

Saint Stephen's News

SAINT STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

24 February 2015

FROM THE RECTOR

You can't blame sex for everything rotten

Denouncing sins committed by others is such glorious fun that we all-too-often overlook the dangers inherent in doing so. As our Lord pointed out in the Sermon on the Mount, the trouble with drawing public attention to other people's shortcomings is that we overlook our own sins, which are frequently even more glaring.

It is, moreover, a trap into which Christians frequently fall when denouncing the increasing moral degeneracy that afflicts so many areas of early 21st century Western society.

Quite a few American Christians, for example, seem to assume that much of today's social and cultural theorising is nothing more profound than rationalised sexual misbehaviour.

There is indeed a persuasive case for saying that many of our most influential thinkers – folks like Karl Marx, anthropologist Margaret Mead, psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the painter Pablo Picasso, economist John Maynard Keynes, sex researcher Alfred Kinsey and theologian Paul Tillich – were not invariably engaged in a dispassionate search for the truth.

It is not unreasonable to conclude from their writings and actions that they were also animated by a need to excuse and justify immoral, often perverse, sexual longings.

However, it strains credulity to blame everything rotten that afflicts society on efforts to enable and justify sexual misbehaviour. The deep decline in morality in public life, for example, can by no means entirely be ascribed to perverse sexual proclivities.

Many of our most amoral modern luminaries are paragons of marital fidelity. By casting sex as the villain, we ignore the powerful influence of the six other deadly sins – pride, avarice, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth – and, thus, fall into the same trap as Freud and Jung.

Corporate chieftains who pillage their investors, for instance, might well have cast off the wives of their youth for youthful trophy wives. But sex was not necessarily a primary motive for the exchange.

The younger women probably rank in their husbands' esteem alongside fat stock portfolios, country estates, private aircraft and fleets of limousines. In other words, they should probably be classified as possessions rather than sex objects.

Dr Henry Kissinger once observed: 'Power is the most powerful aphrodisiac.' Well it might be. But the politicians who pursue it rarely do so in order to gratify their sexual appetites. They pursue power in order to exercise it over their fellow human beings.

In analysing the ills of society, Christians sometimes display a disturbing tendency to blame other brands of Christianity for causing the ills afflicting society.

An egregious example of this is to be found in E. Michael Jones' book *Degenerate Moderns*, published in the 1990s, but still frequently cited today. Jones' book traces the roots of degenerate modernity to the Reformation.

Specifically, Jones accuses Martin Luther of fomenting rebellion against the Roman Church in order to obtain an opportunity for sexual high jinks with former nuns – an outrageous claim which serves to undermine some otherwise quite acute social criticism.

Anyone with a passing knowledge of the Reformation knows that its origins can be traced back at least to the 14th century in Europe and to the early 13th Century in the case of England. (The independence of the Church of England from Rome is asserted in both the first and the final clauses of the Magna Carta.)

Luther, moreover, was merely one European reformer among many and by no means the most theologically influential. This honour surely falls to John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, neither of whom, despite the normal human flaws, can reasonably be accused of sexual obsession.

Perhaps the readiness of Jones – and, to be fair, many protestant

commentators – to identify sex as the root degeneracy is explained by the common misconception that original sin is sex-related.

Folks familiar with the third chapter of Genesis should be well aware that Adam and Eve were married long before they defied God and ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Original sin lies in our constant efforts to supplant God as the ruler of creation – confusing our ability to use creation creatively with God's unique capacity to create.

The problem with putting a heavier emphasis on lust than the other six deadly sins is that it can lay us open to accusations of being pharisaical and uncharitable. It also means we overlook the sin of pride – a sin that our era proclaims as a virtue. **GPH**

The 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. 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.

FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Vivian, Jack, Donald, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Fran, Edie, Oona, Cary, Janna, Martina, Leela, Isabelle, Julie, Ray, Mary, Phyllis, Liz, Joe, Indra, Marjorie, Steve, Wendy, John, Joy, Walt, Nina, James, Nancy, Janet, Connie, Hobie, Nathan, Matthew, Adele, Starr, Kathleen, Ned, Mark

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Lydia, Ann, Melba, Donna, Josh, Kim, Shane, Susan, Paula, Hannah, Scott, Charles, Vinnie, Doug, Rusty, Ian, Carolyn

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

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Explore the foundations of the Christian Faith

The first five books of the Old Testament are known to the Jewish people as The Torah. The Church refers to them as the 'Books of Moses'. Surprisingly, perhaps, few Christians today study them in the depth they deserve. This is a pity, for they are the very foundation of our Faith.

It is hoped that this year's Lenten Study, 'Exploring The Torah', will go some way towards rectifying this. So why not join us to learn what the books have to tell us about who we are, where we come from, and how we should live.

We shall investigate claims by fashionable theologians that The Torah should be largely ignored because it promulgates racism, slavery, revenge killing, capital punishment, and the subjugation and exploitation of women. And we shall explore what archaeology has to tell us about the books and the events they record.

The studies – by Fr Guy Hawtin and Fr Mike Kerouac – will offer plenty of time for discussion. Each study will be self-contained, so if you miss one or two – or even more, for that matter – you'll not be left dangling.

Why not join us at 6.30pm after Evening Prayer on the five Wednesday evenings in Lent (25 February and 4, 11, 18 & 25 March) for body and soul. We're offering beverages, hearty soup and the best bread in Baltimore, not to mention plenty of food for thought. If you think you need more, bring a sandwich.

FROM THE LADIES WHO LUNCH

The Ladies will lunch on 18 March

This month the Ladies Who Lunch will meet at Barrett's Grill on Wednesday, 18 March at noon. Barrett's is located on the second level of the Hunt Valley Town Center. Why not join us for a convivial get-together over a delicious meal? Good food and good fellowship – what more could you want? Please phone Joyce Perlberg on **410 252 2680** to make your reservation; she will need a final count by the 16th.

FROM THE MUSIC OFFICE

Do you know a boy under the age of twelve who likes to sing?

Saint Stephen's Choir Academy, the voice-training programme which provides the choristers for our parish choir, is looking for new recruits. If you know a family member, neighbour, or random kid on the street who enjoys singing, wishes to receive a *free* classical music education, and who might be interested in earning a stipend in the process, please contact the Admissions Director, Mrs Cheryl Nickol, on **410 329 6399** or at **admissions@choiracademy.org**

More information is available on our website: **ChoirAcademy.org**

SAINT STEPHEN'S CHOIR ACADEMY

A fun and rewarding experience promoting artistic and intellectual development in a highly select team of boys

BENEFITS

- Gain a formal classical music education from an accomplished Peabody Conservatory graduate
- Develop discipline, social skills, and self-confidence
- Earn credentials which score high on high school & university applications, leading to scholarships
- Regularly perform alongside professional musicians

TUITION

- Full-scholarships and half-scholarships are available
- Choristers are paid stipends to foster a professional commitment to rehearsals and performances

Talented boys of all faiths are encouraged to apply.
To schedule an interview, please contact the Admissions Director, Mrs Cheryl Nickol: **admissions@choiracademy.org • 410-329-6399**

ChoirAcademy.org

Saint Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093
Office: 410 560 6776 · Rectory: 410 665 1278
Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P. Hawtin, *Rector*
The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki, *Associate Rectors*
The Rev. Mr M. Wiley Hawks, *Deacon* · Adric, *Magister Chori*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8 AM: Said Eucharist

9.15 AM: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11 AM: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6 PM: Choral Evensong (as announced: **evensong.ststeve.com**)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, **6 PM:** Evening Prayer

Friday **12 NOON:** Healing Eucharist

Saturday, **5 PM:** Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Mondays, 6.30 pm: Bridge Club

Tuesdays, 7 am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursdays, 10 am: Knitting Circle

Fridays, 10.30 am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Wednesday, 18 March, 12 noon:

The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Barrett's Grill,
Hunt Valley Town Center, 2nd level

Thursday, 19 March, 2 pm:

Afternoon Tea

Wednesday, 25 March, 6.30 pm:

Lenten Study I

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Saint Stephen's Anglican Church
11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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