

St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Don Ruthig

February 18th, 2014

FROM THE RECTOR

Was lack of diploma the deciding factor?

MODERN historians tend to judge past civilizations not on their achievements but on how their philosophies of life stack up against our own. For example, great Romans are often branded as male chauvinists, ignoring the fact that Romans, both male and female, would find today's brand of feminism quite irrelevant.

Equally, academics often express surprise that famous folks who were remarkably successful by our standards were often less than satisfied with the achievements for which we remember them.

Sir Christopher Wren designed and rebuilt St. Paul's Cathedral and many other churches destroyed in the Great Fire of London, but he despised the notion of being thought of as an architect. He wished to be remembered as a great scientist.

In Sir Christopher's time, you see, natural science was considered a gentlemanly pursuit, animated solely by the pure pursuit of knowledge. Architects, by contrast – no matter how exalted – were hired hands, who worked at the behest and whims of a patron.

Sir Christopher would, doubtless, find us quite odd for admiring what he would have regarded as his seedy money-grubbing activities in the realm of construction. While ignoring his contributions to scientific knowledge.

If, however, measuring the past by our standards is valid. It can occasionally be exceedingly useful to measure today's attitudes and achievements by the standards of the past.

What, for example, would Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison think about life in today's America?

Funnily enough, it is unlikely they would be in the least bit surprised by our modern technology. They would, no doubt, be enthralled to see the results of it. But our advances would not really surprise them in any major way – for the world has gone much the way they anticipated.

But what would probably surprise them is our obsession with qualifications. They'd probably be quite amazed by the way in which we assign jobs and responsibilities to people.

They would almost certainly be utterly aghast at our ideas about education and its purpose. Indeed, they'd probably think the world had gone mad.

In their day, you see, jobs went to those who demonstrably knew how to do them, while promotions were awarded to those who had proved themselves more able than their peers.

In their day, the rewards went to the competent, energetic and enterprising – those who had proved themselves in practical competition with their fellow men.

If you'd asked them, they'd probably have told you that was what the revolution was all about: making sure that the rewards of enterprise went to the able rather than the well-connected. Most of our founding fathers were beneficiaries of such a system.

Franklin was an entirely self-taught man. Ironically today, lacking a high school diploma, he probably would not be considered qualified to work as a mail carrier in the Post Office he established.

George Washington, for that matter, would certainly not qualify either as an army officer or as a surveyor. As he never attended agricultural college, he would even find it hard to get a job managing a farm.

Similarly, Edison would have trouble landing a job as janitor at one of the laboratories he founded – because he was totally lacking in paper qualifications.

Strangest of all, perhaps, William Shakespeare would never be allowed to teach a writing course in any reputable university's English Department, let alone at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. Indeed, he would't even qualify for a copy writer's job on Madison Avenue.

Calendar of Events

Weekly Activities at St Stephen's

Tuesdays, 7.00 AM: Breakfast Fellowship at the Nautilus Diner

Thursdays, 10.00 AM: Knitting Circle meets in Quimby Hall

Wednesdays, 6.30 PM: Bridge Group meets in Quimby Hall

Fridays, 10.30 AM: Bible Study in the Cadwalader Room

Special Events

Tuesday, February 18th, 2.00 PM - 7.30 PM: Blood Drive, Quimby Hall

Wednesday, February 19th, 11.45 AM: The Ladies Who Lunch at The Peppermill

Wednesday, February 19th, 7.00 PM: Vestry Meeting in the Cadwalader Room

Tuesday, March 4th, 5.00 PM - 7.30 PM: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Wednesday, March 12th, 6.15 PM: Lenten Studies begin in Quimby Hall.

Thursday, March 13th, 2.00 PM: Afternoon Tea in Quimby Hall

In 21st Century America, you see, we hire people and hand out promotions largely on the basis of theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom rather than at the School of Hard Knocks.

There are, of course, many fields of endeavor in which this is perfectly appropriate. It would be silly to consult a neurosurgeon who didn't have a medical degree. And it would be equally daft to employ a nuclear physicist who did not have the necessary diplomas.

On the other hand, it seems a bit odd to expect, say, a rap singer to have diplomas in rap in order to perform or football players to have a master's degree in football before being allowed on to the field. And it would be no less absurd to demand novelists and playwrights to produce writing diplomas in order to get their works published or produced.

These are natural aptitudes, not talents acquired by book learning. They either come naturally, or not at all. Indeed, both these activities are excellent examples of our Lord's saying: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

In any event, our national obsession with qualifications explains the gloss that many modern theologians put on the question posed by the chief priests and elders to Jesus in Matthew 21:23.

"By what authority," they asked the Son of God, "doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?"

Modern scriptural commentaries often treat these questions as though the Chief Priest and Elders were asking Jesus to produce his sheepskin from New York's Yeshiva University. But this was not at all the case.

The Chief priest and Elders weren't trying to arrest Jesus for teaching in the Temple without a diploma. All manner of people taught there – anybody who could get an audience in fact.

The Chief Priest and Elders were actually trying to coerce Jesus into proclaiming in their presence that he was God's promised Messiah.

Some, like Caiaphas, were despererately looking for evidence that would justify a charge of blasphemy, a capital offence. The chief priest feared that Jesus was planning to launch an insurrection that would lead to the destruction of the nation.

But many others were wavering about committing to his cause – imagining that an unequivocal personal assurance from Jesus that he was, indeed, the Messiah would help them make up their minds.

It is unlikely, however, that one more such assurance would have stiffened the back bones of the timid and uncommitted. Jesus, after all, had declared his Messiahship on numerous occasions. And if these assurances were not enough, they had the evidence of Holy Scripture.

Give the Gift of Life. St Stephen's Blood Drive Tuesday, February 18th

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE
SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY**

February 23rd, 2014

8.00 AM & 9.15 AM HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: II Corinthians 11:19-31

The Gospel: St. Luke 8:4-15

11.15 AM CHORAL MATINS

The Psalter: Psalm 71

The First Lesson: Isaiah 50:4-10

The Second Lesson: II Corinthians 11:19-31

Jesus had fulfilled all the scriptural prophecies concerning the Messiah. He had been born in Bethlehem of a virgin of the tribe of Judah. He was, thus, a lineal descendant of Jesse and his son, the great King David.

Gentile lords had presented gifts in honor of his birth. He had worked great miracles, including the raising the dead. He had entered Jerusalem in precisely the manner prescribed in scripture.

And if that wasn't enough, there was the witness of John the Baptist, the new Elijah, the messenger sent to prepare the Messiah's way.

God had provided Caiaphas and his allies with all the evidence necessary to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. They failed to do so not so much out of pure evil, but out of cowardice. Like so many Christians, both of yesteryear and today, when the chips were down they lacked the courage to trust in the faith they professed.

GPH*

From Father Mike

I APPRECIATE all of the prayers, love and concern from St. Stephen's since my fall on the ice. It means so very much!

I have started PT and OT this week and it is wearing me out. My request is no visits to Powerback, except the Pastoral Care Team.

Carolyn will do her best to keep updates flowing. Blessings to you all!

FROM THE LADIES WHO LUNCH

Plan to join us on February 19th

THIS month the Ladies Who Lunch will be meeting at 11.45 AM (please note the earlier time to ensure we get a table large enough - the Peppermill does not take reservations) at The Peppermill, on Wednesday, February 19th. Why not join us for a convivial get-together over a delicious meal? Good food and good fellowship -- what more could you want? To reserve your place call Joyce Perlberg at 410-252-2680.

✠ PARISH PRAYER LIST ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice & Dr. Bob's Place. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office at 410 560 6776.

RECOVERY: Fr Guy, Donna, Aida, Eunice, Cherry, Ruth, Carolyn, Hilarie, Vivian, Jack, Suzie, John, Charlene, Rodney, Hamilton, Jane, Donald, Annie, Cynthia, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Fran, Tracey, Linda Lou, Edie, John, Beth, Adele, Melba, Lydia, Chandra, Brady, Nina, Baby Charlie, Maryann, Angie, Oona, John, Ann, Cary, Janna, Martina, Leela, Bobby Sally, Isabelle.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Connie, Azalea, Stephen, Ann, Lydia, Remi, Melba, Donna, Josh, Kim, Shane, Susan

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt. Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt. Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN. Lt. Col. Harry Hughes.

✠ St Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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RECTOR: The Rev. Canon Guy P. Hawtin

VICAR: The Venerable Michael Kerouac

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Happy Riley
(410- 252-8674)

WEDDING CO-ORDINATORS: Happy Riley (410-252-8674)
Martha Miller (410-321-9038)

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Sung Eucharist (*with Nursery & Church School*)

11.15 am: Choral Mattins (*1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist*)

6.00 pm: Choral Evensong (*1st Sunday only*)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6.00 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday Noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5.00 pm: Family Eucharist.

**COLLECT FOR SEPTUAGESIMA
SUNDAY AND ST. MATTHIAS
THE APOSTLE**

O LORD, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

Book of Common Prayer Page 115

O ALMIGHTY God, who into thy place of the traitor Judas didst choose thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; Grant that thy Church, being alway preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

Return Service Requested

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