitude and spirit of humility, placing our brother or sister first. Let us NOT take for granted the wonderful, transcendent gifts we have from God, the transcendent benefits of our heritage as joint heirs with Christ. And above all, Praise Him for His Goodness. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

Fr. Paul A.F. Castellano, PhD

Vicar of St. Peter the Apostle Anglican Church

Kingsport, TN

Lent 1 – Ember Friday, February 27

Evening Prayer - First Lesson - Ezekiel 37:1-14

*“And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live?
And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.”*
(Ezekiel 37:3)

On Ember Days, the Church prays for vocations and those called to them. This lesson provides a vivid illustration of what the faithful discharge of such a calling entails. God has called the prophet Ezekiel, not to a foreign people, but to his own, who will be a challenge to get through to (Ezek. 3:4-11). While any of us may be called to serve, instruct, and/or minister to others, and thus will properly identify with Ezekiel, today’s focus is on those called to ordained ministry. We pray that God will continue to raise up clergy and that those so called will be faithful to Him.

In this evening’s lesson, God sets the prophet down in a valley filled with dry bones, which represent the people of Israel, those to whom he has been called to minister, in their present, hopeless, condition. While recognizably human, the remains have no particularity or individuality. They are generic human dead; they could be any group. God asks the prophet if these bones can live. Humanly, this is obviously impossible. Even Dr. Frankenstein needed actual tissue to work with.

With God, of course, matters are quite different. For Him, it is not a matter of ability, but of the divine will. The prophet gives the wisest available answer: “O Lord God, thou knowest.” God so wills, yet chooses to act through the one He has called. Ezekiel will not be a mere bystander, but an active participant. God gives him the words to

Speak, but it is through the prophet's pronouncement that He causes the action to take place.

On the one hand, the image is only becoming more macabre, like those scenes in vampire movies wherein the hero drives a stake into the monster, and it devolves in moments into a rotted corpse, and thence into bones; only here it is reversed. On the other hand, the rattling signals the return of lost individuality, as the assemblage moves from scattered bones to intact skeletons, to individually identifiable corpses. Yet, they are merely that; life is not in them.

"Prophesy unto the wind," God commands. And again, it is the word of God spoken by His appointed servant that moves the breath to enter the corpses, who are now an identifiable people. This is the second of three such scenes wherein divine breath brings life. In Genesis 2:7, God breathes life into the new-made Adam and commissions him to serve in the Garden. In John 20:22, Christ breathes life into His new-made Church, setting the Apostles on their task as His agents of reconciliation. Here, God, via the word proclaimed through His appointed servant, breathes life into His people, making of them a mighty host.

Let us pray that God will continue to raise up servants and strengthen them. And let us pray to Him that we would be open to His call to serve through and with His clergy in His Church.

Dcn. Dan Muth
Assisting at St. Alban's Cathedral
Oviedo, FL

Lent 1 – Ember Saturday, February 28

Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 2 Timothy 2:1-15

*“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding
in all things.”*

(2 Timothy 2:7)

Does anyone want to live a life of suffering? Most people would answer “No.” However, is there a life without suffering? It seems unlikely. Everyone experiences their own suffering. Typically, people try to escape suffering. However, believers are called to be prepared to suffer. Therefore, they must be strong, in and with God.

2 Timothy 2:1-15 contains St. Paul’s advice to St. Timothy, his “spiritual son,” to strengthen his faith by following Jesus Christ as an example and to remain obedient in suffering, following Paul’s example, namely the call to persevere in suffering.

St. Paul’s advice relates to the threat of cruel persecution by the Roman government against the early Christian community and the influence of confusing heresies that differed from the gospel message preached by St. Paul. All of this advice is reinforced by three images: from military life, from the world of athletics, and from agriculture.

Christians are likened to soldiers fighting in war. Just as a soldier endures hardship on the battlefield, so too must Christians endure the suffering that comes from being faithful to their faith. Just as a soldier obeys his commander, so too must Christians obey Christ in all things.

A person who preaches the gospel is called “a good soldier of Christ Jesus” because it is not easy; challenges and obstacles constantly arise. Yet, he willingly endures suffering to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. As the fulfillment of God’s promise and the message of salvation for humanity, St. Paul’s struggle serves as an example. He was imprisoned, but God’s word could not be shackled. Paul continued to work patiently to lead others to salvation. This kind of spirit and struggle is what St. Paul wanted to instill in St. Timothy and the congregation at that time.

St. Paul also said that believers are like athletes: like athletes who compete by properly following the rules of the sport, they will emerge as true winners. The life of a Christian who obeys God’s will (the Word) will receive the crown of eternal life.

Christians are also like farmers who must work hard and earnestly in service. St. Paul told St. Timothy that God will give understanding in all things; understanding or wisdom from God exceeds human understanding. This wisdom also strengthens us when facing suffering. Today’s reading invites us to continue to grow in perseverance; even though we have to suffer, we are asked to have the character of endurance and patience in suffering while hoping in Jesus Christ, and continue to do our service work obediently and faithfully. We are faithful warriors to spread the good news in Jesus Christ to the world despite facing various rejections and obstacles. May God be glorified in our lives.

Fr. Juris Kangihade
Rector of St. Swithin’s Anglican Church
Manado, Indonesia

Lent 2 – Sunday, March 1

Homily for Lent 2

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Matthew 15:21-28

By Saint John Chrysostom

(*Homily 52* – Anglican Breviary C226-7)

And the gospel saith “But he answered her not a word.” What is this new and strange thing? To the Jews, in spite of their perversity, Christ seems ever to show great patience; when they blaspheme, He entreateth; when they vex him, He does not dismiss them; but to this Canaanite woman, who had received no instruction in the law or the prophets, and yet was showing such a great reverence, to such and one as this Christ does not vouchsafe so much as an answer! I suppose that even the very disciples must have been affected at the woman’s affliction, so that they were troubled, and out of heart. Nevertheless, not even in their vexation did they venture to say to him: “Grant her this favor.” Rather we read: “His disciples besought Him, saying, ‘Send her away, for she crieth after us.’”

But in this connection, let us not forget how we too, when we wish to persuade anyone, do often say the exact contrary of our own wishes. [For thus the disciples could reverently call their Master’s attention to the contrast between His wonted compassion and the strangeness of his behavior toward this woman.] Then Christ made answer: “I am not sent but on to the

lost sheep of the house of Israel.” And there upon what did this woman do? Was she silent? Did she desist? Did she falter in her earnestness? By no means; rather, she was the more instant. But with us, it is not so; rather, when we fail at once to obtain, we desist; whereas it ought to make us the more urgent. What then saith Christ? Not even with all this was He satisfied, but He seems to make as though to perplex furthermore, saying; “It is not need to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.”

And thus it was that when He did finally vouch safe to speak to her, He smote her more sharply by His words than by His silence. The more urgent her entreaty, so much the more doth He urge His denial. No longer does He speak of His own people as sheep, for on the contrary He calls them children, and her He calleth a dog! What then saith the woman? Out of his own very words she maketh her plea; for it is as if she said: “Though I be a dog, yet am I not thereby cast out from thee; for along with the children, the dogs are partakers, even though it be in scanty measure, since they eat of the crumbs which fall from the master’s table.” What then saith Christ? “Oh woman, great is thy faith!” Yea, it was for this reason that He had beforehand put her off, namely, that He might crown her as the Woman Great of the Faith!

Lent 2 – Monday, March 2

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 27:1-29

“And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.”

(Genesis 27:19)

The story of Jacob and Esau is not a tale of well-defined morality. It has no clear winners or losers; neither Jacob or Esau are perfect characters. They are twin brothers with two distinct personalities and natures. Esau is a man of the earth. He is more primal, a hunter, quick tempered, and superficial. He seems to live for the moment, concerned only with what is right in front of him. Jacob is more intellectual and calculated; he has a vision and purpose for his life though he attempts to achieve it by morally dubious means and the narrative makes no attempt to hide this.

But as in most biblical accounts, we should not remain fixated on the human individuals, but instead, look for God’s presence and purpose.

Despite the rivalry, parental favoritism, deception, and general discord, the account of Jacob and Esau testifies to a God who is continually at work within the human struggle of life. God’s working and purpose is not always plainly visible, but it is there. God does not condone deceit or trickery but does use all things for good and His presence in the lives of these men

eventually brings forth redemption, forgiveness, and ultimately, salvation.

We all have the same traits as did Jacob and Esau and they constantly fight within us; they are part of the fallen human condition, and as flawed and prone to bad decisions as we are, we can be confident in faith, of God's love, and redeeming grace toward us.

Jacob's name means Supplanter. He supplants Esau, the firstborn, and takes his birthright and Isaac's paternal blessing. Jacob took Esau's proper place in receiving Isaac's blessing, but Christ freely shares His birthright with us, and we take our proper place in receiving God the Father's blessing at our Baptism: The words of the Father spoken over Jesus, "This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased," are spoken over us also. For God loved us while we were yet sinners.

God's blessing does not necessarily remove hardship from our lives. It may at times lead us into them. Jacob would learn this and Christ was led into the desert to be tempted after His baptism. Through hardship and trial, we can learn much about our own character and the faithfulness of God in spite of our weaknesses and infirmities. We are all like these brothers in many ways. This causes me to ask which brother am I and how is God working in me in spite of myself ?

Dcn. Robert Shoup
Saint Patrick's Anglican Church
Brevard, NC

Lent 2 – Tuesday, March 3

Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

*“But brother goeth to law with brother,
and that before the unbelievers.”*

(1 Corinthians 6:9)

Some years ago one of my students, a devout Roman Catholic, graduated from law school and was engaged by a prestigious law firm. For his first case the firm threw him a slam-dunk lawsuit launched by one brother against another. After meeting with his client, something began gnawing at this young lawyer. In his prayers he was reminded of this passage in which Paul exhorts believers not to be suing each other, and especially not to take disputes we might have with our Christian brothers and sisters to a secular court of law. After a sleepless night he determined that he would counsel his client NOT to sue his brother, even knowing that this would likely result in his dismissal from the firm. God was with him! The next morning before he could see his client, the man of his own conscience called and apologized, but he said that he could not sue his own brother and to please withdraw the case. My young lawyer found his faith strengthened, his integrity intact, and his job secure. His client found reconciliation with his brother.

Paul is simply applying Jesus' words from Matthew 18:15-17: “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more,

that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church...”

Jesus and Paul are exhorting us to resolve disputes face to face. If that does not bring reconciliation then we go to two or three trusted believers, and then to the church.

Furthermore, we are cautioned to seek reconciliation before receiving Holy Communion as per the rubrics in the Book of Common Prayer found on page 85: *The minister shall deny communion to those, betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign; not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord's Table, until he know them to be reconciled.*

Lent is the perfect time to examine our hearts and see if there be any grievance, no matter how small, that we hold against another. Finding such, let us make our confession to God and go to our brother or sister, resolve the grievance, and be reconciled.

Our Book of Common Prayer has a wonderful section of “Family Prayer” in the back. The following is in the *Prayer for Grace to reform and grow Better* on page 590.

“Purge our hearts from envy, hatred, and malice; that we may never suffer the sun to go down upon our wrath; but may always go to our rest in peace, charity, and good-will, with a conscience void of offence towards thee, and towards men.”

Fr. Scott Eddlemon

Priest-in-Charge of Holy Apostles Anglican Church (ACC)
Pewaukee, WI

Lent 2 – Wednesday, March 4

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Gen. 27:46 & 28:4,10-22

“Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”

(Genesis 28:12)

I remember hearing a story about a man who fell asleep one night and began to dream that he was building a ladder from earth to heaven. The construction of this ladder was based on his own good works. Every time he fed the hungry, gave a cool drink to the thirsty, or visited the sick another rung would appear and he would climb one step closer to heaven. In his dream time passed quickly, and as the years rolled by the ladder went up into the clouds and the man thought that when he died he would step off his ladder at the gate of heaven, but one day as he climbed another rung higher on his ladder of good works, he heard a voice roll out from Paradise, which said, He who “climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1). At the sound of the voice, every rung on his ladder broke, and as the man fell to the earth he awoke from his dream no longer believing that the stairway to heaven is built by the good deeds of good people, but rather by grace through faith in the One who “loved us, and gave Himself for us” (Ephesians 5:2).

Trying to ascend to heaven on a ladder we’ve built from our own good works will end in destruction, but there is a Ladder that ascends to “the gate of heaven,” at

the top of which the LORD stands, and this Ladder is our Savior Christ Jesus, who said to Nathanael that he would “see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending” upon Him (John 1:51). Through the Incarnation, the Creator “emptied Himself” (Phil. 2:7) and accomplished what the creature could not. He, being fully man, anchored this means of ascent to the lowest point on earth, and as the Divine Second Person of the Holy Trinity, He extended its reach to the highest heaven.

Christ is the Ladder by which not only the angels, but even the most “miserable offenders” may ascend to the kingdom of God, and Lent is a season in which we more deliberately set our affection on “things above” (Col. 3:2), and by the grace of God, climb. In this penitential season, as we devote more time to fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, may we be given eyes to see these disciplines not as good works by which we construct our own ladder to heaven, but instead as evidence of our ascent to God the Father, through Christ the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Christopher Smith
Rector of St. Andrew’s Anglican Church
Jacksonville, OR

Lent 2 – Thursday, March 5

Morning Prayer – First Lesson – Genesis 29:1-13, 18-20

“And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.... And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.”

(Genesis 29:18 & 20)

Lent is an exciting time in the life of a Christian. If handled properly, it is a time of intense prayer, fasting, abstinence, and introspection of our lives. It is also a time of immense growth in the Christian life.

We are just over two weeks into the Lenten Fast. It is normally around this time of Lent that the excitement of fasting and abstinence begins to wain in our hearts and souls. The desire of the food(s) or activity we are fasting from begins to grow. At this time, the finish line of Lent seems so far away. With this in mind, I find it absolutely brilliant that our lectionary has this passage of scripture that details the story of Jacob and Rachel for today.

To summarize the full story, Jacob leaves his mother and father to go find a wife. He travels to Haran to find his mother's family. On the day of his arrival, he meets the love of his life, Rachel. Jacob goes to Laban, Rachel's father, to set the terms of the engagement period. Jacob agrees to work for Laban for seven years and then he would have the opportunity to marry Rachel. Here is where the story gets good; in verses 18 and 20, it says Jacob served those seven years but they seemed like a few days because of his love for Rachel. Genesis tells us later that Jacob was tricked and

ended up serving another seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage. That was fourteen years that Jacob gladly worked due to his love for her.

What an example that is to us Christians today. Lent can be hard. It forces us to give up foods and activities we love and enjoy so we can grow closer to our Lord. It becomes draining. But, if we approach it with the mindset of Jacob, it is well worth the effort. Our love for God should rival and exceed Jacob's love for Rachel. We should endeavor to fast, abstain, and pray more. Our hearts should look forward to the work and toil of Lent, for we know that we will receive the treasure chest of growing closer to Christ. The days of fasting and abstaining are a mere drop in the bucket compared to the love that the Holy Trinity has for us.

It is my prayer that we all are holding to that Fast in a way that is spiritually meaningful to us. As we continue through Lent, let us remember to fast and abstain from the things we planned to. Let's spend more time in prayer by praying the Daily Offices and prayerfully reading the assigned scriptures of the day.

If any have not begun to participate in Lent, then start today. If any have fallen and eaten that food we gave up, let us pick ourselves up and renew the fast again. It is not too late to start or start again. God's grace is larger and more forgiving than we can imagine.

Dcn. Jason McInnis
Non-Parochial
Shreveport, LA

Lent 2 – Friday, March 6

Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - John 11:28-44

“When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled...”

(John 11:33)

To all the readers, my brothers and sisters in Christ, praised be Jesus and Mary! Now and forever, Amen. Allow me to first introduce myself. I am Fr. Joel Arellano, Priest-in-Charge of the Missionary District of the Philippines of the Anglican Province of America. Last 2013, I attended the APA synod in Orlando, Florida, USA. Greetings to those I met and who saw me personally during my short visit in the USA, including the Parish of St. George the Martyr in Simpsonville, South Carolina. I would like to thank you all and the APA family for all your prayers and support during battle with stage 3 cancer. Thanks be to God, I am now free from cancer and my health is being restored by God, and that is a miracle.

In the second lesson of evening prayer, Friday of Lent 2, in the gospel St. John 11:28-44, there are two things to ponder and reflect upon: First, Jesus weeps. We can see here that Jesus showed deep human emotion, compassion and empathy for suffering, particularly during his friend Lazarus' death. Jesus shared in the grief of Mary and Martha even though He would raise Lazarus. With these, we can see a demonstration of God's presence with us even in sorrow. He will not abandon us because of his loving mercy, his nature, true humanity and his divinity. He felt the pain of human loss and the consequences of sin and now we may be comforted to know that He understands our grief. The compassion and empathy felt by Jesus over Mary and Martha's loss is an act of caring and loving which we may imitate for those we know who suffer like Mary and Martha.

The true humanity of Jesus experiences sadness and grief just as we do. That's how he showed to us. The essence of Jesus

weeping signifies God's profound love and his power to overcome death and offer comfort and hope in times of loss. When we witness our families and friends experiencing the loss of their loved ones, we realize how hard it is to accept the reality of 'death' like Lazarus. Like Jesus, we comfort the bereaved family for the loss of their loved ones. We pray for them to lighten the burden that they have—to give them hope about the resurrection and remind them of what Jesus declared: "I am the resurrection and the life," *Ego sum resurrectio et vita*.

Second, Jesus raises Lazarus. It signifies His absolute power over life and death proving that He is God and the source of eternal life—showing compassion for humanity's suffering and faith. It serves as an example of His own resurrection and points to the future resurrection of all believers. Concerning us as Christians, the resurrection of Lazarus substantiates divine mercy and the hope of new, spiritual life beyond physical death, calling us out of the tomb of sin. In the forty days of Lent, we are called to repent from our sin. And we are called to deepen our faith in God as the source of eternal life. Yes, we will all die but we do not know when? Where? And how? Only God knows, because he is the author of our life.

In this season of Lent, let us acknowledge our sins before God. Let us now go to church and look for a priest and ask for the Sacrament of Confession. Today, many people do not come to the church for the Sacrament of Confession, probably because many of us do not know the essence of the Sacrament of Confession. Let us use this season of Lent to reflect and meditate on the Paschal mystery of Jesus. As Anglo-Catholics, let us dedicate our extra time to prayer, to reading the scriptures; to rosaries; to the corporal works of mercy, especially for our brethren who are less fortunate; and to the recitation of Morning and Evening Prayer by using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

Fr. Joel Arellano

Priest-in-Charge of the Missionary District of the Philippines
Anglican Province of America

Lent 2 – Saturday, March 7

Morning Prayer - First Lesson – Psalm 63

*“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee:
My soul thirsteth for thee,
My flesh longeth for thee In a dry and thirsty land,
where no water is.”
(Psalm 63:1)*

David wrote Psalm 63 while in the wilderness of Judah. He had reached the end of his own strength and discovered, in that emptiness, a deep thirst for God. David begins with a raw, unfiltered, almost physical longing: “My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.” That kind of language doesn’t come from comfort, it comes from wilderness.

This psalm invites us to sit in prayer in our own dry place for a few moments, not to wallow in that silence, but instead to notice what rises out of silence. When the noise and distractions of life fade, something truer begins to surface. A desire, a need, a longing, to reach out to the One who made you. The wilderness becomes a mirror, showing you what you really hunger for.

But David doesn’t stay in longing; he moves quickly into remembrance. “I have seen thee in the sanctuary.” David recalls moments of encounter with the Lord. Times when God felt close—when worship was effortless and his heart full. Memory becomes a kind of spiritual nourishment. We’re reminded that the God we seek in the desert is the

same God who meets us in the sanctuary. The setting has changed, but God hasn't.

Then comes the turning point. "Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." David doesn't wait for his circumstances to improve before worshiping. Praise becomes an act of defiance against despair, a declaration that God's love is not measured by the comfort and ease of your surroundings.

Then the psalm shifts from thirst to satisfaction: "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness." Notice the order: longing first, satisfaction second. David treats longing as the doorway to a deeper communion with the Lord. The God who is sought is also the God who satisfies.

And then, in the quiet stillness of the night, David remembers God again. "When I remember thee upon my bed... My soul followeth hard after thee." This isn't a frantic fearful clinging. It's the steady, trusting grip of someone who's learned that God's hand is already upholding them. The wilderness hasn't disappeared, but it has been transformed. It's no longer a place of abandonment. It has instead become a place of intimacy.

Psalm 63 ends with confidence, not in the psalmist's strength, but in God's faithfulness. The one who seeks God in the wilderness discovers that God has been seeking them all along. Let this psalm invite you to bring your own thirst—your own wilderness, into the presence of the only One who truly can satisfy. Let longing become prayer, memory strength, and praise the path that leads you through this Lenten season.

Fr. Michael P. Sclafani, SSC
Vicar of All Souls Anglican Church
Asheboro, NC

Lent 3 – Sunday, March 8

Homily for Lent 3

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Luke 11:14-28

by The Venerable Bede

(Anglican Breviary C239-230)

Matthew saith that the devil, by which this poor creature was possessed, was not only dumb, but also blind; and that, when the possessed was healed by the Lord, he both saw and spake. Three miracles, therefore, were performed on this one man; the blind saw, the dumb spake, and the possessed was freed from the devil.

This mighty work was then done in the flesh, but is now fulfilled spiritually every time men are converted and become believers. For from them the devil is cast out, and their eyes are given to see the light of the Faith, and their lips, which before were dumb, are opened that their mouth may shew forth the praise of God. But some of them said: He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. It was not some of the multitude that uttered this slander, but Pharisees and scribes, as we are told by the other Evangelists.

The multitude, which was made up of such as had little instruction, was filled with wonder at the works of the Lord. But the Pharisees and scribes, on the other hand, denied the facts when they could; and when they could not, they twisted them by an evil interpretation, and asserted that the works of God were the works of an

unclean spirit. And Matthew saith: Others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. It would seem that they desired him to do some such thing as Elias did, who called down fire from heaven; or like as Samuel, who caused thunder to roll, and lightning to flash, and rain to fall at midsummer: as though they could not have explained away these signs also, as being the natural result of some unusual, albeit hitherto unremarked, state of the atmosphere. O thou who stubbornly deniest that which thine eye seeth, thine hand holdeth, and thy sense perceiveth, what wilt thou say to a sign from heaven? Verily, thou wilt say that divers signs from heaven were once also wrought even by the sorcerers in Egypt.

But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them: Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to a desolation, and an house divided against an house falleth. Thus did he make answer, not to their words, but to their thoughts, in hopes that they might at least believe in the power of him who seeth the secrets of the heart. But if every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, it followeth that the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which same is to abide in everlasting steadfastness, is not a divided kingdom. Wherefore we hold, without fear of contradiction, that it never can be brought to desolation by any shock whatsoever. But, saith the Lord, if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out devils by Beelzebub. In saying this, he sought to draw from their own mouth a confession that they had chosen for themselves to be part of that devil's kingdom which, if it be divided against itself, cannot stand.

Lent 3 – Monday, March 9

Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - Mark 10:17-31

“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”

(Mark 10:21-23)

In this evening’s appointed reading from the Gospel of St. Mark, we find ourselves standing on a dusty road with our Lord, witnessing a scene that is, at the same time, both full of immense hope and crushing tragedy. A young man runs up to Jesus, kneeling to ask the most important question a human heart can frame: “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” He is neither a hypocrite nor a Pharisee setting a trap for Jesus, but a soul seemingly on fire with the desire for God, having kept God’s commandments from his youth. Jesus, looking at him, loved him. The young man is full of hope and passion for the divine life, yet, he remains unique in the Gospels as he is the only person who comes to Jesus seeking the Kingdom of God and leaving with nothing.

The tragedy lies in the nature of his departure. St. John Chrysostom, the great preacher and early Church Father of the 5th century, pierced the heart of this narrative by observing that, for this young man, “wealth is more powerful than even the desire for eternal life...for he went away sorrowful. This showed that he was not only under the power of his possessions, but that he was also a slave to them.” The young man believed he possessed his wealth, but in truth, his wealth possessed him. He was a slave living in a gilded cage, desiring the treasures of heaven without the cross, attempting to reconcile a life in God with a life already crowded with temporal comfort.

It is tempting to dismiss this warning as applicable only to the very wealthy. The great 19th century Oxford Divine, John Henry Newman, warns against such spiritual complacency by reminding us that “riches” encompass whatever we rely upon instead of God. He writes, “Riches are a snare... they lead us to be satisfied with this world. The young man was ‘virtuous,’ but his wealth was the ‘one thing’ he lacked the courage to abandon.” These are our “rival gods”: our reputation, our need for control, our cherished resentments. These are the “great possessions” we fear to leave at the Master’s call. We judge the young man for holding onto gold, yet we often clutch our own idols with equal desperation.

As we journey through this holy season of Lent, we are called to confront these rival gods. This season is not merely for trivial deprivations, but for what St. Clement of Alexandria called the “Great Exchange”: that is, trading the temporal for the eternal. Jesus says to us, as He said to the young man, “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow me.” He speaks this not to condemn, but to liberate. He sees the heavy baggage of anxiety, materialism, and pride, and invites the young man—and us—to let it go. Lent is the season to unclench our fists and smash the idols that cannot save us. We must not turn away sorrowful, dragging the heavy chains of the world. Instead, we must pray for the grace to make the impossible possible, cutting the ties that bind us to the earth so that we may not merely run to Him, but walk with Him to Calvary and beyond to the joy of the Resurrection.

Fr. James Sweeney, SSC

Assisting Priest at Saint Barnabas Anglican Cathedral
Dunwoody, GA

Lent 3 – Tuesday, March 10

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 40

*“Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph,
but forgot him.”*

(Genesis 40:23)

This morning’s lesson continues the story of Joseph, which began in Chapter 37. Having been sold into slavery by his envious brothers, he is now imprisoned for an offense he did not commit. He is soon joined by the baker and butler of the king of Egypt, jailed for unspecified offenses. Joseph uses his God-given gift of interpretation to correctly interpret the dreams of the butler and baker.

The unfortunate baker is put to death, while the butler is restored to his position in Pharaoh’s household. In v.14, Joseph asks the butler to intervene on his behalf before Pharaoh, that he might be released from prison. Yet, when he returns to his former position, the ungrateful butler, who owes Joseph his very life, seems to forget Joseph (v.23).

Have we not all experienced these disappointments, when we feel forgotten by our closest friends? Perhaps we may have felt forgotten by God himself in the midst of major suffering or trial? Raised in an alien and pagan culture, Joseph might have been tempted to turn his back on the God of his fathers. Apparently, he does not, as the gift of interpreting dreams does not depart him, but reappears later in the story (Gen. 41). The rest of the story of Joseph, which we shall read in the next few days, assures us of God’s steadfastness and reliability. In the midst of

suffering and trial, God does not forget us, but is close by us and can be relied on.

The reading of the story of Joseph during Lent is not an accident. We see in this morning's portion and in the rest of the story that Joseph is a sort of proto-Christ figure. He suffers unjustly for offenses he does not commit; he is ignored or forgotten by those who should be grateful; but is eventually raised to great honour and glory. Joseph uses his new status to save both his own nation of Israel, and Egypt as well. Likewise, Jesus, who, in his human nature, cries out to God in the words of Ps. 22, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Christ is exalted to glory to save all mankind.

Today's lesson leaves us with two important observations: When we suffer, we can doubt the presence of God; when things are going well, we can be tempted to forget God, as the chief butler forgot Joseph. God has a plan for us, even if things are not going well. We should remember God and call upon him regularly, in good times and ill. God is near and has a plan for us.

Dcn. Thad Osborne
Holy Cross Anglican Church
Farragut, TN

Lent 3 – Wednesday, March 11

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 47:29-31, 48:8-20

“... Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.”
(Mark 10:52)

When we read about Jesus’ healing miracles, we sometimes think, “wasn’t that nice of Jesus to heal that person, but what does it really have to do with me?” Let’s look at the text and see what does have to do with us, today.

It begins, “blind Bartimaeus,” ... “sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.” We are not told how Bartimaeus came to know about Jesus, but he did understand who Jesus was. When he called upon Jesus as “thou son of David,” Bartimaeus was proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah.

In crying out for mercy, he was asking him for help. Of course, as a beggar, he could have simply been asking for alms. This may have been what was behind the crowd’s trying to shut him up, but Bartimaeus was having none of that: “he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.”

Clearly, Jesus was touched by Bartimaeus’ entreaties, so “he commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.” And when he had come to Jesus, he “said unto him, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man

said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight,” and not surprisingly he “followed Jesus in the way.”

The first point we can glean from this story is persistence in prayer. If what we are asking for is important to us, we ought to continue asking. As Saint Paul exhorts us, “Pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17).

The second is our prayer must be offered in faith. For our prayers to have any meaning, we must believe Jesus has the power to answer our prayers, if he so wills. We must never let the scoffing of doubters deter us.

The third is we must ask for what we need, specifically. This is most important, so we will know we have received exactly the blessing we for which we asked.

Fourth, our response to having our prayer answered most surely must be gratitude. We should, of course, thank him. This is important because first, it is good manners but even more to the point, it will build our faith. Like Bartemaus, we ought to follow Jesus.

One closing thought is not all blindness is physical. Sometimes the blindness of which we need to be delivered is spiritual. Pride, for example, sometimes keeps us from seeing our own sinfulness, most especially our sins of omission (which are often difficult to see anyway). Sometimes, we are blind to the needs of others.

In this Lenten Season, like Bartimaus, we need to cry out, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.”

Fr. Nicholas Henderson
Vicar of Saint Patrick’s Anglican Church
Brevard, NC

Lent 3 – Thursday, March 12

Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - St. Mark 11:12-26

“For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.” (Mark 11:23)

Our Gospel lesson this evening covers three events that perfectly embody the heart of our Lenten season. First, Jesus curses a fig tree within earshot of his disciples. Second, Jesus enters the temple, drives out those who sold and bought and turns over the tables of the money changers. Lastly, Jesus and the disciples pass by the fig tree and the disciples seem surprised to find that it is withered away to its roots.

Our Lord responds, encouraging St. Peter and the others present with him to, “Have faith in God. When you ask for something in prayer, believe that those things will come to pass. Present your desires to the Lord, and when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. And when you pray, forgive others, that your Father in heaven may forgive you” (Paraphrase of Mark 11:22-26).

These three scenes, stitched together in Holy Scripture, echo Isaiah 40, and call us to examine our hearts before the Lord and make straight the way for his glory.

“Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isa. 40:3b-5).

Isaiah goes on, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa. 40: 8).

In Mark’s gospel, the eternal Word of God withers the fig tree, cleanses the temple and prepares the earth to reveal

God's glory. Our Lord tells his disciples—and you and me—at the base of the withered fig tree to “Take heart, have faith, and make straight the way for God's glory. Valleys will be lifted up and mountains will be made low.”

Dear friend, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

These spiritual realities that you wrestle with are mountains. These are your opponents; your afflicters. Their presence give rise to your petitions for deliverance.

In Lent we examine our hearts and survey the topography of our soul in order to lay our life before the Lord like a map. We are looking for mountains: things that stand between ourselves and our Lord; things that stand between us and our brothers and sisters. These topographical features (i.e., mountains, valleys, hills) are very real and present. They afflict us and wound us, they obstruct our view, and seem insurmountable. But our Lord tells us that they are not fixed. By his glorious might and through our earnest petitions they are very movable. Bitterness, envy, anger, doubt, drunkenness, strife...these things veil us from God's glorious work of redemption in our life and restrict the flow of love and gifts towards our brothers and sisters.

This is the time; this is our opportunity to be honest with ourselves—and with our Lord—and cry out for help that our high priest and King may do what he has promised; gather the mountains and obstructions that have taken root in our life and wither them and throw them into the sea. Forgive your brothers and your sisters, that you may be forgiven. And cry out to God, that he may move mountains and reveal his glorious work of redemption in your life.

Dcn. Max Beebe

Curate of St. Mark's Anglican Church

Vero Beach, FL

Lent 3 – Friday, March 13

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Gen. 42:1-26, 29a, 35-38

“And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. ”

(Genesis 42:8)

There is perhaps no more compelling and dramatic a story in the entirety of the Old Testament than that of the sons of Jacob, Joseph and his brothers. As one takes in this cinematic narrative, the adventure of Joseph becomes ever more relatable, ever more familiar. There are few who can say that they have had such dreams as Joseph had, or that they had been sold into slavery by their brothers. But nevertheless, there is something all too familiar about Joseph's experiences of sibling rivalry, of betrayal and abandonment, and of having to scramble for survival. Joseph suffered for doing what is right when he resisted Potiphar's wife, and yet benefited from God's providence and favor as a result. Having arisen to the height of power in Egypt, he also was given the opportunity to forgive those relatives who caused him such injury.

The familiarity of Joseph's story takes on a more powerful character when one views the life of this chosen and favored son through the lens of the life of Christ. In fact, the story is strikingly similar. Jesus too was rejected by his own, cast into the lowest place, raised from the depths to the right hand of the Lord of all, and given the power to save those who come to Him starving for the means of life.

As we consider the parallel to Christ, we must look closely at what Joseph does when his brothers come to him for help in the famine of their day. Joseph, in a way that perhaps only a brother could do, plays what could easily be

called a prank on the crowd of siblings that supplicate before him. Similar to how Jesus “came to his own and his own did not receive him” so now Joseph’s brothers came to him but did not recognize him. Joseph knew that he would “save” his brothers and his father, but nevertheless, he was not above using the circumstance of their ignorance to press hard his point. In the end, Joseph would allow his brothers to suffer, to feel confused, and even to be humbled by returning to him multiple times for help.

By the end of the story there has been suffering, there has been supplication and there has been sacrifice—but there also has been redemption, renewal, forgiveness, and, for Jacob who thought his beloved son Joseph had died years before, there was a downright honest to goodness resurrection. The family is reunited and Joseph reveals to his brothers, who like Judases squirmed in their seats about how they were being saved by the one they had sold, that what they had meant for evil God had used for good.

For some during the season of Lent it is quite possible that, to the suffering and supplication and sacrifice of regular daily life, very little austerity must be added in order to know the great benefit of a penitential season. But let us not be confused into believing that all this spiritual fasting is an end in itself. Just as in the story of Joseph as well as in the life of our Lord, let us rather understand that this is the straight and narrow path to our ultimate feast—the Kingdom of God.

Fr. Paul Rivard

Rector of St. George the Martyr Anglican Church
Simpsonville, SC

Lent 3 – Saturday, March 14

Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

If you are reading this devotional on a Saturday during Lent, you are on a path of self-examination and purification. The Church, in her wisdom, offers us these words of Saint Paul today so that we may not dwell on our shortcomings, but rather on the richness that the Spirit has placed within us, precisely to sanctify this time and serve others.

Lent invites us to fight against selfishness and to discover our true identity in Christ. In this passage, Paul reveals to us that this identity is not one of isolation, but of communion; not of spiritual poverty, but of a generous endowment. The danger, like that of Esau in the Genesis reading we meditated on earlier, is to despise the spiritual birthright we receive in Baptism: the dignity of being temples of the Spirit and bearers of his gifts.

Paul writes to a divided community, where some boasted of certain spectacular gifts, such as speaking in tongues, and despised simpler ones, such as service or administration. Esau despised his birthright for an immediate meal; we too can despise the gift of the Spirit within us, and within our brothers and sisters, through vanity or impatience. We believe our charism is the most important, or that the other's is insignificant. We fall into Jacob's impatience, wanting to force God's will with our own cunning, instead of humbly accepting the place the Spirit has assigned us in the Body.

But the Apostle offers a clear and liberating criterion: “To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” Not for personal glory, not to feed our spiritual impatience, but for the common good. The gift within you, dear brother or sister—whether it be unwavering faith, the ability to console, the skill to teach with patience, or silent fortitude in times of trial—has been bestowed by the same Spirit who led Christ into the desert. And He has given it to you so that, precisely in your daily “desert”—be it your office, your home, your community—you may be a wellspring of that more “beneficial” being for others.

Lent is a propitious time to examine not only our sins, but also our gifts. Let us ask ourselves: Do I gratefully acknowledge the charism the Spirit has given me? Do I despise it, thinking it is insignificant? Do I joyfully esteem the different gift of my brother or sister, seeing in them a manifestation of the same Spirit? Or perhaps, on the contrary, do I fall into envy or contempt, breaking the unity the Spirit wants to build?

The same Spirit who distributed the gifts in Corinth today distributes them in our parish, in our family, in our hearts. Dear brother, may this time of preparation find us not bitter about what we believe we lack, but grateful and diligent with what we have received freely, to put it at the service of God’s plan, whose perfect rhythm requires our patience and faithful cooperation.

Fr. Gustavo Emiliano Méndez Aldás
Director of the Jesus Good Shepherd Seminary of the
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Lent 4 – Sunday, March 15

Homily for Lent 4

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – John 6:1-14

by Saint Augustine of Hippo

(Tractate 24 on John, Anglican Breviary C253-4)

The miracles wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ were verily divine works, and they stir up the mind of man to rise by a perception of what is seen by the eye unto an apprehension of God himself. For God is of such substance as eye cannot see, and the many miracles which He doth work in his continual rule of the whole universe, and in his providential care of everything which he has made, are by use become so common that scarce anyone permitteth himself to perceive the same, as for example, what wondrous and amazing works of God there be in every grain of seed. Wherefore His mercy hath constrained Him to keep some works to be done only at some convenient time, as it were, out of the common course and order of nature, to the intent that men may see them and wonder, not because they be greater, but because they be rarer, than those which they so lightly esteem by reason of their daily occurrence.

For to govern the whole universe is surely a greater miracle than to satisfy five thousand men with five loaves of bread. At the former works no man doth marvel, yet at the feeding of the five thousand, all men do marvel, not because it is a greater miracle than the

other, but because it is a rarer one. For who is He that now feedeth the whole world? Is it not that same who, from a little grain that is sown, maketh the fulness of the harvest? God worketh in both cases in one and the same manner. He that over the sowing maketh to come the harvest, is the same that took in His hands five barley loaves, and of them made bread to feed five thousand men. For the hands of Christ have the power to do both the one and the other. He that multiplieth the grains of corn is the same that multiplied the loaves, save only that in this latter case He committed them not into the earth whereof He is Himself the maker.

Therefore this miracle is done outwardly before us, that our souls inwardly may thereby be quickened. The same is shown to our eyes to furnish food for thought. Thus by means of those of his works which are seen, we may come to feel awe toward Him that cannot be seen. Perchance we may thereby be roused up to believe, and if we attain unto belief, we shall be purified to such a good purpose that we shall begin to long to see him. Wherefore, in such wise, through the things which are seen, we may come to know Him that cannot be seen. Yet it suffices not if we perceive only this one meaning in Christ's miracles. Rather let us ask of the miracles themselves what they have to tell us concerning Christ; for in all truth they speak with a tongue of their own, if only we have goodwill to understand the same. For Christ is the Word of God, and each and every work of the Word speaketh a word to us.

Lent 4 – Monday, March 16

Morning Prayer - Psalm 90

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, thou art God from ever lasting, and world without end.”

(Psalm 90:2)

Know thyself. It's an old adage, originating from an ancient Greek maxim. It is a useful idea, not only for the ancient Greek, but also for the Christian. Indeed, to really know ourselves is to come to understand our limitations. We are creatures, finite and corruptible. We have a beginning and an end. There is a limit to ourselves that we cannot transcend. When we truly know ourselves, then we understand that we are absolutely dependent on The Other, God, for even our moment-to-moment existence.

The Christian Faith has always taught that there is only one who is infinite, without beginning or end. It is the great I AM, the self-existing one, who encompasses all things, and holds them together. Indeed, God is the source of all being, all existing. St. John tells us this when he writes “All things were made by Him [the logos]; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” Yet, God is not bound by his own creation. He transcends His own works. The Christian Faith has consistently taught that God is both “immanent,” or everywhere present, and “transcendent,” or beyond all things.

The Psalmist understands this well for he writes “Thou art God from ever-lasting, and world without end” and “a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is

past, and as a watch in the night.” No one can wrap their mind around God or fully understand the Divine Nature. To know yourself means that you come to the realization that you must depend on God for everything: “We consume away in thy displeasure, and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation.” Further, the Psalmist knows that Humans do not truly fear God nor keep God in their thoughts and hearts: “Who regardeth the power of thy wrath? or feareth aright thy indignation?”

It is hard for us to walk daily with the fear of God in our minds and hearts. Too many trivialities distract us. We are worried about the future, about what our friends and acquaintances think. Thus the Psalmist begs God “teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Sometimes the best we can do is simply to ask God to make us good, to make us mindful of Him.

In Lent, Mother Church gives us a season of fasting and discipline. Really, we should be practicing those things every day, not just during Lent; nor are fasting and discipline means unto themselves. We discipline our minds, bodies and spirits so that we might be made more like God. We need a constant reminder of who we are and who the great I AM is. Since most of us are lazy, the Church tells us that we must do this sort of thing at least once a year during Lent. She is saying to each Christian: “Pay attention!” “Know thyself!” “Know God!”

Walk daily with the fear of God. Practice repentance. In other words, cling to the Lord each moment so that “the glorious majesty of the Lord our God will be upon you.”

Fr. Joshua Kimbril

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Weaverville, NC

Lent 4 – Tuesday, March 17

Evening Prayer – Second Lesson – Mark 12:28-37

“There is none other commandment greater than these.”

(Mark 12:31)

In this evening’s second lesson, our Lord says something that should sound very familiar to us, especially to us Anglicans. In Mark 12:29-31, our Lord gives us the Summary of the Law: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”

Now, unless the entire Decalogue is read, every Anglican Mass begins with a variation of these words, the Summary of the Law, right after the Collect for Purity. Many of us undoubtedly know these words by heart. In fact, if you’re anything like me, you may have stumbled over this evening’s second lesson because we are more accustomed to St. Matthew’s version than St. Mark’s. Yet whichever Gospel is read, the meaning is the same: the love of God and the love of neighbor are the heart of God’s Law – a truth especially important to keep in mind during the season of Lent.

Lent can easily become a self-centered—and even self-righteous—spiritual exercise. Maybe that’s why every Lent begins with a warning on Ash Wednesday not to fall into hypocrisy and self-indulgence. After all, Lent is personal. Lent is intimate. Lent calls for quite a bit of self-discipline and self-examination, which many wrongly interpret as

mere self-improvement. But Lent is not a self-help program. It is not a test of our willpower, nor is it only about “me and Jesus” and my private and personal spiritual progress.

Lent is about Christ. It is about the life of self-denial and selfless love He lived and to which He calls us to take part. It is about taking up our cross and following Him, not by sheer effort alone, but by grace. Becoming more like Christ requires far more than just determination; it requires God’s mercy, love, and sustaining grace. In the end, this is what Lent is truly all about.

So rather than beating ourselves up over the sins of our past, let us confess them and receive absolution from a priest, as from God Himself. Rather than lingering in vague guilt over what we have done or left undone, let us turn our attention outward and consider how best we might love and serve our neighbor. And rather than praying only for our own spiritual growth, let us pray for the whole state of Christ’s Church and for all people according to their needs.

Therefore, hear again what our Lord Jesus Christ says. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” After all, this is what the Christian life is all about—and this is the true goal of every season of Lent.

Fr. Randall Russell

Future Vicar of St. Patrick’s Anglican Church
Brevard, NC

Lent 4 – Wednesday, March 18

Evening Prayer - Psalm 97

“The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.”

(Psalm 97:1)

The first appointed Psalm for Evening Prayer today is Psalm 97, one that opens with a striking introduction, “The LORD reigneth” (v. 1a). It is the consideration of this blessed reality that is the impetus of all our worship, whether private or corporate. The text continues this declaration by setting before us the full extent of the reign of God: “let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof” (v. 1b). In other words, wherever there is ground on which men stand, the Trinity is to be praised. There is no place on earth unfit for worship.

Sometimes, when we pray the Offices of Morning or Evening Prayer at home, we can feel that the entire exercise is out of place. This is compounded by the numerous rubrics (the italicized instructions found throughout the Prayer Book) that speak of a priest being present and a congregation there to respond to him. It is easy to get the impression that we should be doing something else. But it is here that God meets us with the encouragement of this Psalm. We are to consider our homes, offices, vehicles, or wherever we pray to be like little chapels, places that we can hallow (make holy or separate) for the purpose of worshipping Jesus Christ, since He is Lord over everything.

In the next verse, the Psalm continues, “Clouds and darkness are round about him.” This is a curious assertion, perhaps even foreign to our conception of God. Yet, it is taught throughout holy Scripture (cf. Psalm 18:11; Exodus 20:21). On the other hand, St. John says, “God is light; in him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 5:1b). Both of these realities are true, even if such a synthesis is hard for us to understand. In the same way that God is both merciful Savior and just Judge, He dwells in light unapproachable (1 Timothy 6:16) and in thick darkness (1 Kings 8:12).

This is similar to how we speak of the Trinity. We confess, in accordance with the Athanasian Creed, that God is both One and also Three, One Being, Three Persons, “one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Essence.” A stupefying mystery! The mention of clouds in this verse is also helpful. Clouds naturally obscure our view of the sky above us.

Airline pilots often have to rely on GPS navigation when flying through dense cloud coverage. Similarly, our view of God is partially obscured. Even after we attain the beatific vision, we will still not fully understand God. Rather than have any cause for fear, we should be struck with awe in consideration of our ineffable and adorable Creator. And as we are in this season of Lent, let us already look toward Calvary, where this God, Jesus Christ our Lord, hung upon a tree and there died (Galatians 3:13), opening the gates of paradise to lowly sinners.

Mr. Lucas Mann

Postulant of Saint George the Martyr Anglican Church
Simpsonville, SC

Lent 4 – Thursday, March 19

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 49:33-50:26

“Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good”

(Genesis 50:19-20)

Am I in the place of God? This is an obviously rhetorical question with an implicit and seemingly obvious answer. But in the throes of their father's death, Joseph's brothers feared for their lives and wondered if Joseph harbored wrath towards them that had been hidden for the sake of their now late father. However, reflection on the course of Joseph's life elucidates the rhetorical nature of this question and reveals that Joseph's character and countenance were defined by his attention to the power of this question. As the son of his father's favorite wife Rachel, perhaps Joseph was the spoiled child that his many-colored coat and his brothers' envy portrayed. Perhaps Joseph's recounting of his seer-like, self-exalting dreams was performed with as much pride as prophetic truth. Scripture is silent on this rather probable youthful immaturity and sin. However, the details of Joseph's life revealed in the Genesis account clearly declare Joseph's proper cosmological, personal, and spiritual orientation as he continually and steadfastly bowed the knee to God and trusted in His providence. From his coat of many colors to the dirty pit in Dothan, from a 17-year-old paternal emissary to the shackles of Ishmaelite slave traders, from favored son status in Canaan to slave duties, false accusations, and then prison walls in Egypt, Joseph practiced the acknowledgement of and contentment with God's sovereignty.

“Am I in the place of God?” Joseph had already declared his answer to this question when he refuted Potiphar's wife (“How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against

God?” [Gen 39:9]), answered Pharaoh’s chief butler and baker (“Do not interpretations belong to God?” [Gen 40:8]), and demurred to Pharaoh (“It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer” [Gen 41:16]). Joseph declared his answer to this question again when he “comforted... and spake kindly” (Gen 50:21) to his brothers and invoked the omnipotent, omniscient providence of God in turning their evil into good, for “it was not you that sent me hither, but God” (Gen 45:8)

“Am I in the place of God?” The trajectory of human history has been profoundly influenced by the individual and collective response to this question. When we creatures, in the persons of our forebears in Eden’s garden, bent the course of human history and corrupted all creation, we pridefully placed ourselves above our Creator God on the throne of our God-given free will in pursuit of the Evil One’s deceptive promise “your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods” (Gen 3:5).

“Am I in the place of God?” is a thoroughly Lenten question and a Lenten and life litmus test. During this Lenten time of self-examination, introspection, and purgation, may we, like Joseph, pursue the creatureliness that our place before our Creator demands. In posture and practice, in attitude and action, may we know our proper place and avoid pridefully usurping the place of God in our hearts and lives. In emulation of the One who took our place (by changing His), may we “delight to do Thy will” (Ps 40:8/Heb 10:7), “set (our) face like a flint” (Is 50:7/Lk 9:51) for any baptism He has planned for us (Lk 12:50), and bend our knee with Him in Gethsemane’s garden while praying “not my will but Thine be done” (Lk 22:42).

Dr. Eric Byrd
All Saints Anglican Church
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Lent 4 – Friday, March 20

Evening Prayer - First Lesson - Jeremiah 16:5-13

“And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me.”

(Jeremiah 16:12)

We are invited or encouraged regularly in our time to acknowledge and repent for the grave moral failings of our forebears. There is precedent for this in Scripture. The sins of any generation can leave a lasting impact on their children and grandchildren. And we might be called at times to confront those difficult truths and repent on behalf of our fathers and mothers. Like the Psalmist (Ps 106:6), Jeremiah (Jer 3:25), Nehemiah (Neh 1:6), and so many others say, “we have sinned with our fathers.”

Motivated strongly by advances in trauma psychology, there is also in our day a push to better understand how the major and minor traumatic experiences of our early childhood impact our present lives. This, too, is important. Our human hearts long for the perfect love only God can give, and when we are hurt by the imperfect love of others, especially as small children, we can carry deep wounds that linger until they are healed by Christ.

But the Lenten season is not primarily a call to meditate on the sins of others, no matter how much those sins have left marks on us. During this time of year, each of us individually must choose to journey out into the wilderness with Christ. And in the solitude of His presence, when we open our lives up for examination under His just gaze, we discover an important truth: we are no better.

God may use the asceticism of Lent to show us what he showed the people of Judah: “ye have done worse than your fathers.” And that is no easy pill to swallow, because it is a humbling realization. But God gives grace to the humble.

The great prophet Elijah, after his confrontation with the prophets of Baal, fled into the wilderness from the horrible Jezebel. After only one day’s journey into the desert, he collapses beneath a juniper tree and cries out, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers” (1 Kgs 19:2).

What is fascinating is that the angel that comes to Elijah to console him does not correct him, because his words are true. He is no better than his fathers, and neither are we. But rather than allowing Elijah to remain in dejection and self-loathing, the angel calls, “Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee” (1 Kgs 19:7). He gets up and departs “in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God” (19:8).

The gravity of our sin does not disqualify us from the journey. Instead, the humble acknowledgment of our brokenness makes us ready to press forward. Every eucharist, we come forward to the altar and kneel in humility before we receive the body and blood of Christ, because “there is no health in us.” We do not have what it takes, but in receiving this meal, this grace, we receive from God the nourishment and strength we need to make the journey unto the mount of God.

Dr. Jesse Stone

Aspirant of Holy Cross Anglican Church
Farragut, TN

Lent 4 – Saturday, March 21

Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...”

(1 Corinthians 15:1a)

This Lenten season encourages us to meditate on themes such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These constitute the very essence of Lent. Through prayer, we maintain constant contact with our Creator. As we follow in the footsteps of Christ, He teaches us, through His concrete example, to sometimes step back and fast, which increases our strength to fight against temptations. Finally, through almsgiving, this Lenten season urges us to share what we possess with the needy. May the spirituality of Lent lead us toward eternal happiness

Lent is a time of renewal for the Church, for the communities and for every faithful. We must realize that knowing the presence of our Savior in our life we are nothing without our God who invites us to convert to his Love. We must build our daily lives through fasting, prayer, penance, confession, forgiveness to prepare our Easter.

It is true that in the face of misfortune we see what a man is worth, but let us have no part in wickedness or in war that brings such misfortune about. Let us meditate instead on why there so much wickedness and war and turn instead to Jesus Christ who is the only one who can heal the heart from evil and sin. In this Lent, let us work to build a better world according to the plan of our God.

Consider meditating on these Biblical texts this Lent.

Psalm 34:13-15

“Keep thy tongue from evil, And thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, And his ears are open unto their cry.”

Romans 12:17-18

“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

Matthew 5:43-44

Isaiah 40:3

John 3:18-36

Revelation 14:6-7

God's promise to Abraham

Gen 17:7, Gen 26:3, Gen 28:15

Incarnation of Christ and God's mission towards us.

Matthew 28:18

Christ himself declared: “I am the way, the truth and the life.” Follow Him with all your heart! The Haitian Church of APA wishes you a Happy Lent!

Fr. Mews Guerrier

Chief Priest of the Haitian Church of the APA

Cap Haitien, Haiti

Lent 5 – Passion Sunday, March 22

Homily for Lent 5, commonly called Passion Sunday

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – John 8:46-59

by Gregory the Great

(Homily 18 on the Gospels, Anglican Breviary C267-8)

Deary beloved brethren, consider the gentleness of God. He came to take away sin, and He saith; “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” He, who in virtue of his Godhead was able to justify sinners, did not distain to show by an appeal to reason that He was not Himself a sinner. But verily the words which he addeth are exceeding awesome: He that is of God heareth God’s words; ye, therefore, hear of them not, because we are not of God. Wherefore, if he that is of God, heareth God’s words, and if one who is not of God, is not able to hear God’s words, let each one ask himself: “Do I, in the ear of my heart, hear God’s words, and understand whose words they are?” The Truth commandeth us to long for a fatherland in heaven, to bridle the lust of the flesh, to turn away from the glory of the world, to covet no man’s goods, and to bestow freely of our own.

Let each of you therefore think within himself if this voice of God sound out loud in the ear of his heart; for thereby will he know whether he be of God. Some there be, whom it pleases not to hear the commandments of God, even with their bodily ears. And some there be, who receive the same with their

bodily ears but whose heart is far from them. And some also there be, who hear the words of God with joy, so that they are moved thereby even to tears. But when their fit of weeping is past they turn again to iniquity. They who despise to do the words of God certainly cannot be said to hear them. Wherefore, dearly beloved brethren, call up your own life before your minds eye, and then ponder with trembling those awful words which the mouth of the Truth speak: “Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

The Truth speaketh these words concerning the reprobate. But the reprobate make manifest the same thing concerning themselves, by their evil deeds. Thus immediately followeth: “Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, ‘Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?’” Hear now what the Lord saith to so great an insult. “I have not a devil.” But He did not say, “I am not a Samaritan.” For in a sense a Samaritan He was indeed, since the word Samaritan is by interpretation a Watcher, and the Lord is that Watcher, of whom the Psalmist saith, that except he keep the city, any other watchman waketh but in vain. He also is that Watchman unto whom crieth Isaiah, “Watchman, what of the night, Watchman, what of the night?” Wherefore the Lord did not say, “I am not a Samaritan” – but, “I have not a devil.” Two charges were brought against Him. One He denied. To the other His silence gave assent.

Lent 5 – Monday, March 23

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Exodus 3:1-15

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

(Ex. 3:1-2)

“The first appearance of God to Moses, found him tending sheep. This seems a poor employment for a man of his parts and education, yet he rests satisfied with it; and thus learns meekness and contentment, for which he is more noted in sacred writ, than for all his learning. Satan loves to find us idle; God is pleased when he finds us employed.”

(The Rev. Matthew Henry)

There is seldom in our lives a time wherein we are more likely to be tempted than during the season of Lent, especially after the first week or two when our initial fervor begins to wear off and we enter the longer season of the “marathon” rather than the quick “sprint.” And yet we, like Moses, are called to fulfill the duties of our station in life—indeed, to seek greater conversion of heart that we may be more and more conformed to the image and reality of Christ our Saviour. A great part of that conversion is found in the disciplining of our bodies by regular fasting and abstinence. As we hear in the Epistle for Septuagesima Sunday: “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I

keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:26-27). Our fasting, however, must never be disconnected from our prayer. The one gives impetus to the other. Indeed, you cannot truly fast if you do not pray, for then it becomes at best a diet plan and at worst is an imitation of the demons who neither eat nor pray, but rather curse God all their days.

By all means, be about the work that God has given you at this season of your life. Remember to do it joyfully, do it without a burdened heart. “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4).

As to the burning bush, “[t]his vision is very similar to that former one which Abraham saw (Genesis 15:17)....The bush is likened to the humble and despised people; their tyrannical oppression is not unlike the fire which would have consumed them, had not God miraculously interposed....Thus was the cruelly afflicted people aptly represented, who, though surrounded by flames, and feeling their heat, yet remained unconsumed, because they were guarded by the present help of God” (John Calvin).

Let us then renew our desire to follow that Man, humbled and despised, who was beaten and crucified on Calvary. Let us follow Him all the way through the tomb to the Resurrection. Let us be filled with the fire of the Holy Ghost, the flame that burns but does not consume. Let us come at last unto everlasting life.

Fr. Dan Squires

Vicar of Saint Luke’s Anglican Church

Port Orange, FL

Lent 5 – Tuesday, March 24

Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Cor. 15:20-34

“Christ is now risen from the dead”

(1 Corinthians 15:20)

It is understandable if St. Paul’s statement that “Christ is now risen from the dead” strikes us as being a little out of place in the lectionary. After all, the events of Holy Week and the celebration of Easter are many days off. But today’s lesson selected from the First Epistle to the Corinthians gives us something to consider in anticipation—something to remember when the great Feast of the Resurrection finally does arrive. St. Paul wants us to think about what it means that Our Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead and came out of the garden tomb.

In order to think rightly about his resurrection, we have to consider it within the larger context of the Scriptures, including, among other things, the fact that Jesus is not the only person to have risen from the dead. In 2 Kings, for example, we read about a dead man who was revived after being thrown into the tomb of the prophet Elisha, whose bones worked the remarkable miracle by coming into contact with the dead man. It is a strange story, and there are other ones like it. Elisha, when he was alive, and, before him, Elijah both raised young boys from the dead by their prayers. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read separate stories about Sts. Peter and Paul bringing disciples to life again. In the Gospels, Our Lord brings back more than one person from the dead: not only Lazarus but also the son of the widow from Nain and the daughter of Jairus. And, in St. Matthew’s account of the resurrection of Jesus, we are told

that “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves.”

Taken together, these stories of resurrection tell us a few things. One is that coming back to life after death is an unusual occurrence—and it stands as an interruption of the typical order of things. Another is that Jesus is not the only person recorded in the Scriptures that rises again after having died. What, then, makes the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ different from what occurred in these stories?

In his epistle to Corinthians, the Apostle Paul gives us a clear answer to this question: The resurrection of Jesus was no mere resuscitation. Instead, his resurrection was an expression of unrivaled and complete authority by which he “put all things under his feet.” Those people like Lazarus or the widow’s son returned to live an ordinary human life—and they died again, like ordinary human beings do. But Our Lord’s resurrection was the means by which God defeated death, undoing the curse of Adam that all human beings inherited.

The good news to remember when Easter arrives is this: Christ’s resurrection is just the beginning—what St. Paul calls the “firstfruits”—of a kingdom that has defeated death once and for all, under whose reign all those who belong to Christ by baptism are set free from the fear of death.

Fr. Kyle Williams

Curate of All Saints Anglican Church

Charlottesville, VA

Lent 5 – Wednesday, March 25

Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - Matthew 1:18-23

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. ”

(Matthew 1:18)

Today the 25th of March is not just the Wednesday after Lent 5 but also the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the greatest saint ever to live). The passage given for this feast is Matthew 1:18-23.

It tells us of how Joseph interacted with this event and shows us the very human reaction he has to the news that his fiancé is pregnant. He reacted in a manner in which most men (and not a few ladies) can relate. He is disturbed by this news but not wanting to hurt anyone, though he himself was obviously hurt, decides to end the engagement quietly so as not to shame the young girl who is obviously not the wife for him. He is described as an honorable man and as time goes by we shall see his character filled with virtue on full display.

He had to have thought to himself that marrying a pregnant nun was not what he wanted from life. Most reasonable men want a wife for a wife, not a pregnant nun. But notice his character: he does not complain, bargain or disobey. It would be perfectly reasonable to complain to God about not getting a “real” wife. Was he not entitled to this basic human desire? What, other than being an honorable man, doing the right things, had he done to deserve this?

Maybe, just maybe, God would let him out if he did something else instead; that of course involved him having a real wife.

Or he could have said nope, I ain't gonna do it! I don't have to do it after all. Nowhere is it written that I have to marry a pregnant nun! No, thanks.

But this was not the heart of Joseph. Mathew 1:19 says Joseph was a "just man." What is justice? St. Thomas described justice as given to each what is due to them. For your cat or dog that would be food and water among other things. To your wife it is love and provision and protection. To your husband it is love and respect. To your children it is being loved and nurtured in the Christian religion. To a criminal it is the appropriate punishment for their crime. For the criminal it is restitution for their injustice. This could go on forever.

What justice do we owe God?

First and foremost, it is worship. But that worship is so all-encompassing that it really includes the category of EVERYTHING. Joseph was a just man. He wanted to deliver justice to his pregnant fiancé. But God intervened and called in a bigger debt. That debt was what he owed to God. So in this instance and in every instance in our lives the justice we owe God overwhelms our own concerns. We must always strive to be like Joseph who was a just man, and especially so towards God.

Fr. David Hodil

Assisting Priest of Saint Paul's Anglican Church
Crownsville, MD

Lent 5 – Thursday, March 26

Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - John 12:34-43

“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

(John 12:42)

These are hard words. The rulers were not unbelievers. They had watched Jesus, seen His signs, and drawn the right conclusion. Their faith was real enough, as far as it went. But they kept it hidden. Confession would have cost them too much. They would have lost their reputation and place in respectable society. And so, they stayed quiet.

The Church gives us this passage just days before Holy Week, and the timing matters. In a few days, we will watch Peter warm himself by a fire and deny knowing Jesus three times. We will watch the disciples scatter when the soldiers come. The rulers in John’s Gospel are not so different. They believed but lacked the courage to say so.

The Church has never pretended that following Christ is safe. Our Lord Himself told His disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). The cross is not incidental to following Christ. It is the shape of the whole thing. And St. Paul warned Timothy plainly: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). To follow Christ is to walk a road that the world does not understand and often despises.

We can all relate to the pressures the rulers faced, because every day we face versions of them ourselves: the colleague who goes quiet when we mention church, or the friend or family member who wishes we would just stop talking about religion. After enough of these moments, we learn to just stay quiet. We don't deny Christ, exactly. We just stop mentioning Him. And that silence, over time, becomes its own kind of betrayal.

John's judgment is severe: they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. This is not a failure of intellect but of love. They loved the wrong thing more, and it was that disordered love that kept their mouths shut.

Lent invites us to examine where our loves have gone astray. Where have we chosen comfort over the often uncomfortable task of examining ourselves and confessing our sins? Where have we kept our faith hidden, afraid that speaking out would cost us something? The rulers believed, but hidden faith bears no witness and offers no hope to others. Faith that will not confess is faith that has not yet understood what it has received.

Christ did not hide Himself for our sake. He was lifted up on the cross in full view of those who mocked Him. He asks that we, who have received so much, would not be ashamed to be known as His. Amen.

Mr. Matthew "Stu" Stuart
Postulant of St. Philip's Anglican Church
Blacksburg, VA

Lent 5 – Friday, March 27

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Exodus 12:21-28

“What mean ye by this service?”

(Exodus 12:26)

This morning’s Old Testament lesson recounts the institution of the first Passover feast, commanded by God to Moses and the people of Israel as they prepare to depart from slavery to the Pharaoh in Egypt. “Passover” is the English translation of the Hebrew word, Pesach, which comes into Greek as Pascha. Pascha is what Greek-speaking Christians to this day call the holiest of Christian holidays—what we call in the English church Easter, and so, in Christian worship, the word “Paschal” means “of or having to do with the feast of the Resurrection.” Easter is the Christian Passover for two reasons—first, because Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection occurred historically at the time of the annual Passover feast, which Moses commanded was to be kept as an ordinance “to thee and thy sons forever.”

In a much larger and more significant sense, however, Easter is kept as the Christian Passover because, in and through the sacrifice of His Passion and by the power of His Resurrection, the shadows of the Old Covenant are most perfectly fulfilled. Christ shows Himself that Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, by whose Blood the Church is sanctified and protected, by whose Flesh we are nourished, and whose Cross becomes that gate through which we are to pass to freedom from sin, death, and Satan’s dominion.

Like the people of Israel, we are commanded to keep this Passover Feast in constant remembrance—and the Christian Church has never been content to observe it once

a year, as did the ancient Hebrews, but we constantly hold it in remembrance. While Easter Sunday is, of course, a particularly intense remembering of the Sacrifice and Triumph of Christ, we Christians show forth the Lord's death and resurrection at every Eucharist, not only at every Sunday mass (each of which is a "little Pascha"), but on every occasion where we eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. Christians, in other words, are called to live in a nearly perpetual remembrance of the Great Passover of Jesus Christ, giving thanks always to God our Father for the deliverance wrought for us by "His precious death and passion, His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension."

Just as every Sunday—and every Mass—is a sort of little Easter, the Church has usually kept every Friday as a day of solemn remembrance of our Lord's crucifixion. We find ourselves today keeping the last of these "little Good Fridays" before next week, which is one of the most solemn days in the liturgical year. Let us remember that the whole of the Christian year, all our worship, our study of scripture, and our lives of prayer—all are aimed at keeping Christ before the eyes of our hearts, fostering a state of perpetual and thankful remembrance. What do we mean by this service? Moses tells the Israelites that they are to respond, when asked: "This is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover... when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." Christ Himself has given the explanation of our Passover: "This is my Body and Blood, given and shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of Me."

Fr. Peter Joslyn

Rector of St. Alban's Anglican Cathedral
Oviedo, FL

Lent 5 – Saturday, March 28

Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - John 13:1-17

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

(St. John 13:14)

He had said to them, “I am among you as he that serveth.” This Second Lesson of Evening Prayer turns ahead our gaze to what the Church calls “Maundy Thursday” of Holy Week when, on this night of the Last Supper before He was crucified that He instituted both the Eucharist and the Apostolic Priesthood, St. John alone records Our Lord’s most humble demonstration of Christian service. Foot-washing (which would normally have been offered before the meal) was a standard gesture of hospitality in the dusty environment of first century Judea, but it was a slave who usually performed the act at his lord’s command. And yet, it is Christ, both the guest of honor and lord of the feast—not to mention the Master of His Disciples—who washes their feet, instead. Does He not do so at His Father’s command? Had He not been sent by Him to regenerate a race dirtied by sin and consigned back to our dust in death?

St. Luke’s record of this night (chapter 22) gives a narrative backdrop that everything which proceeded the Foot Washing led up to this moment. As Our Lord still sat at the table with the Twelve, He interrupted the “strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” Gently but firmly, He corrects them saying, “he that is chief, [let him be] as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat?” If we interpolate Luke’s second-hand witness with John’s own personal memoir, we may imagine it was only shortly after Jesus testified He was among them to serve that

He rose from the table to illustrate His message so poignantly. Undoubtedly, Christ's intention was two-fold. He washed their feet to do His Father's will, for Jesus was the Son in Whom He was pleased and without Whom He could do or say nothing. Moreover, by His reversing of their roles, He washed their feet to give the Twelve His Mandatum—to emulate Him. “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (vs. 15). It is not a command which ends with the clergy's recital of this act five days from now, as if Christ merely commissioned liturgical performance for its own sake. Let every Christian who answers the discipleship call reflect on what form this charge to “wash feet” may take, be it in the Church parochial or domestic. No humble offering is too small if it is done with great love, the essence of Our Lord's “New Commandment.” May His words to the Twelve when Christ first called and sent them out reverberate in our hearts, as well that, “It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master.”

Indeed, “Let this mind be in [us] which was also in Christ Jesus,” for in tomorrow's Palm Sunday Epistle, we will hear again St. Paul's words in Philippians 2 that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” However, he reminds us that before the whole creation in its triple frame would bow before His Triumph, He would bow His knee to cleanse it in His Humility. Christ first took the form of a servant that God might then highly exalt Him. As the Church enters this Holy Week, resolve to kneel a servant that God may raise a son. Carry your cross to receive a crown.

Fr. Daniel Trout
Rector of St. Barnabas Cathedral
Dunwoody, GA

Palm Sunday – March 29

Homily for Palm Sunday

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Matthew 27:1-54

by Saint Leo the Great

(Sermon 2 On the Passion of our Lord

Anglican Breviary C279-80)

Deary beloved, the solemnity of the Lord's Passion is come; that day which we have so desired, and which same is so precious to the whole world. Shouts of spiritual triumph are ringing, and suffer not that we should be silent. Even though it be hard to preach often on the same solemnity, and do so meetly and well, a priest is not free to shirk the duty of preaching to the faithful concerning this so great mystery of divine mercy. Nay, that his subject matter is unspeakable should in itself make him eloquent, since where enough can never be said, there must needs ever be somewhat to say. Let human weakness then, fall down before the glory of God, and acknowledge itself unequal to the duty of expounding the works of His mercy. Let us toil in thought, let us falter in speech; it is good for us to feel how inadequate is the little we are able to express concerning the majesty of God.

For when the Prophet saith: "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore," let no man thence conclude that he will ever find all that he seeketh. For if he cease his seeking, he will likewise cease to draw near. But among all the works of God which weary the

stedfast gaze of man's wonder, what is there that doth at once so ravish and so exceed the power of our contemplation as the Passion of the Saviour? He it was who, to loose mankind from the bonds of the death-dealing Fall, spared to bring against the rage of the devil the power of the divine Majesty, and met Him with the weakness of our lowly nature. For if our cruel and haughty enemy could have known the counsel of God's mercy, it had been his task rather to have softened the hearts of the Jews into meekness, than to have inflamed them with unrighteous hatred. Thus he might not have lost the thralldom of all his slaves, by attacking the liberty of the One that owed him nothing.

But he was undone by his own malice. For he brought upon the Son of God that death which is become life to all the sons of man. He shed that innocent blood which was to become at once the price of our redemption and the cup of our salvation. Wherefore the Lord hath received that which according to the purpose of his own good pleasure He hath chosen, He submitted Himself to the ungodly hands of cruel men which, busy with their own sin nonetheless ministered to the Redeemer's work. And such was His loving-kindness, even for His murderers, that His prayer to His Father from the cross asked not vengeance for Himself, but forgiveness for them.

Holy Week – Monday Before Easter, March 30

Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - St. John 14:1-14

“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father”

(St. John 14:9)

At the heart of Jesus’ farewell discourse, our morning gospel is one of the most frequently read passages at funerals. Here our LORD conveys assurances to Christians who are perplexed, grieving, or anxious about the future. The immediate context for our reading revolves around the disciples who have, on the same night, received distressful news that has reduced them to a state of bewilderment and fear.

The disciples are at last beginning to recognize that Jesus’s earthly ministry must end and that, rather than enter Jerusalem as a conquering hero who drives out the Roman occupiers, Jesus will be killed. Moreover, Jesus has revealed to them that one of their closest associates, Judas, has betrayed him. And as if to add insult to their injury, they learn that their emerging leader, Simon Peter, whom Jesus earlier designated as “the rock” (John 1:42), will soon crumble under pressure, turn his back on Jesus, and deny ever knowing him. No wonder their hearts were deeply troubled. The disciples’ fears were amplified by the fact that at this time they had failed to grasp the meaning of the resurrection. St John’s intention is to draw the attention of Christians in every generation who struggle with the dreadful effects of a fallen world. John was at his Master’s side on the night he was betrayed, and he published his gospel decades later, near the end of the first century, when

the Christian community was facing persecution under the Roman Emperor Domitian and his successors.

We have underscored the “bad” or “troubling” news as we enter this section of Jesus’ discourse. Yet good news abounds. Here in chapter 14, when the worst that circumstances can hurl at Jesus’ followers pins them against the ropes, Jesus counters the darkness with brilliant light. The disciples need not live in fear even at times when all may appear to be lost. Jesus did not provide his disciples, or us, with a map that guides us to the Father. Nor did he refer us to the Christian self-help section of our local bookstore to figure out what God is like. No, Jesus declares to his disciples that he himself reveals God’s nature. So in response to St Philip, Jesus declares, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (14: 9). Even in the darkest hour Christ’s followers may encounter, Jesus reveals to us God’s true nature, which is unsurpassed compassion and unconditional love. Jesus alone can reveal the truth about who God is. He is “the way” to the Father (14: 6).

As we follow Jesus’ bleeding footsteps along the path to his Cross this week, this passage from St. John’s Gospel reminds us that the God of compassion—perfectly reflected in the life and teachings of Jesus—loves us. He loves us so profoundly that to restore us to right relationship he sacrificed that which in all the universe is of the greatest value to him, his only son, Christ Jesus. The darkness of Good Friday is upon us, yet we now possess the advantage of insight into what soon follows: the promise of resurrection and an empty grave.

Fr. Briane Keith Turley

Anglican Mission Chaplain at Genesis Healthcare Center
White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

Holy Week – Tuesday Before Easter, March 31

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Hosea 14

“I will heal their backsliding.”

(Hosea 14:4)

At Morning Prayer, we read two comforting passages. In Hosea, “O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.” We read this and we should hear the weight of even our small sins dragging us down in relationship to one another, in our families, our work life, even our parish life. We know our sins. As we draw to the close of Lent this year, our spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving have shown us where we have fallen and failed. Here the Lord also addresses the whole of Israel together in its apostasy, idolatry, murder, adultery, and abuse of the widow and the fatherless. Each iniquity, each sin weighed Israel down until they did not have the strength to stand against Assyria and Babylon. That judgment may also come on us. Beneath the weight of our own sins, we fall as individuals, as parishes, as towns and states, as a nation; and we can do nothing to get back up, nothing to repel the assaults of our enemies, nothing to redeem ourselves from our sins.

Nothing, that is, except repent. Repentance is the one thing we can do, crying out from the ground for help. Only the Lord can answer that prayer. Our own efforts push us further into mire; turning to the Lord supplies every need. We can return to the One who says “I will heal their backsliding.” We can give ourselves to the One who says “I

will love them freely.” He tells us that He will spread His branches over us and that those who live in Him will grow as the vine. In repentance, even Ephraim, that most disobedient tribe of the people of Israel, will be restored. God is working our salvation out in Himself and He rejoices in those who give themselves to Him.

This God spent Holy Tuesday preaching in the Temple, preparing the people to receive healing. From St. John’s Gospel, we hear a part of the teaching the Lord gave in the Upper Room this same week. Jesus says that He is the vine, that we are the branches. The Healing which the Lord prophesied to Hosea is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus is forgiving our backsliding; even in that great day we will observe this Friday. There, the God who fully took on our human nature even took our iniquity and fell on the road to the Cross. He knows our falling, our temptation, our weakness, and turns it into mercy. In the mercy obtained for us in the Cross, He does not call us servants, those who need to fetch and carry, those who need to do the master’s work and then maybe get around to our own needs. No, He calls us friends, those who walk with Him in the cool of the day.

Fr. Raymond Davison
Headmaster of St. Paul’s Classical School and
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Melbourne, FL

Holy Week – Wednesday Before Easter, April 1

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - John 16:1-15

“I have told you this so that you may not fall away.”

(John 16:1)

During Lent, the Church invites us to walk more closely with Jesus on the path that leads to the cross—and beyond it, to new life. In John 16:1-15, Jesus speaks tenderly and honestly to His disciples as the shadow of His suffering draws near. His words prepare them not only for His departure, but for a deeper way of living by faith.

Jesus begins by acknowledging hardship: “I have told you this so that you may not fall away.” He does not promise comfort or ease. Instead, He names the pain ahead—rejection, persecution, confusion. Lent asks us to face this same truth. Following Christ means allowing illusions to fall away: the illusion that faith protects us from suffering, or that God is absent when life becomes difficult. Jesus speaks so that we will not be scandalized by the cross, either in His life or in our own.

Yet sorrow is not the final word. Jesus says, “I tell you the truth: it is better for you that I go.” This seems impossible to understand. How could absence be better than presence? But Lent teaches us that loss can open space for transformation. When familiar supports are taken away, we are invited into a deeper reliance on God. Jesus’ departure makes room for the coming of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who will dwell not beside us, but within us.

The Spirit, Jesus says, will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. This is not condemnation, but illumination. During Lent, we ask for this same light. The Spirit reveals where we have closed our hearts, where we

cling to false securities, where we resist love. This gentle conviction is a grace—it frees us from self-deception and leads us toward truth. Lent is not about self-punishment, but about honest seeing.

Jesus promises that the Spirit will “guide you to all truth.” This guidance is not sudden or overwhelming; it unfolds over time. Lent mirrors this slow journey. Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we learn to listen more carefully—to God, to others, and to the movements of our own hearts. The Spirit does not shout; He whispers. He leads us step by step into freedom.



Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - John 16:16-33

“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

(John 16:33)

In John 16:16-33, Jesus speaks tenderly and honestly to His disciples on the night before His suffering. These verses unfold in the shadow of the cross, where confusion, fear, and grief are already pressing in. Jesus does not hide what is coming. Instead, He prepares His followers for the painful truth that sorrow will visit them—but it will not have the final word.

Jesus begins with a paradox: “A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me.” The disciples struggle to understand. Their uncertainty mirrors our own experiences of faith, when God’s presence feels close one moment and distant the next. Lent invites us to sit with this tension, acknowledging that faith does not always bring clarity, but it does invite trust.

Jesus names the coming sorrow directly. He knows His death will shatter the disciples’ hopes. Yet He speaks of joy—

not as a denial of pain, but as something born through it. He uses the image of a woman in labor: anguish giving way to new life. This image reminds us that Christian joy is not shallow happiness; it is joy forged in suffering. Lent teaches us that transformation often comes through what is hardest to endure.

Jesus then promises a new intimacy with the Father. After His resurrection, the disciples will pray with a deeper confidence, no longer asking in confusion, but trusting in God's love. This promise invites us to examine our own prayer life. Do we pray as those who fear rejection, or as children who know they are loved? Lent calls us to grow in this trust, to bring our needs honestly before God.

As the disciples finally declare their belief, Jesus gently challenges them. He knows their faith will soon falter. They will scatter, leaving Him alone. Yet even in this moment, Jesus does not condemn them. Instead, He reveals the heart of the Gospel: "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." In Jesus' loneliness, we glimpse both His humanity and His perfect trust in the Father.

The message concludes with words of deep comfort and courage: "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." Jesus does not promise a life free of struggle. He promises His victory within it. Lent is a season of realism—acknowledging sin, suffering, and weakness—but also a season of hope, rooted in Christ's triumph over death.

Bp. Richard Rajesh Kumar
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Cathedral of the Holy Nativity
Jammalamadugu, Andhra Pradesh, India



The Small Passion, Albrecht Dürer (ca. 1509)

Holy Week – Maundy Thursday

April 2

Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

(Jeremiah 31:31,34)

As we embark on the beginning of the “Triduum Sacrum,” the Sacred Three Days, three great Holy Days of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ which will bring our Lenten journey to its climactic close, we are confronted by the words of the Prophet Jeremiah this morning. He speaks of a New Covenant established by God with Israel emphasizing that it will be different from the old covenant made with their ancestors. This new covenant involves God’s law being written on their hearts, and we are told that they will know him, symbolizing a transformation in how people relate to God.

When Jesus, later in the day, raises the third cup at the Seder meal, the Passover meal, which is called fittingly, “The Cup of Redemption,” He would connect what was spoken in Jeremiah 31 with what He was doing on that night and what would happen on Good Friday and on the day of resurrection. “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20). In the Revelation of St. John, we are told about the old and the new in our eternity, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no

more death neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat on the throne said, Behold I make all things new” (Revelation 21:4-5).

The Old Covenant was given by God, but it was not His final word. His final word was found in Jesus, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. This day is all about New Covenant, a new promise, a new agreement. Jesus raises the chalice and speaks that this is the new covenant in His blood. On this night He gives us the gift of the Holy Eucharist. All of us who struggle with our old ways and the sins that would devour us come to receive a gift from Jesus that, as a result of His sacrificial death and resurrection, will make us new.

Through this New Covenant the old has gone and the new has come. Believe in the miracle of His divine real presence in this meal. And believe what it brings – full, complete, eternal forgiveness. God says of the New Covenant, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” You don’t have to either. You don’t have to live in the past, rehash the past, or be bound to the past.

Today we celebrate a New Covenant. We relish that we are a new creation. St. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” That is what Jesus is doing for us today.

But our Lenten journey is not done yet...the best is still to come.

Bp. David Haines

Missionary Bishop of Global Partnerships

Rector of All Saints Anglican Church

Wilmington, NC

Holy Week – Good Friday, April 3

"And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent..."
(Matthew 27:51 KJV)

One of the greatest mysteries of the universe is that the Creator of the universe actually became incarnate and allowed Himself to become physically a part of it. He allowed Himself to be born and experienced life as we do in the world He created. What is really hard to understand is why He did it even though the Holy Scriptures are clear as to the purpose of His visit.

Our Lord's purpose for coming to this world in a physical form was incredibly a rescue mission. He came personally to redeem and set right His creation that had been marred and polluted by sin. He also came to confirm and re-affirm God's commitment to His created beings whom He loves with a sacrificial love.

The veil in the temple referred to in the scripture passage above was put in place to cover the door to the holy of holies so that no one could view the interior of it. It was also meant to be a barrier to separate and prevent those unworthy from entering and from being punished by God for doing so. The holy of holies was a room in the temple of Jerusalem where God was present in a cloud to accept the sacrificial offerings of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. The holy of holies was also the place where the Ark of the Covenant resided which contained the two

stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments, the rod of Aaron that budded, and some of the manna the children of Israel ate in the wilderness on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Although the Ark of the Covenant disappeared with the destruction of the first temple and thus was not in the second temple, the holy of holies was still considered the place where heaven touched earth and God met with His chosen people. The only one who was allowed to go into the holy of holies was the high priest who only entered in on the Day of Atonement to offer God the sacrifice required to reconcile the people to Him for the sins they had committed during the previous year.

When our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, His death was received as the once-and-for-all atonement for the sins of all mankind, and in this manner He reconciled man to God. Now unlimited access and forgiveness of sin was granted to those who approach God with a truly humble and repentant heart. A veil, whether visible or invisible, no longer separated one from the presence of God, and access to Him is granted to all who truly seek Him. Thus “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” because it was no longer needed. “Praise be to Thee, O Christ.”

Bp. William H. Perkins

Suffragan Bishop of the APA Diocese of the Eastern US

Rector of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church

Delray Beach, FL

Holy Week – Holy Saturday, April 4

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!

As we celebrate the glorious Third-Day Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, there is but only one important thing to say, one incontrovertible fact of human history to assert, and that is that God the Father has raised Jesus Christ from death. Our Lord, who was dead on Good Friday afternoon, was alive again on Easter Sunday morning. He was not alive in some metaphorical, symbolic, merely spiritual, emotional, or psychological manner - he was alive in a true and physical Body, a transformed immortal Body.

Our Lord's glorified Body, a Body animated and vivified by the Holy Ghost, a Body radiant with the splendour of the Spirit, is a Body that can eat, a Body that can be touched, a Body recognisably identified with the Body that was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary and crucified on the Cross of Calvary, but which is a new kind of Body, a Body with a new mode of existence in a new dimension: a Body that can appear and disappear at will; a Body that can transport itself through walls – and transcend even the walls of a tomb. It is a Body that can make itself present as desired, the Body that appeared in the upper room on the first Easter, the Body we now eat for the forgiveness of sins in the Holy Eucharist, objectively and substantially present under the form of bread.

The radical physicality of Jesus Christ after His Resurrection shocked and frightened His disciples, so he ate a piece of broiled fish and then some honey in front of them to show that He was not an apparition or

hallucination. And then Our Lord asked the disciples, ‘Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.’

The Resurrection of the flesh is not something we just believe exclusively happened to Jesus Christ, although He is the first to receive the mystery. ‘But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.’ If we are baptised into the Body of Jesus Christ, our Father in Heaven will raise us from death too.

We shall be resurrected in bodies at the Last Day to enter into the Beatific Vision, to enjoy the Blessed Trinity at His heavenly banquet for eternity. Because we have been planted into the risen Body of Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, we possess God’s guarantee that what was given to Jesus Christ is exactly what will be given to us. Our Lord was born, we are born. Our Lord lived, we live. Our Lord died, and had He not risen, we too would surely die. But Christ is alive. Jesus lives. And because He lives, we shall live with Him and in Him.

Jesus Christ rose from His tomb in a transformed Body, and because of this, we shall rise from our graves in transformed bodies. Our Lord ascended into Heaven to be with his Father forever—we shall ascend into Heaven to be with God forever. As Saint Paul tells us on Easter morning, ‘When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.’ We shall have our own Easter, and our own Ascension.

The ultimate Gospel of the Easter proclamation is that because Jesus Christ rose from the dead in His Body, and we shall certainly rise from the dead in our bodies, then in the end, the eschaton, the completion and fulfillment of all

things, everything is going to be alright. Everything. God shall be all in all. 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' In the end, all will be Amen and Alleluia.

Bp. Chandler Holder Jones, SSC
Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Province of America



The Resurrection, Albrecht Dürer (ca. 1511)

Easter Day – Sunday, April 5

Homily For Easter Day

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – John 20:1-10

by Saint Gregory the Great

*(Homily 22 on the Gospels, The Anglican Breviary
C326-7)*

Brethren, the lesson which ye have just heard from the holy Gospel, is clear enough if it be considered in its historical sense only. However, not only does it contain history, but also suggestions of a mystic import, into which it is meet that we should at least make a brief inquiry. The evangelist saith that Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre early, when it was yet dark. By these words, according to the historical interpretation, is known the time of her visit. But according to a mystical interpretation, there is also set forth the state of mind of her who just came, and sought the sepulchre, namely, in these words, “It was yet dark.” For Mary was seeking after the very Author of life. But she was seeking Him as though He were lifeless, even as she had seen Him, in bodily fashion. And because she could not on this wise find Him, she thought that His body had been stolen. Therefore, truly, she was as yet in darkness.

And she ran quickly, and told Peter and John; of whom we read that they also ran. Verily, those who are most exercised by love, do go more quickly, and

further, than other folk. So Peter and John ran, both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. But note that he paused there, and waited, and did not at once enter in. Peter, however, when he came, went at once, and that boldly, into the sepulchre. Brethren, of what does this haste put us in mind? Is there no subtlety here, no mystic meaning? Doubtless the evangelist would not have said of himself, "Yet went he not in," if in that reverent shrinking of his there had been no mystery. For John, like the synagogue of the Jews, waited upon knowledge; whereas Peter, like the church of the Gentiles, came at once, although blindly, to the mystery of the empty sepulchre.

We have also heard how, according to the evangelist Mark, Mary Magdalene, and the other holy women who had followed the Lord, came to the sepulchre, bringing sweet spices. For him whom they had loved in life, they also served in death, and that with all care and tenderness. But in this there is indicated something which is to be done by all of us who are members of holy Church. If we, who believe in Him that was dead and is alive again, do come, seeking the Lord, and bearing with us the perfume of good works, and the sweet odor of holiness, then do we come as it were to his empty sepulchre bearing spices which are sweet indeed.

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