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Fr. Robert's Remarks



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC
VICAR GENERAL

*In the Cross of Christ I glory, Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story Gathers round its head sublime.*

Hymn # 588 (Book of Common Praise 1938)

When I survey the wondrous Cross.

Hymn # 593 (Book of Common Praise 1938)

Take up thy cross, the Saviour said, If thou wouldst my disciple be;

Hymn # 589 (Book of Common Praise 1938)

These are just a very few of the many beautiful, thought-provoking, hymns written as meditations on the Holy Cross.

Last Sunday we commemorated the Feast of the Holy Cross., so it seems, this week, to be a particularly good topic for reflection and prayer.

(Continued on page 12)

Fr. Byron Woolcock: The Misplaced Comma



FR. BYRON WOOLCOCK,

Some severe winters we have close to one hundred wild turkeys come to our yard for their corn. They catch on fast and thus roost overnight in our maple trees. In the summer I often see a single bird wandering, seemingly aimlessly, in a field but pecking now and then at a discovered seed or insect.

Hopefully some of my wanderings, in the field of my favorite Ephesians, etc., may find some nourishment for us! The main title above (refers to Ephesians 4:11-12 in our familiar King James Version; (11) "And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:..." The comma in question is after "the saints" in verse 12. That comma, in that location may not make clear a very important fact. As you know, there are no punctuations in the Greek.

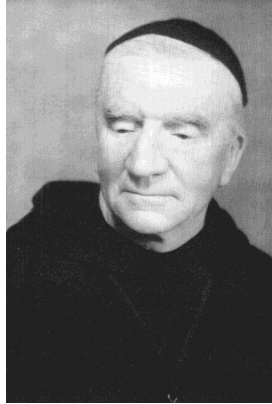
Through the years various patient souls, attempting to teach me French, Latin, Greek, and even Ojibway, threw up their hands in despair! Thus I rely on the kind patience of some of my more linguistically gifted fellow Priests and, of course, good translations. The expanded translation by Kenneth Wuest reads; (vs. 12) "for the equipping of the saints for ministering work". Despite both "capital S" and Canonizations "the saints" still means God's consecrated, baptized people those who I have too often

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Fr. Andrew: Two Meditations



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

“THE TEST OF
OUR LIVES LIES
IN THIS—IN THE
WORD THAT
WE LEAVE
BEHIND US.”

MATTHEW'S DAY*

FROM PUBLICAN TO SAINT

'At the place of toll.' MATT. ix. 9, R.V

ONCE to a man at the place of toll, bending over his business, getting the best material gain he could out of his day's work, came the vision of a face, which smote upon his soul in such fashion that his life could never be the same again. He saw the face of Jesus, and with that vision came an uplift transfiguring life and giving it purpose and direction.

A man's life is altogether affected by the vision of God which he has. Our Lord's conflict with the Pharisees lay in this, that He had one vision of God and they another. Christ Himself is the one true vision of God, but people can have very different ideas of Christ. Just as it is only the real Christ Who can reveal the Father, so it is only the Holy Spirit Who can reveal the Christ. As long as a man is honestly trying to interpret in his life the Christ of his own conscience, the mistakes he makes will ultimately bring him to reality. He is learning all the while. But if a man sees one Christ with his conscience and interprets another with his life, he is killing in himself all power of vision and harming in some degree the spiritual sense of his generation. The sin of the Christian is to see one Christ and to reproduce another.

The test of our lives lies in this—in the word that we leave behind us. Each life is a word, each one of us is the revelation of a faith or a futility. S. Matthew left a Gospel behind him. Matthew the publican revealed what his life might have been if Jesus had never come into it ; S. Matthew the martyr-evangelist revealed what meeting with Jesus could mean.

* September 21st

S. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS*

'Who maketh His angels spirits:'.Ps. civ. 4

THE Feast of the Holy Angels was a feast specially dear to the heart of S. Francis. It marks our faith in the unseen world. It seems congruous that the first creation of the Everlasting Spirit should have been spiritual, so we may well believe that, before this human scene appeared, there was a prologue of the spiritual world, in which God created spirits in His own image and gave those spirits the gift of free will. Then somewhere in that spiritual world there came a fall. 'There was war in heaven,' war in the spiritual sphere, and so there came disorder.

Fr. Andrew: Two Meditations

Our fall is always in our spirit. It is not our bodies that sin, but we who sin with our bodies. The sin is always in the will. There is a right order and a wrong order in things. Soul must control body, and mind must control matter. The spirit will only control the body rightly when the spirit is itself controlled rightly. The reason my spirit does not perfectly control my body is that my spirit is not wholly controlled by the Divine Spirit.

How wonderful a thing it was when in the Manger at Bethlehem there lay a little Child, Whose Sacred Humanity was altogether in the divine order ; Whose body was the perfect instrument of His soul, because His human soul would always be indwelt by, and obedient to, the Holy Spirit ; Who would touch every material thing with the right attitude of mind, because His human mind would always be in conformity with the divine wisdom. We can understand how the unfallen angels, millions and millions of spiritual beings, not only those the shepherds saw but millions unseen, knelt in adoration, seeing there the hope of the divine order coming at last.

September 29th



“...THE HOPE OF
THE DIVINE
ORDER COMING
AT LAST.”

Fr. Byron Woolcock: The Misplaced Comma

(Continued from page 1)

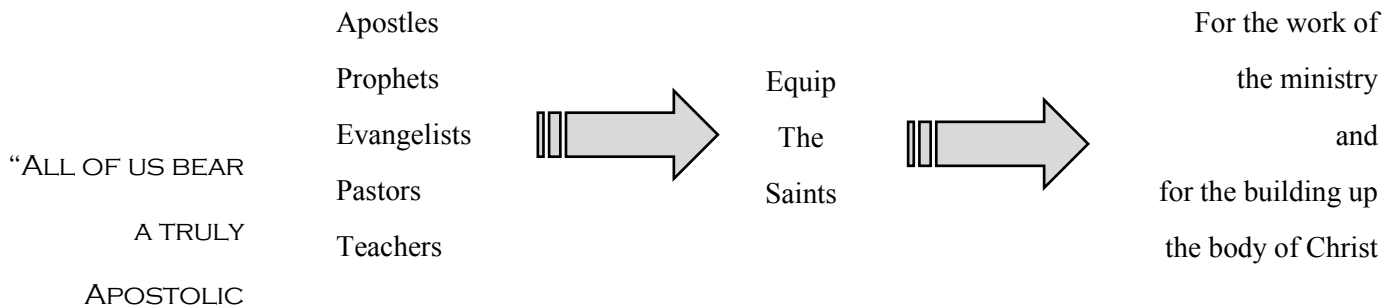
heard say “well I’m just a Layperson”! This, to me, is on the same par as “just a homemaker” or “never been to Seminary”. How often I was told, “but we pay you to do ministry”! (Although I could have made nasty remarks about Clergy stipends and the problem with “hired shepherds” I attempted, usually, to “help remove the comma”!)

The sad impression that there are two levels among those who follow Jesus is Satan’s lie. There are those who are trained, even referred to as “the Called”, the “professionals” paid to preach and teach and guide in the Way of Christ. These folks occupy “the upper level”! “The lower level” is made up of everyone else, those God assigned jobs as storekeepers, lawyers, journalists, parents, farmers or computer programmers! Thank God there is not a great “laity putdown” in our little portion of the Church Catholic but our prayerful vigilance must ever see it as a barefaced lie from Satan. (who has a reputation for using perfectly good words for telling lies.) It is a lie because it misleads a huge company of Christians into assuming that their life and workplace severely limits their usefulness in the cause of Christ. Their home, school, farm, workplace, etc. is the frontline of ministry.

I am attempting to finish this little study on the feast day of Blessed Mary’s Nativity. St. Augustine’s statement, (commenting on Jesus’ words; “here are my mother and brothers, anyone who does the will of my Father who sent me is my brother and my

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sister and my mother” Mt. 12:50) is relevant to our theme; “Indeed the blessed Mary certainly did the Father’s will, and so it was for her a greater thing to have been Christ’s disciple than to be his mother, and she was more blessed in her discipleship than in her motherhood.” (From a sermon of St. Augustine in The Little Office of the B.V.M.) There are no experts in the Company of Jesus. We are all beginners, necessarily followers, stumbling but baptized Disciples of Christ seeking to live out hymn #3 (New Every Morning is the Love) day by day. Before I rant on in this theme it may help to have a clear illustration of Ephes. 4:11-12.



(From “Body Life” by Ray C. Stedman and “Breaking Free: From Caregiver to Equipper” by Greg Ogden)

Note that neither the “Apostles, prophets, evangelists not Pastor-teachers” are expected to do the “work of the ministry”. This is done by the “plain, ordinary, frontline Christians, the Laity (with no “just”)!

Recently I spoke with one of our priests as we remembered those humble, patient and so dedicated folks who taught us in Sunday school, Bible Class, Summer Camps and Confirmation preparation. All of us bear a truly Apostolic ministry by our Holy Baptism and Confirmation. We are blessed with Equippers” who are sent (Apostello) by the Bishop, namely his priests and deacons.

I do not want to neglect the People of God who daily exercise Ministry through their gifts of the Spirit (Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12) but, for a moment, emphasize the “equippers” of the saints, namely our Apostolic Shepherds, Teachers and Guides. The original Greek for equip is Katartismos. The word was used medically as setting a broken bone or bringing back a joint in alignment. This word was also used for an artisan who made things useful and beautiful. This reminds us of the extreme care, responsibility and commitment, as in the admonitions and questions by the Bishop or Archbishop to those to be ordained or consecrated (pgs. 648-650 and 662-664 B.C.P.) Regular reading for the Clergy. (It is also good to note, in passing that in our Ephesians section in the Ordinal, pg. 647, there is, indeed, no comma!

In the same theme, of the full meaning of Ephes. 4:11-12, I have always been inspired by God’s original purpose that His People will be “a kingdom of priests” (Exod. 19:6) and that purpose, as you know, is carried on into the New and Eternal Covenant (1

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Peter 2:9, Rev. 1:6, 5:10 etc.). Sadly some of our fellow Christian sisters and brothers have seen such references as an elimination of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. We know throughout “His-Story” that idea is clearly wrong, as is summarized in the preface to the B.C.P. Ordinal. (And perhaps too we must here recall and pray that those previously mentioned admonitions in the Ordinal may be clearly seen in the lives of the Ordained). A Priest’s tombstone in England well expresses that need. His people engraved, “He was kind, he loved us”.

Recently, “by chance” a wonderful article appeared in the September “Restoration” paper from Madonna House in Combermere. The article is entitled “My Priestly Vocation as a Layman” written by Mark Schlingerman, the Director General of Laymen at Madonna House. Although Mark felt no call to the Sacramental priesthood, the idea of a priestly calling would not go away. “It wasn’t until later,” he says, “that I learned of the priestly function of the laity from “Lumen Gentium” (The Constitution on the Church), a document of Vatican II”.

It said; “Jesus Christ gives the laity a share in his priestly function. All the works of the laity, if carried out in the Spirit, are spiritual offerings acceptable to God. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.” (part 4, The Laity, the Priestly function of the Laity) Emphasis mine.

Later, as Mark describes, Archbishop Joseph Raya, “called us, during a Byzantine Divine Liturgy, to be attentive to what was happening and, to be aware of the fact that, together with the Lord Jesus, and on behalf of the whole world, our Divine Liturgy gathered the four corners of the universe to return it in Thanksgiving to God the Father.” Mark summarizes, “This action stunned me, and it still takes my breath away. If this liturgical gathering of the elements of the Cosmos is true, and I have staked my life on being true, then the action of the Liturgy gave meaning to the desire of my heart to participate, in a priestly fashion, in the spiritual healing of the world.”

I am grateful for Mark’s personal and beautiful article which witnesses and expresses so well what I am also attempting to express. I may be going both beyond my depth, and perhaps beyond our Theme, in the following. (I pray I am not.)

My good friend, and fellow Franciscan, Brother Dunstan in Toronto, often has phone conversations with me. We often recall our similar experiences, in both the UK and Canada, with people and groups often labelled “Evangelical” or “Catholic”. Brother Dunstan rightly concluded, “You can’t be one without the other”! This example also shows the limitations of words and the ultimate Divine purposes of “Clergy” and “Laity” “equipping” or “ministering” going on beyond to our goal as

“MY PRIESTLY
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expressed in Ephes. 4:13; “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; “Incidentally, like me, you may have thought of someone who goes beyond synthesis or integration to personify, or incarnate, “Catholic/Evangelical.” I thought of our own Fr. Roland Palmer S.S.J.E. and of Blessed Catherine de Hueck Doherty (one could add “Orthodox” to our terms with no loss of unity).

In looking at Persons we run out of words and turn to prayer, which is more than words.

“That I May Know Him, and the Power of His Resurrection...” (Phil. 3:10a)

I return often to the “goal of the Gospel” (“we make it our aim to please him” (2 Cor. 5:9b) and “working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight...” (Heb. 13:21)

“THAT I MAY
KNOW HIM,
AND THE POWER
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RESURRECTION...”
(PHIL. 3:10A)

We know our “God of Peace is also our “God of Power”. Archbishop Michael Ramsey in his “Canterbury Essays and Addresses” has comforting words for those who seek, in all things to please Our Dear Lord Jesus. His words are not very far from our theme and scope; “Resurrection is a mighty act of God. Remember that in the New Testament the language used is not of Jesus rising, but of Jesus being raised by God. Jesus did not “achieve” resurrection: rather did he make himself naught, and when all was dark, when human possibilities were exhausted, God raised him by a mighty act of his power.

This truth about resurrection colours the whole process of man’s movement towards his goal, whether in this world or the next. It is not that man, even under God’s grace, gets gradually better and better, and so attains to saintliness here, and heaven hereafter. Rather does the grace of God work surprises, turning defeats into deliverances, “calling things that are naught as though they are”, and acting beyond any laws of progress or expectation”. How the Archbishop’s com-fort-ing words recall unto us our beginning in Resurrection Life, namely our New Birth in Holy Baptism. God’s (initiating) answer to our title prayer, from Phil. 3:10, begins to grow (as is also beautifully expressed in the pre-baptism supplications on pg. 527 B.C.P.) Also, on pg. 530, again in accord with our theme, “Remember always that Baptism represents unto us our profession...”

As we thus grow in grace and in years, with daily conversion dovetailing with Sacramental realities, we think once again of water.

The familiar story of the woman at the well (Jn. Ch. 4) sees this woman as representing each one of us and, indeed, the whole Church, Christ’s Bride. In verse ten, in response to the woman’s query, based on Samaritan-Jewish divisions, Jesus says, “If you knew the gift of God...”

“The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we

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realize or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him." ("Jesus the Bridegroom, the Greatest Love Story Ever Told" Brant Pitre.)

May Christ's Peace be with you as you seek in your Life and Ministry, in the fellowship of His Church, to please him in all things.



Bonnie's Reflections: FOCUS



MRS BONNIE IVEY

Bishop: "Do you, in the presence of God, and of this Congregation, renounce the devil and all his works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, so that you will not follow or be led by them?"

Answer: I do.

Perhaps these strong words seemed "over the top" to us in our Confirmation classes. Looking around in the present, we may see there is no exaggeration. Our world has greatly changed since the postwar generation confidently expected a continuous upward path of peace and prosperity. People struggle to pay debts. Newscasts show the ideal of peace fading. Answers discovered by science raise more questions, many of them ethical. Learned professors tell us truth is relative; right and wrong only social constructs. Our society is becoming like Paul's description in Romans 1:31: "...senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless." As "black and white" becomes formless grey fog, it takes effort not to stumble. We need to focus on our Lord.

FOCUS: to adjust in order to produce a clear image

IN FOCUS: clear, sharply defined, distinct

Jesus spent much time ministering around the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, in Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. At the recently-discovered site of Bethsaida, archeologists uncovered the town's walls, its houses built of black basalt, and its main street. Visitors can walk literally on the same pavement where Jesus walked.

In Matthew 11:21 Jesus exclaims "...woe to you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on the Day of Judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you." The word "woe" means "how terrible for you!" His teaching was not welcomed there. Jesus had told his disciples as they set out on a missionary journey, that if they encountered a town which rejected their

FOCUS:

TO ADJUST IN

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IMAGE

Bonnie's Reflections: FOCUS

message of repentance and faith, they should move on, shaking its dust from their feet.

John says in the final verse of his gospel "But there are many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain all the books that would be written." There is only one "mighty work" recorded as happening in Bethsaida, in Mark 8: 22-25.

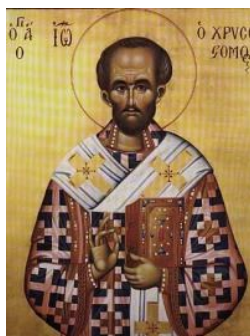
Some people brought a blind man to Jesus, begging him to touch him. The man himself asked nothing. Jesus, leading him by the hand, took him outside the village. Jesus ministered to him, and the man reported he saw men, "like trees walking". Jesus touched his eyes again, and the man looked intently (in Greek: fixed his eyes on definite objects) and saw everything in focus.

Jesus told the man to go directly home, avoiding passing through Bethsaida. Why? Perhaps he wanted to protect the man from negative comments. I know a woman who was healed after prayer of a serious condition. She joyfully shared the news with some Christian neighbours. How great was her confusion and distress when they told her God no longer works miracles. Therefore, her healing must be from the devil.

Let us beg Jesus to take us by the hand and lead us out of the clamour of the world which seeks to make us as unbelieving as the crowds. We need to allow him to minister to us, so we can see him clearly; focusing on him, lest we fail to receive our healing.



St. John Chrysostom: On the Holy Cross



St. John Chrysostom

"The Cross of the Lord is unpleasant and sorrowful to the ear, but it consists of joy and gladness. It is the originator not so much of suffering as much as of passionlessness. For Jews the Cross is temptation, for pagans it is madness, but for us believers it reminds us of our salvation. When in church one reads about the Cross and one is reminded of the sufferings on the Cross, the faithful are indignant at the Cross and let out a plaintive wail and murmur not at the Cross but at the crucifiers and unbelievers. For the Cross is the salvation of the Church, the Cross is the praise of those who hope on it.

The Cross has released us from the evil that possessed us and is the beginning of the blessings received by us. The Cross is the reconciliation of His enemies with God, the promise of sinners to Christ. For by the Cross we were freed from enmity and through the Cross we have become amiable to God. The

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St. John Chrysostom: On the Holy Cross

Cross delivered us from the authority of the devil, the Cross saved us from death and destruction. The Cross changed human nature to the angelic, having released it from all that is corruptible, and have found lives worthy of immortality.”

“How great is the power of the Cross! How great is the change made by it in the human race! How from the deep darkness it has led us to the boundless light, from death it has restored us to eternal life, from corruption it has transferred us to incorruption. What good is not accomplished for us by means of the Cross? Through the Cross we learned piety and learned the properties of the Divine essence. Through the Cross we learn the truth about God, through the Cross we who were far from Him are united to Christ, and we become worthy of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Through the Cross we learn the power of love and we are taught to die for others. Through the Cross we are scorned and all what we do is not temporal, we search the blessings of the future and we accept the invisible as if seen. The Cross is preached, and the faith in God is confessed, His truth is spread throughout the universe. The Cross is preached, and the faith in the resurrection, the life and the kingdom of heaven is made without a doubt. What is more precious than the Cross and what is more saving for the soul? The Cross is the triumph over demons, the armor against sin and the sword with which the Lord has struck the snake. The Cross is the will of the Father, the glory of the Only-begotten, the joy of the Holy Spirit, the ornament of angels, the protection of the Church, the praise of St. Paul, the protection of the Saints, the lamp of all the world.”

“See, however desired and deservedly amiable the Cross is made today, it was the most terrible and shameful sign of the cruelest execution in antiquity! And the Cross makes the best ornament on the imperial crown, the most precious in all the world. The image of the Cross is now found on you, both masters and servants, both wives and husbands, both maidens and married, both slaves and free. All place the sign of the Cross on the noblest part of their body, daily carrying this sign on their forehead, as on a depicted pillar. It shines on a sacred meal, on the clothes of the priest and together with the Lord’s body at the mystical supper. You see it lifted everywhere: on houses, in market-places, in the deserts, on the paths, on mountains and hills, on the sea, on ships, on islands, on boxes, on clothes, on armor, in the halls, on golden and silver vessels, in pictures, on the bodies of sick animals, on the bodies of the demon-possessed, in war, in the world, in the afternoon, at night, in festal assemblies and in the cells of the ascetics. Already no one is ashamed and does not blush at the thought that the Cross is a sign of a shameful death. To the contrary, all of us honor this as an adornment for ourselves, which has surpassed crowns and diadems and precious stones. Let us not run, let us not be frightened, but let us kiss and honor it as an invaluable treasure.”

““HOW GREAT IS
THE POWER OF
THE CROSS!”

From www.preachersinstitute.com



St. Theophan the Recluse: On the Cross



ST. THEOPHAN

The Lord accomplished our salvation by His death on the Cross: on the Cross He tore up the handwriting of our sins; through the Cross He reconciled us with our God and Father; and through the Cross He brought down upon us grace-filled gifts and all heavenly blessings. But this is the Lord's Cross itself. Each of us becomes a partaker of its salvific power in no other way than through our personal cross.

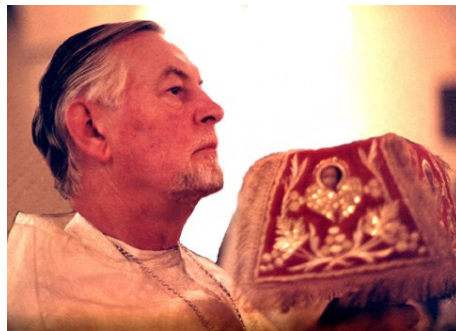
When the personal cross of each of us is united with Christ's Cross, the power and effect of the latter is transferred to us and becomes, as it were, a conduit through which every good gift and every perfect gift (James 1:17) is poured forth upon us from the Cross of Christ.

From this it is evident that the personal cross of each of us is as essential to the work of salvation as the Cross of Christ.



“EACH OF US
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Fr. Alexander Schmemmann: The Elevation of the Holy Cross



FR. ALEXANDER SCHMEMMANN

On September 14th, for centuries, when the feast of the Elevation of the Cross was celebrated in cathedrals, the bishop would take his place in the center of the church and, surrounded by a great assembly of clergy, would majestically raise the cross high over the crowd and bless the worshippers on all four sides of the church while the choir thundered in response, "Lord have mercy!" This was the celebration of Christian empire, an empire born under the sign of the Cross on that day when Emperor Constantine saw a vision of the Cross high in the sky and heard the words "In this sign conquer..." This is the feast of Christianity's triumph over kingdoms, cultures and civilizations, the feast of that Christian world which now lies in ruins, still crumbling before our very eyes.

Yes, the solemn, ancient rite will once again be celebrated this year. The choir will still be joyfully singing that "the Cross is the strength of kings, the Cross is the beauty of the universe." But today, the tumultuous metropolis surrounding the church does not participate in that hidden triumph and is completely unconnected to it. Its millions of inhabitants will go on with their normal lives and their usual ups and downs, interests, joys, and sorrows, with no reference whatsoever to the goings-on within the church building.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann: The Elevation of the Holy Cross

Why then do we keep repeating words about universal triumph, and singing over and over again that the Cross is unconquerable? Sadly, we have to admit that many, many Christians are unable to answer this question. They are accustomed to seeing the church in exile and on the margins of life, exiled from culture, life, schools and from everywhere. Many Christians are content and undisturbed when the authorities contemptuously allow them to 'observe their rites' as long as they are quiet and obedient, and do not interfere in the building of a world where there is no Christ, no faith, and no prayer. Those tired Christians have almost forgotten what Christ said on the night he went to the Cross: "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

It seems to me that we continue to celebrate the Elevation of the Cross and repeat ancient words of victory not simply to commemorate an old battle that was won, or to recall a past that no longer exists, but in order to reflect more deeply on the meaning of the word "victory" for Christian faith. It may be that only now, stripped as we are of outward power and glory, government support, untold wealth, and of all apparent symbols of victory, are we capable of understanding that all of this was, perhaps, not genuine victory. Yes, the cross raised above the crowds was in those days covered with gold and silver and adorned with precious stones. Yet neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones can erase the original meaning of the Cross as an instrument of humiliation, torture, and execution on which a man was nailed, a man rejected by all, gasping from pain and thirst. Do we have the courage to ask ourselves: if all those Christian kingdoms and cultures died, if victory was replaced by defeat, was it not because we Christians became blind to the ultimate meaning and genuine content of Christianity's most important symbol? We decided that gold and silver would be allowed to eclipse this meaning. And we decided as well that God desires our worship of the past.

To honor the Cross, to raise it up, to sing of Christ's victory: does this not mean, above all, to believe in the Crucified One and to believe that the Cross is a sign of staggering defeat? For only because it is a defeat, and only to the measure it is accepted as defeat, does the Cross become victory and triumph. No, Christ did not enter the world to win outward victories. He was offered a kingdom, but refused. And at the very moment of his betrayal to death, He said: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt 26:53). Yet, Christ was never more a king than when He walked to Golgotha carrying his own cross on his shoulders while the hate-filled and mocking crowd surrounded him. His kingship and power were never more obvious than when Pilate brought him before the crowd, dressed in purple, condemned to a criminal's death, a crown of thorns on his head, and Pilate telling the raging mob: "Behold your king." Only here can the whole mystery of Christianity be seen, for

IT SEEMS TO ME
 THAT WE
 CONTINUE TO
 CELEBRATE THE
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 ORDER TO
 REFLECT MORE
 DEEPLY ON THE
 MEANING OF THE
 WORD "VICTORY"
 FOR CHRISTIAN
 FAITH.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann: The Elevation of the Holy Cross

Christianity's victory resides within the joyful faith that here, through this rejected, crucified and condemned man, God's love began to illumine the world and a Kingdom was opened which no one has power to shut.

Each of us, however, must accept Christ and receive him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our hope. Otherwise, outward victories are all meaningless. Perhaps we needed this outward defeat of the Christian world. Perhaps we needed poverty and rejection to purge our faith of its earthly pride and of its trust in outward power and victory, to purify our vision of the Cross of Christ, which is raised high above us even when neither we nor the world can see it. In spite of everything, the Cross is still elevated, exalted and triumphant. "The Cross is the beauty of the universe." For in whatever darkness people find themselves, and however great the outward triumph of evil in this world, the heart still knows and hears the words, "Take courage, I have overcome the world."

"TAKE
COURAGE, I
HAVE
OVERCOME THE
WORLD."

[Taken from, "Celebration of Faith" Sermons, Vol. 2, "The Church Year" by Protoperbyter Alexander Schmemmann, 1994.



Fr. Robert's Remarks

There are many people who recite the thrice daily *Angelus*. The prayer at the close of the *Angelus* is the Collect of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

WE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Even as we reflect on the announcement by the angel of the Incarnation of Jesus we are reminded of the Cross.

I want to commend the reading of the brief pieces in this issue by St. John Chrysostom, St. Theophan, and Fr. Alexander Schmemmann.

There is much in our calendar this month. The Autumn Ember Days. Please remember Deacon Steve Beyer of Thunder Bay in your prayers as he prepares for his ordination to the priesthood at the hands of Archbishop Haverland during Synod next month. The Ember Day Collect on page 210 could serve here. It would also be a meaningful prayer for those who will be appointed or elected to offices during the Synod. St. Matthew's Day (21/09) the titular Feast for our Ottawa parish; St. Michael and All Angels Day (29/09); Holy Guardian Angels (02/10); St. Francis (04/10)—just to mention a few.

Fr. Robert's Remarks

No doubt, you will be looking forward to Thanksgiving Day on October 13. I am. It is certainly good to have an excuse for a party—or at least a special dinner with family and or friends. There could be time in our area for a walk in the bush drying leaves crackling underfoot.

I think that I am having some difficulty though watching the news, lately. I am grateful for many things—for the freedom we have in Canada, for example—and then the materials posted about the centenary of the First War reminds me of how many lives were lost during the various 20th Century wars to maintain that freedom. Images from other countries remind me of circumstances completely different from ours, and they sadden me.

Lately, I have become more conscious of the opening words of the Intercession (p. 75 BCP) reminding us that we are “to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men.”—that is, “on behalf of all men”. We are to pray and give thanks in the place of those who cannot or will not do so.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his little book *For the Life of the World* (p. 15), “So the only *natural* (and not “supernatural”) reaction of man, to whom God gave this blessed and sanctified world, is to bless God in return, to thank Him, to *see* the world as God sees it and—in this act of gratitude and adoration—to know, name, and possess the world.” He continues by reminding us that “The first, the basic definition of man is that he is *the priest*. He stands in the centre of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God...” 1

Practicing this life of gratitude and adoration is central to the “priesthood of the baptised.”

I remember a little “Night Litany” published years ago by the Society of St. John the Evangelist and described as reprinted from “Fr. Field’s Prayer Book”. The closing lines of this litany read:

“On behalf of those who have said no prayers to-day let us say: Our Father /
“On behalf of those who blaspheme and neglect the Blessed Sacrament, let us say: Blessed, praised, hallowed, worshipped, and adored be Jesus Christ on his throne of glory and in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.”

It worth the time to look up the various prayers of thanksgiving throughout the Prayer Book and reflect on them. Though some are specifically focused on thanks for an issue or event, the are quite a few more general thanksgiving prayers. Recently, I have been more conscious of the General Thanksgiving in the Daily Office—saying it but also going back and reviewing it word by word and phrase by phrase. It is time not wasted.

Until next month.

WE ARE TO PRAY
AND GIVE THANKS
IN THE PLACE OF
THOSE WHO
CANNOT OR WILL
NOT DO SO

*“Give thanks to the Lord,
for his love endures forever.”*
2 Chronicles 20:21b



TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

TACC Office
136 William St.
Parry Sound, ON
P2A 1W2

Phone: 705-746-7378
E-mail:
vicargeneral@traditionalanglican.ca
&
We're on the web at
TRADITIONALANGLICAN.CA



EUNTES IN MUNDUM UNIVERSUM
GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

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From the Parishes

St. John's, Parry Sound

On Trinity XII, St. John's parish was pleased to be able to take into service a new, simple, light-weight set of vestments—chasuble, stole, and maniple—in each of four colours.



Prayer Chain

Requests for prayer may be sent by email to the TACC District Office at:

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Contact Info:

Fr. David Marriott

drm274@hotmail.com

409-15210 Guildford Dr.

Surrey BC V3R 0X7

604-551-4660