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The Shepherd's Staff

1 message

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The Shepherd's Staff

Newsletter of the Anglican Province of Christ the King

March, 2024

The Most Rev. Blair Schultz
The Right Rev. D. M. Ashman, Editor
The Rev. Gordon Hines, Publisher

All Saints' Bolingbrook, Illinois
Christmas: Then (2002) and Now (2023)

Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant

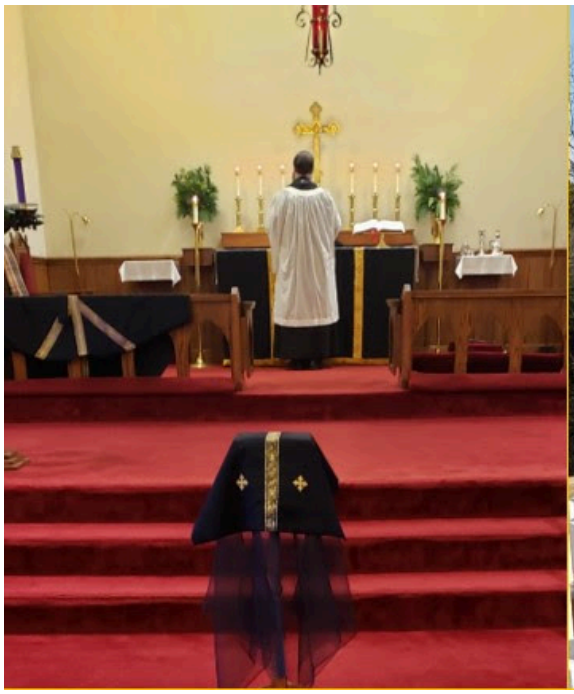
On December 15, 2023, Archbishop Schultz, assisted by Bishop William Wiygul, Bishop Benton Jones, Father Shannon Clark and other Diocese of the Atlantic States clergy, presided over the funeral mass of the Reverend Canon Michael Church at the Church of Holy Comforter in Montevallo, Alabama.

Canon Church was buried at Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo. Officials wouldn't let people get near the grave-site for the burial for safety reasons until after the burial.

The Archbishop pronounced the committal at a shelter away from the grave which is customary in military cemeteries. There was also a military ceremony.

In a touching moment, the flag was presented to Sarah Church by Lt. General Jeffery Buchanan. General Buchanan served under Canon Church when General Buchanan was Lt. Buchanan.

There were a couple of other generals that had either served under Canon Church or under whom Canon Church had served.



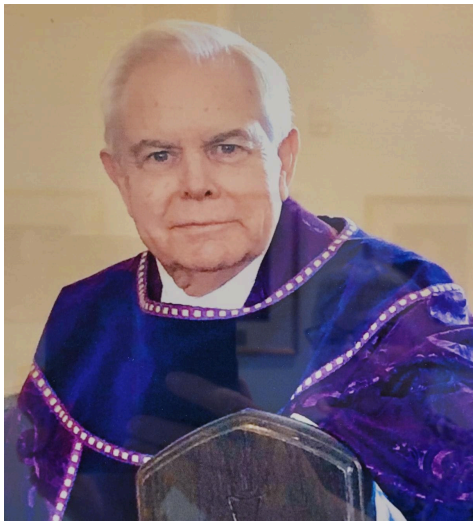
Canon Edward Jones Organizing a Mission in Dallas, Texas

Canon Edward Jones is shown here receiving a bouquet of flowers from a group of Nigerian Anglicans who hope to revive old Saint Mary's Parish which used to be in Plano, just north of Dallas, TX.

Canon Jones used to serve at Saint Mary's before he was called to Saint Nicholas Church in Scottsdale, AZ.

A Homily for Epiphany III

From January 21, 2024



A man and his dog were walking along a beach. As they walked along, they met another man coming toward them. The other man showed an interest in his dog, so after talking for a few minutes, he had the dog show off for the stranger. He had him sit, speak, and shake. And then he said, “Watch this!” Then he tossed a piece of driftwood far out in the ocean. He told his dog to fetch. The dog ran on top of the water to fetch the piece of wood! His paws were the only part of him getting wet. After reaching the stick the dog came running back. Again he was running on top of the water! He dropped the stick at his master’s feet. The stranger was shaking his head in disbelief. He just stood there speechless. But the owner of the dog couldn’t take it anymore. He asked, “Well, aren’t you going to say something? What do think of him?” Finally the man responded, “I notice your dog can’t swim!”

Of course it seems crazy to think that someone could miss seeing something so impressive and focus on something far less impressive. Does that ever happen to us? Perhaps when it comes to Jesus’ miracles we are like that man. The Bible puts something amazing and supernatural right in front of us and we miss it. Or because we have heard about them many times and read about them many times we discount the miracles as not being all that important. We acknowledge that Jesus did them. But we miss their meaning.

In the Gospel Lesson for this Sunday, we heard about the first miracle that Jesus performed. We are at a wedding in Cana of Galilee that Jesus, along with his mother and the disciples, is attending. At this wedding, however, the couple runs out of wine to serve their guests. Running out of wine for one’s guests was a serious embarrassment. It was a great cause of shame for the couple because this lack of wine implied that they did not have enough money to serve the people they had invited. In other words, this was an impending disaster for the whole family.

By the way, notice that our reading begins with the statement that this was “on the 3rd day”. That would make it Tuesday, based on the Hebrew week which began on Sunday. The “3rd day” was chosen as the wedding day in ancient Judaism because it was only on the 3rd day of creation that God said “It was good” twice (in Genesis 1 verses 10 and 12). The day was considered by the Hebrew people to be twice blessed. Also, practically speaking, Tuesday was a perfect day for their weddings which gave the guests time to get there after the Sabbath and remain for the several days of the wedding feast.

When the wedding couple ran out of wine, Mary was the first to notice. So she turned to the one person she knew could help: that would be her son, Jesus. When Mary turned to Jesus and told him the couple had run out of wine, Jesus responded: “O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet

come." Have you ever wondered why he said that? To our modern English-speaking ears it may sound a little harsh, like he's rebuking his mother. But based on Mary's response, we know this is not the case. She received his response in a positive light, telling the waiters nearby: "Do whatever he tells you." Jesus immediately fulfilled her request, and He did so with great abundance! So that leaves us with the question, what is the meaning of these seemingly harsh words?

Jesus responded by addressing his mother as "woman." Men, try that with your mother or your wife! Try saying: "Woman! When will dinner be ready?" Or: "How was your day, woman?" Not a good idea. In the Bible, there is no mention of a son addressing his mother as "woman." Jesus calls other people "woman," like the woman at the well and Mary Magdalene, but this is the first time we've seen it attributed to a mother. Jesus must have had a woman in mind - perhaps a woman like Eve. In Genesis 3:15, there is the very first prophecy of the Messiah, when God is speaking to the devil after the fall. God said: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
So when Jesus called Mary "woman," it was a title of great honor, recognizing Mary as the new Eve; the woman that will bear the Messiah into the world. This, by the way, is also why Mary is often depicted with a snake under her foot, to reflect this prophecy.

After this response to Mary, Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come." This theme of the "hour" is meant to reflect the hour of Christ's Passion: his suffering and death. We can see this in John 12:27, when Jesus spoke about his death after entering Jerusalem. He said: "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." But the most important key to understanding this response is found in the very middle of these two phrases.

Jesus asked Mary the question, "What is this to you and to me?" In Greek, it is "ti emoi kai soi." The Greek very closely and accurately reflects the Aramaic idiom Jesus used - meaning, "What do we have in common if I do this?" This phrase describes two people looking at the same thing, but with different perspectives. So when Mary came to Jesus saying, "They have no wine!" Jesus explained to Mary, that the need for more wine meant one thing to her, but to Jesus, it meant something else.

I think the Passion Translation of the Bible gets is right, and makes this all very clear. It reads as follows: Mary asked, "They have no wine. Can't you do something about it?" Jesus replied, "My dear one, don't you understand that if I do this, it won't change anything for you, but it will change everything for me! My hour of unveiling my power has not yet come."

Mary viewed providing more wine as a compassionate act of love towards the couple. But it would change her very little. Jesus, on the other hand, knew that if he provided more wine, this would be the first miracle he had ever performed. This would be the beginning of his public ministry, and it would be the beginning of His road to the cross.

Mary knew for thirty years what would come once Jesus started his ministry. In the temple, when Jesus was just a baby, the prophet Simeon told her that once Jesus' ministry started, he'd be hated, misunderstood, and killed. Even more, she knew for thirty years that her heart would be pierced with a sword as he suffers the agony of his Passion.

This is recorded in Chapter 2 of Luke's Gospel: Simeon took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

And Joseph and Jesus' mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

And then, even with this full knowledge of what this miracle would mean for Jesus and for her, Mary still said "Yes!" She continued without hesitation, turning to the waiters, saying: "Do whatever he tells you." Mary launched Jesus into his ministry, knowing that at that moment she was letting go of her son. What would you have done in this situation? Would you have been able to say "yes" just as Mary did, not even thinking about what it may cost you?

Let's pray that we can better imitate Mary's response every day, saying "yes" to whatever the Lord asks of us, even if it leads to our own cross.

by Father David St. John
St. George's Parish, Las Vegas NV

Passion Sunday, St. Patrick's Day

March 17th Journal Entry
by Christine Sunderland

Happy St. Paddy's Day! And Passion Sunday. And the Fifth Sunday in Lent. We journey together within the Passion of Christ, to Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter, Resurrection Day. My bishop of blessed memory often said that passion is the union of love and suffering. At the age of 76, I think I am beginning to know what he meant.

Our hills are Irish green, the sunlight drenching them in color. By May they will be summer brown and we will hear the weedwhackers shaving the hills, cutting the grass down, for now the grass is weeds.

St. Patrick (372-466) did the opposite, he turned the dry weeds of Ireland into the green grass of faith, much as Our Lord does with each one of us. Before belief we are dry and parched. After belief we are green and growing. As one of my characters says, "My life is now divided in two - before belief and after belief." And once tasting the joy of believing, there is no turning back.

I am at times overcome with gratitude to God that I have been blessed with belief. Why, I don't know. Why others don't follow the same path to joy, I can't fathom. But then, I tell myself, it's not my business - it's God's business and theirs, and all I can do is witness with my life and my words. Each one of us must decide the path they want to take. It's called Love; it's called free will.

St. Patrick was not born in Ireland, but in Britain. He was enslaved as a boy by a trading ship and taken to Ireland. Wikipedia says,

"According to Patrick's autobiographical *Confessio*, when he was about sixteen, he was captured by Irish pirates from his home in Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland. He writes that he lived there for six years as an animal herder before escaping and returning to his family. *After becoming a cleric, he returned to spread Christianity in northern and western Ireland.* In later life, he served as a bishop, but little is known about where he worked. By the seventh century, he had already come to be revered as the patron saint of Ireland." (Italics mine)

Remarkable, that he returns to the land of his enslavement and preaches the Gospel. In doing so, he forges the link between Classical Civilization and what becomes Western Civilization.

Today, all this is severely threatened, as we head down the road to extinction. Even so, there are quiet links doing their linking, preserving what needs preserving, saying what needs saying, writing what needs writing. There is one here and one there and another one farther afield. Why, there is a network forming underground that none of us can see, but, then again, it is you and it is me.

I often wonder who is pulling the strings, whispering hints, pointing in directions, if anyone, from above. Angels? I play what-if... What if when we enter Heaven we are given one last chance to visit a loved one? Then we journey further to the gates of the city, over the brilliant green hills to the bright light of the walls of gemstones. What if some have a love that is great enough to influence us on earth a little longer? Perhaps the saints who listen to our prayers. Perhaps a mother willing

to forgo instant heavenly delight to help a child maneuver further in life? What if love is the medium shows us the goings on on Earth? How much love is in our hearts? Love that we are willing to give away, to suffer for another?

I've enjoyed writing a bit about Heaven in my current novel, as I did in Angel Mountain, using theological texts as well as Near Death Experiences. I don't make things up from whole cloth, but journey into the what-ifs that are presented by other witnesses.

Maybe it's the Irish in me dancing this jig, telling this tale. While most of my ancestors are either Norwegian or British, I have some Irish (5%) on my paternal grandmother's side. It appears her grandparents came from Ireland mid 19th Century (potato famine would be a good guess) to Ontario, Canada and settled just above Lake Michigan. They had many children, and several adult grandchildren eventually crossed into the U.S. Somehow my grandmother met my grandfather in a town farther south, Escanaba, where she lived, and he took her to Arkansas where my father was born.

I never knew my paternal grandmother. She died before I was born. I did, however, inherit her first name as my middle, Gertrude.
One way or another, I'm glad St. Patrick returned to Ireland. It made all the difference in our world.

St. Patrick is said to have authored Hymn #268, "I bind unto myself to-day/ The strong Name of the Trinity/ By invocation of the same/ The Three in One, and One in Three. It covers the Faith in five verses that ride a powerful melody of serious commitment, a binding, an oath taking. Then the tune shifts to a light dance calling on Christ to be "with me, within me, behind me, before me, beside me, to win me, to comfort and restore me, beneath me, above me, in quiet, in danger, in hearts of all that love me, in mouth of friend and stranger." It's a hymn, an oath, to the Trinity, one of the doctrines developed by the Early Church and debated. It clearly is a teaching hymn as most were and are, full of theology, images, words, all helping us understand who we are and who we are meant to be.

Thank you St. Patrick, for your life and your love and your gift of Christ to Ireland. You made a difference, a huge difference in our world.

And Grandma Gertrude Lilian Foster Thomas, I love you.

CHRISTINE SUNDERLAND is a well-known novelist from the San Francisco Bay Area. Her stories, set in Europe, Hawaii, and California, draw from the past but take place in the

present, dealing with themes of love, suffering, faith, family, and freedom. She is a member of the Anglican Province of Christ the King.

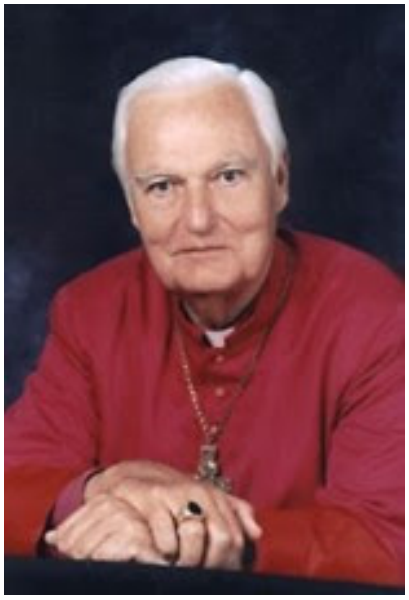
Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant!

On February 19th, friends, parishioners and family of Mr. Paul Lambach gathered at Saint Matthew's Anglican Catholic Church in Newport Beach, CA to attend the requiem mass for one of the pioneers of our movement. Paul and his wife Marilyn were members of old Holy Apostles Episcopal Church in Glendale, CA and helped lead the vote to secede from the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles in 1977 helping to begin our Continuing Church Movement. The Lambachs later became members of Church of Our Saviour and the Holy Apostles in Glendale and Los Angeles. Paul served on many vestries and was many times both Junior and Senior Warden. Paul served in the navy during the Vietnam War and saw much combat in patrol boats along the rivers of Vietnam. Paul leaves his wife Marilyn, his daughter Susan and her husband Lloyd; and son Randall and his wife Kathy; four grandchildren (Carl, Katie, Kara and Anika) and two great grandsons (Luke Isaac and Jeremiah Paul).

Arizona Regional Clericus

Saint Albans Church, Peoria, Arizona

A Homily for Passiontide



Today is Passion Sunday, the beginning of the final two weeks of Lent. The cross is veiled as the church descends into a solemn sadness. We cover our holy images as though to hasten the sacrifice and death of the Incarnate God, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. We try to capture this cosmic event in history with the beautiful English word *Passion*.

Over my bed is a crucifix. I like to meditate on its revealed mystery of God, its more than perfect self-giving love. Passion is the union of the words, love and suffering. Contemporary man avoids both, for love which involves suffering, loss, and closeness. Today the essence of the word passion is replaced today by its opposite, cool, to be detached indifferent, apart. Passion cannot be sustained in life apart from God. Nor can love.

Behold the Lamb of God, the Christian Passover. The meaning of the word Passover is the death of the Messiah on Good Friday.

In the Canon of the Mass, at the moment of Consecration the words are repeated, “Do this in remembrance of me.”44 Words change meaning over time with usage. The word remembrance is best expressed today as a re-calling into the present, into the now. In every Mass we offer we re-present the sacrifice and death of Christ, His Passion.

In every Eucharist we enter into eternity, and for a moment we are inspired to love. This is why we go to Mass, for in each Liturgy in which we participate we enter the Passion of Christ. In our Communion we are made one with Him.

St. Francis said that we should not be afraid of death for it is our way to God. The Christian Faith sees beyond the tragedy of the Cross to the glory of God revealed in the empty tomb of the living Christ, the affirmation of life. We who bear our crosses, endure suffering and death, are no longer alone for Christ shares them with us. This is part of the Atonement and the essence of our receiving Holy Communion that "he may dwell in us, and we in him"45 In the silence of Easter dawn, long before the birds celebrate its new light, we share the hope for Heaven and in Christ the vision of God.

Reflecting on this mystery of Passiontide I am reminded of the French Carmelite nun, Teresa of Lisieux, who died on September 30, 1897, in a cloistered convent in Normandy at the age of twenty-four. She lived a life of complete surrender to God. She suffered from tuberculosis, and at the end was caught in the silence of doubt and pain. Yet over her tomb god mosaics proclaim her last words, "My God, I love Thee." Nothing had touched her love for God.

This is the point of Passiontide, that life will end in resurrection.

This Homily was given by the late Archbishop Robert Morse in 2006 at St. Thomas Anglican Church in San Francisco, CA

Anglican Province of Christ the King

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