

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

Get the past right to avoid setting some folks at odds

No good deed goes unpunished, so the saying goes. Proof of this pudding was evident some years back when I came under attack for a monograph on the Anglican Church I'd dashed off a couple of decades before.

Much to my surprise the essay developed a degree of immortality courtesy of the Internet. It was a potted history of the Mother Church, entitled *Ecclesia Anglicana*. (Folks with an interest the arcana of church history can find it, among other places, on the parish web site.)

The article was originally written as a speech to a small group of Anglican clergy who were considering endorsing the notion that the Church of England was cut out of whole cloth by Henry VIII in 1535. Their contention was that, prior to the Reformation, the Church of England had merely been a branch office, so to speak, of the Roman Church.

My article sought to demonstrate that their argument was based on a false historical premise. Far from being merely a branch of the Roman Church, the English Church had existed independent of Rome since its founding — which, according to many authoritative ancient witnesses, had taken place sometime in the First Century AD.

I pointed out that Rome, itself, had openly acknowledged the English Church's independence until 1215 -- the year in which King John attempted to validate his shaky claim to the throne by ceding England and its Church to the Roman pontiff and receiving back again as the pope's feudal vassal.

This prompted the drafting of the *Magna Carta* which repudiated John's self-serving act, and in both its first and final clauses, vigorously affirmed the historic independence of the Church of England.

Nothing had occurred between that date and Henry VIII's breach with the papacy to alter the English Church's independent relationship with Rome.

My article was in no way intended to denigrate the Roman Church but rather to head off a potential cause of division in the world of American Anglicanism.

Fast forward two decades, however, and folks were interpreting my decades old words as an attempt to undermine efforts to bring about closer relations between Anglican traditionalists and the Roman Catholic Church..

Nothing could have been be further from my intentions. We live in an age in which husbands, wives, parents, children and sibling, are frequently

members of different Church jurisdictions and denominations.

I, and an overwhelming majority of my Anglican colleagues, would enthusiastically welcome closer relations with Roman churches on the basis of mutual respect for the antiquity and validity of each other's sacraments and traditions.

Indeed, Anglicans already welcome Romans (and, for that matter, every other member of the faith in its catholic understanding) to share our communion. Moreover, many Roman Catholic clergy reciprocate the privilege on an informal basis.

It would be very much more comfortable for all concerned if the practice were to be sanctioned in the Canon Law of both Churches. Even so, despite Pope Francis' willingness to liberalize his

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, Ardis, Mavis, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey, Beth & Kath

IN MEMORIAM:

THOSE WHO MOURN:

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

jurisdiction's position on many other issues, this is a step he seems unable or unwilling to take.

That said, when reviewing the history of the English Church, there is no escaping the fact that, over the centuries, its relationship with Rome has frequently been fractious and marked by a woeful lack of charity on either side.

This ought in no way to be controversial. After all, if the past had all been kindness and light there would have been no breach in communion with one another in the first place. Wounds of this nature tend to heal best when they are cauterized by humor.

In this context, there's a story involving a rabidly anti-Roman English vicar who won a free tour of heaven at a parish garden party. He was received at the pearly gates by St Peter who ushered him into an elegant and chauffeur-driven Roll-Royce convertible.

Heaven, it turned out, was a beautiful park, dotted with stately homes, lush groves and glades of glorious flowers. During his tour, St Peter introduced him to large numbers of Anglicans as well as groups of Christians of various denominations – Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Mennonites, Armish and even Holy Rollers. The Vicar, however, was struck by the fact that although St Peter had introduced him to a vast number of people, there had not been a single Roman Catholic among them.

His suspicions aroused, he asked St Peter diffidently: “Where are the Romans?”

“Come with me,” replied the apostle.

St Peter led him on a long trek through a dark and dismal forest that contrasted gloomily with glories of the heavenly parkland – and increasingly it struck the vicar that his denunciations of the Roman Church had been entirely justified.

Eventually they arrived at a forbidding gray stone wall that stretched far up into the firmament

“That’s where the Romans are,” announced St Peter, “They are behind that wall.”

“Oh, St Peter,” exclaimed the vicar, secretly pleased, “Don’t tell me that is hell, the pit of damnation!”

“No! No! No! Of course not!” replied St Peter, “It’s just that they don’t think the rest of you are up here.”

In an effort to set things right, this year’s Lenten Study – which begins after Evening Prayer on Wednesday, March 13th – will explore the Story of the Anglican Church from its founding through the Reformation and the subsequent Roman Catholic Counter Reformation.

The best spirit in which to approach this subject might be summed up in the motto of the Order of the Garter, one England's noblest orders of chivalry: "*Honi soit qui mal-y-pense*. "Roughly translated from the medieval French, it means "Evil be to he who thinks it" In short, when it comes to the past, it is best to accept history for what it is and to learn from it — in order to avoid repeating it. GPH✘

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

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

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Noon: Bible Study

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

TAKE NOTE: CHANGED DATE

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, February 20th, 7.00 pm

Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, Noon, February 20th

at the Peppermill, Towson

Reservations: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

Monthly Choral Evensong

Sunday, March 3rd at 6 pm

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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