

SOUNDS

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Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FROM THE RECTOR

In a few weeks, we will concentrate more fully on matters of faithful Christian stewardship, specifically as that discipline applies to the life of our parish. The thoughts in this column appear a little in advance of the scheduled dates for me to write on the subject, but why put off that pleasure until a later time?

I am not being disingenuous when I refer to such matters as a pleasure, but I would be willing to admit it is an ambivalent one. Every year when we come to this part of our parish life, I find myself somewhat chagrined to be in the company of so many others who ask for our money. Each person who reads this column regularly knows what I mean, for we are all besieged by requests for various causes, some of them even worthwhile. It is not simply enough to point out that for the Christian, all requests are not equal, and that our use of money is specifically related to the seriousness of our desire to be a faithful disciple of Jesus. That is why he talked so often about money and treasure.

The two – treasure and the disciple’s heart – are inseparable.

And that is where the real pleasure comes in. It is a joy to respond “unfeignedly”, as the Prayer Book puts it, as part of our discipleship. The faithful use of money is one of the distinguishing traits of the Christian, and there are countless examples over the years of those who embodied that trait, and whose examples inspire and encourage the rest of us.

Those who do not think there is a relation between our discipleship and our stewardship bear the burden of proof, and stand in direct neglect or even disobedience of our Lord’s teachings. I do not write that to be contentious nor sanctimonious, and surely not to try to induce greater guilt among the flock of Potomac Parish. That would be very poor pastoral

leadership, and it would surely not produce greater financial stewardship among us all. Yet to deny that relation is also to deny a basic Biblical tenet. I have said over the years, perhaps too sardonically, that those who complain that the Episcopal Church is quick to ignore Biblical principles (and we surely are, to our shame) are not as quick to speak loudly when the principle in question is the tithe. Do Biblical principles apply only to morality and not to bank accounts? Jesus did not seem to think so.

That sets the context, bluntly but with charity. Here is another case where St Paul’s observation that we have all fallen short comes to mind. It is not *just* a matter of dollars and cents pledged to the church – although let it be clear, that concern does indeed matter. We will save that for later, but when we do consider these things, we will know we are not permitted the false luxury of thinking these questions do not reflect the health of our soul. As we approach this serious subject, I hope we can do so with a broad vision. We recognize how important these matters are. We recognize that the work of faithful Christian stewardship is more than just good works, but rather is part of our response to the blessings we have received from God. We recognize that this use of money really is different from every other cent we commit – not necessarily better, but surely different. Humility demands that recognition, too.

So, coming soon will be words and thoughts from the Vestry and those who are helping with this work in our parish. I am confident you will give a fair hearing to what others will present, just as I am confident that with the grace of God, we shall prove faithful in this as in many other aspects of our common life in this parish.

LISTEN UP!

Evensong

The name itself is lyrical and evocative. It's been used repeatedly as a novel, poem, and CD title (including our latest release in honor of Saint Clare of Assisi). And I don't know an Anglican musician anywhere who doesn't count offering *evensong* as one of their favorite duties.

The latter, of course, is what our interest is here. Evensong is, plain and simple, the sung form of our Evening Prayer liturgy. When presented in this manner, almost everything is sung with the exception of the confession (and in some places the creed), the appointed lessons, and, perhaps, a few of the prayers. I dare say that since the Reformation there are more musical settings for the components of evensong than for any other liturgy currently in use. My own catalogue of works includes three settings, so far, of the canticles, at least eight settings of the various responses, and several dozen Anglican chants for the delivery of psalms, one of the primary focuses of Evening (and Morning) Prayer.

As a writer, I'm always interested in the form of things. Just as a building must have a solid foundation on which to stand properly, so must a work of literature, a sports team, a movie, a theory, a fine meal, and, yes, even a liturgy. Evensong has just that with a clear and well-balanced architecture of three primary sections:

- i. The Psalms
- ii. The Lessons (and Canticles)
- iii. The Prayers

This structure has stood the test of time since Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) penned it in the 16th century for the first Book of

JOY AND CONCERN

Welcome, Christopher Bales Mion, born in Beijing on Christopher Columbus Day, son of JR & Caroline Mion, and grandson of Nancy & John Mion.

Common Prayer. He took as his models Vespers and Compline, combining elements from both of these evening liturgies from the monastic tradition. It is a highly practical and very elegant expressive tool for our corporate worship life. Each section is able to amplify the others and even within its seemingly rigid structure the overall form offers an endless variety for topic and musical settings.

The psalms follow an appointed sequence, which is intended to present all the psalms over a period of time. The Canticles, which follow the appointed lessons, are fixed: *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis*. Those lessons along with certain prayers follow a lectionary, and yet all three can be adapted easily to special occasions and feast days.

Such will be the case here on November 1st, when the Saint Francis Choir will offer a 5:30 evensong for The Feast of All Saints'. In one way or another, some obvious and some more subtle, everything will point us to the saints in light as we remember those who have gone before us in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection that we hold dear and fast as Christians. Musically, you will hear settings from every century since the 1500's. Very few experiences allow for this kind of breadth and richness, especially where relevance is concerned, something that seems to be an obsession these days. Well, here's a golden opportunity – step right up! And while you're at it, bring someone

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with you.

If my observations and invitation aren't enough, consider some thoughts from Professor Edward Higginbottom of Oxford University, the internationally renowned Director of Music at New College Oxford since 1976. "I see evensong as an unusually enabling liturgical environment within the contemporary Church: without confrontation, without the demands of affiliation – rather an engagement with the world of the spirit, and an encouragement to seek Truth at an individual's own pace, in his or her own way. If there is a self-sufficiency of music within worship, from it flows the necessity of excellence. This should not be an embarrassment to the musician [who] is enabling us to join in the song of creation, an activity requiring no further justification. St Francis understood this. Whatever our state, our access to choral evensong is an extraordinary feature of the modern church, clearly telling us that there is more to life than the word: there is also the Music of the Word."¹

Stay tuned.... Gary Davison, O-C

¹ Church Music Quarterly, September 2009.

CHALICIST TRAINING RE-SCHEDULED

The second class in the Layreader/Chalichist Training has been rescheduled to this Tuesday evening, 10/27/09 in St. Francis Church. The time has also been changed to 6:30 pm.

Both new candidates and experienced Chalichists are encouraged to attend this session. Copies of the newly revised Layreader's Customary will also be available there.

Contact Devar Burbage or Christine at the office at 301-365-2055 for additional details.

TIME TO TURN BACK THE CLOCKS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER FIRST



YES, it is almost that time already. As of 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 1st, Daylight Savings Time will be over and darkness will return early to our land. Please make a note to turn your clocks back by one hour, so you don't miss your favorite Sunday Service.



POTOMAC COUNTRY HOUSE TOUR PCHT WRAP-UP MEETING

Mark your calendars for Thursday, 10/29 at 7:30 PM!

Please join us in the library for a wrap-up meeting. Bring your ideas and binders for next year's Chairmen. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your thoughts and feedback to improve for next year.

COFFEE CANS & CHEER —A COLLOQUY

The once ubiquitous one pound coffee can is becoming a thing of the past. It is being supplanted by vacuum packed beans, resealable bags and other exotic packaging.

If you have any old fashioned metal cans you can spare, we want to convert them into 'vases' for the flowers which the Petal Pushers distribute on Sundays. You can drop them off at the Church after service or Monday through Friday during office hours. Mr. Thai will then prepare them for their new lot in life.

These arrangements go to those who may be unable to attend services or who could use a cheery bouquet. If you know of anyone who might appreciate such a token, please let Christine know at 301-3365-2055. She will pass the information on to the Petal Pushers.

“I DON’T PET ABDUCTORS”

When you’re a priest as I am and you say the word ‘stewardship’ some people start edging toward the door. Like a family story told too often, it can elicit groans. Soon after I came to Saint Francis eleven years ago, I remember being at a stewardship committee meeting where themes were considered for the upcoming campaign. I cheekily proposed this one: *Either life is holy with meaning or life doesn’t mean a damn thing. You pay your money and you take your choice.*

Blank stares and furtive glances. I kept a straight face until a committee member said it seemed a little wordy. We ended up that year with *Charting Our Future Together in Christ*. I said it lacked punch, but Carol Tutera and Brenda Bell assured me with a knowing wink that it meant the same thing.

Stewardship asks where we are going and how we plan to get there if we get there at all, and what we are going to find if we finally do. Vestries are responsible for that planning, and the only reason for asking yourself what your role — and your checkbook’s role — will be in the life and mission of Saint Francis is that you want to be part of where we’re going and how we plan to get there. That’s all.

We pay our money every day, to one thing or another. By the way we use what we earn and what we’re given, we show what really matters to us. Sometime soon you’ll receive an envelope from Saint Francis with a pledge card in it. Hmm. You’ll ask: What to do with this? What numbers to scratch there? How much of what I work so blessedly hard for should I give gladly away?

If you believe in what we say and do at Saint Francis — if you believe that God is busy in your life here — then when the pledge card comes do this: say your prayers, take your pen, and surprise yourself.

The struggle we have with money is a struggle with Jesus himself. And the truth about Jesus is that if indeed he is everybody’s friend the way the old Jesus hymns proclaim, he is at the same

time everybody’s worst enemy. He is the enemy at least of everything in us that keeps us from giving him what he is really after. And what he is really after is our heart’s blood, our treasure, our selves.

On the twenty-third of June, 1993, Victoria, Evan, Gabriel, Gillian and I took a train to Boston to visit the New England Aquarium. I remember the sea lions as we call them (it would be interesting to know what they call us) racing around in their tank, leaping through hoops, balancing beach balls on their whiskered snouts and delighting us all.

On the train ride home that night, Gabriel and Evan were sitting in front of us on opposite sides of the aisle. At one stop, I looked up and noticed Gabriel patting people on the arm as they passed by him. Victoria saw it, too. She leaned forward and said, “Gabriel. What are you doing?” “I’m petting them, Mom,” he said. “What?” she said. “You shouldn’t do that, Gabriel.” “I’m only petting them, Mom.”

At the next stop, I overheard Evan encourage Gabriel to pet a steward whom Gabe must have mistaken for the conductor. Gabriel said, “No.” “Why not?” Evan asked, and Gabriel replied, “Because I don’t pet abductors [sic].”

There’s a steward in this story but that’s not why I tell it. I tell it because I ask myself: Why would a boy barely four pat on the arm people he did not know from Adam? And why do I love him for doing it? It was a crazy thing to do. It was a risky thing to do. It ran counter to all standards of New England practicality and prudence.

It was debonair. He did it because he saw the people on that train not as strangers but as *compagnons de voyage*. It was not a play-your-cards-close-to-the-vest thing to do, just as giving away your hard-earned cash is not playing your cards close to the vest. But to live this way with your money is to make visible who we are and where we are going together. It is to see the world lit up as if by lightning on a dark night.

COMING UP AT ST FRANCIS

For more information, please visit our website at www.stfrancispotomac.org

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

8:00am Holy Eucharist
9:00am Holy Eucharist
Adult Education Hour
11:15 am Morning Prayer
1:00pm Confirmation Class

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

5:30 pm St. Nicholas Training Choir
5:30 pm St. Clare Girl Choir
6:30 pm Layreader Training—Church
7:00 pm Centering Prayer—Undercroft

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

10:00 am Holy Eucharist
11:00 am Rector's Bible Study
5:30 pm Jr. High Bible Study

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

5:00 pm *Sounds* Deadline for 11/8
5:30 pm Sr. High Bible Study
7:30 pm St Francis Choir

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

7:00 am Men's Bible Study

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

8:00am Holy Eucharist
9:00am Holy Eucharist
Adult Education Hour
11:15am Holy Eucharist
1:00pm Confirmation Class
5:30 pm All Saints Evensong



The Scripture appointed for the Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost
Job 42:1-6, 10-17, Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22) or Jeremiah 31:7-9, Psalm 126 ; Hebrews 7:23-28,
Mark 10:46-52

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