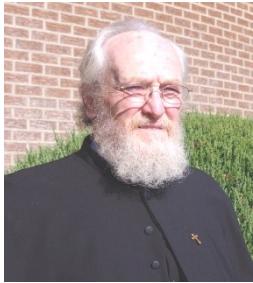


THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN NEWS

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Fr. Robert's Remarks

FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC
VICAR GENERAL

Alleluia, Christ is risen: / O come let us worship. Alleluia.

The Lord is risen indeed. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Greetings; the Lord be with you!

Last month I began by stating that “[w]e are in a time of crisis; a time of anxiety” and little has happened, on one level, in the last 30 days, to make me rethink that comment—except Easter.

The words of the Angel to “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” in St. Matthew’s Gospel were,

Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus , which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come and see where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead;

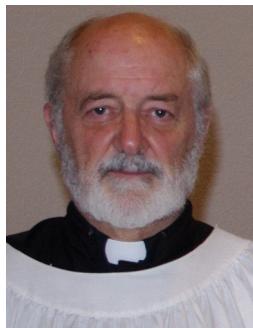
In the Gospel of John are Jesus’ first words to His disciples. You know the scene.

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Fr. Peter Jardine: Treating men and women equally is a Christian Virtue



FR. PETER JARDINE

I sincerely hope there is not a single person in the Traditional Anglican Church who looks down upon women to any degree at all. But we have to admit that in society around us, in this country and elsewhere, there are far too many people who regard women as inferior to men. In fact, some groups which are referred to as religions, which is an erroneous term for them, state that women are inferior and treat them that way.

The saddest explanation for that is that such people do not know the Bible, and worse, they do not know our God. In the love that God has for His human creatures there is no distinction between men and women. We are all created equal by Him and all loved equally by Him. It is absolutely wonderful that God shows his Love for women through the esteem He grants them. Consider this example: **The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.** (John 20:1) What a very special distinction that was for Mary!

There are two keys on which salvation in Christianity hinges. On the Cross, Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, in His full humanity, died for all – *men and women alike*. The sins of all of us were His burden on the Cross.

Fr. Peter Jardine: Treating men and women equally is a Christian Virtue

And in His mighty Resurrection, Jesus, in His full divinity was restored to life for the justification of all, *men and women alike*. Justification is the gift of God, the forgiveness of the sins of a believer, a man or a woman who responds to the Gospel with faith. As St. Paul says, we are justified by faith alone and not by works.

In the Gospels there are two women called Mary who we should look upon with great respect and love. We should also witness the high regard God shows for women. The brilliant light of that regard shines *on* these women and *through* them.

The first Mary is the Blessed Virgin, chosen by God to be the vehicle for God the Son to take on human form. What a unique honour God gives there to woman kind.

The second Mary is Mary Magdalene, and it is easy to consider her honour as being almost equal to that of the Blessed Virgin. Mary Magdalene found the open tomb of our Lord, and it was to her just a short time later – just a paltry few minutes later – that Jesus, our Risen Lord, showed Himself to her. The first human being to see our Risen Lord.

Mary Magdalene has much to teach us. She first appears in the Gospels, in Luke 8:2, for example, as a woman who had been freed from seven devils. Mary sinned terribly because of those seven devils, but there is not a shred of evidence anywhere that she sinned against the Seventh Commandment, **Thou shalt not commit adultery**, which all too many people want to believe. I am shocked by the number of commentators who accuse her of this sin.

St. Luke does not say that Jesus drove out those evil spirits, but the evidence from Mary's subsequent behavior certainly tells us that Jesus was the one who cured her.

Mary became a most faithful disciple. In Luke 8:3 we learn that she, and other women, provided for Jesus and the twelve Apostles from “out of their means”. This took place perhaps two full years before the crucifixion of our Lord, when we learn of her presence at the foot of the Cross. She remained at the foot of the Cross throughout our Lord's agony there. In the 19th Century, Bishop Andrews said this, *She was last at His cross, and first at His grave. She staid longest there and was soonest here. She could not rest until she was up to seek Him. She sought Him while it was yet dark, even before she had light to seek Him by.*

Mary Magdalene obviously believed in Jesus. She may not have fully appreciated His divine nature until after His Resurrection, but she had great faith in Him and was devoted to Him.

That devotion, and her sense of debt to Him, was enough for Jesus to reward her so specially by revealing His Risen person to her outside the tomb. What an honour! Mary was then able to go to the Apostles and tell them she had seen the Lord. Mary Magdalene knew her God.

There are millions of people today who call themselves Christians, but they do so little for the Saviour whose name they live under. We need to think carefully about



Fr. Peter Jardine: *Treating men and women equally is a Christian Virtue*

that sense of debt Mary Magdalene carried and ask how strong our own sense of debt to Jesus is. We need to ask first if we really do know our Beloved Lord and Saviour. In Matthew Henry's 17th Century commentary on the Bible, he wrote something which made me sit up very straight. He said, *And are there not many now called Christians, who are zealous in their devotions, yet the great object of their worship is to them an unknown God.* What a sobering thought that is!

On a glorious Easter Morning when the cry, Allelujah! He is risen! rings out all over the Christian world, we need to be absolutely sure that we know our God; that we know our Risen, Living, Lord.

We can never understand God fully and we are well advised to leave the mysteries alone until we pass through the veil. But we must know Him well enough to have complete faith in Him. We must quietly seek Him in our daily lives, in our precious Bible and in our church experiences.

Let us go back to the sepulchre for a moment. Mary saw Jesus but perhaps because of the tears flooding her eyes she did not recognize Him. Jesus asked her, **Woman, why weepest thou? whom sleekest thou?** St. John continues, **She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.** Jesus saith unto her, **Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him, Raboni; which is to say, Master.** (John 20:13 – 16).

Mary knew her beloved Lord just because He said her name. Remember what we read in John 10, **he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out....and the sheep follow him for they know his voice.** Jesus promises us the help of the Holy Spirit to help us to know our God. That help may come as quietly as it did from Jesus to Mary Magdalene. But if we believe in Him we can be absolutely sure that it will come.

Jesus died on the Cross for our sins. He rose again for our justification. When we understand that, we know our God. We know our Risen, Living, Lord. And we know that to Him, all human beings are equal, all are the beneficial objects of His inestimable Love.

God bless you all in this Easter season and beyond it forever.

Alleluia – Christ is risen!



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Bonnie's Reflections: The Secret Disciples



BONNIE IVEY (& LAD)

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were “secret disciples.” We do not see evidence of their commitment to Jesus until his arrest. John’s gospel states that Nicodemus hid his connection with Jesus because he feared the Jewish leaders. (Jn. 19:38) Why? He was one of their number.

There is a great cultural difference between our understanding of the law, and that of the Jews in first century Palestine. Today, we have secular lawyers who may choose to specialize. They may work on family law, criminal cases, or corporate law.

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To the Jews, all laws grew out of **The Law**, God’s original instructions as received by Moses, and as interpreted by the “lawyers”. These were scholars who studied every rule in scripture, especially in terms of how it affected relationships between people, and between humans and God. They added details to make sure nobody went over the line by accident. They spelled it out. You shall not work on the Sabbath. What is an example of work? Carrying a load is work. Define a load. Anything heavier than three dried figs, said the lawyers.

It was a serious offence to teach anything contrary to the Law. When Jesus began attracting crowds, people argued, some saying, “He is a good man,” but others replying, “No! He is leading the people astray,” by healing on the Sabbath. Rome controlled the country. As long as there were no disturbances, the Romans left the Jews to conduct their own day to day affairs. They kept their hands off religious observances. What the Jewish leaders feared most was civil unrest that would lead Rome to suppress their religion.

Jerusalem had a council called the Sanhedrin. Its purpose was to deal with civil and religious matters among the Jews. There were 71 men on this council; influential, often wealthy, well educated. They were respected as examples of right living. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were both members of the Sanhedrin.

In the Sanhedrin there were two parties, the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Sadducees were materialists, disbelieving in spirits or an afterlife. They were most concerned with good conduct and preserving a stable relationship with Rome. The Pharisees were religious, believing in God, angels, and everlasting life. They were the *watchdogs* of God’s law, and anyone reputed to be a prophet would be thoroughly investigated. Some of them believed they were above the level of common humanity, expressing contempt for those who were uneducated in holy subjects. The high priests, both the one presently in that role and his predecessors, were Pharisees.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, arrives after dark one night to interview Jesus. He begins by saying nobody could do such wonderful works as Jesus had done unless God was with him. Jesus, going straight to the point, tells Nicodemus that although he teaches others, Nicodemus is ignorant of spiritual essentials. Jesus gives him much to think

Bonnie's Reflections: The Secret Disciples

about, revealing his own mission and purpose. (John 3: 10-21)

The watchdogs sent people to spy on Jesus, reporting on what he said to the crowds. They attempted to discredit him publicly with leading questions like, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?” Controversy grew. Some suggested Jesus was in fact the Messiah. (See chapter 7 of John’s gospel.)

This Messiah had been foretold by prophets for centuries. Some hoped that this coming leader would break Rome’s power over the Jewish nation. The scriptures foretold he would be a descendant of King David, born in Bethlehem. His coming would usher in an age of justice and peace, all nations recognizing the one true God. **He would have power to raise the dead.**

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, in a town three miles from Jerusalem. Prominent people from the city witnessed the event and news reached the Sanhedrin. Insisting that Jesus was just another false prophet, the chief priests conspired to bring about not only the death of Jesus, but also of Lazarus. (John 12: 9-11) Planning judicial murder, they gathered false witnesses.

They send Temple guards to arrest Jesus. The guards come back without him. “Nobody ever spoke like this man!” they report. The chief priests, sneering, say the guards are as ignorant as the mob out there.

Nicodemus raises an objection. “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?” His question is rudely dismissed. (John 7: 50-52)

The chief priests agree it is better for all that one man, Jesus, should die. But having no legal right to enact the death penalty, the Jewish leaders must involve the power of Rome. This succeeds thanks to the traitor Judas. A series of rigged trials result in conviction, flagellation, crucifixion. Jesus dies. Rome left dead criminals on the crosses as a warning and a threat. Birds and animals would take away the carion.

This was offensive to Jews whose law stated a body must be buried before nightfall. That leaves about four hours after Jesus’ death. His disciples have fled. Who will arrange for linen, oil and spices, a burial place? Who dares approach Roman authorities to beg for the body? Joseph of Arimathea dares, and Nicodemus goes with him. They no longer think of their position and connections. They will risk arrest. They have gone beyond fear.

Pilate receives them. They ask for the body. Pilate may have felt soiled and shaken by the day’s events. There was his wife’s urgent note; “Have nothing to do with this just man!” He remembers the calculating manipulation by the Jewish leaders; “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend!” Pilate gives permission.

A poor man’s burial would be in a vertical shaft in the ground. Joseph provides a fine tomb, possibly his own, carved from the rock. Nicodemus offers a staggering amount of costly ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Together they wash the body, anoint it and wrap it in linen. A king’s burial.

THIS MESSIAH . . .

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Fr. Arthur Stanton: Easter Day April 7, 1912



FR. ARTHUR STANTON

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.
“CHRIST BOTH DIED,
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TION” (ROM. IV. 25).
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TO-DAY.

“Christ both died, and rose.”—Rom. xiv. 9.

THERE have been some who denied that our Lord really died; but we are quite sure He did die. It was made doubly sure. Pilate sent out a guard to break the legs, but He was already dead, so “they brake not His legs” (S. John xix. 33). And yet to make doubly sure, they opened His Side, and there came out the rush of blood and of water. So we are quite certain that He was crucified—*dead*. Then they took the dear, blessed Body, and they wrapped it in spices. They who had been cowards before, became brave as lions; and they wrapped the dear Body in clean linen and spices, and they put it away in the tomb, hewn out of the rock, where no one else was ever laid; “wherein was never man yet laid”; and there the enemies watched. “The deceiver,” they said, “said He would rise again.” And Pilate said, “Make it as sure as ye can” (S. Matt. xxvii. 65). So they made it quite sure, as far as they could, for they rolled a great stone to the door. They set a seal, and they set a watch. Well, they did all they could, but they might just as well have rolled a stone to the gate of the morning to prevent the morning dawning. They might just as well have set a watch to prevent the sun rising over the eastern hills, for, as He said, very early in the morning, He passed through the stone and the watch, and went into Galilee.

And there have been some, you know, now, in the day in which we live, who doubt the Resurrection—deny His resurrection. I always think the initial trouble about this is in the denial of the Virgin Birth. If the Lord Jesus Christ was only a man—the very best of men—I, for one, certainly could not believe He rose from the dead. It is an absurdity. But, when we believe that in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, He was very God and very Man, and as He lay in her lap, very God and very Man, then it would seem to me to be a greater miracle if He did not rise from the dead. “Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts xiii. 35). So the Bible says He must rise again; and so we say in our Creed, He “was crucified, dead”—no doubt about it—and buried”—no doubt about it; and “The third day He rose again.” No doubt about it. “Christ both died, and rose.” As S. Paul says, “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. iv. 25). He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. That is the fact we teach to-day.

Now this fact is our philosophy. It is the philosophy of our religion. As Christ rose, so will all His people rise with Him. That is our faith.

Now you won't, any of you, will you, have the folly of the fool, and ask, “With what body do they come?” (1 Cor. xv. 35). There are always fools about who

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ask that question. And the answer is so plain: With what body shall we come? "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed His own body." The resurrection of our bodies belongs to the Almightiness of God. Of course, I believe in God, and God giveth us a body, the resurrection body, as it hath pleased Him, and to everybody His own body. Do you feel sure? Do you feel happy about that? That is our philosophy. As Christ died and rose, so shall we die and rise again. As we say in the beautiful prayer—

"Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of Thy blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection. For His merits, Who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

And if it is our philosophy, it is our inspiration. And we want the inspiration. It is the inspiration of immortality. You younger men don't feel it so much as we who are older, but the greatest gift to mortal, dying men is immortality—immortality in Christ. We dig so many holes in the earth, and bury away those we love in the deep, dark holes. We put them in, and leave them. And as we go on in life, this shadow of bereavement and separation would cloud our life and make us miserable, did we not see it all in the light of the risen Christ. Look at it, all of you—you who have got the pang of death at heart—look at it all in the light of the risen Christ, and admit Easter Day is our inspiration.

"Strong Son of God, immortal love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove."

Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

It is our inspiration!

And last of all, because I cannot preach a long sermon on Easter Sunday, it is our poetry. Oh, the beautiful Spring! Every flower that opens, every leaf, all the movement of nature, seems to us to say, "He is risen again." It is in the air; it is in the breeze; it is in the flower—and I hope it may be in your heart and soul—new birth in Christ for ever and ever.

And this is how it is that when we get on in life, beautiful flowers may grow even in our experience—beautiful flowers grow on the slopes that lie towards the setting sun.

Make no mistake: it is our philosophy; it is our inspiration; it is our poetry. And they who will deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I tell you what they do; they do what Shishak, King of the Egyptians, did. He took the golden shields out of the temple of the Lord, and Rehoboam put up shields of brass in their stead. With their

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ethical resurrection, that is what they do. Thank God, in S. Alban's, the golden shields for ever will remain up.

"So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die,
And dying, rise; and rising, with him raise
His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life."¹

¹ Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III. 295.



Fr. Arthur Stanton: Easter I, April 23, 1911

ALL OF YOU
WHO ARE WORKERS
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FR. ARTHUR STANTON

"Simon Peter said unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee . . . and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore."—S. John xxi. 3-4.

THE "night" and "nothing." That was the result of their fishing. The *night* and *nothing*. Was it these men's fault? No. All of you who are workers for the Lord Jesus Christ to try and get people into the net of the Gospel, oh hear ye the word of the Lord, listen to the Gospel, and when the night seems to be coming because you have caught nothing, and darkness and disappointment are over your work, you look for the morning and you may see Jesus on the shore. Mind you, they were expert fishermen. It was their business, their trade; they lived by it. It was no amateur business. There are many of us who know what amateur fishing is. The amateur fisher-man knows not when or how to fish. They are like the boys who go fishing in the Serpentine and get nothing. There was no amateur fishing about them; they were all fishermen and knew their trade, so that the *night* and *nothing* had nothing to do with that.

And then, again, it was not that they were not provided with the necessaries. There were their boats and tackle ; their oars and their nets. Peter said: "I go a fishing," and when he said that, he was quite prepared to go. He knew as a fisherman what he would want for fishing. He would not go fishing without the proper tackle. And the others said : " We also go with thee." And though they had got all they wanted for fishing ready, still it was a case of *night* and *nothing*.

Then again, they had been fishing at night. Any fisherman would tell you night time is the time for the sea fishing. You recollect the Gospel story. When our Lord said to Peter: "Launch out into the deep," he said, "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing." Just as if it were likely if they had toiled all night and tak-

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en nothing, they would take something in the day, and had not our Lord been brought up a carpenter, and what would He know about fishing? But when He told them in the day to go out, was He not Lord of the sea? The sea is His, He made it, and all the fish of the sea belong to Him.

My brethren, I wonder whether now at this Eastertide, this Easter fishing, they remembered that day when they were so discouraged, and the Lord said: "Launch out into the deep," and the poor discouraged men said: "Master, we have toiled all night and taken nothing, nevertheless at Thy word," and then the catch they made, so that the boat was in danger. I wonder if they recollect? They were always forgetting what the Lord had done for them—the wonders He had done amongst these poor simple men. You remember they forgot the miracle of the loaves, and our Lord chid them because they considered not the miracle of the loaves. He had done two miracles feeding the multitude with loaves and fish, and yet they forgot! They considered not the miracles of the Lord. It is always the same with us. We are always forgetting what Christ has done for us, and remembering our disappointments and troubles. We write our troubles on the rock with the point of a diamond, and our mercies we write on sand. Or we are like the little shopkeepers, we put all our miseries in the front window, and all our blessings in the little parlour behind. I wonder if they remembered what the Lord had done for them before? At any rate it was for them the whole *night* and *nothing*. The night and nothing—and because it was *nothing*, it was *night*.

"But"—there is something in the "but"—"but when the morning was now come." I can always expect the morning—if the night wears on—the night wears off—sooner or later the eastern gates begin to break, and the first gleam of the morning comes. We always associate the Lord and Master with the morning. It was very early in the morning, and it was still dark, only a streak of the morning in the sky, and the Master rose from the dead—He had the primacy of the morning and the primacy of the week. Was it not night with them when they sat over the sepulchre and rolled the stone, and it was sealed? It was night. When the morning came, the Light of lights rose again. We always associate the Lord and Master with the morning, for is He not the Morning of the everlasting day? When the morning came and the shadows had gone, and the darkness was over, they saw Jesus standing on the shore. There He was! He knew all about them. There He stood! It was the same Jesus Who when the storm had swept down from the hills to the boat and filled it with water, was asleep, and they waked Him, stabbing Him to the heart, saying: "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"—those He had come to save! And He rebuked the wind and the waves, and there was a great calm. It was the same Master Who came to them walking upon the water, because the winds were contrary, and when Peter said: "Bid me come unto Thee on the water," and he went, and beginning to sink—*beginning* only, the Lord saved him. It was the same Jesus Who saved them. All night they toiled—the night and nothing—and when it was morning, when the morning came, they saw Jesus standing on the sea-shore.

Now I ask you, isn't that a beautiful thought for our forty days of Easter? We come out of the valley and shadow of death into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God. Should

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LAST OF ALL, DEAR
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we not look at things in the light of the Resurrection? I know that Jesus died for our sins. He died for us and cleansed us from our sins that by His death our sins are clean wiped away. If we are saved by His death, so are we in spirit His, and justified by His Resurrection. Look at all the sadnesses of life whatever they may be—the sadness of bereavement and disappointment—look at them all in the light of the risen Saviour. Let Easter be a real Easter to you all. See it all in the light of the risen Christ. We preach Jesus and the Resurrection. I know not what troubles are before you, or how the shadows are to come across our path. I know not how the *night* and *nothing* may concern us, but He has died for our sins, and sin hath no more dominion over us. “If ye then be risen with Christ seek the things that be above.” When the morning came, they saw Jesus standing on the shore. No wonder Peter jumped over the boat again at once. He girt his coat about him, and over he went again. He was only 200 cubits from the shore, could not he wait till the boat got to the shore? He could not wait. Love can never wait, the 200 cubits was too far and the boat too slow to get to the Master. And you who believe, and in whom the Holy Spirit is shed abroad in your hearts, you need not leave the boat, you can get close to your Lord, get to Him at once. Peter recognized Him. He said: “It is the Lord,” and over the boat he jumped. And when you come to Mass, why don't you sometimes say: “It is the Lord,” and just put out your hand and see if you can feel His wounded Hand in yours.

Last of all, dear brethren, there is this, let us learn the lesson: Don't let us always look for results. You cannot always at once get results in spiritual matters. I know we have the tackle; I know we have the Sacraments and God's Word—the only real endowment of the Catholic Church. There is no other endowment possible or conceivable—the truth and the Sacraments—yet sometimes it does seem like the *night* and *nothing*. And then comes in the cruel world and says: “What good do you fellows do with your Sacraments? What do you do to influence the masses? Why are your churches empty? What good do you do? What is your result? Show us your results.” And so they would tear the heart out of us if they could. And we know it is not a matter of calculation. We can say: “See, we have our 500 or 5000 Communicants! “That is a false issue, for who can tell the number of those that are really God's. The register of those that belong to Him is kept by God, not in the sacristy; and when people taunt us with failure, just look and see Jesus standing on the shore. That will do, that will do.

Again, don't let us ever look for success. Success belongs to the next world. Look at our dear Master: He comes to Jerusalem, His own city, in floods of tears because they rejected Him. And so we, when we look upon our work and see but little success and *night* and *nothing*, creep up into the heart of the Lord. Let us look to the Saviour, and hide ourselves away in His heart, and let His tears fall upon us, and then we can look towards the shore and see Jesus standing on the shore. When the morning came, when the morning came, then the disappointed men saw Jesus standing on the shore. Isn't that the Gospel?

And then at last, dear brethren, when the last comes to us, and we begin to taste

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of the nothing of that annihilation in the agonies of death, which our sins deserve, and from which the Resurrection of Christ will save us, when we begin to taste of that annihilation—"nothing thou broughtest into the world, and nothing thou shalt carry away"—when the shadows of death come upon us, and it is like *night* and *nothing*, then look and see the morning break, the first streaks of the eternal morning breaking on your soul, and see Jesus standing on the shore ready to receive you. Never mind our night's failure, if we see Him standing on the shore.

"How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!

 Back to our own dear dead,
 Into that land which hides in tombs
 The better part of our old homes;
 'Tis there thou mak'st our bed.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!

 Straight to our Father's Home;
 All loss were gain that gained us this,
 The sight of God, that single bliss
 Of the grand world to come.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!

 Ever from toil to rest—
 Where a rim of sea-like splendour runs,
 Where the days bury their golden suns,
 In the dear hopeful west!"¹

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THE SHORE.

¹Faber, The Paths of Death.



Fr. Robert's Remarks

(Continued from page 1)

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he shewed them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: even as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Each Easter I am reminded that these are the very first words that Jesus is recorded to have spoken to the disciples generally. Our peace was accomplished on the Cross and Jesus was eager for His disciples to know that.

The Church Mouse: Our Duty To God

It is Spring here, well, kind of. There is warmer air, and the snow is gone. But now there are ice cold puddles that make it unpleasant for little mice like me. I try to stay dry, but sometimes must go through puddles to reach the garden beside the church. There are tasty seeds there under the bird feeder. Today, after eating some, I needed to run back inside the church to warm my wet paws in my favorite spot under the radiator.

When the children arrived they were wet too: muddy shoes, and jackets dripping from a little rain shower. They settled at the table around a plate of cookies. Fr. Palmer asked, “Who remembers what we are to talk about today?”

“Our duty to God!” replied several. (You know how it sounds when you talk with your mouth full?) Maria put her hand up.

“Does that mean we have to learn a whole bunch of rules?”

“No, not a whole bunch,” said Fr. Palmer. “It’s better to think of it as doing things to please him rather than having a list of rules. His rules, you know, are to keep us from getting hurt by wrong things, like a high fence protects us from dangerous places. They also keep us from hurting others by the things we say or do. It’s our duty to learn about God’s rules.”

“But another reason to learn and obey God’s rules is to become more like him! We are his children, so we want to become like our heavenly Father. Now, if you want to become like someone you love, you try to think and act the same way they do. Jesus did many wonderful things, and told his disciples, ‘I only do what I see my Father doing.’”

“And when we want to be like someone, we need to spend time with them. We can spend time with our heavenly Father in church. We can be near him by praying, anywhere, anytime. We can speak to him in our hearts, not even speaking out loud. If you see something beautiful, thank him for it. If something puzzles or frightens you, ask him to help. He is always with you. You can decide to be with him, on purpose.”

“Finally, when you love someone, you do not use words in a way that can harm that friendship. Maria, who is your best friend?”

“Sandra!” said Maria with a big smile at Sandra, who was sitting next to her.

“Now suppose you are building a birdhouse, Maria. (Here he pretended to be using a hammer.) You are hammering away, and BANG! You hit your thumb with the hammer. It hurts! You are frustrated that you



The Church Mouse: Our Duty To God

missed the nail. Do you throw the hammer down and say “Oh, SANDRA !” ?

All the children laughed as Fr. Palmer pretended his thumb was sore and flapped his hand around. “No way!” cried Maria! “Sandra’s my friend and I wouldn’t use her name to mean something bad! It wouldn’t be HER fault!”

“That is exactly right,” said Fr. Palmer. “A very good answer. And we don’t use the name of God or of his son Jesus to mean something bad. It is our duty to use God’s name, and Jesus’ name, in a good way.”

As the children left the church, some were singing the little song about duty... “My Duty is what I must do...”



Fr. Robert’s Remarks

(Continued from page 11)

Just last evening (Tuesday in Easter Week) at Evening Prayer, we read from Isaiah 26. In the copy of the Authorised Version that I have there are headings on each page. The heading referring to the reading was “A song inciting to confidence in God.” It is interesting to create an image of inciting or provoking someone to confidence in God; but then, too, the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts us to “consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works”.

One of the verses—verse 3—in Isaiah 26, I find particularly beautiful. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

It seemed to fit perfectly with tonight’s reading from a book that serves as our post-prandial reading. Currently we are reading *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self Discovery*—the second book in a trilogy by David G. Benner. (A tip of the hat to Bishop Stephen Scarlett for his recommendation of this author—a recommendation I would pass on to you as well.)

Benner speaks of “[g]enuinely knowing yourself as you are known by God” and “having the courage to meet themselves and God in solitude.” Under the heading of *Prayerful Reflection* he goes on to speak of spending time with God and identifying the distractions that we create for “avoiding solitude”. He suggests that one “[b]egin with a simple prayer asking God to help you be still. Don’t feel you need to fill your time with words or thoughts; just remain still and believe

YOU SHALL LOVE
THE LORD YOUR
GOD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART,
SOUL AND MIND;
AND THE SECOND
IS LIKE IT. LOVE
YOUR NEIGHBOUR
AS YOURSELF.’

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GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD*

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Fr. Robert's Remarks

(Continued from page 13)

that you are in God's presence whether you sense it or not." Benner concludes that section with the comment, "And remember, it is in the depths of yourself that God waits to meet you with transforming love."

The 'simple prayer' asking God's help could be an adaptation of the verse from Isaiah "Lord, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Keep me stayed on thee." Or, it could be acknowledging before God Jesus' first words to the disciples after he rose again—"Peace be with you." He gave them their commission to go, but the synoptic Gospels allow that there was a peaceful waiting on God before that going took place.

We have this Paschaltide/COVID-19 season to rest quietly before God learning of Him and of ourselves and becoming more ready to do as he asks us.

Please pray for our Synod scheduled for October.

Till next month; God Bless!



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