

# THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN NEWS

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## *Fr. Robert's Remarks:*



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC  
VICAR GENERAL

Greetings; the Lord be with you!

As this issue of the Traditional Anglican comes out, we shall have just completed the Epiphany cycle and we shall be on the verge of moving once again into the pre-Lenten and then the early Lenten seasons.

We move from the feast to the preparation for the fast and then to the fast itself.

It is a time to review our lives. The Exhortation in the Penitential Service (BCP p. 611) explains how “the whole Congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution contained in the Gospel of our Saviour, and of the need which all Christian continually have, of a renewal of their repentance and faith.” I

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## *Fr. George Betsos: You're Never too Old to Serve the Lord!*



FR. GEORGE BETSOS

SS Simeon & Anna: “You're never too old to serve the Lord!” A Sermon for Candlemas 2014

Have you ever had déjà vu? Already having seen this scene play out before. It's a phenomenon of having the strong sensation that an event currently being lived through has been experienced in the past, whether it has actually happened or not. It is an awkward feeling of a vision or dream coming true, although you are not able to predict, nor place your finger on what comes next. All you know is that you are here in the present moment, gripped by a strange sense that you are where you are supposed to be. For whatever the reason or cause, God wills you to experience this... whatever the outcome - it is for your benefit. For we are promised “God works all things for our good.” (Romans 8:28)

So it must have been with St Simeon and St Anna that were led by the Holy Spirit to meet Our Little Lord Jesus, in today's gospel lesson. The story briefly mentions why the Holy Family are there in the Temple, the Virgin Mary's Purification, yet the narrative quickly changes direction. The story's entire focus is on the spontaneous, awkward and yet strangely familiar encounter with people that knew The Child Saviour before ever meeting Him face to face. Much like the encounter of the worshipping Magi, led by a star, a dream, a vision and seeing the anticipated promise fulfilled.

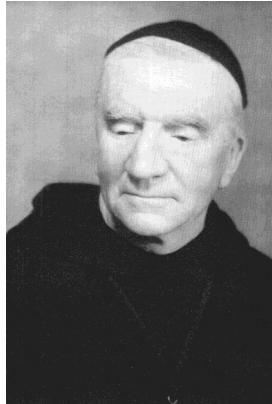
Scripture tells us that, “God is faithful to keep His Promises,” (Deut. 7:9, Ps. 145:13, 1 Th 5:24; 2 Tim 2:13) especially to His Promised People, dwelling in the Promised Land. Throughout Scripture, God speaks about The Promise of all promises – the sending of His own Son. The time had come to reveal the promised Saviour, at least to a chosen few. Simeon & Anna were blessed to be in that holy fold. And God had made them a promise that they would not see death, until they saw in the flesh the Light of the World,

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Three Meditations: SPIRITUAL CONVICTION



FR. ANDREW, SDC
PICTURE 1935, BY JOAN BERTWISTLE
FRONTISPICE: THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF FATHER ANDREW SDC

OUR REAL
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SPIRITUAL CONVICTION : I

'Surely the Lord is in this place.' — Gen. xxviii. 16

WE often talk about intellectual conviction, and artistic conviction, and moral certainty. When we speak about intellectual conviction, we mean that our minds are persuaded that a certain thing is true ; when we speak about artistic conviction, we mean that the artistic part of us is persuaded that a certain thing is beautiful ; and when we talk of moral certainty, we mean that we are assured that such-and-such a thing is right.

But there is something that is deeper than all these, and that is spiritual conviction. Our real self, our spiritual self, is conscious in some way of having contact with the all-holy God. After such an experience we know that it is spiritual values that matter most. We are completely sure that all true reality is spiritual reality, that it is not the crown or the cowl that matters, but the man himself. We are sure of this with the same kind of certainty with which a musician knows that a note is out of tune or with which any one appreciates the beauty of a flower. We should never think of arguing about the beauty of a rose or the rightness or falsity of a note struck upon the piano. There is that in our artistic consciousness which just knows the truth. Deep in our being is the spiritual sense which reacts to the revelation of Christ with joyful acceptance and shrinks from, or repents of, any contact with the selfishness of sin.

SPIRITUAL CONVICTION : II

'Abram went . . . unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first : and there Abram called on the Name of the Lord.'— Gen. xiii. 4.

IN the old story Abraham went back to the altars he had made, each altar, we may suppose, representing to him some spiritual experience. It is well for us sometimes to refresh our souls by revisiting, as it were, the altars we have made, and seeking to renew our consciousness of contact with reality.

Spiritual conviction may grow in different ways. It may be by the natural increasing dawn and unfolding of spiritual beauty to the pure in heart, as was the case with our own Divine Lord, Who ' increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' To a certain type of soul spiritual conviction comes not by way of crisis but by way of gradual growth. To another it may come from a deep revulsion from the slough and mire of sin into which the soul has fallen, and the recognition, however vague, that the fact that sin is seen to be sin can only be due to an apprehension of the

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## *Three Meditations: SPIRITUAL CONVICTION*

*(Continued from page 2)*

holiness of God. Such was the case with the prodigal son in our Lord's story. Again, spiritual conviction may come through contact with a holy person or persons, who bear about them an atmosphere which suggests contact with realities which are holy and spiritual. Such was the discernment of those who took knowledge of the apostles that they had been with Jesus. Herein is one of the institutional values of the Church, that we may find in the blessed company of faithful people at any rate some whose personal holiness brings to our own faltering faith the comforting conviction that the King cannot be far distant since His courtiers are here.

### SPIRITUAL CONVICTION : III

*'Ye shall be holy : for I the Lord your God am holy.'* Lev. xix. 2

THE proper end of spiritual conviction will be some kind of mystical experience, which will take one of two forms. It will be either an apprehension of spiritual beauty, and a sense of rest in and affinity therewith : or a sense of loss and distress, when the soul feels itself rebuked because of its rejection of or discord with that spiritual beauty, which it knows now to be the supreme reality of life.

Mystical experience brings with it the sense of the personal. There cannot be impersonal goodness any more than there can be impersonal evil, and so there follows the recognition that holiness is 'an effluence from a person, and that person God.' This discovery brings to the soul the consciousness of Christ as the incarnate revelation of God and the Saviour from sins against the divine beauty. So we learn the supreme importance of behaviour. The greatest disaster is always the spiritual disaster. What we have, matters not ; how we behave ourselves, matters exceedingly. The wealth of life is not in the things that a man has, but in the virtues which he acquires. If the things come in the way of the virtues, how much better to get rid of the things ! So the soul learns with absolute certainty to weigh experiences by their spiritual value, and to follow the path of faith in the knowledge that the end of life is communion with God, and the way thereto the attainment of holiness.



### *Notice*

There is to be a Synod this fall at Queen of Apostles Retreat Centre in Mississauga, ON from October 21-23. This is the same venue as our last, Synod. Information will be forthcoming.



YE SHALL  
BE HOLY :  
FOR I THE  
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*Fr. Robert's Remarks*

*(Continued from page 1)*

commend this Exhortation and the whole of the Penitential Service to your prayerful consideration.

The Collect for Quinquagesima—the Sunday before Ash Wednesday—is a powerful reminder for us:

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth: Send thy Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts that most excellent give of charity, the very bond of peace and all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

“... ALL OUR  
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WORTH ...”

A couple of Scriptures that might be reflected upon with this collect, aside from the proper readings in the Prayer Book, would be Revelation 2.1-7 and Romans 5. This reading in the Apocalypse is the first of the letters to the seven churches—that to Ephesus. The Ephesians are reminded that Jesus has somewhat against them because they have “left thy first love.” Anytime is right, but the Great Lent, especially, is a time to remember, repent, and do the first good works. There is a beautiful promise at the close of this brief but poignant letter: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

In his sermon in this current issue, Fr. George refers to “This graceful love returned to us beyond the grave and calls us friends and by name, to be purified and consecrated to Himself.” This “graceful love” is a love that we are called to share.

There is much in Romans 5. Among other things, the chapter speaks of our peace with God, of grace, patience, experience, hope. We are reminded that “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” There is so much more; but enough for the moment to highlight why we ask God to “[send the Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity...”. Think, too, of the prayer at Confirmation that we may “daily increase in thy Holy Spirit, more and more.” We pray similarly at Whitsun and at Christmas for a “renewal”.

In a separate column, I want to address a specific question that I have been asked a number of times. I am sure that the general form of the question could easily be developed into a series of columns. The question is in this form: “Is *such and such* really Anglican?”

It is an extremely important—if not critical—question for us to look at. We have been challenged over the issue of the Ordinariates. It is so easy simply to say of certain things, “Oh, we don’t do that, it’s “Catholic” (meaning Roman Catholic.)

One point of significance is that while we are not in communion with the See of Rome, we ARE Catholics. Regardless of whether it is in the name “Traditional Anglican Church of Canada” or not, it is in the Creed that we profess to be such. “I believe One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church” and it is in the Catechism. There are many things that are Catholic regardless of whether they are distinctively Roman or not.

The question to be addressed is, “Is private Confession and Absolution Anglican?”



*Fr. George Betsos: You're Never too Old to Serve the Lord!*

(Continued from page 1)

the Light that enlightens all men, Jew and Gentile alike!

God had a special purpose for these senior saints. Their highest moment in life and greatest ministry opportunity would come near the end of their life! Maybe God has that in mind for some of us. Too often when Christians get old they think they are done serving God, because they don't have the strength of their youth. Let me not list my own ailments at 34 – I'm getting old too! Some people may begin to look down on themselves, for not being able to do what they used to. Brothers & sisters, how do we know if God is done with us? What's the clue that He gives us, when the work He's given us to do is accomplished? The answer is: when God lovingly takes us to our heavenly home. That is when your earthly ministry finishes and your eternal one peacefully begins.

Ministry is not about pride or self-pity, it has very little to do with what you and I can or can't do. Ministry is about God's Holy Spirit working through us, compelling us, guiding us and most often carrying us to continue to work. It's not about the amount of good work – it's about the quality of work... that's the work of a Christ like heart! A faith in a saving God, that continues till the end, one that doesn't quit, but fights the Good Fight! There are many rounds in this boxing match, we call life, but with the Grace of God, He'll see us persevere. We will be placed in countless situations, where we can witness and even if we suffer a couple of bruises along the way, we'll learn as we heal to fight on.

St Simeon was "righteous" and "devout." Righteous indicates he did was right according to the Law. "Devout" has the idea of fearing God. He did what was right, because He had a healthy respect for God.

St Anna was found at the temple 'night and day'. She was there every day ministering to others. Sts Simeon and Anna are great examples of how seniors minister to others without realizing it – they were where the people of God were, regularly. It's called the ministry of presence. One of the first things you learn in Pastoral Care courses. It's the most basic way all of us minister – by just showing up. When we show up, people are glad to see us. When you walked in the door of our "upper room" today you ministered just by being here. Anytime we show up – Midweek Eucharist, Bible Study or even me, as your collar wearing representative in the community, it encourages other people. It's a witness! Especially seniors. You might be asking why? As I have learned by you dear brothers and sisters, the older you get the harder it is to get out. And when we get together that's when we have the best opportunities to serve each other. This is what the author of Hebrews said, "*Let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves.*" (Heb. 10:24-25)

Yes, we can provoke each another to love and good works by phone, or letter or email, but the best way is face-to-face. We are a post resurrection people who anxiously awaiting for the Second coming of Our Lord. We therefore enjoy getting together, be-

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cause we share a hope in Jesus the Promised Christ. We don't just gather for worship services, we celebrate the Eucharist with action, adoration, thanksgiving and praise.

In a couple of weeks we will enter the purple season, heading towards the Cross. Through this narrative we acknowledge the bitter-sweet begins of the Promised Child, as did Sts Simeon & Anna. Not only two doves were brought into the Temple that day, but three... This third dove would need to grow up to become the Promised Saviour, by keeping Himself pure, sinless and finally offering Himself up as sacrifice for the life of you and I... A love that endured till the end and passed the gates of death. This graceful love returned to us beyond the grave and calls us friends and by name, to be purified and consecrated to Himself. Therefore let us, especially those seasoned Christians, do nothing less than to continue toiling in our faith and spread "the salvation He hath prepared before the face of all People, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of His People Israel." Amen.

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*Bonnie's Reflections: THE VOICES IN OUR HEADS*



MRS BONNIE IVEY

A forest fire once cut off all power to my town for five days. There was an initial flurry as people scrambled to get gas cans and generators, many offering extension cords to neighbours without these resources. At evening, peace descended. Darkened streets showed glimmering candles in a few windows. It was refreshing, a welcome break from the onslaught of voices from the world that hammer at us from TV, radio and the internet.

There are so many opinions, questions, terrible news items. And the visual images! "Caution: Graphic Content" we read. Often the flickering pictures that crawl across page or screen are things we wish we had never seen. Blinking ads sit beside our email, and TV commercials howl for attention. Our ears and eyes are besieged.

Too often we dive right into this flood. We check the news repeatedly, or sit mesmerized by Netflix. How much of this flood is conducive to our growth as children of God? How much is in stark opposition to our faith? Do we sip with caution, or swallow greedily?

St. Paul lists some sins of the flesh (human nature apart from God's grace.) "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage; selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like." (Galatians 5: 19-21)

## *Bonnie's Reflections: THE VOICES IN OUR HEADS*

Sounds like tonight's TV lineup, doesn't it? So much entertainment is steeped in these values. They are so pervasive we may not discern their effect on our lives as followers of Jesus. Addiction to internet porn, for example, is an increasing problem among Christians. We may confess "We have sinned in thought, word and deed" without realizing this describes a progression. Spending time uncritically soaking up the godless gospel of self-indulgence, we begin to think of hatred, revenge, or adultery as normal. We start to speak with approval of these behaviours, and finally act out our new values.

In the tenth chapter of John, Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd. He describes this shepherd: "...he calls his own sheep by name...he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice." As we approach the season of Lent, why not consider a "fast" from some of the world's noise? Give less time to anti-faith editorials, portrayals of lawless behaviour, and news that brings anxiety. There will be more time to listen for the voice of Jesus, and perhaps memorize some of his words.

*"I will set no worthless thing before my eye; I hate the work of those that fall away. It will not fasten its grip on me." Psalm 101:3*



"... HIS SHEEP  
FOLLOW HIM  
BECAUSE THEY  
KNOW HIS VOICE"

## *Fr. Robert Mansfield: All May, Some Should None Must*

### *On Confession and Absolution*

"Is private Confession and Absolution truly Anglican?" is a question that has been asked many times. Unequivocally, the answer must be, "Yes, most definitely, it is." As a title for this article, I have used an old expression of the Anglican position on Confession and Absolution – "*All May, Some Should, None Must*". This phrase is important to our understanding of an Anglican position. The way it is phrased suggests that confession and absolution have a pastoral focus and concern which we would see as therapeutic rather than legalistic.

Regardless of whether one is Anglican, Roman, Orthodox, Calvinist, Anabaptist, Evangelical, Charismatic, or whatever, there will be some resource that will be key to and instrumental for the interpretation of the Faith.

As Anglicans we are raised in the tradition of and informed by the Bible and the Prayer Book and it is these very guides which teach us of Confession and Absolution.

As one of our key resources is the Book of Common Prayer. I shall begin with that.

There are two specific references to *private* confession and absolution in the Prayer Book; there are other references to the forgiving of sins by a priest. (References are to the BCP [Canada] 1962 unless it is otherwise stated.)

The first reference is on page 91 in the second of the three Exhortations. The context is an announcement and warning that the Holy Communion is to be celebrated and that the people are to prepare themselves so that they shall be the "devoutly disposed" to whom the Sacrament is administered.

## *Fr. Robert Mansfield: All May, Some Should None Must*

Listen to the opening words from that Exhortation beginning on page 90:

Dearly beloved, on ... I intend, through God's assistance, to celebrate the Lord's Supper; and to administer to all such as shall be devoutly disposed the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; to be by them received in remembrance of his meritorious Cross and Passion, whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.

This sets some context for the Exhortation and also for our discussion about private confession and absolution and one thing particularly to be noted is that it is "[Christ's] meritorious Cross and Passion **whereby alone** we obtain remission of our sins..." (emphasis mine)

Another thing to be noted too is the use of the word "Minister" in the rubric at the top of page 90. "When the Minister gives warning for the Celebration of the Holy Communion..." Note that the Exhortation requires that the Minister say, "... I intend ... to celebrate ...", thus identifying the use of the word "Minister" in this Exhortation with one in the order of *Priest* or *Presbyter*. This is a common usage in the Prayer Book tradition. Here is a reminder that only a Priest may celebrate (in the sense of preside at) the Holy Communion.

Having discussed the reasons for coming to Holy Communion and the need for preparation, the Minister goes on to describe how to do that preparation. It must be noted that all of us are affected by our psychological and emotional make-up and baggage; all of us are affected by our ancestry. This Exhortation recognises that and offers the gift of confession and absolution. This is not legalism, nor is it nosiness as some would suggest of the Roman confessional. It is a pastoral response to a pastoral problem.

There are people who may be overly scrupulous in their preparations and include things which may not necessarily be sinful; there are those who may not be able to believe that God has forgiven them for something that is a sin. In the former case the person needs pastoral counsel to show where the problem lies—it may be that an over scrupulousness attitude is hindering them in the spiritual life; in the latter there is need for the counsel to help the person receive the benefits of the absolution. They are to come to the priest—the Minister—and open their grief. These interventions are to be healing in their effect.

The Prayer Book exhortation recognises that, presumably, some people do have "a full trust in God's mercy" and do have "a quiet conscience". There are those who contrariwise do not and it is particularly to these latter that the offer of the gift of confession and absolution is made—the goal being "the quieting of his conscience, and the avoiding of all scruple."

The next reference to *private* confession is in the Ministry to the Sick on page 581.

The offer of General Confession with Absolution is there in the first instance and then the rubric then reads, "If the sick person feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, he shall be moved to make a special confession of his sins."

The Priest blesses the person saying, "The Lord be in the heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest truly confess thy sins to Almighty God."

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Not only is this aspect of the confessional a pastoral office, it is also an intercessory office as well. It is a moment when, in confidence, the priest may pray with and for his people.

Following the penitent's confession, the Priest then prays,

O MOST merciful God, who, according to the multitude of thy mercies, dost so put away the sins of those who truly repent, that thou rememberest them no more: Look upon this thy servant, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness. And forasmuch as he putteth his full trust only in thy mercy, impute not unto him his former sins, but strengthen him with thy blessed Spirit; and whenever thou art pleased to take him hence, take *him* into thine everlasting favour; through the merits of thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Following this the Priest, at the request of the penitent—*If he humbly and heartily desire it*—shall give absolution:

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him: Of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences. And by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

There is a difference in the tone of this absolution when compared to the General Absolutions offered previously in the Ministry to the Sick and also elsewhere as in Morning and Evening Prayer which are declarative and refer to “them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him...” (p. 77) or “He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.” (pp 5 & 20)

In the case of the confession and absolution in the Ministry to the Sick, the Priest is dealing with one specific individual who has personally declared that he has a heart-felt (hearty) desire for the absolution and has mentioned specific sins to which the Priest is responding with the absolution, reminding the penitent that it is ultimately Jesus who “Of his great mercy forgive[s] thee thine offences.” It is the Priest who absolves “by his authority committed to me.”

This point takes us to the Ordination Service and then to the Scriptures.

In the Ordination of Priests the Bishop declares:

RECEIVE the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

The direct implication of these words is that among other things, the Priest receives the power to forgive sins and this precisely because of the words of Jesus in the Gospel.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Jesus says that he will give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven and that “whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever

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you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (16.19) Later he, talking to the disciples, said to them more generally, “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

This is something that the Church generally—Anglican, Orthodox, and Roman—has accepted and understood as applying to pastoral ministry of the priests (and bishops) and with respect to sin.

This is also confirmed by the beloved disciple, John, who quotes Jesus’ first words to his disciples (after he had talked to Mary in the Garden): “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’, And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’” (St. John 20. 21-23)

This reading is of immense significance, too, because of the opening words, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” These are the very words which the Anglican Church has preserved in the ordination service. The whole three verses, basically, are integrated into the prayer of ordination.

So, the Anglican Church never sought to do other than to give faithful expression to the Apostolic Ministry of which, “[I]t is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and the Ancient Authors, that from the Apostles’ time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.” (BCP p. 637)

The point here is that this 3-fold ministry is totally evident to those who read the Scriptures with an Anglican mind-set; i.e., using Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. That it will not necessarily be believed by those whose hermeneutic is post-Reformation like the Evangelicals and others is not really surprising. Nor will it be surprising to find that those who chose to reject the Apostolic Ministry in the traditional form will have a different view point. But, we are Anglicans.

TAKE thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy Sacraments in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto.

The only restriction imposed is that the Priest remains in obedience to those in lawful authority.

Let’s look at some material from the Catechism.

*Question.* What is the work of a Presbyter or Priest?

*Answer.* To minister to the people committed to his care by the Bishop; to lead them in the worship of God and to preach his Word; to baptize, to celebrate holy Communion; and to pronounce Absolution and Blessing in God’s name.

Unquestionably, the Prayer Book in its teaching and its expected practice gives and important place to the absolution.

While it hardly needs to be said that the Irish Anglicans are not the most likely to embrace what might be seen as papist practices, The Irish Canons of 1634 make a statement about the preparing for Communion. It is written,

...“WHATEVER  
YOU BIND ON  
EARTH SHALL  
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HEAVEN, AND  
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And to this end the people are often to be exhorted to enter into a special examination of the state of their own souls; and that finding themselves either extreme dull or much troubled in mind, they do resort unto God's ministers to receive from them as well advice and counsel for the quickening of their dead hearts and the subduing of those corruptions whereunto they have been subject, as the benefit of Absolution likewise for the quieting of their consciences, by the power of the keys which Christ hath committed to His ministers for that purpose.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor of the Irish diocese of Down and Connor stated:

"Confession" might be made of excellent use and is so among the pious children of the Church of England...

The Bishop of Carlisle, Francis White:

The difference then between Papals and us in this question is not about the thing itself, considered without abuses, but concerning the manner and also the obligation and necessity thereof.

Bishop White goes on

The true ends of private confession are these which follow: First to inform, instruct, and counsel Christian people in their particular actions. Secondly, if they be delinquents, to reprove them and make them understand the danger of their sin. Thirdly, to comfort those that are afflicted, and truly penitent, and to assure them of remission of sins by the word of Absolution. Fourthly, to prepare people to the worthy receiving of Holy Communion. And if private Confession be referred and used to these ends it is a work of godly discipline consonant to the Holy Scripture and anciently practiced by the Primitive Church. Bishops and Ministers of the Church are Shepherds, Stewards, and Overseers of God's people committed to their charge (*1 Pet. V.1,2; Acts xx, 28*) They have received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and power to loose and bind sinners (*Matt. xvi. 19, Matt. xviii, 18; Joh. xx, 23*). They have power to direct and govern their whole flock and every sheep and member of the same in things concerning their salvation. The people are subject to them in such offices and actions as concern their spiritual state (*Heb. xiii, 17; 1 Thess. v, 12*). And if Christian people must confess and acknowledge their faults one to another (*James v, 16*), then also when there is cause why should they not do the same to the Pastors of their souls?

But the precise and direct law of Confession, imposed on all Christians as a necessary means of remission of sins, is neither commanded in the New Testament nor hath the warrant from the Primitive Church.

This whole statement is worth the reading and reflecting on and with the last paragraph is of singular importance in emphasizing the pastoral nature of the confessional. It is not imposed for all but is available as part of the pastoral ministry and with the reference to the verse from St.

"CONFESSION"

MIGHT BE MADE

OF EXCELLENT

USE AND IS SO

AMONG THE

PIOUS CHILDREN

OF THE CHURCH

OF ENGLAND...

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR

*Fr. Robert Mansfield: All May, Some Should None Must*

James hints at the therapeutic element. It is a good pointer as to why the Form of Confession in our Prayer Book is found in the Ministry to the Sick.

While Bishop Francis White, and other classical Anglican writers are affronted by the notion of Confession being compulsory; none of them is anything short of enthusiastic about voluntary confession as a pastoral aid.

There are those who want to go to confession. I remember a little book entitled *Repentance the Joy-Filled Life*. The point of the book was to build a sense of perpetual repentance a constant turning toward God. I have heard the ministry of the confession and absolution described as a “kiss of Christ”.

There will be those who will want to have a regular confessor

There will be others who will, especially if they have become involved in the demonic whether as victims or as ministers or exorcists who will avail themselves of the ministry of the confessional as a therapeutic measure or as a protection for themselves in their ministry. There will be those who have been burdened too long and cannot bear it any longer who will come. There will be those who come to a realisation that there are things in their lives that offend God who will come.

“O WHAT  
PEACE WE  
OFTEN

These will be those whom I would categorize under the “All May” in the phrase I quoted at the beginning. While not all must go to sacramental confession, those who do are accepting Jesus’ invitation: “Come unto me all that travail and are heavily laden and I will refresh you.” How many carry burdens unnecessarily?

FORFEIT,  
O WHAT  
NEEDLESS

Joseph Scriven beloved hymn *What a Friend we have in Jesus* touches on this:

PAIN WE  
BEAR,”

What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer.  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer

“O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer”—and who ever said that our prayer MUST be solitary prayer. Your priest wants to be able to be with you, to pray with you that you may have peace.

Scriven’s closing lines:

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In his arms he’ll take and shield thee;  
Thou wilt find a solace there.

Once again, there is nothing said that the prayer must be solitary. Think of the many taken with a palsy who was lowered to Jesus through the roof of a house. His sins were forgiven and

*Fr. Robert Mansfield: All May, Some Should None Must*

he was healed. Had he relied on himself to get to Jesus, it would not have happened. The goal of a confessor is to help one to “find [the] solace there.”

There will be some who ought to go to confession—“Some Should”. This is not for merely legalistic reasons but simply to help the person return to his first love and to rekindle what seems to be a dying love. Handled gently by a confessor and a good spiritual director, this person might return to a vibrant faith.

Toward the end of Graham Greene’s novel, *The Power and the Glory*, there is a scene where the whiskey priest tries to make his confession. He is the only priest left—he has nobody to whom he can turn. Sure, the confession can be made directly to God, but listen:

“After a while he began again: ‘I have been drunk – I don’t know how many times; there isn’t a duty that I haven’t neglected; I have been guilty of pride, lack of charity ...’ The words were becoming formal again, meaning nothing. He had no confessor to turn his mind away from the formula to the fact.”

“He had no confessor to turn his mind away from the formula to the fact.” We use formulae in our prayers.

Think of the Confessions at Morning Prayer or at the Eucharist. Do you ever get trapped by the formula and never get to the fact—to the root of your problem, to the sin that needs to be dealt with? We think nothing at all of turning to a medical physician when we are sick or even uncomfortable; should we do less for our souls than to turn to a physician of the soul.

After the General Confessions we hear words of Absolution. One thing that must never be forgotten is that the benefit of Absolution is assured to those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe.

Sadly, there is the declaration that “None Must”. I am sure that there are immense numbers of people who refuse to go to confession because they have an animus against it—or at least an invincible ignorance about it. There are those whose hearts are hardened who should go; however, no one can force them to go. There are those who are perhaps, too proud to go. I am sure that this includes many clergy who will not admit to another their need.

So, happily, all may go to confession; some should and do go to confession; sadly, none must and so many in the churches who ought to repent and be converted never do.

As we have seen, the ministry of Confession and Absolution—Penance—because it is truly Catholic is Anglican. It is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church, perhaps not “generally necessary for salvation”, but unquestionably of value to many.

Perhaps, this Lent, you will hear and heed the call of Jesus to you to come.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

IN HIS ARMS  
HE’LL TAKE AND  
SHIELD THEE;  
THOU WILT FIND  
A SOLACE  
THERE.



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EUNTES IN MUNDUM UNIVERSUM  
GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

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### *From the Parishes*

#### **Mission of the Ascension, Waterloo, ON**

Some of our little group—still diminished by the weather, slushy roads, or by uncoöperative cars—from Waterloo area assembled once again in the Chapel/theatre of Clair Hills Retirement Centre for Mass on Sunday February 9, Epiphany 5.

For the present, the service is being held once a month.



L-R: Gladys O'Donnell, Fr. Ted Bowles, Helen Glover, Joyce Mansfield, Geoff Mansfield

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