

# THE LION

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## *Curate's Corner*

Fr. Randall Russell

### *A Tale of Two Covenants*

As every Christian who is even remotely familiar with the Bible knows, Holy Scripture can be divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New. But what many Christians often seem to forget is that both the Old Testament and the New really are only one testament for they both testify of Jesus Christ. For the same God who told Abraham to prove that he was faithful by sacrificing his only son is the same Jesus who once told His disciples, "He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." And the same God who refused to allow any Israelite who worshipped the golden calf to enter the Promised Land is the same Jesus who overturned tables in the Temple and refused to allow any of the money changers to remain in His Father's house. And the same God who showed mercy to Israel by providing them all with bread from heaven is the same Jesus who each and every Sunday provides His people with the true bread of heaven to eat in Holy Communion for the preservation of both their body and soul. Yes, the God of the Old Testament is the very same God of the New; for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. But if that's true than what has changed? What really is the difference between the Old and New Testament?

And the difference is this: in the Old Testament the people of God lived under the Old Covenant where as in the New Testament the people of God live under the New. For in the Old Testament the prophet Jeremiah prophesied and he said, "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD." But in the New Testament we actually see this New Covenant come to pass. For it is in the context of the Passover meal (*it is in the context of the Old Covenant that God made with Israel "in the day that He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt"*) that Jesus says in the Gospel according to St. Luke: "This cup *is* the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." And, once again, there's the difference!

The difference between the Old Testament and the New is that in the Old Testament the people of God lived under the Old Covenant which was imperfect, which was not whole, which was not yet complete. But under the New Covenant all is made perfect, all is made whole, and all is complete. In fact, "it is finished!" For this is why in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ could say, "Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." For the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the old. As the writer to the epistle of the Hebrews explains: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serving the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."

*Curate's Corner - Continued*

For again the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews explains: "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission." And this was true not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New. In both the Old and New Testament there simply was no remission of sins without the shedding of blood, but one of the chief differences between the Old Testament and the New was in the quality of the blood. In the New Testament the New Covenant had been sealed not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with the blood of God, the blood of Christ, the blood of the ultimate sacrifice.

For life is in the blood! That's what the Old Testament book of Leviticus tells us. It tells us that life is in the blood and that the blood was reserved for sacrifice, and that the blood was reserved for God alone. And in Genesis 9:3-4 after the flood God tells Noah: "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood." Yet now according to the New Covenant the blood (*and not only the blood, but life and life eternal*) is freely given to man so that man and God might be one, so that man and God might be re-united through the ultimate sacrifice of Mary's perfect and life-giving Lamb.

"Behold, the Lamb of God, behold Him that takest away the sins of the world!" That is what John the Baptist told the crowd as Jesus began His journey toward the cross. "Behold, the Lamb of God, behold Him that takest away the sins of the world!" That is what the priest says as he elevates the consecrated host and cup before we commune at the 10:00 a.m. Mass. "Behold, the Lamb of God, behold Him that takest away the sins of the world!" That is what we must remember each and every time we commune.

Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ "on the night He was betrayed, took Bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat, this is My Body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise, after supper, He took the Cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of this; for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins; do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me.'" For the God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New; and in both testaments, in both covenants, life is in the blood, but eternal life is found only in the blood of Jesus, the blood of the Lamb of God that was shed for you and for me and for all.

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## *Music Notes*

### **Kathleen Knott, Music Director / Organist**

We are blessed at St. Mark's to have a wonderful electronic organ which has worked beautifully since it was installed in the church before the first service. It is called an Allen Renaissance Quad and produces digital sounds designed to imitate organ pipes. If you listen closely on some stops you can hear the air going through the pipes. It is called a "quad" because it is four organs in one. It can be set to duplicate the English Cathedral Organ, the French Romantic Organ, the Neo-Baroque Organ or the American Classic Organ. It is organized in traditional fashion with the diapasons, strings, flutes and reeds representing the four families of instruments. These families are further organized into pitch (16', 8', 4' and 2') in duplication of organ pipe lengths. The organ has three manuals or keyboards on which to play plus a full pedalboard. The top manual is called the Swell, the middle is the Great and the lowest manual is the Choir. These manuals can be coupled to each other or played separately as in an oboe solo and accompaniment. Fortunately, in this electronic age registration choices can be programmed on preset buttons and the organ features sixteen memory levels.

Please feel free to come up and look at your instrument. The children love to come to the organ after service and play. Thank you for the honor and privilege of playing St. Mark's instrument in service to the Lord.



## *Update on St. Mark's New Roof Campaign*

St. Mark's wishes to thank everyone who has made contributions toward our goal of providing funds to have our new slate roof installed.

Enthusiasm shown by many parishioners has resulted in our being ahead of schedule. As you will recall, we initially felt like St. Mark's would need until November to collect the amount of pledges to reach our goal, however, in approximately six weeks we received significant pledges, but are still short of our goal of \$350,000.00.

St. Mark's is asking that those who have pledged consider funding their pledge sooner rather than later, as it is imperative for us to sign a contract as soon as possible in order to lock in the cost of the slate.

Our anonymous donor has deposited their check for \$350,000.00 into the Church's bank account. We are now depositing the checks that are being paid on pledges from parishioners into the Church's bank account.

The estimated cost of the new roof is a little in excess of \$700,000.00. While the parish has not reached its matching goal of \$350,000.000, we feel that those who have not pledged or contributed will do so. Even going over our goal is a good thing, as in all construction projects, there always seems to be cost overruns, and having a reserve for such an occurrence is a great blessing.

We cannot operate our church or provide for capital improvements if everyone at St. Mark's doesn't contribute their fair share.

Thus far, out of 105 families at St. Mark's, we have received pledges or payments from 47 of these families. St. Mark's is hopeful that every member will contribute something for this campaign since this is our church and it is our responsibility to maintain it.

If you have not pledged or given, would you prayerfully ask God to motivate you to do so?

May the Lord be with you!

Calvin B. Brown and the  
Capital Campaign Committee

## *Upcoming Holy Days*

### April/May/June/July/August/September Holy Days

April 2-3 (noon) – Monday, Tuesday in Easter Week

April 4 (noon) – Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

April 25 (noon) – Feast of St Mark the Evangelist

May 1 (noon) – Feast of St Phillip and St James, Apostles

May 10 (noon) – Feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ

May 21-22 (noon) – Whit-Monday, Whit-Tuesday

June 11 (noon) – Feast of St Barnabas the Apostle

June 29 (noon) – Feast of St Peter the Apostle

July 4 (10 a.m.) – Independence Day

July 25 (noon) – Feast of St James the Apostle

August 6 (noon) – Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord

August 24 (noon) – Feast of St Bartholomew the Apostle

September 21 (noon) – Feast of St Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist

September 29 (10 a.m.) – St Michael and All Angels

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## **St. Mark's Anglican Church**

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