

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH • TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

English Church history and the wrong end of the stick

Not so long ago, the story runs, a visitor at an English Vicarage Garden Party won a day trip to heaven. When he arrived, St Peter gave him a guided tour of what turned out to be a beautiful garden. Under some shade trees, he saw people laughing, joking, playing cards and gambling on horse races.

"Who are these people? he asked.

"They're Presbyterians," St Peter replied, "They weren't allowed to do that sort of thing down on earth."

The next group of people he encountered were crowded around an extraordinarily well-stocked bar. They were all smoking cigarettes like fiends, and guzzling vast quantities of highly alcoholic cocktails – dry martinis, Manhattans, whisky sours and the like.

"Baptists and Methodists," St Peter announced, cheerfully, "They weren't allowed to do that sort of thing on earth."

On reaching the next group, the visitor was amazed to see people wandering gloomily around with their hands in their pockets, doing nothing in particular. "Who are they?" he exclaimed.

"Actually," said St. Peter, "They're Episcopalians. They could do anything they liked down there, so they can't think of anything new to try up here!"

The corollary of the story is that the runner up's prize at the Vicarage Garden Party was a day trip to hell.

The devil proudly showed his visitor the holes in hell where Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists were being tormented for dancing, playing cards, wearing lipstick and drinking strong liquor. But by far the loudest howls came from a hole set far apart from the others.

"Who are those poor people?" the visitor asked.

"They're Episcopalians," the devil replied.

"What did they do," quavered the visitor.

"Oh," replied the devil, "They ate their entrées with their salad forks."

There are many misconceptions about Anglicanism – and not merely in the realm of do's and don'ts. Many cradle Episcopalians, for example, falsely imagine the Church was founded by King Henry VIII. In fact, it is actually the oldest Church in the gentile world. This year's Lenten Series will be aimed at setting things right. Details will given in a future edition of the newsletter, but here's a taste of things to come:

Even well-informed students of Church history seem to be under the impression that the first English Prayer Book is the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI, which was authorized for use in 1549.

True, this wonderful book is the ancestor of all the Books of Common Prayer in use in the world of Anglicanism today – albeit a very distant one in many cases, with its literary and theological DNA scarcely discernable. But it cannot fairly be claimed that it is the English Church's first prayer book.

The English Church has played a major role in the liturgical life of the Church catholic for more than one and a half millennia. Not only that, the liturgical works that survive from times prior to the Seventh Century demonstrate a lively liturgical tradition in which much, if not all, of the Eucharistic rite was celebrated in the vernacular rather than Latin. Thus it

can be claimed they were distinctly English liturgies. Latin, however, was the *lingua franca* of the polyglot British society which by the late 6th & 7th Centuries embraced a number of languages, including at least three major strains of Gaelic (four if you include Pictish), Anglo Saxon and Old Norse, and numerous dialects of each.

When it came to the written word, Latin was a convenient compromise in an age when books, even of the cheapest sort, were laboriously hand copied by scribes. But while service books were often written in Latin, it was the custom for celebrants to make a running translation of the liturgy into the vernacular – a practice continued by priests today in places, such as the Philippines, which boast multiple languages.

You'll find evidence of this practice, for example in the autobiography of Ireland's patron saint. In his *Confessions*, written in the late 5th/early 6th Centuries, St. Patrick grumbles that his native Latin has been ruined by years of speaking the

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List and guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office (410) 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Daniel, Leona, Charlotte, Bryan, Rachel, Elizabeth, Dorothy, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Robert, Jan, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, Adrian, Tom, Michell, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, Judy, Elizabeth, Wade, Sifa, Theresa, Lisa, Larry, Dan & Scott

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Bethany, Caroline, Mavis, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey, Beth & Kath

IN MEMORIAM: The Rev. Canon Roger Rovelstad

THOSE WHO MOURN: Mrs Ardis Rovelstad & family

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt. Col. Charles Bursi, Lt. Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; MSGT Michael Holter, USAF; Cpt Fiodor Strikovski, US Army.

"barbarous" Irish tongue. His *Confessions* show he wasn't exaggerating. Patrick's Latin is execrable – far worse than one would expect of a priest who routinely celebrated in Latin.

By the way, this habit of saying the liturgy at least partially in the vernacular seems to have continued into the early Middle Ages when the Epistle and Gospel were often read in the vernacular during parochial Masses. And it's worth noting that Archbishop Thomas Cranmer reinstated this practice as a temporary measure before the 1549 Prayer Book was authorized.

Latin, however, did not entirely displace the major local languages as the medium for religious publishing in Britain until late in the first Millennium. A considerable body of writings remains from the ancient church in Wales and Ireland; while among the towering literary achievements of the English Church in the 8th Century was the Venerable Bede's translation of the Gospels into Anglo Saxon.

The great historian and scholar spent virtually his entire life at the great Monastery at Jarrow, is best known today for his *History of the English Church and People*. But tradition has it

that his last words were those of the final verse of St. John's Gospel. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." Then, having completed his self-appointed task, he begged for the *Gloria in excelsis* to be sung and, as the brothers sang the great hymn of the Church, Bede died.

Contrary to common belief, England from the late 6th Century to the early part of the 9th was among the most prosperous – and relatively tranquil – places in the West. Europe, as St. Gregory of Tours records, was wracked by constant warfare. But with the rise of the Frankish Empire in the mid-8th, the situation began to stabilize. Charles or Karl, the Frankish king, later proclaimed the Holy Roman Emperor. Charlemagne as he came to be known, was not content to remain a semi-barbarian tribal leader.

He transformed the Palace School at his court in Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) – founded by his ancestors to teach royal children manners – into a center for the study of religion and the liberal arts. And the man he chose to lead it was a disciple of the Venerable Bede, an eminent English scholar named Alcuin from St. Peter's School at York. St. Peter's was renowned as a center of learning not only in religious matters but also in the liberal arts, literature and science.

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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

Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki,
The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, The Rev. Robert Ludwig. &
The Rev. Dr. Norman Flowers

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

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

9.15am: Sung Eucharist (**with Nursery & Church School**)
11am: Sung Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

Choral Services (**as announced**) – evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

In about 780, Alcuin became Charlemagne's chief advisor on ecclesiastical and educational affairs. And from 782 to 790, Alcuin's pupils included the king, himself, his sons Pepin and Louis, the young men sent to be educated at the court, and the young clerics attached to the palace chapel.

Alcuin lastingly transformed education in Europe with the philosophy of the York School. And in the course of doing so, he – unintentionally perhaps -- preserved for future generations the works of ancient Rome's literary giants. Alcuin, you see, insisted his apprentice scribes perfect their skills on secular writings before being permitted to tackle the sacred.

More directly relevant to the subject under discussion, Charlemagne considered the Eucharistic liturgy in use by the Roman pontiff too simple and primitive for use in an emperor's court. Thus he commissioned Alcuin to compose the Eucharistic liturgy for the Holy Roman Empire.

Ironically perhaps, until the Counter Reformation which began in the mid 16th Century, the Mass said by the Roman pontiffs was a rite essentially inspired by the Rite of York – one of the great English pre-reformation liturgies. Even more ironically, the Mass that emerged from the counter-reformation was largely derived from the Sarum Rite, the oldest of the English Eucharistic rites. GPH*

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Noon: Bible Study

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

The Sunday School Lunch

Sunday, February 10th, 1.00 pm

Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, Noon, February 20th

at the Peppermill, Towson

Reservations: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

Monthly Cash Bingo Night

\$2 per game

Friday, February 22nd at 6.30 pm

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