

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

It's time the scolds realized tolerance is a two-way street

The nation's self-anointed arbiters of morality devote much time and energy to lecturing the peasantry (that's us) on the need for "tolerance" – a virtue that apparently entails accepting uncritically all manner of unpleasant, antisocial and offensive behavior.

Since I come from England, tolerance is an area in which I claim a modest degree of expertise. The British, you see, once had the reputation of being among the world's most tolerant people.

Not only did they endure the eccentricities of fellow Britons, they also good-naturedly put up with the eccentricities of an army of foreigners attracted to their shores by the national live- and-let-live philosophy.

Some might think that tolerating foreigners whose eccentricities were confined to kissing ladies' hands and talking knowledgeably about ballet dancing – things no self-respecting British male of a generation ago would dream of doing – was no more difficult than tolerating a next door neighbor who believed himself to be the Emperor Napoleon, Mahatma Gandhi or the Ran of Kutch.

But many foreigners the British took in were rather nasty characters – Karl Marx, Friederich Engels, Vladimir Illych Ulyanov (a.k.a. Lenin), Ho Chi Mhin and the like. Toleration, you see, was a courtesy extended to everyone, nice or not.

To understand how the British sense of tolerance worked, it might be useful to look at their relations with the gypsies – a bunch of people who roamed the English countryside in much the same way that the American Indians once roamed the Great Plains.

Gypsies, I confess, were tolerated rather than loved. They were very different from everybody else. For starters, they lived in horse-drawn caravans and traveled from place to place, never stopping more than a few weeks in the same spot.

Practitioners of latter day political correctitude would, doubtless, denounce Mrs. Windsor, my friend Chris' mother, for discrimination because she warned us to steer clear of "Romanies" or we'd be kidnapped and raised as gypsies. But, truth to tell, she was not being so much discriminatory as practical.

Her description of what "being raised as a gypsy" entailed – no baths, no schooling, no permanent home, cooking over an open fire, eating hedgehogs and rabbits, and trading horses – sounded pretty good to us.

For a few days one summer, a group of us hung around a local gypsy encampment, shooting the breeze, catching hedgehogs (which, after admiring them, the gypsies mercifully released), snaring rabbits (which the gypsies swiftly stewed), and displaying our grasp of the finer points of horse flesh.

At the end of that time, however, the gypsies moved on, having displayed no sign whatsoever of wishing to kidnap any of us – indeed, having studiously ignored the broadest hints that none of us would have any aversion to being "stolen away" and raised as gypsies.

This should not be construed as meaning that we were left with nothing to show for our pains.

Chris' mother was right on the money about gypsies not washing. We all ended up with the finest crop of head lice you ever did see.

To top it all, one of our number developed ringworm – a condition attributed to our folly in hanging round the gypsy encampment. (The cure involved shaving his head and painting it a lurid purple with gentian violet. Boy, were we envious!)

The gypsies' unconventional mode of life was tolerated by the majority of Britons – mostly quite cheerfully. In fact, their arrival at a village was usually welcome.

Sometimes it heralded the arrival of a fair – complete with coconut shies, carousels and swing boats. Occasionally, it foreshadowed the arrival of a circus with its acrobats and jugglers, a camel or two, and a couple of mangy lions, and even – oh, rapture! – an elephant.

But, in any event, they usually had goods to sell: hand-made clothespins, besom brooms, crochet work, dried wild flowers and nosegays. And they were often skilled craftsmen: tinkers who repaired pots and pans, caners who re-caned sprung seats, knife grinders who

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, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776.

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FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Phyllis, Edie, Bill, Terry, Helen, Jim, Adele, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Rosemary, Robert, David, Jan, Susie, Beth, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Pam, Warren, Cary, Courtney, Jason Richard, John, Marie, and Alan.

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FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Scott, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Ned, Cindy, & Bruce.

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IN MEMORIAM:

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THOSE WHO MOURN:

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ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, Lt Col. Harry Hughes; & Lt Cdr Emma Hawkins, RN

put an marvelously keen edge on anything from scythes to pocket knives.

They were also welcomed as casual and seasonal workers – reapers, tattie hokers (lifting potatoes), turf (sod) cutters and – a strange craft for people who lived in caravans – tilers (roofs were either tiled or thatched back in those days).

But living cheek-by-jowl with gypsies wasn't all beer and skittles. They had their down side: Their camps were often hideous eyesores. They were prone to fighting in pubs and holding wild, drunken parties. Some were decidedly light fingered.

Nor was it merely a question of stealing the occasional chicken. One family specialized in pig

stealing, another in rustling Christmas turkeys and another in horse thievery, while the most enterprising of all stole lawns. No kidding!

The lawn thieves came from a high tech tribe that was into trucks at a time when the others were still horse-drawn. They'd arrive in the middle of the night with their turf cutting spades and have your front yard on their truck in a matter of minutes. By the time you'd discovered it was missing, it was laid in a front yard in a neighboring village.

The victims of these atrocities were sometimes villagers – caravan dwellers, after all, don't own lawns – but more often than not they were other gypsies. Be that as it may, when crimes were committed, the law took its usual course.

Gypsies who trashed the countryside and got drunk and assaulted people were fined or jailed, just like anyone else with similar habits. Gypsies who poached game and stole other people's property – including lawns – were shipped off to the pokey, pronto.

Never once did the offenders claim they couldn't help trashing the countryside, or getting drunk and fighting,

or thieving because it was a part of their "culture." Never did they complain that their self-imposed lifestyle was the result of discrimination.

Gypsies realized that they were free to be as "different" as they liked – providing that they didn't inconvenience or harm other people. They understood that the tolerance they enjoyed was not a license to harm, plunder and steal.

Tolerance is a willingness on the part of the majority to live peaceably alongside people who are different, sometimes uncomfortably so, from the vast bulk of society.

But it does not mean that the majority should have to put up uncomplainingly with – still less affirm the legitimacy of – anti-social or criminal behavior. It's time the scolds realized that tolerance is, above all, a two way street. **GPH**✳

Parish Life meets August 9th

St Stephen's Parish Life meetings are taking a summer holiday for July. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 9th in the church library from 7:00 - 8:00 PM. Please join us. Priscilla & Dick Huffman

St 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,

The Rev. Robert Ludwig, *Associate Rectors*

The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, *Pastoral Care Chaplain*

Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

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

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

6pm: Choral Evensong (as announced) –
evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Tuesday, 7am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Wednesday, 27th July, 7.00 PM

Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, 27th July, 6.30 PM

The Weekly Silly Summer Supper

Wednesday, 17th August, 12.00 Noon

The Ladies who Lunch

at a venue to be announced

To reserve, call the Parish Office.: 410-560-6776

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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