



Faithful Centurion Anglican Orthodox Church

Thanksgiving Day Advent Sunday



28 November 2011, 236th Birthday of the United States Navy Chaplain Corps¹

Sunday Report



Thanksgiving Day

Thursday brought us Thanksgiving Day; a day known primarily for the excess consumption of food in the company of all available family members. Sometimes we forget the origin of the thanksgiving in Thanksgiving Day. While we are, or certainly should be, grateful to God every day for the wonderful world, country and family He has given us, this is the day our country has set aside to give thanks to God. Not thanks in general, but thanks to God. If you look at other countries and other times, you cannot be but thankful to God we live here and now. The list of things to be thankful to God is endless. If nothing else, give thanks you are here now and able to praise Him. Here is the start of our family list of things for which we are fortunate and give thanks for:

- God's love for us;
- Our great country;
- Our families;
- Our military who protect our freedom at great cost to themselves and their families;
- Our friends (that would be each of you)
- Our health;
- Our earthly great fortune;

Surely your list is similar.

Thanksgiving Day The Collect.

O MOST merciful Father, who hast blessed the labours of the husbandman in the returns of the fruits of the earth; We give thee humble and hearty thanks for this thy bounty; beseeching thee to continue thy loving-kindness to us, that our land may still yield her increase, to thy glory and our comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ryan Hopkins read the Epistle for Thanksgiving Day, which uses one of our favorite phrases "superfluity of naughtiness" and comes from the Epistle of St. James, the First Chapter, beginning at the Sixteenth Verse. James counsels us, "Every good gift and

¹ For our Marine readers, it should be noted that it took the country just about two and a half weeks after the establishment of the Marine Corps to figure out they needed a Chaplain Corps to keep the Marines under some semblance of control.

every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." God is the perfect source of good. What is good is of God. Through His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, we have been given instructions on how to act. Many of us have listened and claim to be followers of Christ. But James warns us, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man be-holding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." With so much about us, we need ask, what is it to do the work of the Lord? The answer is simple, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Being able to fluently and glibly talk the talk is meaningless, if you will not walk the walk. You have to fulfill with your body the promises you made with your mouth.

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man be-holding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Deacon Striker Jack Arnold read the Thanksgiving Day Holy Gospel which came from the Sixth Chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew beginning at the Twenty-Fifth Verse. Jesus tell us to "Trust in God and Dread Naught". He reminds us that by worrying, none of us can add even one cubit, or one second for that matter, to the span of our life here on earth. In a very graphic example He points out that not even the raiment of Solomon, the most glorious of all kings, could approach the beauty of a lily, who toiled not at all. Do as God asks, put your faith in Him and all you need will come to you. Understand, this means doing as He asks, not just sitting by and watching the world go by. Note the words of James in the Epistle.

Jesus said, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow;

they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Bishop Jerry Ogles Sermon Notes for Thanksgiving Day

20 November 2011 Anno Domini

St Andrews Anglican Orthodox Church

St. Andrews celebrates Thanksgiving the Sunday before, so we have Bishop Jerry's great sermon notes shared with us what appears to be ahead of time! Perhaps it is the miracle of an earlier timezone!



Prayer: O MOST merciful Father, who hast blessed the labours of the husbandman in the returns of the fruits of the earth; We give thee humble and hearty thanks for this thy bounty; beseeching thee to continue thy loving-kindness to us, that our land may still yield her increase, to thy glory and our comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"33 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say

unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an

hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt 25:31-46)

We celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday here at Church today. But Thanksgiving, just like Christmas and Easter, is a day that we should observe every day of our lives. It is always appropriate and Godly to do our labors before the Lord with a spirit of Thanksgiving in all things. There are special way-markers of life upon which we may observe a more elevated and Communal Thanksgiving such as that observed by the Pilgrims at their first harvest in America. We have adopted, as a nation, that day to observe in returning thanks to God for our freedoms and the nation that He has given us for our enjoyment of those freedoms.

Our Gospel text today speaks of that moment in time at which time itself will be no more: It is beautifully expressed in that old Gospel hymn:

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more, And the morning breaks, eternal, bright and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there

The crucifixion of Christ divided all time into those times before, and those after, the coming of Christ. It is the signal event of all history. I had once said that it also divided eternity in half, but, on second thought, I believe I was mistaken because infinity cannot be divided in half. Of course, we may label that expanse of eternity before Christ as Eternity Past and that after as Eternity Future. Eternity is a measure of which the human mind is incapable of conceiving.

Next Sunday is 1st Advent Sunday. Advent is the season in which we look to the Coming of Christ as a little child at Bethlehem. But Christ did not only come to us at Christmas – He has been coming to us from eons of Eternity past, and Eternity Future. For the Christian, Christ is forever filling us with His love, with His counsel, with His watchfulness, and even with His tears. He will never cease to come unto us for He abides with us to a greater and greater extent as we are sanctified in Him.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:" Christ came in bodily form at that first Christmas long ago. He came as a little baby nursed by the loving Mary. But when Christ returns in bodily form the second time, He will come trailing the Armies of Heaven. (Rev 19) His great victory which has already been won at Calvary will be fully consummated and all His foes (including the devil and his followers) will be taken cast into the Lake of Fire. Who will the Lord find you following at that coming day? We are not neutral in the great war that is happening upon the earth. We are either **WITH** Christ, or we are **AGAINST** Him. We belong to one of two families – that of the Kingdom of God, or of Satan. Before coming to Christ, we already belong to that rebellious and dark angel. If we will belong to that Kingdom of God, we must make application to be naturalized and adopted into that citizenship.

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." How does a shepherd divide his sheep from the goats? Professor Broadus describes the approach with this observation: *"The morning after reaching Palestine, when setting out from Ramleh, across the plain of Sharon, we saw a shepherd leading forth a flock of white sheep and black goats, all mingled as they followed him. Presently he turned aside into a little green valley, and stood facing the flock. When a sheep came up he tapped it with his long staff on the right side of the head, and it quickly moved off to his right; a goat he tapped on the other side, and it went to the left. Thus the Savior's image presented itself exactly before our eyes."*

Is it ever a possibility that the Good Shepherd might mistake a lamb for a goat, or vice versa? See this: *"I saw, at a certain spot, a great intermingled flock of sheep and goats. The goats were all perfectly black, the sheep were all beautifully white; and thus, even to my eye, and while I was looking from a distance, the distinction between the two kinds was strikingly obvious. If a separation of the two had been required, there would not have been the least possibility of a mistake."* (Morison, *Suggestive Illustrations*, 1879)

If we suffer division and hate here among races, we will not do so in heaven – for we shall not go there with such an attitude. If we cannot learn to love our brothers and sisters in Christ on this earth, we shall never have a second chance.

"And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." What a day of great joy to some, and such a devastation of misery for many. The sheep and the goats have continued together in the same flock for a very long time. Has not the Lord forewarned us of this: ***"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."*** (Matt 13:24-30) *"In the rabbinic custom of the day, the right hand signified approbation and eminence: the left hand, rejection, and disapprobation. The right and left were emblematical of endless beatitude and endless misery among the Romans."* - Adam Clarke's Commentary

Have you ever fed Christ? If not, how could you do it? Have you provided Him, at the cross perhaps, raiment to cover His nakedness? Would you have done if you could have? When you saw the Lord wandering as a stranger, did you give Him shelter? Or, when you saw Him thirsty with lips parched and tongue cleaving to the roof of His mouth, did you at least offer Him a drink? When you saw Him bleeding and beaten, did you go to His aid, or when He was falsely charged and in the prison of Pontius Pilate, did you at least visit Him to comfort Him? ***"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."*** Have you done any of these things for Christ? You should have done if you are His friend! Answer not without thinking, for it is likely that you have performed some of these services for the Lord: ***"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?_ Or when saw we thee***

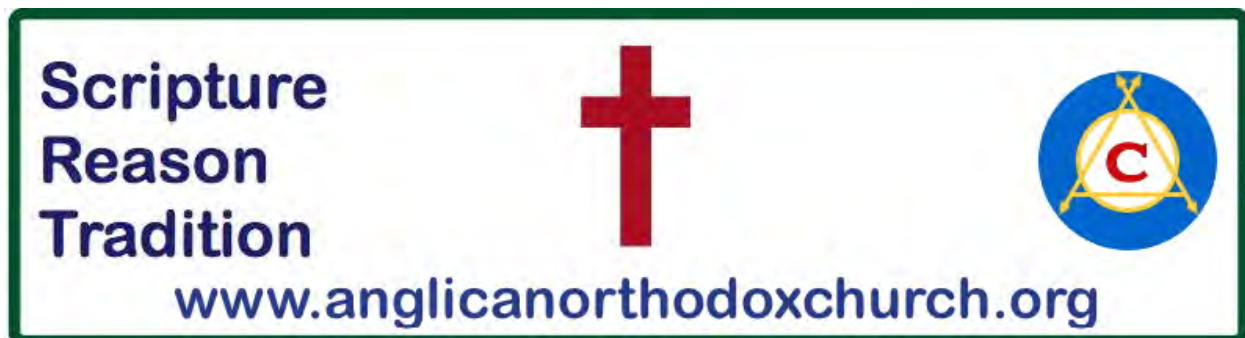
sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" Do you find yourselves attempting to answer such a question proffered by a hurting conscience? When have we lifted a finger to soothe the whelps of the whiplash on the back of our Lord? Or when did we apply a soothing balm to those jagged wounds made by the crown of thorns crushed down on His innocent brow? When did we stand up boldly and declare Him to be our Friend as He stood before the Judgment seat of Pilate? Would we have done?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." What a wonderful comfort. Lord, though unworthy, may I hear these words from your blessed mouth! Have you comforted a hurting child who could never hope to repay your kindness, or a widowed woman whose life has become hard a full of deprivation? Have you stopped by the wayside to assist a total stranger even though your time was pressing? Have you given of your own resources to build up the ruined ashes of another who is helpless to raise himself? If so, you have done for Christ.

"Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." The goats (false professors, hypocrites, and villains) on the left hand shall go into everlasting punishment (longer than 24 hours, or even 24 millennia) but the sheep on the right hand shall enjoy life eternal with Christ.

If the Curtain of Time falls this morning, where shall you be standing – as a stubborn, stiff-necked goat on the left hand (nearest the fire) or as a lamb on the right hand (nearest the gates of heaven)? The ball is in your court!

Bumper Stickers coming soon!



Advent Sunday

28 November 2011, 236th Birthday of the United States Navy Chaplain Corps²

Today was the First Sunday in Advent. This is the first day of the new “liturgical year”³, a New Year’s Day, so to speak. It is also the first Santa Ana of the weather year, sunrise temperature was 57°F on Mount Olympus with bright blue skies and moderate winds of 5-15 knots. The start of church brought a lovely 68°F, which warmed to a lovely 73°F under those same blue skies with no clouds at all. The superb weather brought out 4 people for the service:

Gathering Song

Jack Arnold played *Amazing Grace* for the gathering song.

Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

We try to pick our gathering songs to have a wonderful message, be easy to sing and suitable for guitar accompaniment. *Amazing Grace* is one of Hap’s absolute favorites.

Propers

Each Sunday there are Propers: special prayers and readings from the Bible. There is a Collect for the Day;



² For our Marine readers, it should be noted that it took the country just about two and a half weeks after the establishment of the Marine Corps to figure out they needed a Chaplain Corps to keep the Marines under some semblance of control.

³ If you would like to know what the liturgical year is all about, there is an explanation near the end of this report.

that is a single thought prayer, most written either before the re-founding of the Church of England in the 1540s or written by Bishop Thomas Cranmer, the first Archbishop of Canterbury after the re-founding.

The Collect for the Day is to be read on Sunday and during Morning and Evening Prayer until the next Sunday. If you have a hard time remembering, "Do I read the Collect from last Sunday or next Sunday during the week?" Remember Sunday is the first day of the week. There are also two Bible readings, the Epistle and the Gospel. While they are "lessons", they are not the First Lesson and the Second Lesson, they are the Epistle and the Gospel. The Epistle is normally a reading from one of the various Epistles, or letters, in the New Testament. The Gospel is a reading from one of the Holy Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Collect is said by the minister as a prayer, the Epistle can be read by either a designated reader (as we do in our church) or by one of the ministers and the Holy Gospel, which during the service in our church is read by an ordained minister or our Deacon Striker.

The propers are the same each year, except if a Red Letter Feast, that is one with propers in the prayerbook, falls on a Sunday, then those propers are to be read instead, except in a White Season, where it is put off. Red Letter Feasts, so called because in the Altar Prayerbooks the titles are in red, are special days. Most of the Red Letter Feasts are dedicated to early saints instrumental in the development of the church, others to special events. Some days are particularly special and the Collect for that day is to be used for an octave (eight days) or an entire season, like Advent or Lent.

Today, the propers for today can be found on Page 90-92:

The First Sunday in Advent

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

¶ This Collect is to be repeated every day, after the other Collects in Advent, until Christmas Day.

Ryan Hopkins read the Epistle for today, which comes from Paul's letter to the Romans, starting at the Eight Verse of the Thirteenth Chapter. Paul tells us to be self sufficient, but love and care for one another, do not commit adultery, do not murder, steal or lie. But more than that, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." For, if you love your neighbor, you will do no ill to him. "Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." We need to do this today, because the time of "our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." We hear often "The end of the world is near." And it may well



be. But for each of us, this world's end comes when we leave for the next. Have we treated our fellow beings as Jesus commanded us in God's name? Because in the answer to that is hidden the key to our next life.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Deacon Striker Jack Arnold read today's Holy Gospel which came from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the Twenty-First Chapter, beginning at the First Verse. It is the story of Palm Sunday when Jesus came triumphant into Jerusalem. Jesus sent "two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." This was done that the prophecy of years gone past might be fulfilled of a triumphant entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem. The people expecting a Prince of this World, "spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Rather than assuming the crown of this world, "Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."⁴



others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Rather than assuming the crown of this world, "Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."⁴

⁴ Sometimes quoted as a reason for the church not to have rummage sales, the sellers were thrown out as they were cheating the people, selling the one legged sparrow in the morning as a "perfect specimen of an unblemished dove" without fault for a sacrifice, then reselling the same sparrow in the afternoon. They were indeed making the temple a den of thieves rather than a place of worship.

When they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Sermon – Time and Action

Today's sermon brought the Collect, Epistle and Gospel together and is partly contained in the forewords above.



As is oft the case, today's propers are all tied together. As is usual, they provide direction and call for action not just thoughts. The collect asks God for His Grace to accept His Help to do what we are supposed to do, so that we might have the desired result, Eternal Life with Him.

Paul exhorts us to love one another, for if we love one another we cannot do each other ill. You cannot steal from one you love. You can steal from one you say you love. Saying and doing are not the same. Paul calls on us to put on that armor of light, the feeling in our heart and soul, the Holy Ghost, that we might do what we are supposed to do. To do our duty.

For duty is doing what you are supposed to do, without regard to the cost, without regard to what others think, without regard to the likely outcome. To do what is to be done.

Consider the story of Palm Sunday that Saint Matthew relates. The period between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday is often referred to as Holy Week. Most churchgoing people go to church on Palm Sunday, then to church on Easter Sunday. It's a fairly uplifting time with not a lot of thinking. On Palm Sunday Jesus makes his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. On Easter Sunday there's the joyous resurrection. What's not to like about that?

Well, if you follow the whole story, not just the beginning and the end, you find Holy Week was a roller coaster, a series of ups and downs. Some high, some low, a true nadir and zenith. Luckily for us the best was saved for last.

Sunday was a day of triumph and fulfilled the anticipation of the Jews of a day for which they had waited four centuries. The Messiah had finally come, at the time predicted by scripture. They were certain that He would free them from the burdensome and cruel yoke of Roman rule. The Jews would finally be on top of the power pyramid. They would rule the world under Him! Yet, that was not to be. The day in the temple! Holy Cow! Here their savior was throwing people out of the temple, not throwing the Romans out of Jerusalem. They were sad to learn He came not to rule this world, for that time was not yet come; He came to give them the key to eternal salvation. He came to take them from this veil of tears to a state of perfect freedom. They wanted someone to throw the Romans out and all God sent them was the key to eternal life. What a disappointment!

Are we not so often like that? Disappointed in the gift of elegant gold when we wanted costume jewelry.

Bishop Dennis Campbell's Sermon

Bishop Dennis is a brilliant speaker, making biblical precepts perfectly understandable, even to me. Oft he provides the text of his sermons and I take the utmost pleasure in passing them on:



Getting ready for Christmas

Romans 14:8-14

First Sunday in Advent

27 November 2011

I have called today's sermon, "Getting Ready for Christmas." Advent is a time to prepare for Christmas, but, unlike shopping and decorations, Advent emphasises the spiritual aspect of Christmas.

If we are going to celebrate Christmas instead of just a winter holiday, then it is good to consider what we are doing, and why. Advent helps us do this. Even the name of the season, "Advent," tells us we are thinking about the arrival of the Saviour, the Light of the World, who came to save His people from their sins.

Advent does not simply look back to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem more than two-thousand years ago. It also looks ahead to the Second Coming of Christ. Thus, it reminds us that we live in anticipation of the Lord's Return, and to the completion of the Kingdom He began when He came in humility to sacrifice Himself for us. It is the aspect of looking ahead to the Return of Christ that I want to dwell on today, and I want to begin with what watching for His Return does not mean.

Watching for Christ's Return does not mean attempting to make current events fit Matthew 24 as signs that His Return is near. In the first place, that is not what Matthew 24 is about. In the second place, there is vagueness in the Bible about when and how the Lord is coming back. I think that vagueness is intentional. I think the Lord wants to keep us on the alert, and if He were to tell us the year and the hour of His return, His people might become lax and complacent about being His people. My parents used to give my sister and me tasks to do if they were going out. They would not tell us when

they were coming back, but they expected the tasks to be done, or to find us busy doing them when they arrived. I think the Lord has the same kind of thing in mind about His Coming; He expects to find us busy about the task of being His people, not sleeping on the job. I think it is clear that watching for Christ's Return does not mean trying to guess when He will return, or who the antichrist is. All of these things are favourite pass times of people waiting for Christ's Return, but I think they are misguided.

So what exactly does it mean to be watching for Christ's Return? It is living in such a way that if the Lord were to return now He would find us living for Him. It means living the kind of life He died to give to us. It means we are busy about the task of being the Church and Kingdom of God. In more Biblical terms, it means we are continuing in the faith once delivered to the saints. This faith has two components; doctrine and practice.

Doctrine of course means the truths taught in the Bible, for it is in the Bible that we learn what we are to believe about God and what duties God requires of us. So, when St. Paul wrote that the Scripture is profitable for doctrine, he did not mean it is one of several profitable sources. He meant the Bible is the source of profitable doctrine. If you use the word, "authoritative" in place of "profitable" you begin to see what Paul is trying to teach us in II Timothy 3.

There is a movement within the "Church" to do away with doctrine. People, believing they are being led by the Holy Spirit, want to replace doctrine with sentiment and religious experiences. They don't seem to realise that if other doctrines can be expelled from the faith, their doctrine of the Holy Spirit can also be expelled. Nor do they seem to realise that expelling their doctrine of the Holy Spirit is inevitable once we start excising doctrines, or doing so also reveals the foundation of their beliefs, which is their own imaginations, not the Holy Spirit's leadership. Watching for Christ's Return necessarily means continuing in the Apostles' doctrine; the doctrine Christ gave to the Apostles, which they committed to writing, and which God preserves for us in the Bible.

The second part of the faith in which we are to continue, if we are truly watching for the Return of Christ, is what we often call, "Christian living." By this I mean the obvious things of worship, fellowship, Christian love, and all the things we generally summarise in the term, "good works." But there is more to Christian living than good works. There is this thing of being transformed in our inner being so we become more like Christ and less like Satan. It is the continuing process of becoming Godly in our essence. I have a hard time putting this into words. I think this is because the concept is bigger than our words can describe; which is why the Bible uses word pictures to communicate it to us, like new creature and following Christ. I am trying to say that being a Christian is not just doing good; it is actually becoming good through the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in your inner being. Though I have a hard time expressing this in concrete words, I think the concept is readily understood by any true Christian as an essential part of watching for Christ's Return, and of the Gospel message. I think this is an important part of what Paul meant in Romans 13:14 by the words "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

But something very important might happen before the Lord Returns to end the world. He might return for you or me. He might come to take us out of this world through death. That might be the way the world ends for us. And we need to be living life in

such a way that we are always ready for His appearing, whether it is at the end of the world, or at the end of our lives. Advent reminds us to live in readiness. Thus we pray;

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

--

+R. Dennis Campbell
Bishop of Diocese of Virginia
Rector, Holy Trinity Anglican Orthodox Church
Powhatan, Virginia
www.HolyTrinityAnglicanOrthodoxChurch.org
www.lifeinthescrptures.blogspot.com

New Nametags

We had no new nametags today.

After Church Hospitality

Today, finally, Ryan Hopkins found the fatted dog nut and killed it. Sadly, it was only a runt, but it was GOOD. Perhaps not as good as the colossal fatted dog nuts of old, but still very good. After the fine repast, the congregation went out to the fancy Chinese food restaurant in the next valley. Hopefully, we will have a dog nut again, perhaps a gigantic one once more!

After church goodies providers as currently signed up:

Date	Name
4 December 2011	Dru Arnold
11 December 2011	Opportunity Available
18 December 2011	Opportunity Available
25 December 2011	Opportunity Available
1 January 2012	Jack Arnold



People in our Prayers - <http://faithfulcenturionprayerteam.blogspot.com/>

Why? Prayer is an extremely important activity.

It is not that God knows not our needs, for He surely does. Yet, Jesus commanded us to ask God for those same needs. In addition to the obvious of asking God for help, offering thanksgiving and the like, prayer helps us focus our thoughts on how we might do God's work.

The Prayer Team of the Church of the Faithful Centurion was established to help our members and fellow Christians pray for those in need and to give thanks as well for the blessings we have been granted.

Who can be on the list? Do I have to be a member of the Church of the Faithful Centurion to be prayed for?

No! The only qualification to be on the list is that you want our prayer team to pray for you. We are Christians and are happy to pray for you, no matter who you are. If you want help from God, you are our kind of people.

What is the commitment from the prayer team?

Each member of the team will pray for the desired outcome at least once per day.

How do I get myself or someone else on the prayer list?

You can email one of the prayer team leaders: Jack - jack@faithfulcenturion.org or Dru - dru@faithfulcenturion.org, or call the church office at (619) 659-3608 or fill out a prayer card at church.

What should I ask for?

Depends on what you want. Some people merely want God to be asked to heal their ills and be mentioned by their first name, others want a specific outcome and / or have more of their personal information known to the team. Ask for what you want. It is your desire and need for prayer the team is attempting to meet. For typical examples, see the list below.

Updating the Team

If you are on our prayer list, or if you have submitted a person that you have asked us to pray for, please update one of the team members or Hap in person, by telephone or email. It helps to be able to pray specifically for these individuals including their specific needs; plus if they get better, it is nice to give thanks!

Please note that on the yellow (maybe green or orange if you get an old one) cards at church, you can ask that those to be prayed for have their names disseminated to the prayer team. Those names will be said in church and appear here. Or, you can ask that their names and purpose be kept confidential, then only Hap will know to pray for them.

Prayer List Notice – If you have someone on the prayer list and their needs have changed, please let us know. We'd like to update our prayers to reflect the need and most important to give thanks!

Travel

Hap is on travel this week.

Move

The Thomas Family is on a short tour assignment in Guam for the next two years. Please pray for the assignment to go well for Kurt and for Mary and the kids to make new friends and Kristyna and Mitchell in particular to develop good friends and

school mates there so as to further their development.

Birthday

Don Patton celebrated his 49th birthday 13 November 2011.

Jack Arnold celebrated his 19th birthday with us 26 October 2011.

Homebound or Infirm

Sara's mother is in a state of deteriorating health, both physically and mentally. Please pray for peace of mind for her and the ability for both Sara and her mother to put their cares and worries on God's shoulders so they can deal with the many problems involved.

Departed

Colonel Don Frisbee, USAF passed away on 12 October 2011, after bowel surgery, infection and pneumonia. Please pray for the repose of his soul and comfort for his wife Bev and their family.

Colonel Don Durbin, USAF passed away on 12 October 2011, after what appeared to be an abdominal problem. A visit to the hospital found that he had congestive heart failure and liver problems. Shortly thereafter, he developed multiple blood clots and dementia. Don passed away shortly thereafter with his family by his side. Please pray for the repose of his soul and comfort for his wife Lynn and their family.

In need of a miracle or understanding of God's Plan

Todd and Kenny have both been fighting osteocarcinoma for over five years and have been told their time here on earth is nearing its end, absent a miracle from God. Both are ready to go home and leave the pain, but would like to stay. Please pray for them and their families.

Healing

Bill Aitken had a third abdominal surgery on 22 November 2011. This time the tumor was removed, hopefully all of it; it looked like it. Bill tolerated the surgery fairly well, the lab results should be back shortly. Please give thanks for the surgical team doing their very best, a successful surgery and pray for a good end result. Please pray that Bill might live a long and healthy life to the honor and glory of God. Pray also for peace of mind for Bill and his wife Sara.

Walt Dexter had a stroke the week of 12 September 2011 and is still mostly half paralyzed. Please pray for a full and complete recovery for Walt and for peace of mind for him and his wife Fran.

Gil Garcia is back in the hospital for a re-do of his colostomy and a couple of relatively minor skin surgeries. He has not been able to get out on schedule. Not only is this getting to Gil, but his wife Mary is very tired from all this. Please pray for guidance for the team treating Gil. Pray also for peace of mind for Gil and his wife Mary.

Dotty Valkenaar has been diagnosed with a reoccurrence of breast cancer and had a double mastectomy and no reconstruction on 23 August 2011 in Seattle. Seemingly everything went very well, however there were complications in the recovery, but she is home. Now a torn muscle has surfaced in her shoulder, perhaps as a result of positioning during surgery. There is concern over a reoccurrence of the cancer and some question as to whether to do chemotherapy or not. Dotty is also having problems with fluid building in her upper body area. Please pray for guidance for the medical team treating her and for her to make

the correct decisions regarding treatment and pray for continued peace of mind through trust in God for Dotty and Lew, her husband, as well as their entire family.

Lew Valkenaar developed ankle and leg pain and swelling in his lower right leg due to a blood clot. The blood clot taken care of he is on Cumadin for six months and wearing a cool compression stocking on one leg, kind of a Michael Jackson thing.

Morris Martin, 91, was hospitalized with pneumonia, he in rehab now and doing well, he has been irritated by having a feeding tube in until his throat can heal and be retrained, but he has responded with renewed effort when he failed the swallow test on 21 July 2011. He had a bit of a fever from which he seems to have recovered; it is hard, but he is strong. Give thanks for his great attitude and trust in God. Pray for strength and peace of mind for Morris and his family, in particular his son Paul. Pray for his trust in our Lord and for both him and his family to let God carry their worries while he recovers.

Steve Sundberg had a heart attack after Easter. After some time, the medical team treating him decided he was not a candidate for stents and a five-way heart bypass was performed the week of 6 June 2011. Please give thanks for an apparently very successful surgery and also pray for his complete recovery and for his three children and family who are very worried about him, pray also for his trust in our Lord and for both him and his family to let God carry their worries while he recovers.

Matt Alcantara, age 15, has Osteosarcoma (bone cancer), a very rare and often lethal form of cancer with limited treatment options. This is a disease that is about 90 percent fatal in a couple of years. He has no hip joint on one side, but he walks and swims! Courage? Guts? You bet! Matt's scans on 20 June 2011, were CLEAN! Thanks be to God for the way things have gone. Thanks also for the great faith of Matt and his entire family. Their faith and trust is a wonderful example for each and every one of us. But, now is not the time to stop praying. Actually, it never is the time to stop praying!

Shamim Gray underwent a lumpectomy on Saturday 6 November 2010 at Bethesda Naval Hospital, with apparent great result. Please pray for a complete remission of the cancer. Pray also Shamim will maintain her great attitude and trust in God.

Judith Clingwall, is afflicted with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). She is currently in Laurel Place, an extended care facility in Surrey, British Columbia. Judith's condition seems stable a present, although the medication levels have been increased. Please pray for her to take an active part in her own life, for her strength, peace of mind, trust in God and remission of the disease so she might return home to her family. Pray also for strength for her husband Martin as he deals with all the problems and stress of Judith's situation.

Becky Madden is paralyzed from the neck down as the result of a tragic shooting accident. She has made it home and to church in a new donated magic wheelchair. Please pray for further recovery for Becky, as well as strength and guidance for each of those involved.

Betty Macauley, Tim's mom, is currently in a state of failing health. Please pray she will gain interest in life around her and actively pursue life here on earth. Please pray for her family, in particular her son Tim, as they try to help her.

Lauralee underwent a lumpectomy on Friday after Thanksgiving. A further anomaly has been discovered and she had additional preventative radiation treatment. Please pray for a complete remission of the cancer. Pray also *Lauralee* will maintain her great attitude and trust in God.

Luca, 5 years old, from our church family in Perth, Western Australia, who has just been diagnosed with leukemia. And for his Mum and Dad and extended family.

Greg Chase asks that you pray for his family:

Diane, *Greg's* wife, has a positive attitude dealing with the ongoing treatment of her ulcerative colitis. They are grateful for a positive attitude and would be pleased to see physical progress.

Phyllis, *Greg's* mom, has stabilized as the result of the good home care she is receiving and recently celebrated her 89th birthday.

Wilma is at home after three weeks in the hospital and is working on building strength for a planned hip replacement in August 2011.

Vince (age 13), reoccurrence of cancer, recent testing found a nickel sized tumor in his lungs. The doctors are consulting with a specialist in Houston. Please pray for guidance for the medical team and for peace of mind for *Vince* and his family.

Obra Gray continues to take day by day. Please continue to keep *Obra* in your prayers, and give him the strength of knowing the Lord is with him and will never forsake him. *Obra* needs security of what lies ahead of him, and only the Lord can grant the solace to answer his prayer.

Bashir Ahmed, father of *Shamim Gray*, has been blessed with the Lord's breath of life to stay on this earth for the time being. But, things are hard for him and his loving wife, who cares for him. They have two young nieces living with them who see no real need to help, pray for God to enter their hearts. Above all, pray for his entire family to open their hearts to accept all God's love will bring them.

Kay Denton (Mrs. *Kay*) is still home and doing pretty well considering the bones in her neck and hands are degenerating as a side effect of her kidney failure. Her thumbs are not particularly useful any more. Mrs. *Kay* asks everyone who is praying for her know how grateful she is for their prayers. As always, she retains her trust in the Lord and her positive attitude

Guidance

Steve asks that you pray for difficulties he is having with his family. Please pray that the Holy Ghost will enter into his heart and provide him with the heaven sent inspiration that he needs to see clearly and deal with problems and the courage to do what needs to be done in the manner it should be done.

Jacquie to open her heart to God and accept His Love and Grace.

Hap and *Ryan* both ask you to pray that they might be able to trust God will help them make the right decisions at the right time and not to worry uselessly, to change those things they can change, accept those things they cannot change and that they will open their hearts to the Holy Ghost.

Armed Forces & Contractors

Airman *Donny Patton* (RAF *Mildenhall*, UK), *Jordan* (USMC – AIT), *Neal* (USN-Afghanistan), *Trevor* (USAF - KC-10 Boom Operator), *Trevor* (USN – Whidbey Island, EF-18 Pilot), *Kurt Thomas* (USN – Guam),

Persecuted

Around the world, Christians are under attack, not only in the Muslim world, but from Hindus and others in India. Also, they are under continual attack in the name of "Separation of Church and State" in the western world, as it becomes actively atheist or pro-devil buddy. Please pray for God's guidance and protection for all persecuted Christians and those around them.

Thanksgiving

Hap gives thanks for safe and interesting travel this week.

Various Special Requests

We ask that you pray, please ask God that the Holy Ghost might give you insight into how you might make the lives of your friends and family better. Remember helping others is not just those who you don't know!

Please join us in praying that the *Free Teen Guitar Class* will be continue to be an opportunity for God to work in the lives of the kids and their families. Please ask God to guide the class to new opportunities to make Him known to others. Help us to let the love of our Lord shine through us into their lives, putting Him first, so that He might enter in to their hearts and lives.

Question that only you can ask

What would you like to know about our history, what we believe, what we do or how we operate? Hap is looking for material for the continuing education class and *Thought for the Day* material. Help us help you. Please send your question to Hap so we all can get an answer. Just because you don't know the answer to your question doesn't mean you are the only one who doesn't know. But, if you don't ask, no one will know.

I'd like to get a different point across or announce something

If you have a different point of view, I would be happy to give you room to get your point across. While this publication is my perspective on events, I recognize not everyone may agree and that some people would like to express their own opinion. If you want to write something, please forward your item to Hap (with a note as to whether or not you would like editing help) to: hap@faithfulcenturion.org.

What is the "Liturgical Year"?

Liturgy based Christian churches who consider themselves catholic, or universal, use a Christian Calendar which has a pre-set annual cycle of liturgical seasons which determines when Feasts, Memorials, Commemorations, and Solemnities are to be observed and which portions of Scripture are to be read.

Distinct liturgical colors are used in connection with different seasons of the liturgical year. The dates of the festivals vary somewhat between the Western (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Protestant) churches and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, though the sequence and logic is the same.

The dates of many feasts vary from year to year (Moveable Feasts) due to the variation in the date of Easter, and all other dates follow from that. The extent to which the fasts and festivals are celebrated also varies between churches; in general Protestant churches observe far fewer of them than Catholic and Orthodox churches, and in particular are less likely to celebrate feasts of the Virgin Mary and the Saints.

The liturgical cycle divides the year into a series of seasons, each with their own mood, theological emphases, and modes of prayer, which can be signified by different ways of

decorating churches, vestments for clergy, scriptural readings, themes for preaching and even different traditions and practices often observed personally or in the home.

In churches that follow the liturgical year, the scripture passages for each Sunday (and even each day of the year in the Anglican tradition) are specified by a list called a lectionary. Anglicans and Lutherans have traditionally followed the lectionary since the days of the Protestant Reformation. Since the 1960s, the adoption and use of lectionaries in other Protestant churches (Methodist, Reformed, United, etc.) increased. This has led to a greater awareness of the Christian year among Protestants in the later decades of the 20th century, especially among mainline denominations.

Biblical calendars are based on the cycle of the new moon. The year is from the first new moon on or after the spring equinox to the next new moon on or after the spring equinox, rather than an arbitrary starting point like the modern calendar.

Western Christian liturgical calendars are based on the cycle of the Roman or Latin Rite of the Catholic Church, including Lutheran, Anglican, and Protestant calendars since this cycle pre-dates the Reformation.

Generally, the liturgical seasons in western Christianity are:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Green Season (Time after Epiphany)
- Lent
- Easter
- Green Season (Time after Trinity)

Advent From the Latin *adventus*, "arrival" or "coming", the first season of the liturgical year begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Historically observed as a "fast", its purpose focuses on preparation for the coming Christ.

Although often conceived as awaiting the coming of the Christ-child at Christmas it also points towards the final coming of Christ.

This period is marked by the Advent Wreath, a garland of evergreens with four candles. Traditionally, the wreath is made of four candles in a circle of evergreens. Three candles are violet and the fourth is rose. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday of Advent. Although the main symbolism of the advent wreath is simply marking the progression of time, the church attaches themes to each candle, most often 'hope', 'faith', 'joy', and 'love'. Color: Violet or Blue. On the third Sunday of Advent, also called Gaudete Sunday, Rose/Pink is used.



Historically, the primary sanctuary color of Advent is Purple. This is the color of penitence and fasting as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. Purple is still used in Catholic churches. The purple of Advent is also the color of suffering used during Lent and Holy Week. This points to an important connection

between Jesus' birth and death. The nativity, the Incarnation, cannot be separated from the crucifixion. The purpose of Jesus' coming into the world, of the "Word made flesh" and dwelling among us, is to reveal God and His grace to the world through Jesus' life and teaching, but also through his suffering, death, and resurrection.

To reflect this emphasis, originally Advent was a time of penitence and fasting, much as the Season of Lent and so shared the color of Lent. In the four weeks of Advent the third Sunday came to be a time of rejoicing that the fasting was almost over (in some traditions it is called Gaudete Sunday, from the Latin word for "rejoice"). The shift from the purple of the Season to pink or rose for the third Sunday Advent candles reflected this lessening emphasis on penitence as attention turned more to celebration of the season. Churches other than Anglican have changed colors and emphasis on the whole wreath, we remain true to tradition. Maybe we are just slow learners or not so open to change for change' sake.

The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival. " The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. Thus, Advent is far more than simply marking a 2,000 year old event in history. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God. That is a process in which we now participate, and the consummation of which we anticipate. Scripture reading for Advent will reflect this emphasis on the Second Advent, including themes of accountability for faithfulness at His coming, judgment on sin, and the hope of eternal life. In this double focus on past and future, Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power. That acknowledgment provides a basis for Kingdom ethics, for holy living arising from a profound sense that we live "between the times" and are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God's people. So, as the church celebrates God's entry into history in the Incarnation, and anticipates a future consummation to that history for which "all creation is groaning awaiting its redemption", it also confesses its own responsibility as a people commissioned to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and to "love your neighbor as yourself. "

Four Chaplains

While researching the Chaplain Corps birthday, I came across articles on the Four Chaplains. While many of you know this story, it bears repeating. For those of you who have never heard the story, please read this brief tale of four men who truly understood Jesus' Summary of the Law. Read about four US Army officers, Chaplain Lieutenants: Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend George L. Fox, Reverend Clark V. Polling, Father John P. Washington; one Jew, one Roman Catholic and two Protestant. Each a brother serving the Father.

When the soldiers boarded in New York on 23 January 1943 *Dorchester* certainly was filled to capacity. In addition to the Merchant Marine crew and a few civilians, young soldiers filled every available space. There were 902 lives braving the frigid North Atlantic and the omnipresent threat of German submarines.

Most of the men who boarded for the trip were young, frightened soldiers. Many were going to sea for the first time and suffered sea-sickness for days. They were packed head to toe below deck, a steaming human sea of fear and uncertainty. Even if they survived the eventual Atlantic crossing, they looked forward to the cauldron of war on foreign shores. They were men in need of a strong shoulder to lean on, a firm voice to

encourage them, and a ray of hope in a world of despair. In their midst moved four men, Army Chaplains, called to put aside their own fears and uncertainties to minister to the needs of others.

Perhaps Chaplain Fox thought of his own 18-year old son, serving in the Marine Corps, as he walked among the young soldiers on the *Dorchester*, giving strength and Spiritual hope to those he could. Before leaving he had said goodbye to his wife and 7 year old daughter Mary Elizabeth. It was Chaplain Fox's second war, for the "war to end all wars" ... had not!

In other parts of the ship Father Washington likewise did his best to soothe the fears of those about him. A Catholic Priest, his closest brothers were the other three Chaplains on the *Dorchester*. They leaned on each other for strength, as they tried daily to mete that strength out to others. Surely as he prayed for his makeshift parish, Father Washington also whispered a prayer for Chaplain Fox, Chaplain Poling and Rabbi Goode. Not only had Chaplain Fox left a son and daughter behind, Rabbi Goode had left behind a loving wife and 3 year old daughter. Chaplain Poling's son Corky was still an infant, and within a month or two his wife would be giving birth to their second child. In time of war, perhaps being single had its advantages.

With so many men crammed into so small a space, all of them so much in need of the ray of hope Spiritual guidance could afford, differences ceased to be important. All of the soldiers shared the same level of misery and fear, whether Protestant, Catholic, or Jew. The title "Rabbi", "Father", or "Reverend" was of little consequence when a man needed a CHAPLAIN. A prayer from Rabbi Goode could give strength to the Catholic soldier as quickly as a hymn from the beautiful voice of Father Washington could warm the heart of a Protestant. The Jewish soldier facing an uncertain future on foreign shores could draw on the strength of a Protestant to help him face tomorrow. When sinking in the quicksand of life one doesn't ask for the credentials of he who offers the hand of hope, he simply thanks God that the helping hand is there.

The crossing was filled with long hours of boredom and misery. Outside, the chilly Arctic winds and cold ocean spray coated the *Dorchester's* deck with ice. Below deck the soldiers' quarters were hot from too many bodies, crammed into too small a place, for too many days in a row. Finally, on February 2nd, the *Dorchester* was within 150 miles of Greenland. It would have generated a great sense of relief among the young soldiers crowded in the ship's berths, had not the welcomed news been tempered by other news of grave concern. One of the *Dorchester's* three Coast Guard escorts had received sonar readings during the day, indicating the presence of an enemy submarine in "Torpedo Junction".

Hans Danielson, the *Dorchester's* captain, listened to the news with great concern. His cargo of human lives had been at sea for ten days, and was finally nearing its destination. If he could make it through the night, air cover would arrive with daylight to safely guide his ship home. The problem would be surviving the night. Aware of the potential for disaster, he instructed the soldiers to sleep in their clothes and life jackets...just in case. Below deck however, it was hot and sweaty as too many bodies lay down, closely packed in the cramped quarters. Many of the men, confident that tomorrow would dawn without incident, elected to sleep in their underwear. The life jackets were also hot and bulky, so many men set them aside as an unnecessary inconvenience.

In the distance a cold, metal arm broke the surface of the stormy seas. At the end of that arm, a German U-Boat (submarine) captain monitored the slowly passing troop

transport. Shortly before one in the morning he gave the command to fire.

Quiet moments passed as silent death reached out for the men of the *Dorchester*, then the early morning was shattered by the flash of a blinding explosion and the roar of massive destruction. The "hit" had been dead on, tossing men from their cots with the force of its explosion. A second torpedo followed the first, instantly killing 100 men in the hull of the ship. Power was knocked out by the explosion in the engine room, and darkness engulfed the frightened men below deck as water rushed through gaping wounds in the *Dorchester's* hull. The ship tilted at an unnatural angle as it began to sink rapidly, and piles of clothing and life jackets were tossed about in the darkness where no one would ever find them. Wounded men cried out in pain, frightened survivors screamed in terror, and all groped frantically in the darkness for exits they couldn't find. Somewhere in that living hell, four voices of calm began to speak words of comfort, seeking to bring order to panic and bedlam. Slowly soldiers began to find their way to the deck of the ship, many still in their underwear, where they were confronted by the cold winds blowing down from the arctic.

Petty Officer John J. Mahoney, reeling from the cold, headed back towards his cabin. "Where are you going?" a voice of calm in the sea of distressed asked.

"To get my gloves," Mahoney replied.

"Here, take these," said Rabbi Goode as he handed a pair of gloves to the young man who would never have survived the trip to his cabin and then back to safety.

"I can't take those gloves," Mahoney replied.

"Never mind," the Rabbi responded. "I have two pairs."

Mahoney slipped the gloves over his hands and returned to the frigid deck, never stopping to ponder until later when he had reached safety, that there was no way Rabbi Goode would have been carrying a spare set of gloves. As that thought finally dawned on him he came to a new understanding of what was transpiring in the mind of the fearless Chaplain. Somehow, Rabbi Goode suspected that he would himself never leave *Dorchester* alive.

Before boarding *Dorchester* back in January, Reverend Poling had asked his father to pray for him, "*Not for my safe return, that wouldn't be fair. Just pray that I shall do my duty...never be a coward...and have the strength, courage and understanding of men. Just pray that I shall be adequate.*" He probably never dreamed that his prayer request would be answered so fully. As he guided the frightened soldiers to their only hope of safety from the rapidly sinking transport, he spoke calm words of encouragement, urging them not to give up. In the dark hull of the *Dorchester*, he was more than adequate. He was a hero.

Likewise Reverend Fox and Father Washington stood out within the confines of an unimaginable hell. Wounded and dying soldiers were ushered into eternity to the sounds of comforting words from men of God more intent on the needs of others, than in their own safety and survival. Somehow, by their valiant efforts, the Chaplains succeeded in getting many of the soldiers out of the hold and onto the *Dorchester's* slippery deck.

In the chaos around them, lifeboats floated away before men could board them. Others capsized as panic continued to shadow reason and soldiers loaded the small craft beyond limit. The strength, calm, and organization of the Chaplains had been so critical

in the dark hull. Now, on deck, they found that their mission had not been fully accomplished. They organized the effort, directed men to safety, and left them with parting words of encouragement. In little more than twenty minutes, the *Dorchester* was almost gone. Icy waves broke over the railing, tossing men into the sea, many of them without life jackets. In the last moments of the transport's existence, the Chaplains were too occupied opening lockers to pass out life jackets to note the threat to their own lives.

In less than half an hour, water was beginning to flow across the deck of the sinking *Dorchester*. Working against time the Chaplains continued to pass out the life vests from the lockers as the soldiers pressed forward in a ragged line. And then.... the lockers were all empty... the life jackets gone. Those still pressing in line began to realize they were doomed, there was no hope. And then something amazing happened, something those who were there would never forget. All Four Chaplains began taking their own life jackets off... and putting them on the men around them. Together they sacrificed their last shred of hope for survival, to insure the survival of other men.... most of them total strangers. Then time ran out. The Chaplains had done all they could for those who would survive, and nothing more could be done for the remaining... including themselves. Those who had been fortunate enough to reach lifeboats struggled to distance themselves from the sinking ship, lest they be pulled beneath the ocean swells by the chasm created as the transport slipped into a watery grave. Then, amid the screams of pain and horror that permeated the cold dark night, they heard the strong voices of the Chaplains. "Shma Yisroel Adonai Elohenu Adonai Echod." "Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

Looking back they saw the slanting deck of *Dorchester*, its demise almost complete. Braced against the railings were the Four Chaplains...praying...singing, giving strength to others by their final valiant declaration of faith. Their arms were linked together as they braced against the railing and leaned into each other for support, Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling, and Father Washington⁵. Said one of the survivors, "It was the finest thing I have ever seen this side of heaven."

And then, only 27 minutes after the first torpedo struck, the last vestige of *Dorchester* disappeared beneath the cold North Atlantic waters. In its death throes it reached out to claim any survivors nearby, taking with it to its grave the four ministers of different faiths who learned to find strength in their diversity by focusing on the Father they shared. On that day...

They made their "Father" very proud!



⁵ A survivor of the sinking, Engineer Grady Clark later recalled, "As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets."

Epistleers

We post the list of Epistle Readers in the Sunday Report each week so you can either plan your attendance or your pre-reading as the spirit so moves you.

Date	Reader	
4 December 2011	Ryan Hopkins	
11 December 2011	Ryan Hopkins	
18 December 2011	Ryan Hopkins	
25 December 2011	Ryan Hopkins	Christmas Day
1 January 2012	Ryan Hopkins	
6 January 2012	Ryan Hopkins	Epiphany
8 January 2012	Ryan Hopkins	
15 January 2012	Ryan Hopkins	
22 January 2012	Ryan Hopkins	
29 January 2012	Ryan Hopkins	

The near future, as well as Next Sunday

4 December 2011 – Second Sunday in Advent – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

11 December 2011 – Second Sunday in Advent – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

18 December 2011 – Third Sunday in Advent – Holy Communion - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

25 December 2011 – Christmas Day – Holy Communion - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

1 January 2012 – First Sunday after Christmas – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

6 January 2012 – Epiphany Day – Evening Prayer - Service start time 1900 (7:00 pm); **Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

8 January 2012 – First Sunday after Epiphany – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**