

THE LION

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Issue 3

Curate's Corner

Fr. Randall Russell

During this time of year it is practically impossible to not read or to not hear someone talk about how we all need to keep Christ in Christmas. However, let us not forget that there is another word in Christmas that is often forgotten even more than Christ (*forgotten even by many well-intentioned Christians*) and that word is Mass. For what do we think we are really doing when we wish one another Merry Christmas? We are actually telling one another that we hope they will have a most blessed Christ Mass; we are actually encouraging one another to not only remember Christ in our hearts, but to physically go to the place where God in flesh may still be found today and to worship Christ our King. After all, isn't that what Christmas (*the Christ Mass*) is really all about?

For long ago in the town of Bethlehem (*a town which very name means "House of Bread"*) Jesus Christ, the true Bread of Heaven, was given and placed in a manger (*which is a feeding trough*) so that all His faithful sheep might spiritually be fed. Nevertheless, that's not just some past event that happened over two thousand years ago, but our current reality today. For in many ways each and every time we commune, we are experiencing a mini-Christmas; we are going to church, going to the Lord's house, in order to have Jesus Christ, the true Bread of Heaven, placed upon a chalice and paten (*a different type of feeding trough*) so that all His faithful sheep might still be fed.



And let us remember that Christmas really isn't about fantastic feasts, unless of course that feast is the feast of our salvation. In fact, let us remember that Christmas really isn't even about spending time together with family and friends, unless that family is the brotherhood of all mankind and those friends are the blessed company of all the faithful.

For the truth be told, Christmas is actually a lot bigger and a lot more glorious than most of us even realize. Christmas doesn't just concern us; it isn't just composed of all of our own personal preferences, most cherished traditions, or favorite holiday snacks; you can't buy it in a store or stuff it in a stocking or place it under the tree. Christmas is about the birth of our Savior, the celebration of God in flesh for us, and it concerns not only our own hope and salvation, but the hope and salvation of all mankind. "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men." That's not only the song of Christmas, but that is the very celebration of the Christ Mass.

So this holiday season let us not only strive to keep Christ in Christmas, but also strive to keep His Mass. For we can talk all we want about the so called war on Christmas, but let's just be honest and actually acknowledge that that war has already been won. Christ Jesus is born and Christmas is the celebration of His birth. It's a fact and nothing will ever change that, but that doesn't mean that this great truth can't be forgotten.

And if Christ's birth and our salvation is to be forgotten than let's also acknowledge that it won't be



Curate's Corner - Continued

forgotten by those who already care nothing for Christ, but it will specifically be forgotten by those who have been called to live in the truth.

Christmas this year falls on a Sunday and there will only be one worship service at 10:00 a.m. Therefore, I kindly invite everyone to come and celebrate the blessed Feast of our Lord's Nativity together. And if by chance you happen to be away or out of state that day visiting with family or friends, please remember that doesn't mean that you can't still celebrate the Christ Mass someplace else. For Christmas isn't just a day of remembrance, but the most magnificent celebration of God in flesh for us in the here and now. So Merry Christmas to all and to all a blessed feast of our salvation.

Music Notes

Kathleen Knott, Music Director/Organist

Two Medieval Carols

Many of the carols we sing hark back to earlier times. "The Coventry Carol" and "The Friendly Beast" are examples of tunes and text from the Medieval Era. "The Coventry Carol" (# 247 The Hymnal 1982) is also called "The Lullay Song" and this song was originally performed in the nativity play "The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors" in Coventry, England. The song refers to the Massacre of the Innocents, and the song appears when the mothers sing a lullaby for the doomed children. The text was first written down in 1534 by Robert Croo and the melody was not recorded until 1591. The English composer John Stainer included the song in "Christmas Carols New and Old" (1878).

The children of St. Mark's will sing "The Friendly Beasts" during one of the Christmas Sundays. The tune originated in 12th century France and was used in the 13th century as part of The Donkey's Festival that celebrated the Flight into Egypt. The charming English words were written by Robert Davis in the 1920s. Each verse celebrates the contributions of the various creatures who gather around the manger. The animals featured are the donkey, cow, sheep, camel, and a pair of doves.

Thus every beast by some good spell, In the stable dark was glad to tell
Of the gift he gave Emmanuel, The gift he gave Emmanuel. (verse 6)

Many thanks to the St. Mark's handbell ringers and choir members who work extremely hard during the Advent and Christmas seasons to enhance worship with music. We greatly appreciate their Music Ministry.

Testimony

Tom Dennis

In 1993, a compressed disk in my back caused much pain radiating down my legs. The x-rays and the MRI showed that surgery was the answer. The relief brought about by the recommended surgery was quickly overshadowed by news of an infection. Despite following the recommendation of a surgeon for another surgical procedure to get rid of the infection and the efforts of infectious disease doctors administering all sorts of antibiotics, the space between the vertebrae deteriorated completely. The result was a very painful series of spasms and doctor-ordered confinement to bed. After three months in bed, never getting up for anything, getting weaker by the day, I resolved to get some relief. The surgeon suggested a third surgery, but after 3 months what more could they possibly do? Despite my obvious pain and plea for relief, no alternatives were suggested. It was then that my dislike of the surgeon became apparent to me.

Taking the bull by the horns, my wife Donna sought alternatives and discovered a trauma care rehabilitation hospital that agreed to take a look at my situation. Suffering from both debilitating pain and months of inactivity, I could not use my legs to get into the car for the ride to the hospital. So Donna with the help of a neighbor, slid me on to a sleeping bag and, using a piece of plywood as a ramp, loaded me into the back of our

Testimony - Continued

station wagon. On arrival at Thoms Rehabilitation Hospital, a psychiatrist interviewed me and asked, if I was to be admitted, what was I expecting? My reply was, "Get well!" I was accepted.

The following day, I was placed in a wheel chair with a strap around my chest and a strap to hold up my head so it would not flop over. The first of my treatments was to be packed in ice and then given many drugs to reduce swelling. I lay there on a flat table and saw so many others much worse than myself - I just knew wellness would come. After the ice treatments, they assembled a team to lift me out of the wheelchair and stand me in front of two parallel bars. Three people surrounded me with straps for support and I managed to take four steps that day. With encouragement from the team, I pushed myself and eventually walked 20 steps with the parallel bars. Other days, there were trips into the pool by wheelchair, weights around my ankles for exercise. The rehabilitation and healing turned out to be a 6-month journey and contempt for the neurosurgeon was ever-present, there was so much hatred. But I enjoy encouraging others and urged other patients to follow me on my journey — we were going to "Get well!" I pushed even harder and eventually, with a walker in front of me and a wheelchair behind me just in case, I walked 200 steps, counting each tile on the floor.

When I departed the rehab facility, we went to the Mayo Clinic where further tests were conducted over a two week period. The results from their team of doctors said that no further surgery was necessary and a corset would heal the vertebra in time. Hooray!

Back home and in church, my dislike for the neurosurgeon hit like a bolt of lightning as we recited the Lords Prayer, "And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us." It was then that I placed the doctor at the foot of the cross as our Lord would have us do. The surgeon is forgiven. As the realization sunk in, I sat there with tears running down my face. Donna said, "Tom what is wrong?" "I am free of the disdain that has been festering inside me."

Jumping forward to 2012 and to a fishing tournament with 5' to 6' seas in a 36' boat. The captain pounded thru the foam and refused to slow down. The pain came back with a vengeance, my back now broken where it had been fused. Blessings abounded as epidurals to reduce the swelling was the only required treatment - no surgery. Again, forgiveness prevailed with prayer and grateful heart knowing that God's healing grace is there.

We must be reconciled to others as God's willingness depends on our willingness to forgive others. There are no limits on the forgiveness we must offer to others. The Greatest Commandment lives in us. Then we can rejoice in the Spirit of our Lord Jesus.

ACW

From the Anglican Church Women:

Fr. Mike will be the guest speaker at February's meeting (Feb. 16). The topic will be Lent and our Lenten disciplines; however, he plans to concentrate on coming into the "Real Presence" of our Lord in Scripture. The book he will be using is *Lectio Divina* by M. Basil Pennington, osco (ISBN: 0-8245-1736-9). He suggests that all who are planning to attend read it before the meeting. It is a short book but highly recommended. Please join us.

Men's Group

John Burton

ATTENTION MEN!

We are looking for those that enjoy a friendly game of low stakes poker. We meet on Wednesday evening 6:00 – 9:00 pm once a month at parish hall. For additional information, contact John Burton 321.327.3485.

St. Mark's ReMarkable Treasures Sale

Ann Dozetos and Priscilla Reilly

Mark your calendars! Just around the corner on Saturday, February 4, 2017, marks the date of our THIRD Annual Treasures Sale held at our church. This is the ONLY fund raiser that the Anglican Church Women (ACW) of our parish undertakes on a yearly basis. Did you know that every woman in this parish is a member of ACW automatically? We are now calling out for all your help!

Here is the timeline:

Beginning right now, gather items in good working order that you would like to donate. We will be accepting clothing, jewelry, appliances, kitchen items, lamps, furniture, gadgets, tools, glassware, you get it...anything you would buy yourself would be suitable to donate. Talk to family, friends, neighbors, co-workers to encourage donations and participation on that day too.

Wednesday, February 1, 2017 – We need 4 men to help with setting up tables and chairs. Thank you men of our parish!

Thur. Feb. 2 Drop off donations at church. Note, this is the ONLY day we can accept donations. Many hands will be needed to accept donations, sort items and arrange goods. If you cannot deliver your items on Thursday, contact Ann or Priscilla for alternate arrangements. *Repeat: no donations can be accepted after Thursday.*

Fri. Feb. 3 All hands on deck. We need as many volunteers as we can get to re-sort, tag, price, and organize/refine donations on tables.

Sat. Feb. 4 8:00AM to 1:00PM are the hours of the sale and we will need a full crew to work the crowds and make this a HUGE success.

Please, mark your calendars and begin stashing those goods to bring to St. Mark's. We will provide sign-up sheets closer to the working dates at the church. If you have a large item that needs picking up, or if you have an item that needs storage until the sale, let Ann or Priscilla know. Remember, the success of this major fundraiser depends on everyone's collective effort. All monies collected go into the ACW treasury which is then distributed to our Lenten appeal and Community Outreach, but proceeds are mainly for the benefit of our beautiful church.

Upcoming Holy Days

December/January/February Holy Days

December 21 (noon) – Feast of St Thomas the Apostle
 December 24 (11:30 p.m.) – Carols and Midnight Mass (*with incense*)
 December 25 (10:00 a.m.) – Christmas Day
 December 26 (noon) – Feast of St Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
 December 27 (noon) – Feast of St John, Apostle and Evangelist
 December 28 (noon) – Feast of the Holy Innocents
 January 6 (noon) – Feast of the Epiphany
 January 25 (noon) – Feast of the Conversion of St Paul
 February 2 (noon) – Feast of the Purification of St Mary the Virgin
 February 24 (noon) – Feast of St Matthias the Apostle
 December 25 (10:00 a.m.) – Christmas Day
 December 26 (noon) – Feast of St Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
 December 27 (noon) – Feast of St John, Apostle and Evangelist
 December 28 (noon) – Feast of the Holy Innocents

St. Mark's Anglican Church

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