

THE LION

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Curate's Corner

Fr. Randall Russell

Giving Thanks in the Midst of Sorrow and Loss

Two thousand seventeen was a rough year for a lot of reasons. Natural disasters of every kind, multiple mass-shootings, and worldwide acts of terror all seemed to abound in 2017, not to mention all the funerals we have had here at St. Mark's throughout the year. In fact, this past Thanksgiving proved particularly somber with one funeral taking place right before the holiday and another funeral taking place shortly after. Nevertheless, on Thanksgiving I was reminded of the words of St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. "Rejoice always," the Apostles writes, "pray constantly, *and* give thanks in all circumstances."

Now please note that the Apostle does not tell us to give thanks FOR all circumstances, but instead to give thanks IN all circumstances. For example, giving thanks FOR some horrible tragedy which has occurred is very different from giving thanks IN THE MIDST OF some horrible tragedy which has occurred. In the first instance the giving of thanks seems rather odd and perhaps even cruel while in the second instance the giving of thanks seems quite sensible. However, none of that changes the fact that when we actually are in the midst of some great tragedy, sorrow, or loss, none of us really feels like giving thanks. So why would St. Paul instruct us all to give thanks IN ALL circumstances?

I believe that one of the reasons St. Paul told the Thessalonians (as well as all of us) to give thanks IN ALL circumstances is because St. Paul understood how giving thanks can provide a mourning heart with comfort and a troubled mind with great peace. Most often when we are afraid, we are afraid that something is going to be taken away or we are afraid that something is going to radically change. Yet when we are thankful, when we actually take the time to count our blessings and to focus on all that God continues to provide, we find that our fear slowly starts to fade and that our peace slowly starts to grow.

For instance, both of the funerals which took place before and after Thanksgiving were Requiem Masses; they were funerals in which we celebrated the Holy Eucharist. And as you may or may not know, the word "Eucharist" is a transliteration of the Greek word *eucharistia*, which is itself a translation of the Hebrew word *berekah*. And yet all three of these words have a similar meaning of thanksgiving or praise. Therefore, whenever we celebrate the Holy Eucharist we are giving thanks to God by acknowledging Him as the source of every good gift as we rejoice to receive God's greatest gift, which is His flesh and blood Son, Jesus Christ. "For in the night in which He was betrayed, He 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."

Yet in the context of a Requiem Mass we are also specifically giving thanks for the earthly life of the faithful departed, as well as their eternal rest in Christ, as well as the hope of the bodily resurrection that is to come. And it is in the midst of such thanksgiving that we find comfort in all that God continues to provide, in all the countless blessings He has bestowed upon us, and, of course, in His continued presence with us despite whatever our circumstances may be. All of which is why in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 St. Paul can tell us to "Rejoice always, pray constantly, *and* give thanks IN ALL circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." So give thanks unto the Lord for He is good and be reminded that His mercy endures forever, no matter the rough year or circumstance. God's peace be with you.

Music Notes

Kathleen Knott, Music Director / Organist

Lo! He Comes, With Clouds Descending (Helmsley tune)

Hymn #57 (1982 Hymnal)

During Advent 4 we will sing this wonderful hymn which celebrates the return of the triumphant Christ as Judge and King on the last day. The meaningful text of this hymn was written by Charles Wesley. Charles was born at Epworth Rectory in 1707 and was the youngest son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. He was the brother of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. However, Charles always considered himself an Anglican and on his death bed told the local rector the following: "Sir, whatever the world may say of me, I have lived, and I die a member of the Church of England. I pray you bury me in the churchyard." He wrote over 6,000 hymn texts and this particular poem was a rewrite by Charles of a text by John Cennick. Cennick's version started as "Lo! He cometh, countless trumpets blow before his bloody sign." Charles published his rewrite in Hymns of Intercession for All Mankind (1758) with the title "Thy Kingdom Come."

John Wesley attributed the tune HELMSLEY to Thomas Oliver. Oliver was said to have heard the tune "in the street somewhere." The shoemaker Oliver was a friend of John and Charles and eventually became an itinerant minister. Most sources attribute the tune to the violinist and composer Thomas Arne. The first line of the tune resembles his Thomas and Sally or the "Sailor's Return" (1761). The tune was first published in Martin Madan's Collection of Psalms and Hymn Tunes Sung at the Chapel of Lock Hospital (1763). Madan was a chaplain at the hospital.

When you sing this hymn it becomes obvious that all of these textual and melodic transformations have evolved into a masterful hymn. The majestic tune underscores the return of Christ as King. When He comes every eye will behold him and thousand and thousand of saints will swell His train. Verse 2 mention His crucifixion and verse 3 mentions "the tokens of His passion" his body bears. Verse 4 concludes with a call for adoration and the excitement of His claim of the Kingdom for His own.

A special thanks to choir members who are working hard to prepare Advent and Christmas music.

Blue Tarp Campaign

(New Church Roof)

It is hard to believe that our first service at St. Mark's Church was on July 3, 2005 ... twelve years ago. At the opening, our mortgage was \$1,572,000.00. However, the vision of St. Mark's began years before July 3, 2005 when a few members were worshipping in a metal building at the airport. We have grown to approximately 150 members or 102 family units. By 2012, we had paid off this mortgage. Think about paying off \$1,572,000.00 in just seven years. Many of our visionary members have gone to their eternal reward, but they would be very proud of what St. Mark's is today.

As with any building, it is now time to replace our roof. The original plans called for a slate roof to go with our overall architectural design, but unfortunately we did not have the funds to install slate. We installed shingles, which in Florida only have a life expectancy of thirteen to fourteen years. A slate or copper roof will last many, many years. Replacing our roof with this material will assure us that we will not have to worry about a new roof every thirteen to fourteen years.

If you take a close look at the roof, you will see shingles missing ... shingle tabs coming up, showing that they are becoming defective. If this roof isn't replaced, and we were to be hit by a Category 3 or 4 hurricane, our current roof would fail. This would result in catastrophic damage, not only to the roof but to the tongue and

(Blue Tarp Campaign – Continued)

groove ceilings, organ, pews, windows, and so on. Our casualty wind insurance policy has a 5% deductible. If this type of catastrophe were to happen, our deductible could well be \$300,000.00.

Services with blue tarps over our roof?! No one wants this problem. Common sense says that we cannot use up our endowment funds to replace the roof. Therefore, the plan is to replace the existing roof with slate or cooper, with construction beginning in November of 2019. The estimated cost is \$400,000.00.

The Vestry has appointed a Capital Campaign Committee for the purpose of obtaining pledges from our congregation to pay for the new roof. This Campaign will begin in January of 2018. The Committee will be making a concentrated effort to meet with each parishioner to discuss their pledge amount. The Committee believes that personal contact is very important.

This is our church. We, as members, own it. The maintenance and upkeep is our responsibility. Every parishioner should take pride in what we have, pride in wanting St. Mark's to go forth in perpetuity for the glory of God to do His work. We know each of us wants St. Mark's to be healthy, both financially and spiritually. If a very small membership can contribute funds necessary to pay off a \$1,572,000.00 mortgage, our much larger membership can, if they will, generate \$400,000.00 during a two year period to replace the roof.

We ask you to pray over the amount that you are willing to pledge during this two year period. Be receptive when you are approached for your pledge. Even volunteer your pledge before you are contacted. But remember, we still have an annual operating expense budget which is \$324,000.00. Our members must be prepared to continue to provide funds to meet our Operating Budget. Only you can keep the doors of St. Mark's open. If we all band together and commit ourselves to God and to St. Mark's, we know we can generate the funds to replace our roof, while at the same time committing ourselves to fully give to our Operating Budget.

May the Lord be with you.

-St. Mark's Capital Campaign Committee

Anglican Church Women

****St. Mark's ReMarkable Treasures Sale****

Mark your calendars! Just around the corner on Saturday February 3, 2018 marks the date of our **FOURTH** 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.

January 28th, 2018 (Sunday) – We need 4 men to help with setting up tables and chairs after the 10 AM service. Thank you men of our parish!

January 31st, 2018 (Wednesday) - Drop off donations at the church from 10 AM to 11:30 AM **only**.

February 1st 2018 (Thursday) – Drop off donations at the church from 8 AM to 12 noon **only**. Note, Wednesday 10AM – 11:30AM and Thursday 8 AM to 12 noon are the **ONLY** days we can accept

(St. Mark's ReMarkable Treasures Sale – Continued)

donations. Many hands will be needed to accept donations, sort items and arrange goods. If you cannot deliver your items on those days, all is not lost, as we have volunteers to pick things up from you! Contact Ann or Priscilla for alternate arrangements. Repeat: no donations can be accepted after Thursday 12 noon.

February 2nd 2018 (Friday) – All hands on deck. We need as many volunteers as we can get to re-sort, tag, price, and organize/refine donations on tables.

February 3rd 2018 (Saturday) – 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. Then we will pack up what is left for the people from Habitat Restore to pick up and then the wine and cheese to celebrate what we are sure will be a great 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, let Ann or Priscilla know. If you have an item that needs storage until the sale, let us know about that also.

Remember, the success of this major fundraiser depends on everyone's collective effort.

Ann Dozetos and Priscilla Reilly – Co-Chairpersons

Upcoming Holy Days

December/January/February

December 21 (noon) – St Thomas the Apostle
December 24 (11:30 p.m.) – Carols and Midnight Mass (*with incense*)
December 25 (10:00 a.m.) – Feast of the Nativity
December 26 (noon) – St Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
December 27 (noon) – St John, Apostle and Evangelist
December 28 (noon) – Feast of the Holy Innocents
January 1 (10:00 a.m.) – Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord (*obligation*)
January 6 (10:00 a.m.) – Feast of the Epiphany
January 25 (noon) – The Conversion of St. Paul
February 2 (noon) – The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

St. Mark's Anglican Church

Rev. Canon Michael L. Ward, SSA

Rector

Rev. Randall S. Russell

Curate

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