

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 THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Pride came with the fall and it hasn't gone away

There is something curiously antique to 21st Century ears about the notion of abstaining from "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." It's wildly out of step with a generation whose primary motivation is "immediate self-gratification and whose motto is "just do it."

But, actually, the era in which St. Peter wrote his first round robin to the Apostolic Church was very similar to our own. What he was warning his flock against were attitudes, behaviors and activities that were generally regarded as perfectly natural and normal – harmless even – but that presented enormous spiritual dangers.

St. John had the same opinion, writing in the second chapter of his First General Epistle: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father, but is of the world."

In an age society dominated by steamy TV reality shows, it's hard imagine such outdated concepts being relevant to John and Jane Doe. But Satan has been exploiting the same human weaknesses – lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – to blind human beings to God since the beginning of time. His maxim is clearly: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The old temptations work so well because when it comes to sin, human beings seem quite incapable of learning from the past. We fall for the same old tricks – just as our parents did before us. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life do the trick every time.

It worked when Satan persuaded Eve to try the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden – and I quote: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food (*lust of the flesh*), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (*lust of the eyes*), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (*pride of life*) she took of the fruit thereof and did eat.

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: Mrs Mary Slazinski

THOSE WHO MOURN: Fr John & Diane Novicki and family

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

Eve persuaded herself that eating the forbidden fruit was the practical thing to do; the attractive thing to do; and, ultimately, the prestigious thing to do. The serpent really didn't have to do any work at all. He just had to put the suggestion into her head and she sold it to herself.

The amazing thing is that the devil tried exactly the same temptations -- though in a slightly different order on Jesus.

First, he tempted him to turn stones into bread (*Lust of the flesh*). Then he tempted Jesus to cast himself off the pinnacle of the Temple, so that when the angels saved him, he would win the approbation of the crowd (*The pride of life*).

Lastly, he took Jesus up to a high mountain and showed him all the beauty of the earth and offered it all to him (*Lust of the eyes*).

Okay. So it didn't work with Jesus. But he is perfect man and we are very far from that happy condition. And throughout the centuries these same three temptations have seduced us into committing all seven of the Cardinal Sins, sometimes every single one of them at the same time.

While they might sound a tad old fashioned, they are, in fact, amazingly powerful. And the most powerful of all is pride. Indeed, it was the primary reason for Eve taking a bite out of the forbidden fruit.

She swallowed Satan's lie: "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be open, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

She got it into her head that she could do God's job better than he can. And when it comes down to it, this is the root of all our sin. Indeed, it is the original sin because her descendants have been trying to do God's job ever since.

Whenever we dismiss God's advice as old fashioned and out of touch, we are, in effect, claiming to know better than God. When we question that God can perform miracles, we are arrogantly assuming that the Creator of our entire Universe has no more power than we, his creatures, enjoy.

But if pride poisons our relationship with God, it also poisons our relationships with each other – especially those closest to us. It is pride that requires us always to be right; the pride that makes us struggle to dominate our spouses, our children, our co-workers. It is pride that admits no need to apologize. It's ironic that even though pride is quite plainly

the source of so much trouble, we insist on instilling it into our children. If pride really is some sort of virtue, there is so much of it around it should surely be fostering social harmony on a grand scale.

But we know from long and bitter experience it most certainly isn't doing that. Pride promotes only discord – ethnic discord, civic discord, discord in the home and discord among the sexes.

If pride promotes discord, dissension and hatred, perhaps we might give humility a try. Humility actually does promote peace and understanding – harmony in fact. Sad to sad, I can't see many people turning out for "Human Humility Week" It simply isn't human is it?

Surprising though it might seem, however, God does practice humility, constantly. For example, he sent his Son to make the ultimate sacrifice not for people who are his equals, but for us, for creatures that, in comparison with him, are lower even than cockroaches.

This, of course, should help us understand our place in his great scheme of things . . . if only we had the humility to realize it. 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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