

The Canterbury Tales



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From the Rector

July 14 marks the 178th anniversary of the beginning of what is known in Church history as “The Oxford Movement.” On that day in 1833, The Reverend John Keble, a priest in the Church of England, preached his famous “Assize Sermon” (published under the title National Apostasy) at St. Mary’s, Oxford, England.

The principles taught in that sermon are still relevant for today. You can read it on the Project Canterbury web site.

Keble is one of the founders of the “Oxford Movement”, also known as “The Tractarians”, that revived the Catholic (Patristic) faith first in the Church of England and then in The Protestant Episcopal Church in America. All orthodox, Catholic Anglicans of today owe the clergy and laity of the Oxford Movement a great debt for the legacy they left.

I read the sermon posted below at the Ascension Eve mass that was held on June 1 and then read short excerpts from it and spoke on it during the Ascension Day mass. I have chosen to have it printed in this edition of The Canterbury Tales in place of something I have written in honor of the anniversary of the Oxford Movement and to show the richness of the faith the Anglican Catholic Church has, in part, inherited from the Oxford Movement.

As you read it, I hope you will see that Keble and his fellow “Tractarians” were men who were deeply committed to perpetuating the “...*faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (St. Jude v. 4)

Blessings in Christ,
Fr. Paul

(An Excerpt From)

THE DRAWING OF JESUS BY HIS ASCENSION

by Reverend John Keble on The Feast of the Ascension, 1849

“Draw me, we will run after Thee: the King hath brought me into His chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in Thee.” Song of Solomon 1:4

WE of Christ’s Church are, on this day, as persons out of whose sight a dear friend has just gone, watching the door through which He vanished out of our sight. We have gone out with Him to the Mount of Olives, to the garden, where His sad sufferings had their beginning. He has led us out on this road as far as Bethany, the village

where He had last had something like a home on earth : ...if we have read the Gospels in faith, we have in spirit accompanied our Lord with His Apostles for the last time to that well-known and chosen spot; we have heard His parting commands; He hath lifted up His hands and blessed us, and in adoring wonder we have seen, how in the very act of blessing He was parted from us, and with quiet and gentle motion was lifted up into heaven, and slowly and gradually taken out of our sight, a cloud coming between Him and us, as it comes between the stars and us.

Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, is gone away from us into heaven, and we are left here on earth. What shall we do? Shall we wait kneeling here on the hill, watching, as it were, the door through which He vanished? Shall we gaze on that spot of the heavens, until He return, as He promised, again? This indeed to a loving heart might seem most desirable of all things, so to go on contemplating our departed Saviour : even as those who from their hearts are mourning for a deceased parent or friend sometimes feel as if they would gladly go on thinking of him all their lives, and give up everything else : as the aged Jacob, when he was told that Joseph was lost: *“I will go down to the grave to my son mourning.”*

Something of this sort might well suit the inclinations of some loving hearts. But His will was plainly declared, that His disciples should not so gaze up after Him, nor so mourn His departure, as to withdraw themselves in any degree from the tasks He had set them. By His angels He sent us this message: *“Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? “* And to His Apostles, when He was preparing them for this day, He said, *“Because I have said these things unto you, because I have said, I go away, sorrow hath filled your heart. And yet, if ye loved Me, Me chiefly and not yourselves, you would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father.”*

He told them beforehand, true love would make them rejoice when they saw Him go out of their sight: and now, when the time is come, we read that they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. It was to them, as it has been to the Church ever since, a matter of the deepest joy and thanksgiving that Christ is gone up out of sight to His Father’s Right Hand.

We are not then merely to gaze after Him; we are not to stand bewailing ourselves for His absence: but this one thing we are to do. For the whole of our time, until He come again or call us into His Presence, we are to set about fulfilling His dying commands. That is the point. He is gone, but will come again someday, no one can tell how soon: and in the meantime we are to do all His bidding.

And what is His bidding? That we should run after Him: that, we should obtain a place in the same heaven where He is gone before: and in order thereunto, that we should even now ascend thither in heart and mind. But because the Church knows that we cannot by mere wishing obtain such a mind as this, therefore she prays, and teaches us to pray. *“Draw me,”* she humbly and seriously prays, *“and we will run after Thee.”*

Draw me towards Thee by Thy good providence, ordering the events of my life; the friends and acquaintance that I meet with; my joys and sorrows, my health and sickness, my employments and diversions, secretly and wonderfully, in such sort as shall most turn my soul from the world and turn it towards Thee.

Draw me towards Thee again by the reading and hearing of Thy most holy and heavenly Scriptures: causing me to light in the proper time upon those verses that will do me good: to hang upon them: to taste all their sweetness, or, if need be, all their bitterness; not to let them go till they have become, as it were, part of my mind, and are in a way to do me the whole good Thou intendedst by them.

Draw me by the noble and winning examples of the holy men women and children, whom Thou from time to time hast blessed with a double portion of Thy Spirit: shew me Thine own brightness upon them, and incline my heart to delight in it: for, left to myself, I know too well, I shall but neglect or even hate it.

Draw me, once more, and most of all, draw me, I pray Thee, by Thy most holy and life-giving Sacrament. There, above all, help me to taste and see how gracious Thou, Lord, art: there let me touch Thee, as Thou didst promise to St. Mary Magdalene, now that Thou art ascended to the Father : let me in the Sacrament of Thy love touch but the hem of Thy garment, and by that draw me onward and upward, till, my old impure self being thoroughly put off and cast aside, I being wholly and only Thine, may dwell only and wholly with Thee.’

This is the Christian soul’s prayer, when she muses earnestly on her Lord’s Ascension. Thus day and night she seems to say to Him, *“Draw me.”* But that is not all. She knows well that her holy prayers and heavenly desires, if not embodied as it were in deeds, would soon cease to be holy and heavenly: they would vanish in the air like thin clouds, which never drop down in wholesome dew. This the enlightened soul greatly fears: and therefore she cries out not only, *“Draw me; “* not only does she pray with all her might for the grace, without which she can do

nothing, but she is careful to add always, “We will run after Thee : we will act, and that heartily and zealously, according to the good desires which Thou breathest into us.” “Draw me,” that is her devout petition: “we will run after Thee,” that is her humble and courageous vow, her good resolution made on her knees before God.

And we know that these two things must go along with every good prayer: a devout petition, and a humble and courageous purpose.

But you will say, “It is so hard to disengage one’s-self from these earthly cares; they have so wound themselves about us, like clinging weeds, before we were aware. And in truth it is hard: but observe, Jesus Christ, because He knows it is hard, has told us how we may get strength to do it. Because we have to run after Him, and He knows we have little strength, therefore He teaches us to say, “Draw me :” as the little child that wishes to run and cannot, stretches out its arms and asks for help as well as it can. Since then He has taught us to pray, we may not doubt that He will help us to run after Him: any more than the young child doubts the mother’s or nurse’s will to help him. He will set your heart at liberty, that you may run the way of His commandments. He will help you to untie forever the bands and chains of evil habit, which fasten you, as yet, more or less down to earth, so that you may be free to ascend to Him in heart and mind, and with Him continually dwell. Morning by morning, and evening by evening, say to Him in earnest, “Draw me ;” and day by day you will find yourself better able to run after Him. Again, endeavor day by day to run after Him, to be more alert in His service, and you will be helped morning by morning to pray to Him more earnestly.

And even as those, who are teaching young children to run, very often go before them, and run a little way themselves, and then turn and entice them onwards, beckoning to them with all kinds of affectionate endearments : so our loving Lord before He went up into heaven, had in our sight hastened along the very worst of the rough way which He calls upon us to tread : and now, with unutterable yearning love, He turns towards us from His holy eternal Rest, and beckons us onward by a thousand signs, which we shall see and understand more and more, as our hearts are more open to any kind of goodness. Every hour something happens, by which He speaks to the believing soul, and says, “ Behold Me here preparing a place for you : are you preparing yourself for the place ?”

O may we often, very often, think of Him in this manner: of Him and of this His own Ascension Day! May the remembrance of Him, caring for us in heaven, sweeten and allay the troubles of this life, quicken all our languid (sluggish) obedience, and above all, keep us from the horrid ingratitude of affronting Him by willful sin!

A beautiful Gift for St. Thomas

On Wednesday, June 8, our parish received a beautiful gift from a “friend” of the parish.

Ms. Marilynn Stannard, who has visited our parish several times for weekday mass and Bible study brought a beautiful counted cross stitch piece with the parish name and ACC shield to the church and gave it to Joanie Witt and June Rutherford as they were making the bulletins for Whitsunday. Marilynn stitched the piece herself, had it framed and gave it as a gift to the parish. It is now hanging in the Sunday School wing across from the parish office.

Our thanks to Marilynn for sharing the wonderful talent God has given her with our parish!



The Inheritance

A wealthy man and his wife spent a lot of money collecting masterpieces from all over the world until their home was filled with great art. Then the wife died. With a broken heart, the man continued to collect but it wasn't the same. All he had left that mattered was his son whom he loved most in the world.

The son went off to Viet Nam and the only news the father received was a telegram stating the son had died in action. Years later there was a knock at the door of the old man who was now almost a recluse. Opening the door, he saw a ragged individual holding something wrapped in brown paper. The visitor said, "Sir, I was best friend of your son, loved him and painted a picture of him which I thought you might want." Upon unwrapping the package, the old man looked into the eyes of his son. Treasuring the gift, the old man thanked the younger man and closed the door.

The old man replaced the treasured masterpiece above the mantel with the picture of his son.

The old man died, the auction house came, prepared the art and advertised the sale. Wealthy people from all over the world- art dealers, collectors, etc.,-came in anticipation of acquiring some great art. The auctioneer came out and gaveled the auction to order. On an easel the first picture was unveiled. To the shock of the buyers, it was the rather plain picture of the old man's son. The auctioneer explained the picture was of the old man's son and asked for a bid. None was made. He asked, "Could I get \$50.00?" A man in the back responded, "I just came to watch. I don't have much money but I'll give you \$50.00 for it." No one else bid so the auctioneer knocked it out to the man in the back and then gaveled the auction to a close. The crowd stirred and objected saying, "You can't do that. Where are the other treasures?" The auctioneer explained, "It was in the old man's will that whoever got the son got it all."

God has given us everything. We are heirs of His Son. It's in our Heavenly Father's will-You take the Son, you get it all!

-Author Unknown

Wedding Bells

On Saturday, May 7, at 2:00 p.m., parishioner Neil Ward was married to Ercilia Pereira in a Prayer Book Wedding ceremony in front of about twenty family members and friends here at St. Thomas. Neil's best man was his father, Roger Ward, and Ercilia's maid of honor was her sister, Micheline Pereira. The couple left for their honeymoon later that evening.

They received the Eucharist for the first time as a married couple on Easter III, Sunday May 15, at the 9:00 a.m. mass. We pray God's blessings on their marriage and welcome Ercilia into the St. Thomas family!

Todd Graduation

Thank you to everyone for helping us celebrate Hannah's High School graduation. On June 14th she was recognized as a Distinguished Scholar and received the Advance Studies diploma from Salem High. She also completed the International Baccalaureate Program they offer where she earned 50 college credits. She was awarded the Bill and Marie Young scholarship for community service and academic excellence. Hannah will attend University of Virginia in the fall and plans to study foreign language.

-The Todd Family

NOEL

The Women of St. Thomas will have a Christmas in July Luncheon on Thursday, July 14th, at noon. Everyone is requested to bring a dish (filled with food, please) and a Christmas ornament.

2011 Diocesan Synod

The 2011 DMAS Synod was held June 17 and 18 in Dulles, Virginia. Along with the annual Diocesan business, this year's synod included an Electoral Synod to elect a bishop to replace Bishop William McClean, Jr. who has retired after eight years as the bishop of the diocese.

Sixty-one lay and Twenty-nine clergy electors were present representing each parish and mission of the Diocese. The Electoral Synod was presided over by The Most Reverend Mark Haverland, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the ACC's Original Province.

Four priests were nominated for the Episcopal see: Father Richard Bowyer, currently the rector of St. Paul's ACC, Grand Rapids, Michigan (in the Diocese of the Mid West), Fr. Thomas Crowder, rector of St. Columba, Warrenton, VA, Archdeacon Thomas McHenry, rector of St. Stephen, Clifton Forge, VA and Priest in Charge of Christ Church, Bath County, VA, and Canon Charles Nalls, Rector of St. Alban's, Richmond, VA.

The lay lectors from our parish were Bob Gill, Bill Palmore and Linda Riffel. Betty Loving and Margaret Tear were the alternates. Fr. Paul and Fr. Marvin were both in attendance and participated as clergy delegates.

After 8 ballots, none of the candidates were able to obtain 2/3rds of the vote in both the House of the Laity and the House of the Clergy. The two candidates that obtained the most votes were Archdeacon McHenry and Canon Nalls, with the Archdeacon having slightly more votes in both houses but not enough to elect, particularly in the House of the Clergy.

After the eighth ballot and at the urging of Archdeacon McHenry and Canon Nalls, the electors voted by a 2/3 majority to send the election into Postulation (see Diocesan Canon 4.04 (d)). Postulation places the election in the hands of the College of Bishops of the Province. The College of Bishops can choose Archdeacon McHenry or Canon Nalls, but do not have to. They have the authority to choose any priest they believe to be the one the Holy Spirit has chosen to be the next bishop of DMAS from any diocese in the Original Province. It should be noted that along with the vote for Postulation, a non-binding vote of Recommendation was made to the College of Bishops recommending they choose either Archdeacon McHenry or Canon Nalls.

The College of Bishops is not scheduled to meet again until just prior to the Provincial Synod which will be held October 20-22, 2011 in West Palm Beach, FL. Until the new bishop is elected and likely until he is enthroned, Bishop McClean, though retired, will be the Episcopal Visitor of the Diocese.

LIGHT CHURCH LESSONS

Did Noah Fish? A Sunday School teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the ark?" "No," replied Johnny, "how could he, with just two worms?"

People want the front of the bus, the back of the church and the center of attention.

-Stuff floating around the internet in a free for all!!



St. Thomas of Canterbury ACC

4910 Hubert Road, NW

Roanoke, VA 24012

Church 540-366-9416

The Rev. Father Paul T. Beutell, Rector

The Rev. Canon Marvin Gardner, Ph.D.,

Assistant Priest

www.StTofC.org

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