

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

Sliming for Lent? Why not take up something?

Shrove Tuesday pancake suppers are, for Anglicans, the last vestige of the old Pre-Lenten carnival -- the veritable orgy of eating, drinking and merry-making that traditionally preceded the forty day fast.

Christians in many parts of Europe still observe the Pre-Lenten Carnival; none more so than the Germans who start the carnival season (called *Fasching*) well before Christmas and, from then on, celebrate at frenetic pace until Ash Wednesday.

Lent is one of the oldest of all the Church seasons. Its observance can be traced back to the second century. In very early times, there was no set period for the Lenten Fast. Often, the period of abstinence lasted merely a couple of days.

The emphasis was not on our Lord's trials and sufferings, but on his triumphant Resurrection. This was by no means illogical. After all, the focus of the faith has always be concentrated primarily upon the life-giving Resurrection promise.

Lent was, thus, a time of rejoicing rather than penitence. In our language, at least, its name reflects the fact: "Lent" is the Anglo-Saxon word for "spring."

Lent only gradually became associated with Christ's Forty Days of Fasting in the Wilderness. It seems that the change in focus took place during the 4th Century.

The earliest surviving reference to associating it with our Lord's Temptation in the Wilderness is to be found in the Festal Letters of St. Athanasius, who played a prominent role in the Council of Nicea of 325 AD. (This was the council that formulated the Nicene Creed.)

Lenten observances have never been uniform throughout the Church. The Eastern Churches spread the season over eight or nine weeks, while we in the West have tended to follow the less extravagant observance of a six-week fast.

But if the Lenten Fast in the West is shorter than it was in the East, it was almost certainly more rigorous. In the days before refrigeration, modern food-processing and factory farming, the Lenten season fell at a time when there was generally an acute shortage of food.

Meat was hard to find because the cattle -- slaughtered and salted or smoked at the end of the summer -- had been eaten. Sheep could not be slaughtered because of the approach of the lambing season. Eggs were unobtainable, because hens were hatching their annual broods.

(Ever wondered about the origin of Easter Eggs, Easter Lamb and Easter Chicks? Easter coincided with the reappearance of all three commodities.)

With even fish was in short supply because winter storms made fishing difficult, the majority of the population had little more than grains, vegetables and milk to fall back on.

Lenten abstinences practiced by Christians today are pale in comparison with those of past generations.

They accepted, uncomplainingly, basic necessities. We, by contrast, often take Lent as a welcome opportunity to shed the extra poundage accumulated over the Christmas holiday. In fact, abstinence is often no hardship at all in these days of plenty.

A young friend was once asked what she was going to give up for Lent. "Eggs," she replied, without hesitation. He mother then explained that the child absolutely detested eggs.

With this in mind, may be the time has come for us to redefine our notions of fasting. To be sure, we shouldn't give up abstaining from our favorite foods, but perhaps we should start taking up things for Lent as well -- something that helps a good cause or puts to good use the money we save by fasting. GPH✘

It's good for your health to be on a parish's prayer list

Folks who have gotten out of the habit of saying their prayers frequently feel self-conscious and embarrassed about taking it up again. But it's vitally important to make the effort -- and by no means solely for the sake of your

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: Catherine, Richard✘, Janis, Parisa, Daniel, Judy, Leona, Charlotte, Rachel, Elizabeth, Kim, Dorothy, Donna, Skip, Dan. Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Heidi, Alan, Terry, Helen, Linda, John, Neal, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Jan, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John Tom, Michell, Jack, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, David, Wade, Sifa, Eileen, Ravi, Theresa, Lisa, Larry Ricard & Scott

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Caroline, Karen, Ardis, Mavis, Michael, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Chip, Elizabeth, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Jacob, Casey, Beth, Kath, Rebecca, Colin, Christian, Catherine & Elizabeth

IN MEMORIAM: Thomas Parkinson

THOSE WHO MOURN: The Rev. John Novicki

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

spiritual health.

Scientific studies show that prayer is good for your physical health as well. Patients who are on prayer lists and are regularly prayed for tend to do very much better than those who are not.

Funnily, enough, it makes no difference whether or not the people doing the praying know the people they are praying for. The recovery rates improve all the same. In other words, don't assume that just because you don't happen to know the person you are praying, God doesn't either.

The moral to the story is that even if you don't know some people named on our parish prayer list, don't omit them from your prayers. God knows them all, and your entreaties on their behalf will most certainly help.

Meanwhile, don't forget to pray for yourself. Even if you are so pressured you don't know what time of day it is, you can still say the prayer written in the 17th Century by an English soldier just before going into battle:

"O Lord, thou knowest how busy I shall be this day. If I forget thee, do not, thou, forget me. AMEN." GPH✘

The secularist radicals are channeling George Orwell

No matter what the radical secularists claim, our Founding Fathers did not erect "a wall of separation between Church and state." You will not find these words or anything like them anywhere in the Constitution or the Bill of Rights.

The phrase has been taken – entirely out of context – from a private letter written by Thomas Jefferson to a Baptist inquirer. In it, he points out that the Founding Fathers deemed it inappropriate to establish a single Christian denomination as a federal state church.

Their purpose was to protect the Church from the federal government; not, as is now asserted, the reverse. Even so, many people seem convinced the Founding Father opposed any public expression of Christianity.

They believe this because history has been falsified in a manner described by George Orwell in his prophetic novel "1984." An instance of this is the notion that George Washington and many other Founding Fathers were "deists" – a religious concept that denied the validity of the Christian revelation.

The truth is that with the exception of Jefferson and possibly Franklin (neither of whom favored the exclusion of Christian

thought or principles from national public life), the vast majority of the nation's founders were not "deists." They were, in fact, fervent Christians.

■ George Washington, a church warden and active Episcopal layman, asserted: "True religion offers to Government its surest support." (By "true religion," he was referring to Christianity.)

■ John Quincy Adams declared: "[The] American Revolution . . . connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."

■ Patrick Henry, a devout Presbyterian, stated in his will that the Christian faith was the most valuable legacy that he could bestow on his children: "If they had that and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich; and if they had not that and I had given them the world, they would have been poor," he wrote.

Far from erecting a "wall of separation" between the Church and the nation's public life, the Founding Fathers expected – that the new nation be governed according to Christian principles.

In "1984," Orwell's hero, Winston Smith, works as a civil servant in the Ministry of Truth. The department's purpose is constantly to rewrite history to conform with the approved ideology and to restructure the language to make it impossible to formulate – let alone, discuss – politically incorrect ideas. It is a process chillingly reminiscent of the one under way in schools, universities, legislatures and courtrooms throughout the country. The implications are not reassuring. **GPH✘**

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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The Very Rev. Guy P Hawtin, Dean & Rector

The Rev. John Novicki, Vicar ·

Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. C. Daniel Bursi,

The Rev. Dr. Norman Flowers,

The Rev. M. Wiley Hawks & The Rev. Mark Newsome,

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

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, 7.00 PM, February 19th

Ladies Who Lunch

Noon, Wednesday, February 19th

Venue: To be announced

Information: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

5.00 PM to 7.30 PM, Tuesday, February 25th

Housey Housey (Anglican Bingo)

Friday February 28th, 6.30 PM, in the Parish Hall

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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