

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE PARISH CLERGY

Got the Stay at Home Blues?

Try to view us on the Internet

For many of us old enough to remember it, there are certain similarities between today's Corona Virus epidemic and the Second World War – empty shelves in the stores, shortages of basic commodities like toilet paper, attempts at profiteering and, for many, an ever present level of anxiety.

But there is one very big difference. Government-imposed self-quarantining deprives us of enjoying the collective camaraderie that cheered and encouraged both civilians and combatants here and in Europe during the darkest days of World War II. It is, after all, impossible to quarantine ones self from Shortages and, in Europe, bombs.

Isolation is for many of us a serious problem – and not only for folks who live alone. Enforced togetherness is tough on married couples and families. Irritations and minor frustrations get magnified beyond all reason. Tensions all too frequently overwhelm affection.

Your parochial clergy are hampered in our effort to help as we are, too, are quarantined. However each of us is available on the phone for folks in need of comfort, counsel or simply a chat. And the weekly newsletter also helps us stay in touch.

Father John Novicki and Peter Threadgill have mastered the art of video recording Feast Day and Sunday Eucharists to enable you to maintain your worship. The services are posted on the **parish website** (www.ststeve.com), **Youtube** and **Isaac the Eagle's Facebook** page by 9.00 AM every Sunday and they are available indefinitely. You can locate them at ststeve.com at the very bottom of the Home Page, under "Recent Blog Posts."

Meanwhile we are exploring other ways to keep in touch. The rector, raised on BBC Radio, was a great enthusiast of the audio broadcasts of short stories. Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, we thought we'd the idea and broadcast a short story of our own, say, every Wednesday evening.

Our IT guys are busy figuring out how to do it, the rector is hammering away at the key board writing a script and we hope to go on the air, God willing, by Wednesday, April 29th. Please check the web site for details on the 29th.

Meanwhile, God bless you and keep you. May he lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. GPH✠ & JPN✠

SERMON FOR FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

A gift of power that had belonged only to God

From today's perspective, Jesus' appearance to his disciples on the evening of Easter Day was quite unspectacular – nothing like the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost .

St. John relates that the disciples had barricaded themselves in a secret hideout, terrified they were about to be arrested by Jewish Temple police. They were so wrapped up in their own fears and sorrows that they were completely unaware of Jesus' presence until he said: "Shalom" – the Jewish equivalent of "hi."

Their first reaction was shock. They thought they were seeing a ghost. John tells us they didn't believe Jesus was flesh and blood until he showed them the fresh wounds in his hands and side.

St. Luke gives the story in even greater detail in the 24th Chapter of his Gospel – the Gospel appointed for Tuesday in Easter Week. The two disciples who had met and talked with Jesus at the village of Emmaus, had hurried back to tell the others of their meeting with the risen Christ.

Suddenly, as the two were speaking, the disciples saw Jesus standing among them: "Why are you troubled?" he said, "Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

He then showed them his hands and feet – still bearing the marks of the nails that held him to the cross and the spear wound in his side. Then, he asked for food and ate it, not because he was hungry, but to prove he was not an apparition or a figment of their collective imaginations, but solid, flesh and bone.

What could have been the purpose of all this? Why did Jesus take such trouble to point out that he was in the flesh? He had to be trying to tell us something. The point should be obvious:

Jesus is telling us that we, like him, will be resurrected in the flesh: "That though this body be destroyed," as the Book of Job puts it, "in our flesh we shall see God."

When he had finally convinced them he was actually among them in the flesh, he did something that took them by surprise. He conferred on them powers that hitherto God had reserved

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: Eileen, Rebecca, Catherine, Richard✠,

Janis, Parisa, Daniel, Leona, 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, Judy & Scott

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

IN MEMORIAM:

THOSE WHO MOURN:

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

entirely for himself.

Jesus endowed them with the authority to forgive people's sins. He breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." In doing so, he instituted his priesthood and laid down the formula by which they were to be ordained

There are folks who assume Jesus' conferral of power to forgive sins on the priests of his church was simply a symbolic act – a morale booster for folks who had had a rough time of things, so to speak. But that is scarcely a reasonable assumption.

There was nothing casual about what Jesus did. It was not an after-thought. It was the very first act that he performed after his resurrection. What's more, he did not equivocate or use ambiguous language. There's nothing vague or obscure about the words: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." It is a statement as definite and unequivocal as those Jesus used to institute the Holy Eucharist: "This is my body . . . This is my blood."

In other words, like the Holy Communion, the power to remit sins is not a "badge or token, but rather a certain sure witness,

and effectual sign of grace." (*Article XXV of the Articles of Religion.*)

Today, 2000 years after the event, the need for the institution of a priesthood with the power to forgive sins is probably not as apparent as it was back then. With the resurrection, a New Covenant superseded the Covenant that God had concluded with the children of Israel in the wilderness. And with the New Covenant, the old system of expiating sins – animal sacrifices by priests at the Temple in Jerusalem – had been rendered obsolete.

Just as the animal sacrifices in the Temple had been supplanted by Jesus' "one oblation of himself once offered," so a new priesthood was needed to replace the Aaronic priesthood established in the wilderness.

The quiet, unspectacular appearance of Jesus in that barricaded room might not have been as dramatic as the crossing of the Red Sea or the making of the Old Covenant in the wilderness. But it was no less epoch-making. It transformed a tiny group of terrified people into the most fearless evangelists the world has seen. Indeed, one might reasonably argue that, in terms of its effect on the world, it was one of the most momentous events in the history of the world. The people present in that locked room set in motion the transformation of what we now call Western society – what our forebears once unashamedly knew as Christendom.

In transforming the West, Jesus is transforming the world. This is not something that is achieved easily or without great sacrifices. Few of those men in that locked room died natural deaths. Human beings do not like submitting to God's agenda. What do you think this current vicious wave of terrorism is about?

But it is battle the terrorists will ultimately lose. For the transformation is being effected not by the sword or by such things as nuclear energy, electric power, the automobile, the washing machine and the television set. It's being transformed by faith in the fact that every individual, no matter how high or low their estate, is equally precious in the eyes of their creator.

And because we are all so precious to him, God gave his only begotten son to pay the full price for our sinfulness. As a consequence, his forgiveness is ours simply for the asking. And all that God seeks in return for this is we demonstrate our love for him by love our fellows as much as we love ourselves. Over the ensuing two millennia, the Christian faith has radically restructured society.

It has swept away the rationalizations and intellectual accommodations that enabled tyrannical ancient kings and murderous modern utopians to enslave the human soul by usurping God's place in the human heart. And all this was set in motion with the words: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." *AMEN GPH*✠

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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www.ststeve.com

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)

11 am: 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

For Our Country.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favour and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honourable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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