

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A MEDITATION ON TRINITY XII

## The New Testament puts God's modesty on display

It is difficult to square Gospel accounts of Jesus' miracles with St. Paul's contention that the New Testament is so much more glorious than the Old. I mean there is no doubt that Jesus' miracles are . . . well . . . miraculous. But the fact of the matter is that compared with the miracles of the Old Testament, they lack what we in America call *pizzazz*.

For example, today's Gospel concerns a miracle that can hardly be described as dramatic. In fact, it sounds downright prosaic. It is St Mark's account of the healing of deaf man who also had a speech impediment.

Mark tells us Jesus simply stuck his fingers in the deaf man's ears, then spat on his fingers and touched the guy's tongue. There's nothing very glorious about it. If anything, it sounds a bit unsanitary.

Contrast this miracle with the miracles God performs in the Old Testament. He parts the Red Sea so that the Children of Israel can cross it dry-shod. He makes the sun stand still in the heavens so Israelites can win a battle. He knocks down the walls of Jericho to save the Children of Israel the bother of storming them. Now those are really impressive miracles. Indeed, they truly qualify as miracles with *pizzazz*.

Search as one might, the New Testament very has little to compare with them. I guess you could argue that the Virgin Birth was quite impressive, especially the bit about the angel choirs. But the only people there to witness it were a bunch of horny-handed sons of toil from the local sheep-herding operation. And while the resurrection was quite astounding, the only people present – a infantry squad – slept all the way through it.

Even Jesus' most spectacular miracles are low key. When he raises folks from the dead there is no *shazzam!* about it. At the little town of Nain, he simply walks up to the corpse and say: "Okay kid, get up." And the raising of Lazarus is more of the same. There is this huge crowd in the graveyard waiting for something really special and all Jesus does is shout: "Hey Lazarus, come out."

St Paul addresses this issue in the third chapter of II Corinthians – people who find God incarnate in the New Testament, namely Jesus, far less impressive than God as he is portrayed in the Old Testament.

Paul says we need to look beyond the *pizzazz* – the thunder and lightning, the crashing of city walls and the parting of seas. If you study how God acts when incarnate in human flesh, he tell us, we'll discover he's not merely impressive; he's utterly breath taking.

The trouble is that we tend to confuse human concept of glory with God's idea of glory. But he doesn't need the pomp and circumstance. Infinite power is forever at his fingertips. He only needs to utter the word and it is done.

For human beings, the possession of god-like powers would be astounding – all the superlatives you can imagine. But for God, infinite power is an everyday thing: as natural for him as turning on a faucet is for us.

This is graphically illustrated in the remarkably unassuming way he goes about healing the deaf man. There's no song and dance, no lengthy prayers, no effort to impress the onlookers. Jesus simply says: "Open up."

What could be more modest? Yet what followed was a miracle of creation – an act in microcosm as astounding as the creation of the universe. Miraculously, the man's malformed aural passages were opened and his eardrums

were recreated. Miraculously, the string of his tongue was loosed, as the King James Bible so poetically puts it.

Doctors today might possibly be able to recreate this miracle of healing. But they would have to rely on scalpels, lasers, blood transfusions and the like. They couldn't do it as Jesus did it – by just uttering a word.

But just because our notions of glory don't matter to him, it doesn't mean that glorifying God shouldn't matter to us. In fact, it is vital for our spiritual welfare – for our salvation – that we acknowledge God's glory and power, dominion and majesty at every possible opportunity.

Indeed, if we forget it even for an instant we put ourselves in mortal danger. For if we fail to ascribe to God glory and power, dominion and majesty we'll begin to lose sight of who he is in relationship to ourselves.

God walked and talked with Adam and Eve, but he was so disarmingly modest – just like Jesus – they forgot he was their creator. Mistaking his modesty for inadequacy,

## 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:** Mavis, Pam, Eileen, Rebecca, Catherine, Bill, Richard✕, Janis, 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, Larry Ricard, Judy & Scott

**FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE:** Sam, Cameron, Jim, Diana, Caroline, Karen, Ardis, Mavis, Michael, Ian, Melba, Vinnie, Doug, Chip, Elizabeth, 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.

they decided they could do his job better than he can. And we slither just as easily into such foolish assumptions.

Today's gospel illustrates how we do so: The man Jesus healed was a beggar. To the people with Jesus, he was a person of no account, and to see the man they had hailed as the Messiah having dealings with such a trashy, unimportant person lowered him vastly in their estimation.

But the fact of the matter is that all of us, without exception, are equally beloved in Jesus' eyes. He can look at the most dishonest crook, the most corrupt politician, and the most disgusting beggar and see a lost sheep as dear to him as those who are earnestly striving after virtue.

If we lose sight of who he is and, instead, look solely at the company he keeps and flawed human instruments he uses, we will succumb as readily as Adam and Eve to the notion that we can do his job better than he can. For this reason, we can't afford to be casual in our worship.

Certainly God doesn't need our finely honed words, glorious music or gorgeous vestments. He is just as content to meet us in a hovel as in palace. We, however, are the ones who need splendor. We need the splendor and glory to remind us of who God really is – and, no less important, just who we are in relation to him. GPH✕

FROM THE PARISH CLERGY

# New County rules on Covid19

Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch, Health Officer for Baltimore County, has promulgated the following order: “Beginning Thursday, July 23 at 9 a.m., Baltimore County individuals ages 2 and up are required to wear face coverings in any indoor business, service, organization or establishment that serves the general public. This includes, but is not limited to, retail establishments, recreational establishments, houses of worship and other locations open to the public.

Residents are strongly encouraged to wear masks in outdoor public areas where social distancing of at least six-feet is not possible. Exemptions to the decree are:

- Individuals who cannot wear a face covering (as defined in Governor's Executive Order No. 20-04-15-01) due to a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability;
- Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
- Individuals at food service establishments while eating or drinking, which shall all be subject to the same existing regulations and exceptions previously in place under the Governor’s Executive Orders and the Health Officer Orders

of the Maryland Department of Health . . . . In addition, all non-seated parties, must wear a face covering when moving in or about a restaurant or bar premises.

- Individuals are not required to show documentation that an exception applies.”

*The full text of th Health Department Directive and Order and the Interpretive Guidance can be found at the County web site.*

## Our Sunday service schedule

Holy Eucharist at will be said at 8.00 AM and 9.15 AM. Morning Prayer will be said 11.00 AM with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the ,month. Sunday School takes place at 9.15 AM

For shut-ins and folks st in quarantine we will be continuing our videos of Feast Day and Sunday Eucharists. These are posted on the **parish website (www.ststeve.com)**, **Youtube** and **Isaac the Eagle’s Facebook** page.

You’ll find them from 9.00 AM onwards every Sunday and Day of Obligation at **ststeve.com** at the bottom of the Home Page, under “Recent Blog Posts. A new midweek “broadcast” talk by the rector can also be found on the website every Wednesday or Thursday.

Meanwhile, we have opened a Post Office Box for the exclusive use of the treasurer. Please mail your offerings to: **St Stephen’s Anglican Church, P.O. Box 6161, Timonium, MD 21094**. All other mail should be sent to our street address. GPH✘ & JPN✘

## St Stephen’s Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093  
Office: 410 560 6776 · Rector: 443 425-2420  
Vicar: 410 878-5275 · Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

[www.ststeve.com](http://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](http://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.*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St Stephens’s Anglican Church  
11856 Mays Chapel Road  
Timonium, MD 21093

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