



# 2025 Lenten Devotional

Meditations on the 1928 BCP Daily Office  
Lessons composed by Clergy and Special Guests  
of the G3 Anglican Churches

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Lessons composed by Clergy and Special  
Guests of the Anglican Province of America  
(APA), Anglican Catholic Church (ACC), and  
Anglican Church in America (ACA)

**Edited *by***

**Fr. Paul Rivard**

**APA Dean of Appalachia**

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Cover Image:

*Christ Crucified with the Virgin, Saint John and Mary  
Magdalene* by Sir Anthony van Dyck (c. 1619)

# Prologue

**I**t was not many years after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven that the earliest Christians made a special effort to acknowledge the anniversary of the death and resurrection of our Lord by hallowing the feast of Pascha with this new significance. It was not long after the custom of observing this anniversary was established that the followers of Christ discerned it would be fitting to use the weeks leading up to that great feast as a time of penitential preparation.

Many centuries later, the forty days of Lent leading up to Easter have retained their original purpose of readying the faithful for a joyous and holy Paschal feast. The season of Lent continues to offer Christians an opportunity to walk with Christ in the desert, to absorb the narrative of His passion, to wonder at the institution of the Holy Eucharist, to sense anew the sorrow and confusion of the first Good Friday, and to appreciate again the resurrection fire of Christ newly lit in the dark cavern of death. In short, the time of Lent is meant to be a purposeful communal fasting before the glorious and joyful season of resurrection feasting.

This Lenten Devotional is meant to enhance the penitential devotion of those who use it by offering the insights of a number of Anglican clergy and special guests of the Anglican Province of America, the

Anglican Catholic Church (DHC refers to Diocese of the Holy Cross) and the Anglican Church in America.

Each day, scriptural passages assigned for Morning or Evening Prayer in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer lectionary supply the biblical material these meditations are drawn from as the writings are meant to enhance the discipline of praying the daily offices.

Devotional compositions offered for the Sundays of Lent are taken from homilies of various Church Fathers and apply to the Gospel selection of the Order for Holy Communion. On these days, Anglican faithful will hopefully find it edifying to hear both a sermon on the passage from their Rector, and then to consider those thoughts along with the thoughts of one of the great theologians of the Patristic era. The last three days of Lent (the *Triduum*) feature writings from St. Augustine and St. Ephrem the Syrian.

It is my prayer that, when the great feast of Easter finally arrives, those who use this devotional could say that something within these pages served to keep them focused on Christ in the midst of their fast. May your Lenten season be one of repentance, prayer, and earnest meditation on Christ so that you, with the whole Church, may enjoy a joyful, holy, and glorious Easter feast!

Fr. Paul Rivard

Rector of St. George the Martyr Anglican Church  
Simpsonville, SC

# Ash Wednesday, March 5

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## Evening Prayer - Psalm 102

*“Mine enemies revile me all the day long; and they that are mad upon me are sworn together against me.*

*For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.*

*And that, because of thine indignation and wrath; for thou hast taken me up, and cast me down.*

*My days are gone like a shadow,  
and I am withered like grass.*

*But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance throughout all generations.*

*Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion, for it is time that thou have mercy upon her, yea, the time is come.”*

(Psalm 102: 8-13)

**W**e live in a carbon-based universe. When God forms man in His image, He takes dust from the ground and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life, and man becomes a living soul. After the fall, there is death, man returns unto the ground, for out of it he was taken. “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3: 19).

We begin Lent with dust and ashes. We repent and return, with the help of the Church, to our roots in carbon...carbon, and the breath of God, the Holy Spirit. We lower ourselves down to what is most basic, and let all the air out of the leaven, until we are un-leavened lumps. That is our share in Jesus’ Cross.

That Cross is our one true reliance. The carbon put on our foreheads is traced out as a Cross. There is a living hope now for all this carbon. Jesus' Cross is the worst thing that can happen in the universe. Yet the Father makes that Cross an entrance into the light and joy of the Kingdom when He raises His Son from the dead, in the power of the Holy Spirit. We now see dust and ashes, pain and suffering, sin and death in the light of the Cross. Something sooty and gritty becomes a sign of new and indestructible life.

After we are lowered down to what is most basic, the Father releases the leaven of the Holy Spirit so He can raise us up properly at Easter, risen in sync with Jesus' mighty Resurrection. Dust and ashes are now transfigured. We have gone from the brokenness of sin to the wholeness of the new creation.

Lent gives us time to repent and return to the journey toward the glorious promise of Easter. Lent is our school of repentance, a time to enter the mystery of God's love, a time to lay aside every hindrance to the race marked out for us.

A carbon based universe includes us, and our mortal bodies. It is all destined to shine with the glory of God.

Bp. Paul Hewett

Bishop of the Diocese of the Holy Cross

Cathedral Church of the Epiphany (ACC-DHC)

Columbia, SC

# Thursday after Quinquagesima, March 6

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Evening Prayer - First Lesson - Jeremiah 1:4-10, 13-19

*“And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.”*

(Jeremiah 1:19)

**I**t is fitting that today, as Lent dawns, the Church offers for our contemplation the story of God’s calling of Jeremiah to the prophetic ministry. This calling was no gentle invitation; it was a summons to stand against a tide of opposition, requiring courage and boldness, demanding that Jeremiah rely wholly on God’s might, not his own strength. We can see ourselves in this passage as we enter upon our Lenten disciplines. As Jeremiah faced opposition in his calling, so we face sin’s relentless attempt to pull us away from God’s will. Our resolve will be tested as we enter into battle against sin. Fasting strips away our comforts, exposing our weaknesses; prayer bespeaks our total dependence upon God; and repentance demands we stand up to those besetting sins that fight against each one of us: anger, pride, envy, lust. Nevertheless, just as Jeremiah’s mission rested on God’s presence and promise of deliverance, our Lenten exercises are not mere efforts at self-improvement, but a learning to trust in and rely upon the only One who can truly deliver us. God’s presence assures us that sin will not prevail.



This promise is shown forth even more vividly in tonight's second reading. The woman caught in adultery faces real opposition—the scribes and Pharisees—who fight against her with stones in hand and judgment in their hearts. Sin, both her adultery and their self-righteous condemnation, is the aggressor. Dragging her before Our Lord, her accusers are prepared to let sin claim its victory through death. But Jesus steps in—"I am with thee"—bringing God's presence to bear in this woman's battle against sin. He does not deny the reality of sin, but forcefully challenges those who would condemn the woman. In revealing to them their hypocrisy—and in subsequently forgiving the woman—Our Lord despoils sin of its power. Sin's ability to accuse and destroy is broken by Christ's mercy and strength.

Lent invites us to face down our sin: not to be crushed by it, but to hear Christ's voice of redemption over us. As we name our sins, as we bring them into God's presence, we can trust that his deliverance is sure. St. Anthony the Great, who battled temptation in the desert, reminds us that "the devil tempts us, but the Lord supports us. If we cling to Christ, the enemy's arrows fall powerless at our feet." St. Anthony embraced hope and trust in Christ's mercy, making God's promise to Jeremiah his own. Let us fight manfully against sin, the flesh, and the devil this Lent; not in our own power, but in the strength of Christ. He is always with us, and by his Death and Resurrection we already have the victory.

Fr. C. Lance Davis

Curate of All Saints Anglican Church (ACC)

Aiken, SC

# Friday after Quinquagesima, March 7

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 1:8ff

*“And the weakness of God is stronger than men.”*  
(1 Corinthians 1:25b)

**T**oday I will celebrate the mass at noon in remembrance of the day of the week and hour at which Our Lord hung on the Holy Cross. Unless a saint or other holy day must be observed, the Friday Noon Mass here in my church has been a votive (or special mass chosen by the priest) of the Lord’s Passion, His saving suffering for us.

“We preach Christ crucified.” As many times as I’ve had the privilege to pray this service it still strikes me when I read the Epistle, which is taken from Zechariah 13. “And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” This is especially stirring when I pray the mass of the Five Wounds, which has the same readings as the Passion mass, but with a Collect and Post-communion prayer that focus us on the Lord’s healing wounds: His pierced hands that made the world, His pierced feet that deigned to walk in it, His pierced Heart that even now beats with the Love that holds all things together. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

In our New Testament reading this morning St. Paul sees the Holy Cross as the axis of rotation on which the world has been turned upside down—or rather on which it has been turned right side up. But the turning world cannot but see the stability of Cross as insanity. It is insane that the man Jesus Christ's wounds, His apparent weakness, would be the strength of man's redemption. It is insane that the God Jesus Christ's foolishness, His singular focus on the salvation of hopeless men, would be the wisdom of God's eternal purpose. But we are "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

We glory in the Cross of inglorious agony. Only two days ago it smudged our heads, didn't it? The weakness of God on that Cross of our black sin and cold, dry dust is the axis on which we must be turned upside down now in order to be right side up in the Kingdom of the Suffering, Wounded King. I pray for you all at the Altar of God's Weakness today, that in His foolish weakness we would be strong and in our foolish weakness His strength would be known. "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Fr. Kevin Fife

Rector of St. James on the Glebe Anglican Church (APA)  
Gloucester, VA

# Saturday after Quinquagesima, March 8

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 22: 1-14, 19

*“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh:  
as it is said to this day,  
In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”  
(Genesis 22:14)*

**J**ehovah-jireh means “the Lord will provide.” In Abraham’s story, we become aware that the supreme quality of this man’s life is his faith, loyalty, and obedience. Chosen by God, Abraham is a man of great vision, a man who sees the big picture. He has wandered through an unknown land. He has worshiped an invisible God. He believed in an unfulfilled promise. And yet, by the time of his death, Abraham owns no more of the Promised Land than a cave, a hole in the ground, which he purchased for Sarah’s grave.

For descendants he has just two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was his first son by Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant. The Hagar debacle is considered Abraham’s largest moment of doubt in God’s promise. Yes, even Abraham had his weak moment, a day when vision failed and thoughts were selfishly small while waiting for God’s plan to unfold. Abraham had been consumed with the fact he was childless, that he wasn’t getting any younger, and that God was moving slow as molasses in January. Thus Abraham decided to take matters into his own hands. The result? God eventually commands him to send Ishmael away.

Losing sight of God, even for a moment, and small, selfish thoughts, have painful consequences. When all else fails, to whom does one turn in times of pain and suffering? Abraham looked once again to God, and regained his great vision. God, committed totally to Abraham, had chosen the right man. God blesses him through his second child, Isaac, the son promised through Sarah, and made a great nation out of him. This nation is to be a blessing to the entire world. God is showing in Abraham's life what he can do in our life, but He can only work through those who have faith, great vision, and seek the big picture.

We Christians sometimes lose our vision, and fail to think big. We have faith, but we think too small. Paul, reflecting on Isaiah 64:4, wrote to the small church in Corinth, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Jesus said that those worthy of the renewed creation "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." What? Do we think the infinite God is incapable of creating something greater than marriage? Incapable of adding more unknown colors to the rainbow? Make the very stones sing? (spoiler alert, Luke 19:40) We see and smell the beauty of the rose; in the renewed creation imagine how the rose will sound! Yes, we must keep our faith, but let's make sure we expand our vision, always seeking the big picture. Think big. Bigger! The Lord will provide!

Fr. Timothy Butler

Rector of St. John the Evangelist Anglican Catholic  
Church (ACC)

Dayton, KY

# Lent 1 – Sunday, March 9

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Homily for Lent 1

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Matthew 4:1-11

by Saint Gregory the Great

*(Homily 16 on the Gospels, Anglican Breviary C211-12)*

**S**ome are wont to question as to what spirit it was of which Jesus was led up into the wilderness, on account of the words a little farther on, “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy City.” And again, “The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain.” But verily, and without question, we must take this passage to mean that it was the Holy Spirit who led him up into the wilderness. His own Spirit led Him where the evil spirit might find Him to tempt Him. But behold, when it is said that the God-Man was taken up by the devil either into an exceeding high mountain, or into the holy city, the mind shrinketh from believing, and the ears of man shudder at hearing it. Yet these things are not incredible, when we consider certain other things concerning him.

Verily, the devil is the head of all the wicked and every wicked man is a member of the body of wickedness, of which the devil is the head. Was not Pilate a limb of Satan? Were not the Jews that persecuted Christ, and the soldiers that crucified Him, likewise limbs of Satan? Is it then strange that He should allow Himself to be led up into a mountain by the head, when He allowed himself to be crucified by

the members thereof? Wherefore it is not unworthy of our Redeemer, who came to be slain, that He was willing to be tempted. Rather, it was meet that He should overcome our temptations by his own temptations, even as he came to conquer our death by his own death.

*“... it was meet that He should overcome our temptations by His own temptations, even as He came to conquer our death by His own death.”*

But we ought to keep in mind that temptation beareth us onward by three steps. There is, first, the suggestion; then the delectation; lastly, the consent. When we are tempted, we oft-times give way to delectation and even to consent, because in the sinful flesh of which we are begotten, we carry in ourselves matter to favour the attack of sin. But God, when he took flesh in the womb of the Virgin, and came into the world without sin, did so without having in Himself anything of this contradiction. It was possible therefore for Him to be tempted in the first stage, namely suggestion; but delectation could find nothing in His soul wherein to fix its teeth. Wherefore all the temptation which He endured from the devil was without, for none was within him.

# Lent 1 – Monday, March 10

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 24:1-27

## **Rebekah and the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Genesis 24:1-27 tells the story of Abraham sending his servant to find a bride for his son Isaac. Through divine providence, the servant encounters Rebekah at a well, and she demonstrates kindness, hospitality, and generosity, ultimately being chosen as Isaac's wife. This early moment in salvation history points us forward to the story of Christ. When we look at this event through the eyes of faith, we see how God, in his Providence, fulfilled ancient types to bring us to a young woman, willing to say 'YES' - the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## **Divine Election and Willingness**

Rebekah is chosen by God to be the bride of Isaac, just as Mary was chosen to be the Mother of the Messiah. Both women display a deep openness to God's will. Rebekah, when asked if she would leave her homeland to go to Isaac, responds without hesitation (Genesis 24:58). Similarly, Mary, when visited by the angel Gabriel, gives her fiat: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

Their willingness to trust in God's plan exemplifies the virtue of faith, showing that true discipleship requires surrender to divine providence. Just as Rebekah leaves behind her former life to become part of God's covenant family, Mary gives herself entirely to God's will, becoming the new Eve and the Mother of the Living.

## **The Bride and the Church**

Rebekah is often seen as a type of the Church, the Bride of Christ. Isaac, the beloved son of Abraham, prefigures Christ, the beloved Son of God. Just as Rebekah is called to be Isaac's



bride, the Church is called to be the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27). In a more profound sense, Mary is intimately united with the Church as the Mother of God and the first disciple. She is both a member and the Mother of the Church, guiding the faithful to her Son.

Rebekah's journey to Isaac symbolizes the journey of every Christian soul toward Christ, and Mary serves as the perfect guide on this journey.

### **The Well and the Fountain of Grace**

The well where Rebekah is found represents a place of encounter, refreshment, and life-giving water. This imagery is significant in salvation history, as wells often symbolize the grace of God. Likewise, Mary is the vessel through whom the living water—Christ Himself—came into the world.

Just as Rebekah provided water for Abraham's servant and his camels, Mary provides the living water of Christ to all the faithful.

### **A Model of Faith and Generosity**

The story of Rebekah in Genesis 24 is a beautiful foreshadowing of the Blessed Virgin Mary. God chose both women for a divine mission, and both responded with faith and generosity. Both played a role in bringing forth the fulfillment of God's covenant. As Anglicans, we look to Mary as the perfect example of surrendering to God's will, an example we should all follow as we move through Lent towards Easter.

Just as Rebekah journeyed to meet Isaac, we, too, journey toward Christ, especially during Lent. And in this journey, we are not alone—our Blessed Mother walks with us, leading us ever closer to her Son, just as she told the servants at Cana, "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5).

Fr. Creighton McElveen  
Vicar of St. Hilda's Anglican Church (ACC)  
Atlanta, GA

# Lent 1 – Tuesday, March 11

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Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - John 9:24ff

*“I and my Father are one.”*  
(John 9:39)

**W**ho is Jesus? The answer to this question occupied the minds of his contemporaries and answering it has been the mission of the Church ever since. One answer is “Jesus is the Son of God.” This answer is attested to many times in Scripture.

To cite just a few, at the Annunciation, Gabriel said to Mary, in answer to her question of her conceiving despite her virginity, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

At his Baptism, the voice from Heaven (God the Father) proclaimed of him, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11). At the Transfiguration, similarly, the voice from the cloud said of him, “This is my beloved Son: hear him” (Luke 9:35).

When Peter made his great confession, he answered Jesus’ question, “But whom say ye that I am?” by saying, (Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15-16), to which Jesus responded, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17).

One last, terribly poignant example, was when the Centurion realized the enormity of what they had done, “the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God” (Matthew 27:54).

Indeed, Jesus was, and still is, and always will be, the Son of God. What is not clear is exactly what was meant by “the Son

of God.” It is not clear from the Synoptic Gospels just how his followers thought of him. Certainly, they would have thought of him as the long-expected messiah, come to lead the Jewish people in throwing off the Roman yoke. This limited understanding of who he was is what may have tempted Judas to betray him, perhaps hoping when the authorities arrested him, he would reveal his messiahship and lead the Jewish people in rebellion. One other illustration of this lack of clarity may be reflected in the question the apostles asked Jesus at his ascension, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).

John, having had many more years to contemplate the life of Jesus than the Synoptic writers, greatly clarified who Jesus was. In his Prologue he nailed it down firmly: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-4, 14).

We see Jesus as not only the messianic King of the Jews, but rather the Incarnation of the Logos, the word of God who in the beginning was with God and was God. The Son of God was, and is, and ever shall be, God the Son.

This understanding makes our Lord’s work on the Cross comprehensible. Because he was a man, he could die on the Cross; because he was God, his sacrifice on the cross was the “full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world” (including both yours and mine).

Fr. Nicholas Henderson  
Vicar of St. Patrick’s Anglican Church (APA)  
Brevard, NC

# Lent 1 – Ember Wednesday, March 12

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Ezekiel 2

*“I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them,  
Thus saith the Lord God.”  
(Ezekiel 2:4)*

**T**oday is Ember Wednesday in Lent. The Ember Days, which fall at the four seasons every year, are the days the Church specifically prays for the increase of the Ministry of Reconciliation. Generally, we understand this ministry to be the ordained ministry of the Church, that of bishops, priests, and deacons. This ordained ministry, however, has a specific duty enjoined upon it, as St. Paul says, “to equip the saints for works of ministry (Eph. 4:12, ESV).” All ministry, at its root, is about reconciliation, the reconciling of all mankind to God. And the reconciling of all mankind begins with our Lord Jesus Christ’s words from the New Testament Lesson at Morning Prayer, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13).” Since our Lord designates this as the beginning, so it is for us, who are His Body here on this earth. We all then share that ministry with Him, not just the bishops, priests, and deacons.

How then do we engage that ministry? Since we are part of Christ’s Body, we must recognize that we have been sent to the world for this ministry. Just as our Lord was sent, just as the Prophet Ezekiel was sent, so we too must embrace God’s words, as quoted above from today’s Old Testament Lesson at Morning Prayer, “I do send thee unto them.” We

are sent. And we are directed to say unto them, “Thus saith the Lord God.” And what pray tell is that? Truth. All God says is truth because He is Truth and His truth should ever be on our lips, just as with Ezekiel, and just as with our Savior. The reality is we cannot “call” anyone to repentance, to reconciliation, without speaking the truth. And the truth is that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ died for our sins, overcame death for our salvation, and will come again in glory.

How then do we speak that truth? We must understand that it is impossible to speak the truth unless we first live it! That means being faithful to God in all things, as both our Savior and Ezekiel were. Then we, in turn, can live the truth in our lives and so be equipped to speak it. A famous saying, attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, sums up this idea very well, “Preach the Gospel always, and, if necessary, use words.”

Fr. Erich Zwingert  
Rector of All Saints Anglican Church (APA)  
Mills River, NC

# Lent 1 – Thursday, March 13

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 25:28ff

*“Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”*

(Genesis 25:28)

**I**f you’re reading this devotional on the Thursday after Lent I, you’ve chosen God’s will already over your own. This struggle is part of our lives as Christians every day. Do we choose others over ourselves? Do we choose discipline over sloth? Do we hold our tongues, when the easy thing would be to lash out? God’s will is done in the end, always, but our impatience often leads us to try to move it forward before God’s time. That never works.

In this passage from Genesis, we see the two brothers, Jacob and Esau. Esau, the elder, is the darling of his father, Isaac, who loves his skill and athleticism as a hunter and provider. Rebekah, however, loves Jacob, not only for his quick mind, but because of the secret promise of God that the elder will serve the younger (Gen. 25:23). In her impatience to move God’s will forward, she pushes Jacob to seize this promise.

When Esau arrives from a frustrated hunt and finds Jacob with a meal of lentil stew prepared, Jacob sees an opportunity. Esau is impatient to fulfill a physical need. Surely a part of him knows that he can find food with a little patience, but delayed gratification is not a lesson he learned in his childhood. Maybe this lack of patience is from being his father’s favorite, which might have led to

him always getting his wants and needs fulfilled quickly. Regardless, when Jacob asks him to swear an oath to forgo his birthright, there is no hesitation.

The oath elevates this conversation from a seemingly mundane matter of sharing food to the consequences of divine judgment. Suddenly, an innocuous moment turns to one that will change the lives of both young men forever. Physical hunger drives Esau's decision-making in this moment without regard for consequences. Ambition, one could even argue spiritual hunger, drives Jacob. If he prevails here, he will be the spiritual leader of the family. Esau cares nothing for that, but rather quickly swears. To break that oath is to face divine judgment. Breaking it is unthinkable. In a moment, everything has changed.

Perhaps what also changed, that was not immediately evident to Jacob, is that he now has taken the role of firstborn. It is the elder that must serve the younger in God's prophecy. It will take many years of humbling by Rebekah's brother, Laban, before Jacob is ready to submit to his brother once again. It is not often in our daily lives that we face such momentous choices. Yet, like Isaac and Esau, we don't know what secret plans God may have for us. If we allow our personal wants and needs to drive our choices over God's stated will for us in Scripture, then we will likely choose poorly. If we submit ourselves to God's will and follow his Word, then we will choose wisely.

Fr. Jonathan Ulsaker  
Rector of Hopeful Anglican Church (ACC-DHC)  
Fayetteville, GA

## Lent 1 – Ember Friday, March 14

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - Matt. 10:24-33, 37-42

*“He that loveth father or mother more than me  
is not worthy of me.”  
(Matthew 10:37)*

**D**uring the Ember Days we pray for priestly vocations and for the fidelity and zeal of our clergy. The fidelity that God demands from his priests he demands of all his disciples – “a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Pt. 2:9). We all live out this priestly vocation at the Mass, offering up “our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice” unto God, from the first to the final “Amen.”

And beyond. As a royal priesthood, we offer up our whole lives to God, not only our Sundays, but the whole of every week, every month, every year – and every aspect of every life.

Jesus says that if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off – better “that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Mt. 5:30). Likewise, today: “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me” (Mt. 10:37-38).

Elsewhere, Jesus says the same thing, but harsher. “If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14:26). That



version immediately follows the Trinity II Gospel about wedding guests rejecting invitations: “I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused... I have bought five yoke of oxen... I have married a wife...” (Lk. 14:18-19).

None say, “I’m busy pursuing my serial-killing career” or “I’m busy oppressing the poor and beating up orphans.” They are not sordid sinners, just responsible businessmen and family men – yet their disordered priorities damn them.

There can be no compromise. Jesus always provokes a crisis. What is that you would choose over Jesus? That you must give up. This may require a dramatic renunciation – quitting your job, severing a sinful relationship. Poverty or death can be the price of following Jesus.

But for most of us, most of the time, the line between fidelity and apostasy is more subtle. We forsake Christ when we turn a blind eye to dishonesty at work or participate in wicked conversation. We forsake Christ, too, when we let our anxiety – over our job or financial prospects or even our children – overcome our trust in God. We forsake Christ when we let gluttony and greed rule in our lives.

During Lent, we fast – because it is better to be hungry than to be cast into hell, well-fed. We give alms – because it is better to be poor than to be wealthy and end up in hell. This Lent, as always, you must choose.

Will you choose comfort and apostasy – or Christ and his cross?

Fr. Mark Perkins  
Chaplain of St. Dunstan’s Academy  
Roseland, VA

# Lent 1 – Ember Saturday, March 15

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Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Timothy 6:6ff

*“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”*

(1 Timothy 6:11)

**C**heap Grace is always a great danger for orthodox Christians. Its chief poison is to dissuade the believer from confronting his own soul and his sin. Dogmas, doctrines, disciplines all are of no use unless they lead to change and conversion, sanctification, and salvation. Cheap Grace takes God’s wisdom, power, and love for granted. Cheap Grace demeans Christ’s holy Incarnation, cheapens the meaning of His mission, ignores His wisdom, rejects His love, and despairs of His power. Cheap Grace belittles human nature, robs it of its integrity, despairs of its involvement in salvation, and destroys man’s accountability to God. Cheap Grace leads men to damnation.

Of course, Anglicans from the get-go have been only too conscious of the danger found in any theology of Cheap Grace. The traditional Prayer Books everywhere invite believers into a life of contemplation and action. The active involvement of souls in their own salvation is part and parcel of the journey home to God. As fallen as man might be, still he is reminded that his nature is good and made for perfection. The integrity intended for the creature by the Creator comes with responsibility, learning, and work. Salvation is not magic. Redemption is not won without man’s moment of decision for Christ and His way in the soul.

To take but one example, the Anglican approach to salvation is found in the absolution that the priest offers for the General Confession at Holy Communion.

*ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you.*

The forgiveness of sins is ineffectual without hearty repentance in true faith. The point is that God's forgiveness is an offering with expectations. Man, for his part, must cultivate true confession and contrition if he is to benefit by God's Grace. It does us no good if our repentance is not hearty. Hearty repentance reveals that we know the weight of our sins and desire deliverance from them. Hearty repentance is characterized by a condition of soul that is serious about sin and God's solution to it in Jesus Christ's death upon the Cross. The price that Jesus paid on the Cross was not cheap. We must not presume that His gift is ours without some cost for our discipleship.

Hearty repentance is a good start if we hope to be saved. To find this, we must pray for humility and then courage. Humility will move us to confess that we deserve to be punished justly for our sins. Humility will plead the merits of Christ's Cross, a gift we never deserve. Courage inflames us to fight our sins. Courage stirs us to find the causes of our sins and Christ's specific remedy for each. The integrity of human nature demands that we study our condition and find the cure. Humility and courage are costly to acquire. We shall have to die to pride and cowardice.

Fr. William Martin

Rector of St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church (APA)  
Arden, NC

## Lent 2 – Sunday, March 16

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Homily for Lent 2

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Matthew 15:21-28

By Saint John Chrysostom

(*Homily 52* – Anglican Breviary C226-7)

**A**nd the gospel saith “But he answered her not a word.” What is this new and strange thing? To the Jews, in spite of their perversity, Christ seems ever to show great patience; when they blaspheme, He entreateth; when they vex him, He does not dismiss them; but to this Canaanite woman, who had received no instruction in the law or the prophets, and yet was showing such a great reverence, to such and one as this Christ does not vouchsafe so much as an answer! I suppose that even the very disciples must have been affected at the woman’s affliction, so that they were troubled, and out of heart. Nevertheless, not even in their vexation did they venture to say to him: “Grant her this favor.” Rather we read: “His disciples besought Him, saying, ‘Send her away, for she crieth after us.’”

But in this connection, let us not forget how we too, when we wish to persuade anyone, do often say the exact contrary of our own wishes. [For thus the disciples could reverently call their Master’s attention to the contrast between His wonted compassion and the strangeness of his behavior toward this woman.] Then Christ made answer: “I am not sent but on to the

lost sheep of the house of Israel.” And there upon what did this woman do? Was she silent? Did she desist? Did she falter in her earnestness? By no means; rather, she was the more instant. But with us, it is not so; rather, when we fail at once to obtain, we desist; whereas it ought to make us the more urgent. What then saith Christ? Not even with all this was He satisfied, but He seems to make as though to perplex furthermore, saying; “It is not need to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.”

And thus it was that when He did finally vouch safe to speak to her, He smote her more sharply by His words than by His silence. The more urgent her entreaty, so much the more doth He urge His denial. No longer does He speak of His own people as sheep, for on the contrary He calls them children, and her He calleth a dog! What then saith the woman? Out of his own very words she maketh her plea; for it is as if she said: “Though I be a dog, yet am I not thereby cast out from thee; for along with the children, the dogs are partakers, even though it be in scanty measure, since they eat of the crumbs which fall from the master’s table.” What then saith Christ? “Oh woman, great is thy faith!” Yea, it was for this reason that He had beforehand put her off, namely, that He might crown her as the Woman Great of the Faith!

## Lent 2 – Monday, March 17

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 27:1-29

*“And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father;  
and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob’s voice,  
but the hands are the hands of Esau.”*

(Genesis 27: 22)

One of the glories of the Bible is that it doesn’t whitewash its characters. Even the most noble and central characters in the plan of salvation are shown with warts and all. In today’s lesson, we have a key character shown, not with warts, but with fake skin. Jacob (who later will be renamed Israel by God) is one of the most vital personalities in the unfolding of God’s plan for the redemption of all mankind. Though he was born a few minutes after his twin brother, Esau, thus losing the natural claim to primogeniture, yet he is the one through whom God’s promises to his grandfather Abraham would ultimately be fulfilled. Over and over again, God uses the last one you would expect, the least qualified, the “throwaway candidate”: David, Matthias, and Paul come to mind. And God uses Jacob, whose name means “supplanter,” to supplant our expectations, pointing forward to his (Jacob’s) Son Jesus, who would accomplish the greatest supplanting of human expectations ever as he rises victorious over sin and death.

And God uses Jacob in spite of his brokenness—in fact, his brokenness, and the imperfections of his family, are the means through which God accomplishes his perfect will. Every single one of us comes from a dysfunctional family to some extent, and with Jacob’s family, we see that it is nothing

new. His mother manipulates and plots, pitting son against son; and his father passively acquiesces to being thus manipulated, accepting a blatantly unjust situation rather than “rocking the boat.” Just like us, Jacob’s attitude towards himself and his family is warped and perverted. He has been engaged in a lifelong struggle with his twin brother, who should have been his closest friend; even in the womb, the two struggled against each other. Jacob constantly sees himself in opposition to Esau, just as we always see ourselves as either “greater than” or “less than” each other. Jacob is so preoccupied with how he measures up to his brother that he even covers himself with skin to take on the likeness of Esau. He is not content simply to be himself, but instead he artificially disguises himself as another.

But in Christ, all the disguises are removed. Jesus sees us as we truly are, with all our imperfections and brokenness and sins and warts. He loves us and seeks us out and as the Good Shepherd lays down his life for us, knowing perfectly well what we are. He strips us down to the essentials, and as we stand there naked before him he sees himself reflected back. And the hands he holds out to his all-seeing Father to win our heavenly birthright are not covered with the skin of a dead animal, but rather are enfleshed with the real human nature he received from the most godly and least conniving mother a man has ever known, and they still bear the marks of a world determined to twist and manipulate in order to get its own way. But it is with those hands that he makes things right and remakes us as sons of God.

Fr. Paul Sterne  
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and St. Theodore’s Anglican Chapel (ACC-DHC)  
Columbia, SC

## Lent 2 – Tuesday, March 18

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### Evening Prayer - Psalm 51

*“For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me.  
Against Thee only have I sinned...”*  
(Psalm 51:3,4)

**G**iven the assignment to write a meditation on the daily office for the Tuesday of Lent II, I opened the BCP to the lectionary section. Going from left to right it began with Psalm 41, Gen. 27-40 and then I Cor:6-11. For Evening Prayer it was Psalm 51, Jer.5:1-9 and John 10:22-38. Every time my eyes glanced at the line my focus was on Psalm 51.

I looked up each of the lessons as I am sure you will. The Genesis lesson is about the stealing of Esau's blessing. You remember he and his twin Jacob were in competition, rather like Popeye and Brutus. In the end, Esau won their Father's favor. Esau was a man of the wild, a man of the flesh and a man of quick and strong emotion. Jacob was more domesticated. He cared for the tribe and its future. He'd been cowed by his older brother and therefore chose more devious means to gain advantage. Hence, the stealing of the blessing. I Corinthians deals with the ugliness of the parishioners of the church in Corinth. They were suing each other in civil court because they defrauded each other. Worse still they were idolaters, adulterers, and amoral drunkards. Next, Jeremiah pulls no punches as to the sinfulness of Israel and her coming chastisement. And finally, John shows the Jewish people question and abuse



Jesus, even threatening to stone him. All these passages show us the sinfulness and ingratitude of man.

But as I said earlier my eyes kept focusing on Psalm 51. It is well the known lament and confession of King David after it was made clear that he was an adulterer and a murderer. Like most priests who have lived nearly three quarters of a century, I have prayed this Psalm hundreds of times. But it wasn't the content or beauty of the psalm that made it draw my attention, it was a personal memory.

When I made my first confession in college, the priest gave me this Psalm as my penance. I remember being scared and embarrassed, but most of all I remember a huge weight being lifted from my soul.

The day before Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, is known as Shrove Tuesday. It is not just a day for pancakes and ham. "Shrove" comes from the word "shriven" which signifies that you have made a confession and completed your penance. You have been forgiven. Have you ever thought how important a regular confession could be for your soul?

Fr. Gene Geromel

Rector of St. Bartholomew Anglican Church (ACC-DHC)  
Swartz Creek, MI

## Lent 2 – Wednesday, March 19

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - St. John 11:1-16

*“...this is none other than the house of God,  
and this is the gate of heaven.”*

(Gen. 28:17)

**I**n today’s Lesson, Jacob has his famous dream of angels ascending and descending on what the Authorized Version calls a “ladder,” from which we get the story’s usual title: “Jacob’s Ladder.”

The word for “ladder” here in the Hebrew is one which occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures, but we can get clues to its meaning from cognate words in other ancient Semitic languages and from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Taken together, these clues reveal that what is being referred to is more probably a staircase than a ladder. But this would not be a staircase just hanging in the air: the words which Jacob uses upon waking to describe what he has seen (“the gate of heaven”) are words associated with the ancient stepped pyramids known as ziggurats.

These Mesopotamian pyramids were temples, most likely topped by altars where pagan deities were worshipped. They were nothing less than man-made holy mountains, with a place at the top for the worship of and encounter with a pagan god. What Joseph sees in his dream is a great ziggurat with angels ascending and descending the staircase, at the top of which the Lord God stands.

When Jacob had stopped to spend the night, he had stopped at a “certain place. Now, upon waking, he realizes that this place is holy because God has appeared to him

there. Wherever God is becomes a holy place. This is really an astounding revelation: God comes to us where we are and where we are becomes a holy place. The Mountain of God is wherever God appears.

It is no accident that our churches usually have steps leading up to the altar: our humble parishes are actually the Mountain of God, where God is enthroned at the top of the steps in the Tabernacle. When the Eucharist is celebrated, whether there are hundreds of parishioners or there is a priest and one other person, there are the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, ascending and descending to lift us up into the never ending worship of heaven, to bring us up the mountain.

Jacob is alone in the wilderness when he has his vision, and he is not surrounded by any comforts: we're told that he uses stones as his pillows. Not exactly a recipe for a comfortable night! This is, however, a good picture of what Lent should look like, as we put away some of the things that make us comfortable and use those small sacrifices to remind ourselves of the great Sacrifice our Lord made for us and to raise our minds from things of earth, to lead us up the mountain.

We should always be mindful, during Lent and always, that we have near at hand, in our parish church, the very Mountain of God, the Gate of Heaven, to which we may repair again and again to be fed with the very Body and Blood of Christ, and so be made partakers, even in the midst of our fast, of the Heavenly Feast. Every parish is an outpost of heaven, and it's always Easter at the Altar.

Fr. Jonah Bruce  
Editor of *The Trinitarian* (ACC)

## Lent 2 – Thursday, March 20

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 7:1-17

*“God has called us to peace.”* (1 Corinthians 7:15c)

*“He is my defense, so that I shall not fall.”* (Psalm 62:6)

**O**ur prayer book lectionary serves up passages that I would otherwise not contemplate. The New Testament lesson appointed for this morning is one of these passages, yet in welcoming odd passages I always learn something. St. Paul’s teachings seem harsh and confrontational, nevertheless the book of First Corinthians is written to proclaim the relevance of Jesus Christ in every area of the new believer’s life. Christians in the newly forming church of Corinth were destroying their testimony because of immorality and disunity.

St. Paul lays out new principles of sexuality for Christians living in a land full of shrines and temples devoted to Aphrodite, “the goddess of love.” Her temple cult in Corinth employed the services of 1,000 temple prostitutes. A worship many new Christians probably participated in before their conversion. Sexual immorality was rampant in Corinth, so was the disintegration of the family. In the newly forming religion, believers were called to exercise faithfulness to their spouses. Fidelity and stability would be the hallmarks of their lives now.

He also addresses celibacy, encouraging those not married to stay that way. St. Paul is not ignorant to our physical needs and recognizes that his call to celibacy is not for everyone, but those to whom the gift is given. I love that St. Paul distinguishes his opinions from the principles of God.

Concluding, St. Paul encourages new believers to stay with their unbelieving partner. He proclaims, “God has called us to peace.” Teaching that their faithfulness might cause their partner to turn to Christ. A beautiful reminder. We are not called to live contentiously in a world that desperately needs our love and the Gospel; we are called to live in peace and unity.

This passage is rife with cultural nuances not too dissimilar from our own. We are called now, as they were then, to live within those cultural nuances in a new and faith-filled way. Showing genuine concern for the other, remembering our faith calls us to see the relevance of Christ in every aspect of our life.

Humans are complex and life is often hard. Practicing kindness and peace in difficult situations and with difficult people calls us to exercise a gift we may not have. A kindness we cannot muster. We often fall and risk destroying our testimony. How do we move forward? The psalm appointed for today (Ps 62:6) beautifully provides an answer:

“He truly is my strength and my salvation; He is my defense, so that I shall not fall.”

With His help we have the strength to live a life that is truly countercultural. One that can be a witness of God’s love and peace. We are called to do our best and exercise fidelity, stability, and unity in all our relationships, not just the marital bed. Let us embrace His strength and live the life we are called to in all our dealings. Jesus Christ is still relevant.

Lisa Marion, OblSB

Spiritual Director (ACC - Diocese of the Holy Trinity)  
Newport Beach, CA

## Lent 2 – Friday, March 21

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 32:22-31

*“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.”*

(Genesis 32:24)

**A**rguing, questioning and wrestling with God is a common happenstance in the Jewish Scriptures. Often, we think that to argue with God means to rebel against the Almighty. Doesn't the Lord say in Deuteronomy Chapter 11 that “thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway”?

Nevertheless, we see characters that successfully argue with God. Abraham was successful in his pleading for Sodom (alas, that there were not 10 righteous souls in Sodom). Job is rebuked of God for his ignorance of God's ways, but the Lord restores Job and tells Job's friends “my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.”

God's knowledge is infinite, and his Wisdom is without measure. It would be wrong for us to think that God changed his mind and altered his plans because of His conflict with the patriarchs and prophets. We must take a broader view of these scenes. Perhaps, the arguments that the Old Testament saints gave God were part of His will for their lives. There was a testing involved, and the saints were called to wrestle with their own desires and with what

God was commanding. In these situations, it is not God that grew or changed; rather, the saints grew and matured in the midst of their confusion, anger and stubbornness.

Jacob, the sly trickster, who deceived his father, with the aid of his mother Rebekah, and who stole his brother Esau's birthright, has to wrestle with "a man" when he is left alone by the ford of Jabbok. Although this fight was physical, (Jacob's thigh was taken out of joint after all) we can understand that this struggle is the culmination of Jacob's whole life of wrestling with knowing and obeying God. Jacob is given a new name, a new identity. It is through conflict with God that Jacob emerges Israel. That is, he grows, matures and comes to know God more closely through wrestling with Him.

In Lent, we should also learn to wrestle with both ourselves and God. We know that there are many sins and bad habits that we must overcome. Often, we think that God lays too heavy a burden on us, that the Cross he gives us is too hard to bear. We cry out to him and ask why he doesn't take our burdens away. Why don't we always have the victory over sin and our old fallen nature. As we can see from the Scriptures, wrestling with God isn't wrong. Asking Him why things are happening the way they are isn't wrong. It is normal to be perplexed about God's will for our lives. Only through struggle with ourselves and with God will we learn to grow and to be conformed more completely into the image of Christ.

Fr. Joshua Kimbril

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Weaverville, NC

## Lent 2 – Saturday, March 22

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson – Genesis 35:1-7, 16-20

*“Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.”*

(Genesis 35:1)

**W**hen God spoke these words, he called Jacob to return to the place where he received God’s promise. On that occasion, he dreamt of a ladder reaching heaven with angels going up and down. He took the stone he laid his head on and built a pillar to mark that place as the gate of heaven, calling it Bethel. Now, God calls him to return to Bethel to erect an altar at the same place and fulfill the promise he made to make YHWH his God exclusively.

Jacob’s story comes full circle when he returns to Bethel. Upon his first encounter, he promised to make the Lord his God if He provided for him and brought him back to his father’s house in peace. And God did! Now it was time for Jacob to fulfill his vow. It was time to put off all equivocation and doubt and commit himself entirely to God. That wasn’t a private affair only. It included all the people he was responsible for too.

In Jacob’s day, God was still thought of as one among a number of local deities – the local deity of his clan. His family and servants still carried the idols of their clans. Jacob knew he could not appear before God at that holy place knowing there were idols in his caravan. He collected



the household idols tucked away in their tents and buried them beneath the Terebinth tree. Then he had them change into their best clothes, so they were fit to appear before the Lord.

This story powerfully illustrates the Lenten reconsecration of our lives to God. It is time to put away all equivocation and doubt. A time to rummage through the tents of our souls for hidden idols. Not just the ones that are obvious, but the ones hidden under the carpet: Idols of distraction, dissipation, and despondency. And through repentance and confession we bury all of them at the foot of the tree upon which our Lord was hung. Then, having put off the vestiges of sin, we put on the garments of salvation through faith, praise, prayer, and good works.

Jacob had a mystical encounter with God that completely reoriented His life. He returned to the same place where he saw angels ascending and descending a ladder. Likewise, when we renew our consecration to Jesus and rid ourselves of petty idols the gate of heaven opens within the soul and a ladder to heaven is raised. Our thoughts and prayers ascend freely, and angels are dispatched in answer. The heart becomes like Bethel, the house of God, and the voice of God is heard more clearly. Therefore, let us go up to meet the Lord and lay our head down in humility upon the rock of our salvation, that we may ascend the ladder of grace and cast down our idols at the foot of the cross.

Fr. Matthew Mirabile  
Rector of Trinity Anglican Church (ACA)  
Rochester, NH

# Lent 3 – Sunday, March 23

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Homily for Lent 3

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Luke 11:14-28

by The Venerable Bede

(Anglican Breviary C239-230)

**M**atthew saith that the devil, by which this poor creature was possessed, was not only dumb, but also blind; and that, when the possessed was healed by the Lord, he both saw and spake. Three miracles, therefore, were performed on this one man; the blind saw, the dumb spake, and the possessed was freed from the devil.

This mighty work was then done in the flesh, but is now fulfilled spiritually every time men are converted and become believers. For from them the devil is cast out, and their eyes are given to see the light of the Faith, and their lips, which before were dumb, are opened that their mouth may shew forth the praise of God. But some of them said: He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. It was not some of the multitude that uttered this slander, but Pharisees and scribes, as we are told by the other Evangelists.

The multitude, which was made up of such as had little instruction, was filled with wonder at the works of the Lord. But the Pharisees and scribes, on the other hand, denied the facts when they could; and when they could not, they twisted them by an evil interpretation, and asserted that the works of God were the works of an

unclean spirit. And Matthew saith: Others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. It would seem that they desired him to do some such thing as Elias did, who called down fire from heaven; or like as Samuel, who caused thunder to roll, and lightning to flash, and rain to fall at midsummer: as though they could not have explained away these signs also, as being the natural result of some unusual, albeit hitherto unremarked, state of the atmosphere. O thou who stubbornly deniest that which thine eye seeth, thine hand holdeth, and thy sense perceiveth, what wilt thou say to a sign from heaven? Verily, thou wilt say that divers signs from heaven were once also wrought even by the sorcerers in Egypt.

But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them: Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to a desolation, and an house divided against an house falleth. Thus did he make answer, not to their words, but to their thoughts, in hopes that they might at least believe in the power of him who seeth the secrets of the heart. But if every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, it followeth that the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which same is to abide in everlasting steadfastness, is not a divided kingdom. Wherefore we hold, without fear of contradiction, that it never can be brought to desolation by any shock whatsoever. But, saith the Lord, if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out devils by Beelzebub. In saying this, he sought to draw from their own mouth a confession that they had chosen for themselves to be part of that devil's kingdom which, if it be divided against itself, cannot stand.

## Lent 3 – Monday, March 24

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 9:15ff

*“...I am made all things to all men,  
that I might by all means save some.”*

(1 Cor. 9:22)

**T**o our dismay or relief, we have reached the middle of Lent. How are you doing keeping that Lenten resolution? Regardless of our abilities to stick to a fast or other Lenten disciplines, it is no coincidence that right in the middle of this Lent is the Feast of the Annunciation.

We are on the cusp of celebrating the great Feast of the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is as if the liturgical color of the week has lightened from penitential violet to rose to remind us of that rose tree springing forth from an ancient shoot. Tomorrow, we celebrate that the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, that God became Man to save all mankind. We find this great truth foreshadowed and echoed throughout all of Scripture, but especially in the lessons appointed for this morning and for this evening.

Due to the upcoming feast and the way the lessons fall we read Genesis out of order. This evening, in Genesis chapter 3, we find the very first Gospel, the *proto-evangelium*, which contains the promise that despite the sin of Adam and Eve, the seed of Eve will crush the serpent’s head. This morning, in Genesis chapter 37 we read of the selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his own brothers,

and how they tricked poor Jacob, also called Israel, into believing Joseph had been killed. But God has a plan for Joseph, and He uses him to save Israel. In Joseph we find a foreshadowing of Christ, for one who was considered dead is revealed to be alive and plays no small part in another's salvation.

Then there is St. Paul, who tells us that he has been a social chameleon so that he may win as many as possible to Christ. He has been a righteous Jew, so that he may win the Jews to Christ, he has been a Gentile, so he may win Gentiles to Christ, he has been weak, so he may win the weak to Christ. He has been all things to all men, so that he may win some to Christ. St. Paul ultimately sacrificed his life by patterning his life after the Life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who comes down into our world, becoming man for our salvation.

Let us reflect today on how our lives are measuring up to the Life of Christ. How closely are we patterning our lives after the model of Christ? You never know how God may be using you to bring about the salvation of your family, friends, and neighbors.

Fr. Geordan Geddings

Rector of St. Peter's Anglican Church (ACC-DHC)

Cypress, TX

# Lent 3 – The Annunciation

## Tuesday, March 25

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Isaiah 52:7-10

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”*

(Isaiah 52:7)

**T**oday we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the day—exactly nine months before Christmas—that the angel Gabriel came to Mary with good tidings, as Isaiah prophesied, and saluted her as “thou that art highly favored.” The angel gave her the Good News, that God would be made Flesh, inside of her.

She is the first person to hear this Good News, and she is the first by faith, to believe, and in so doing, she becomes the first Christian. St. Augustine writes: “The Virgin conceived in her mind before she conceived in her body.” Meaning she heard the word of God and accepted it, and then the Word of God became flesh, and dwelt amongst us. By her fiat, “Be it unto me according to thy word,” she reverses the curse of Eve. Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho, writes in AD 120: “The Son of God became man through a Virgin, so that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed the same way it had begun. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, gave birth to

disobedience and death...But the Virgin Mary conceived faith and joy.”

The Virgin Mary as the first Christian gives us the pattern of our faith. To hear, to believe, and to do. She heard the message of the angel. She put her trust in God's word. She lived that faith, all the way to Calvary where she stood at the foot of the Cross and watched her Son die for her, and for all mankind.

The collect for this day is found on page 235 in the BCP, and it is known as the Angelus. It's a prayer that is not just commended to us this day, but there is a custom of saying this prayer each day, at Noon, to contemplate and give thanks for the mysteries of the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection of our Lord.

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.

Fr. Matthew Harlow  
Rector of Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church (APA)  
Warner Robbins, GA

# Lent 3 – Wednesday, March 26

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Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - St. Mark 10:46ff

*“And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.”*

(Mark 10:52)

**I**n the early days of the Church, Christians were called followers of the way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14). St. John the Baptist was the prophet who prepared the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:3). Our Lord then pronounced: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). All who follow Christ are pilgrims and sojourners of the way following Jesus on the path to eternal life.

In the second lesson for Evening Prayer, we read about a blind man named Bartimaeus. Because of his blindness, Bartimaeus was reduced to begging. We read that this helpless beggar sat next to the highway in Jericho as people passed by this poor man day after day. The highway represented being an outsider or one removed from the community. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was near, he began crying out, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me” (Mark 10:47). The people demanded that this beggar keep quiet “but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me” (Mark 10:48). This persistent blind beggar would not be silenced.

Although the people were chiding Bartimaeus to keep quiet, our Lord sees this blind man and calls for him to come near. We then read the extraordinary interaction



between blind Bartimaeus and our Lord, “And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way” (Mark 10:51-52). Jesus heals the man who the people couldn’t keep quiet. After receiving his sight, we then read that Bartimaeus “followed Jesus in the way.”

In holy baptism, we received sight as the Light of the world illuminated our path and made us followers of the way. We were like Bartimaeus in the sense that we were blind beggars void of any help. We were aliens and strangers to God apart from Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:19). The Holy Spirit, however, has opened our eyes through the waters of holy baptism and made us followers of the way of Jesus.

How do we then walk in this way? First, we are to be persistent in our prayers by echoing Bartimaeus, “Thou son of David, have mercy on me.” These words make for a good Lenten discipline as we pray the words of the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner.” Second, we are to persevere in our pursuit of God. Some might want us to keep our religion private, but we are called to be passionate in pursuing the way of Christ. May we, therefore, follow the example of Bartimaeus by rejoicing in Christ who has opened our eyes as we pray and follow His way.

Fr. Wade Miller

Rector of St. Philips Anglican Church (APA)  
Blacksburg, VA

## Lent 3 – Thursday, March 27

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson –1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

*“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do,  
do all to the glory of God.”*

(1 Cor. 10:31)

**T**he Lenten season provides us with a concentrated period where we can focus on our spiritual development as we seek to glorify our Savior. We should always be conscience of our responsibility to “Be Holy as I am Holy” (Lev. 11:44; repeated in I Peter 1:16). It is during Lent where we have the privilege to truly focus upon implementing that mindset and carry it into our Life in Christ daily.

The readings for today provide a truly remarkable picture of what it means to “be holy,” to submit to God, and to live a life worthy of our calling in Christ.

The Psalmist presents the foundational principles as to “why” we are to be Holy. There is a full and passionate account of all our Savior God has done for us from forgiveness (Ps. 85:2), His grace and mercy of not being displeased with us forever (v.3), and the appeal, out of our love for these things that God turn us back to Him (v.4).

Our lives are to be Holy, not exclusively out of fear, but out of love for what God has done for us - most notably our salvation (vs. 7, 9 & 11-13). Which drives us to Gen. 41, where we see God’s salvation at work both individually and corporately.

In this passage, Moses concludes the section of Joseph's imprisonment with the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream. The dream is the vehicle by which God uses Joseph's faithfulness to bring salvation not only to Joseph, but to the world! As God works in all things, He was working in the world to show Pharaoh that He, not the gods of Egypt, controls all things. The magicians, wizards, and seers of Pharaoh's court, were helpless to understand the mind of God, unlike Joseph. It took the faithfulness of a man wrongly imprisoned - imprisoned for being Holy before God - to show the "king" who the true King of the universe was, and how the true King would be the salvation of all.

Finally, in I Cor. 10 the Apostle Paul adds another level of living a Godly life, teaching us how we are to live that life around others with whom we might not agree. The Apostle tells us, as Christians we are not bound by artificial constraints fulfilled in Christ. However, we are to always remember that our actions, no matter whether we might consider them benign, can still affect those around us. Think of others before ourselves; do not use our freedom to offend those around us; consider the conscience of those near and ask, "how does my action impact their view of Christ?" The act of putting others first is an act of love.

As God has saved us, and we love Him because He first loved us, let us express our love for God for our salvation, by living lives worthy to be called Holy.

Fr. Paul Castellano

Vicar of St. Peter the Apostle Anglican Church (APA)

Kingsport, TN

## Lent 3 – Friday, March 28

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 11:17ff

*“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”*

(1 Corinthians 11:28)

**W**e live in a sort of famine, though we generally don't realize it. Much of what we consume, whether food or media, our ever-expanding worldly goods or politics, does not fulfill us. We take these things in but at the end of the day, they do not satisfy us, for they fill but do not nourish. In truth, it is really only the Incarnate Word that will satisfy us.

How then are we to replace the filler in our lives? How do we remove the things which we may enjoy superficially so that we may consume, and be consumed by, that which we will enjoy everlastingly?

Fasting is one of those things that we often associate with Lent. This is meet and right, as fasting is one of the three traditional Lenten practices, along with prayer and almsgiving. Yet we must remember that the Lenten Fast, like the Eucharistic Fast, is not simply a reduction of calories or an omission of a favorite activity. It is rather a participation in the Paschal Mystery. By stepping back from those things which we enjoy or find helpful, we can open up an opportunity to fill that open space with divine grace.

The Fast leads to a Feast. The Lenten Fast leads to Holy Week, the Eucharistic Fast to Holy Communion.

In this season of Lent, we go progressively deeper into the process of repentance until we come to Palm Sunday with our Lord's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. Then comes

Maundy Thursday and our Lord's institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood and his arrest that night. On Good Friday, the Lord offers himself on the Cross and is laid in a tomb and on the night of Holy Saturday, Death is trampled down by death and the powers of Hell tremble as the Lord rises. We observe the Lenten Fast in order to make space in our lives for the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, celebrated each year in the round of the sacred liturgy.

The traditional practice of the Western Church has been to observe the reception of Holy Communion with a fast from midnight of the night before. During the Twentieth Century, many churches have shortened this repeatedly so that in many places the Eucharistic Fast is no longer observed, and yet its omission has gained us little and lost us much. By fasting prior to Holy Communion, the first thing we eat is the sacrament of Our Lord's Body and Blood. In breaking our fast, we consume our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. If we are what we eat, how fitting is it for the first thing that we eat be that which we are to be transformed into: the likeness of Jesus Christ himself.

By going down into Egypt and seeking the one thing needful, we die with Christ and we rise with him, through the waters of the Red Sea, that is, through Baptism. But we must, like the Israelites, sustain ourselves for the journey not with our own strength, but through Our Lord's own gift of Himself once offered.

Fr. Zachary Braddock  
Rector of Anglican Cathedral of the Epiphany (ACC-DHC)  
Columbia, SC

## Lent 3 – Saturday, March 29

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Evening Prayer - Psalm 103

*“Bless the LORD, O my soul:  
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.”*  
(Psalm 103:1)

**T**his evening's psalm is a song of profound adoration, in which David calls his soul to remember and magnify the goodness of God. This psalm is a treasury of divine mercy, a wellspring of comfort for the weary soul, and a reminder of the unsearchable love of the Almighty toward His people. It is fitting, therefore, that we should meditate upon its riches, that our hearts may be lifted in thanksgiving and our spirits may be conformed to its holy exhortation.

David begins with the stirring command: “Praise the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, praise his holy Name.” Here, he addresses not merely his lips but his very soul, summoning the deepest affections of his being to render praise to God. It is not enough to speak of God's goodness; we must feel it, embrace it, and let it shape the very core of our worship. To praise the Lord is to acknowledge His greatness with reverent joy, offering Him the tribute of a grateful heart.

The psalmist urges his soul not to forget the benefits of the Lord. Indeed, how easily do we frail humans overlook the blessings that sustain us daily! God “forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities; who saveth thy life from destruction.” These words unfold the manifold mercies of God. He is the pardoner of sin, the physician of our spiritual maladies, the redeemer who delivers us from peril. What greater cause for praise than this? Sin, the great burden of the soul, is lifted by His mercy. The wounds of transgression

are healed by His grace. The destruction that should be ours is averted by His love.

The psalm ascends into a glorious reflection upon the character of God: “The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness.” What comfort is found in these words! The justice of God is not swift to destroy, but His mercy is abundant to save. Though we have often strayed, He has not dealt with us according to our sins. His mercy is as high as the heavens above the earth, and as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Who can measure such love? Who can fathom such forgiveness?

David draws our minds to the frailty of man: “The days of man are but as grass; for he flourisheth as a flower of the field. For as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone.” In contrast to God's enduring mercy, our lives are fleeting, fragile as the grass that withers in the noonday heat. Yet, for those who fear the Lord, His righteousness extends to children's children, a covenant of steadfast love passed from generation to generation.

The psalm closes with a universal summons to praise: angels, hosts of heaven, and all God's works are called to magnify His name. Thus, with holy resolve, let us, like David, command our souls: “Praise the Lord, O my soul.” May this be our daily song, our unceasing meditation, until at last we bless Him in eternity.

Fr. Richard Bugyi-Sutter

Assisting at St. George the Martyr Anglican Church (APA)  
Simpsonville, SC

# Lent 4 – Sunday, March 30

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Homily for Lent 4

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – John 6:1-14

by Saint Augustine of Hippo

(*Tractate 24 on John*, Anglican Breviary C253-4)

**T**he miracles wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ were verily divine works, and they stir up the mind of man to rise by a perception of what is seen by the eye unto an apprehension of God himself. For God is of such substance as eye cannot see, and the many miracles which He doth work in his continual rule of the whole universe, and in his providential care of everything which he has made, are by use become so common that scarce anyone permitteth himself to perceive the same, as for example, what wondrous and amazing works of God there be in every grain of seed. Wherefore His mercy hath constrained Him to keep some works to be done only at some convenient time, as it were, out of the common course and order of nature, to the intent that men may see them and wonder, not because they be greater, but because they be rarer, than those which they so lightly esteem by reason of their daily occurrence.

For to govern the whole universe is surely a greater miracle than to satisfy five thousand men with five loaves of bread. At the former works no man doth marvel, yet at the feeding of the five thousand, all men do marvel, not because it is a greater miracle than the



other, but because it is a rarer one. For who is He that now feedeth the whole world? Is it not that same who, from a little grain that is sown, maketh the fulness of the harvest? God worketh in both cases in one and the same manner. He that over the sowing maketh to come the harvest, is the same that took in His hands five barley loaves, and of them made bread to feed five thousand men. For the hands of Christ have the power to do both the one and the other. He that multiplieth the grains of corn is the same that multiplied the loaves, save only that in this latter case He committed them not into the earth whereof He is Himself the maker.

Therefore this miracle is done outwardly before us, that our souls inwardly may thereby be quickened. The same is shown to our eyes to furnish food for thought. Thus by means of those of his works which are seen, we may come to feel awe toward Him that cannot be seen. Perchance we may thereby be roused up to believe, and if we attain unto belief, we shall be purified to such a good purpose that we shall begin to long to see him. Wherefore, in such wise, through the things which are seen, we may come to know Him that cannot be seen. Yet it suffices not if we perceive only this one meaning in Christ's miracles. Rather let us ask of the miracles themselves what they have to tell us concerning Christ; for in all truth they speak with a tongue of their own, if only we have goodwill to understand the same. For Christ is the Word of God, and each and every work of the Word speaketh a word to us.

## Lent 4 – Monday, March 31

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Morning Prayer - Psalm 90

*“Turn thee again, O Lord, at the last,  
and be gracious unto thy servants.”*

(Psalm 90:13)

**Y**esterday marked the observance of Rose Sunday, also known as *Laetare*, a term signifying Rejoice. The Collect recited on the Fourth Sunday of Lent and throughout the subsequent week holds profound significance for this period of penitence. The Collect implores that, despite our deserving of punishment, we may, through grace, be mercifully relieved. During the fourth week of Lent, we persist in our Lenten disciplines, earnestly seeking pardon as we perceive the initial radiant beams of the Dayspring from on high, illuminating the imminent future. Our Savior, resurrected and triumphant over the chains of death, inspires us to exclaim, “Rejoice!” The end is near, yet our journey is not complete.

Psalm 90 also admonishes, “Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee; and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.” Despite our efforts, we cannot conceal ourselves from the Lord. The Lenten disciplines must be undertaken with genuine sincerity to transform our hearts and minds, amending the ways of the flesh to more fittingly honor Him in this life.

Genesis 44, the Old Testament reading for Morning Prayer, conveys a similar message. At first glance, Joseph's actions might appear cruel, seemingly employing

deception to exact revenge on his brothers for their past transgressions against him. However, a deeper reading reveals that Joseph is, in fact, testing his brothers to ascertain whether they have experienced a true change of heart and mind. Will they sacrifice their youngest brother Benjamin to slavery in Egypt to secure their own return home? Will they once again cause their father anguish by losing another beloved son? Joseph seeks to expose their hidden sins or, preferably, to reveal their repentance.

At this stage in our Lenten journey, much like Jacob's sons, we find ourselves at a midpoint where reflection on our progress is necessary. It is here that we must examine our own actions and intentions. Search our own sack, so to speak. Do we honor ourselves, or do we honor our Father? Are we truly experiencing a transformation of heart and mind, or are we merely going through the motions? How can we return to our Father with a clear conscience? The reality is, without a Savior, this is not possible. So, we must stay the course, continue following Christ on His path to the cross. Becoming more like Him in these final weeks with a renewed dedication to fasting to tame the body, prayer to combat evil, and giving alms to cultivate compassion within our hearts. The end is near, yet our journey is not complete.

Dss. Cynthia Hensley  
All Saints' Anglican Church (APA)  
Mills River, NC

# Lent 4 – Tuesday, April 1

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 45

*“And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.”*

(Genesis 45:4)

If a person wished to search the Old Testament to find the clearest prophecy indicating the coming ministry of Jesus Christ, they would need look no farther than the last chapters of Genesis where readers encounter Joseph, the highly favored son of Jacob and Rachel. Joseph was miraculously conceived in the womb of his mother Rachel. He came to his own brothers and was not received by them. He descended into a low pit because of the betrayal of those closest to him. From the depths he was raised to the right hand of Pharaoh, who was the lord of the land at the time. He was positioned in such a seat of power that he could save many from certain death. From conception through resurrection, elements of the life of Jesus seem to be unmistakably indicated in the types and shadows of the life of Joseph, right there in the first book of the Bible.

Perhaps the most fascinating and emotionally fraught scene of the Joseph narrative is the portion we encounter today in Genesis 45 where the favored son presents himself to his brothers, as it were, risen from the dead. Joseph, with a kind of wry playacting that only a brother could faithfully execute, had made his brothers sweat a little bit by accusing them of theft, even providing evidence which his own servants had planted.

Bewildered, the brothers, who were sure they had done no wrong, were ushered into a room where they would be confronted by a reminder of the full extent of their guilt. Without warning, Joseph revealed his true identity and the brothers were speechless. It was fear, not joy that filled their hearts. They had abandoned him. They had betrayed him. They had sold him for coins, but now, it was they who were powerless. It would be up to Joseph to decide whether or not to have mercy. He had the power to give or to take life.

Jesus, when he arose from the dead, stood in a room of his disciples and declared much the same thing that Joseph had declared to his brothers. His presence alone declared, “It is I.” The disciples were not immediately overjoyed. They had abandoned Jesus. They had betrayed him. Judas sold him for silver coins. St. Peter even pretended not to know his Lord. Whether this resurrection was for restitution or for wrath was not sure. But the words of Jesus were as the words of Joseph, “Peace be unto you.” Joseph’s brothers would become the fathers of a nation, but the apostles would become the fathers of the Church.

From Joseph’s brothers to Jesus’ disciples to your own clergy to you, may we ever keep in mind that perpetual meeting with our Lord where “all hearts are open and all desires are known.” Though we have reason to be afraid, may we rather abandon our fears than Him. May we rather deny ourselves than our Lord. May we, by the manner in which we live our lives, display that we have abandoned spiritual famine and begun gratefully take our place at the eternal banquet. May we see that this has been God’s will, His plan, and His calling for us from the beginning.

Fr. Paul Rivard

Rector of St. George the Martyr Anglican Church (APA)  
Simpsonville, SC

## Lent 4 – Wednesday, April 2

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Genesis 47:29-31, 48:8-20

*“And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.”*

(Genesis 48:14)

**T**he reversal of blessings is a pattern in the Bible. The blessing of inheritance or favor that is normally given to the firstborn son is passed to another. This pattern is made clear from the start: Isaac over Ishmael (Gen. 17:18-19), Jacob over Esau (Gen. 25:21-23), Joseph over Reuben (Gen. 49:3-4, 22-26), and, in today's reading, Ephraim over Manasseh (Gen. 48:13-20). In each case, the Abrahamic blessing was carried on by those born later. God seems to enjoy having the odds stacked against him.

Gideon, for example, was a type of savior of the Israelites. Yet he was hiding from the enemy when Yahweh greeted him as a “mighty man of valor” (Judges 6-8). And where was Saul when Israel sought to anoint him as king? Hiding behind the baggage (1 Sam. 10:22). Esther, with no real power, risked her life to save the Jews by approaching the king boldly—she relied totally upon God working through her. The Hebrew midwives defied Pharaoh to protect the children of Israel, and it worked. Moses' sister, Miriam, delivered Moses from death simply by asking, “Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” (Ex. 2:7).

Likewise, Elisabeth Elliot, in a dangerous environment, continued Jim Elliot's mission to reach the Acua people in Ecuador, as dramatized in *The End of the Spear*. And Mother Teresa, in an overwhelmingly helpless situation, built a movement that has impacted millions, with tens of thousands of people involved and a presence in over 130 countries. Indeed, God often works through the underdog.

The most infamous example of this principle can be found in how God ironically used death to conquer death itself. Through His death, Jesus was resurrected, freeing all who are baptized into His death and resurrection from death's grip. Just as ironically, God desires to use you. That is to say that while he is fully able to do all things himself, the Bible says that we are God's "fellow workers" through whom he brings about reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-6:2). Stated differently, when he wants something done here on earth, he gets it done through us. His eyes, the Bible says, look to and fro throughout the earth, all in an effort to find someone fully devoted to him (2 Chron. 16:9).

Are you a single mother? A young boy? Someone well past retirement age? Do you feel like you lack the time, resources, or skills to serve God, yet you know you've been given a vision for change that feels impossible without His help? It turns out you are uniquely qualified. You need only follow in Jesus' footsteps and commit to giving your life fully to God, for he, like with Ephraim, wants to use the lesser to bless the nations.

Dcn. Ryan Cason

Curate of St. Mary's Anglican Catholic Church (ACC)

Denver, CO

## Lent 4 – Thursday, April 3

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - I Corinthians 14:13-25

*“Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”*

(I Corinthians 14:19)

**I**f you have been reading the second lessons at Morning Prayer since last Saturday, you know that St. Paul devotes three chapters in this letter to Corinth to the use of gifts within the church community. Gifts, in the sense that Paul uses the word here, means abilities or skills. Today’s second lesson focuses on the gift of tongues (languages).

God gave us language so that we might communicate with him and with one another. But language can be misused; at the building of Babel (Genesis 11), God confused the languages when its ambitious builders sought to rise to God’s level. Since then, men have spoken a seemingly endless variety of languages, depending on the culture in which they have been raised. Sharing a common language or language group enables speakers to co-operate in social tasks for the common good. But I cannot undertake even a simple task with a Chinaman, because we cannot understand each other.

In the Book of Acts (cp.2), through his Holy Spirit, God does something miraculous: Before a polylingual audience, the apostles, who are all native Galileans, begin to address them in their own native languages, so that each hears in his own tongue “the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11).” God did not choose to restore a common tongue to mankind, but to offer it a common Gospel. Here, the gift of tongues is put to the service of that Gospel. The preaching of the apostles



was to edify their hearers, not some unintelligible babble intended to baffle or to provoke wonder and admiration.

St. Paul knew and understood multiple languages. It is likely he could read and write Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin (as on occasion, he had to defend himself before imperial officials). He used his ability to make himself understood and to advocate the truth of the gospel. Similarly, the church at Corinth, where multiple cultures interacted, included multi-lingual speakers. Apparently, not all were using their facility with language to edify their hearers. Some were more interested in advertising their own skill than in making known the wonderful works of God. Put briefly, the gift of language can be a gift to the whole church, if it is used for the right reasons. Through the centuries, men have dedicated their lives to translating the Holy Scriptures, in the hope that everyone may hear.

Paul's warning to the Corinthians continues to guide and warn the church of today. During the last century, especially in the United States, sects formed which emphasized the gift of tongues. These largely imaginary languages didn't spread the gospel to others, but tended to identify their speakers as a spiritual elite in their faith communities.

While this morning's readings focus on the gift of tongues, we can ponder seriously our other gifts; be they material prosperity, arts, professional skill, or many others. Are we regularly thankful to their giver? Are we using them in God's service?

Dcn. Thad Osborne  
Holy Cross Anglican Church (APA)  
Farragut, TN

# Lent 4 – Friday, April 4

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## Morning Prayer - Psalm 102

*“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure...”*

(Psalm 102:25-26a)

**I**n orthodox Christianity, there is the teaching of God’s “impassibility.” This is the belief that God does not and cannot change. As firmly as the Church has upheld the belief in God’s impassibility, it has also affirmed the suffering of Christ, who is both fully God and fully Man. This strikes at the very heart of the paradox of the Incarnation: the immutable, incomprehensible and impassible God took on our nature and condescended to accept our suffering.

In Psalm 102 the Psalmist cries out to God and complains bitterly of the pain and mistreatment that he is going through: My days are consumed away like smoke, and my bones are burnt up as it were a firebrand. My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. For the voice of my groaning, my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh.”

We should read Psalm 102 in close parallel with Our Lord’s suffering in the garden. In Gethsemane Christ tells the disciples: “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” In the garden the Son asks the Father “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” The suffering of Christ itself is not salvific; rather his obedience in the midst of suffering is redemptive. As perfect Man, Christ’s faithfulness in Gethsemane redeems the disobedience of Adam in Eden.

Psalm 102 witnesses to the trust and reliance that the narrator has in God: God “hath looked down from his sanctuary; out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth; That he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity, and deliver them that are appointed unto death.” Indeed, the Psalmist writes words that could be placed in the mouth of Christ: God “brought down my strength in my journey, and shortened my days. But I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of mine age.”

It is God’s eternal character that gives the Psalmist hope: “But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance throughout all generations. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion; for it is time that thou have mercy upon her, yea, the time is come.” “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

Now is a time when we call to mind the suffering of Our Savior. We take on fasts and disciplines so that we might chasten ourselves and be conformed to the sufferings of Christ. Lent is a snapshot of our whole lives, since Jesus promises “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Our earthly lives are a tribulation, but in the midst of trouble we take hope, since Jesus also tells us “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Our suffering can be redemptive, but only through faith is suffering transformed into a means of grace.

Fr. Joshua Kimbril  
Rector of St. Matthew’s Anglican Church (APA)  
Weaverville, NC

# Lent 4 – Saturday, April 5

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

*“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...”*

(1 Corinthians 15:1a)

**O**ur Lenten disciplines are meant to hurt a bit. By this time in the fourth week of Lent that has probably been made clear to us! Even if reasonable circumstances keep us from observing the traditional fast and abstinence of the Forty Days, whatever good things we forego and whatever good practices we adopt are supposed to be apparent to us in our bodies, our attention spans, our urges, and in every aspect of our being.

In this evening’s New Testament reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark we read Our Lord’s teaching on His Second Coming to “gather his elect from the four winds.” “Even the Son of Man Himself,” says Jesus, “does not know the hour of His return.” According to St. John Chrysostom (d. AD 407), this is not a statement about how much God the Son knows or doesn’t know! It rather a figure of speech to drive home the point that the disciples of Jesus are not to inquire into this matter, seeking in vain curiosity to know things that are impossibly above our comprehension. Therefore, “take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is...Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.”

One way of looking at our Lenten disciplines is that they conquer minor temptations in training to conquer major temptations. If I can control my appetite for forty days,

then perhaps in God's grace I can control myself when a much more trying temptation presents itself. This is relevant to the Lord's Return.

We are watching and keeping vigil through the dark night of Lent (and the present age) to be trained and ready for the Master of the house to return, finding His servants occupied in the business of His household. We want the Lord to return to a house ordered after His expectations. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this season have been ordered to that purpose. These exercises of self-denial are worked out in us by the Holy Spirit as a participation in the Son of Man's self-denial. And in this life the fountain from which these graces of self-denial spring and the pool to which they return is the Holy Mass—the dress rehearsal for the Son of Man's Return.

Tomorrow is Passion Sunday, on which we will plunge more deeply into Our Blessed Lord's holy suffering for our salvation. May we all go to the Offering of Jesus tomorrow morning watching—wide awake to His precious death and passion, His mighty resurrection, and His glorious ascension, bearing in mind His promise to come again as the Master of His Household the Church and our own individual souls and bodies. “I say unto you, Watch.”

Fr. Kevin Fife

Rector of St. James on the Glebe Anglican Church (APA)  
Gloucester, VA

## Lent 5 – Passion Sunday, April 6

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Homily for Lent 5, commonly called Passion Sunday

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – John 8:46-59

by Gregory the Great

*(Homily 18 on the Gospels, Anglican Breviary C267-8)*

**D**eary beloved brethren, consider the gentleness of God. He came to take away sin, and He saith; “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” He, who in virtue of his Godhead was able to justify sinners, did not distain to show by an appeal to reason that He was not Himself a sinner. But verily the words which he addeth are exceeding awesome: He that is of God heareth God’s words; ye, therefore, hear of them not, because we are not of God. Wherefore, if he that is of God, heareth God’s words, and if one who is not of God, is not able to hear God’s words, let each one ask himself: “Do I, in the ear of my heart, hear God’s words, and understand whose words they are?” The Truth commandeth us to long for a fatherland in heaven, to bridle the lust of the flesh, to turn away from the glory of the world, to covet no man’s goods, and to bestow freely of our own.

Let each of you therefore think within himself if this voice of God sound out loud in the ear of his heart; for thereby will he know whether he be of God. Some there be, whom it pleases not to hear the commandments of God, even with their bodily ears. And some there be, who receive the same with their

bodily ears but whose heart is far from them. And some also there be, who hear the words of God with joy, so that they are moved thereby even to tears. But when their fit of weeping is past they turn again to iniquity. They who despise to do the words of God certainly cannot be said to hear them. Wherefore, dearly beloved brethren, call up your own life before your minds eye, and then ponder with trembling those awful words which the mouth of the Truth speak: “Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

The Truth speaketh these words concerning the reprobate. But the reprobate make manifest the same thing concerning themselves, by their evil deeds. Thus immediately followeth: “Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, ‘Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?’” Hear now what the Lord saith to so great an insult. “I have not a devil.” But He did not say, “I am not a Samaritan.” For in a sense a Samaritan He was indeed, since the word Samaritan is by interpretation a Watcher, and the Lord is that Watcher, of whom the Psalmist saith, that except he keep the city, any other watchman waketh but in vain. He also is that Watchman unto whom crieth Isaiah, “Watchman, what of the night, Watchman, what of the night?” Wherefore the Lord did not say, “I am not a Samaritan” – but, “I have not a devil.” Two charges were brought against Him. One He denied. To the other His silence gave assent.

## Lent 5 – Monday, April 7

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Evening Prayer – Second Lesson – John 12:1-11

*“Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”*

(John 12:3)

**O**ur Anglican formularies teach us that the Sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace. The water, oil, sign of the Cross in Baptism reveal the effectual operation of inward and spiritual cleansing, election, and death to the world, the flesh, and the devil. The bread and wine in the Eucharist reveal the spiritual substance of Christ’s body and blood, His nature and animating power to transubstantiate poor sinners into Saints. As such, we have the Divine intention to redeem and save us, to transform us and make us into new creatures.

On the other side of the Sacraments, we have man’s response to them. Baptism is only effectual and lasting in meaning if the sinner is dying to sin and being made regenerate as a member of the Body of Christ. Eucharist has no meaning unless the Real Presence and Intention of Christ is received into willing hearts who wish for the Word made flesh to be made flesh in us. Sacraments require hearts that are willing for God’s will to be accomplished in human life for salvation.

But human beings, for their part, can also express themselves Sacramentally in response to God. We engage in outward and visible signs that reveal our intention to return God’s Grace back to Him with interest. We kneel in prayer, we stand in jubilant song, and we sit to hear His Word. Our priests and altars are bedecked in colors that reveal our



intention to contemplate a certain aspect of Christ's relation to us. Outwardly and visibly, we reveal in the world and flesh what our souls intend to cultivate and perfect.

In the Evening Prayer New Testament lection for today, we find an example of an outward and visible sign that manifests the effectual operation of Christ's inward and spiritual Grace in the human soul. We read that Mary Magdalene, out of whom the Lord had cast seven demons (St. Luke 8:2), took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. (St. John 12:3) Mary was responding to the Grace of God gifted to her in the life of the Lord. Outwardly and inwardly, she revealed her love of God in Christ, her deepest gratitude, and the honor due unto His name. Judas Iscariot, a thief, missed the point of her devotion, and thought, rather, that the cost of the perfume might have been spent on feeding the poor. Christ rebuked Him, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this (ibid, 7). Christ would point our minds to the Sacramental gesture of one whose heart was fixed on worshiping God.

Mary Magdalene has her priorities straight. In Lent, we respond to Christ's sacrificial offering of Himself for us with Sacramental seriousness. Outwardly and visibly, we ought to be focused on Christ and His work, then as now, for all men and their salvation. Outwardly and visibly, we must reveal to the world that we anoint Christ in His death, a death that will unleash all manner of goodness for our redemption.

Fr. William Martin

Rector of St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church (APA)  
Arden, NC

## Lent 5 – Tuesday, April 8

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Evening Prayer, First Lesson – Jeremiah 22:10-23

*“I spake unto thee in thy prosperity;  
but thou saidst, I will not hear.”*

(Jeremiah 22:21a)

**T**here is a popular saying that goes something like “When you are at rock bottom, the only place to look is up.” When the effects of this broken world come crashing into our lives, whether through our own fault or by circumstances completely out of our control, we can’t help but look up as our only source of help in our time of trouble.

I doubt there are many people that have not experienced this helplessness when things are out of control. God is our only refuge, so we naturally look to and listen to Him. Through this helpless experience we come out the other side closer to our Lord than before the whole ordeal started.

What about when things are going perfectly? Your business is booming and all your needs are met by the fruits of your own hands? No surprises, no hardships, just smooth sailing. We would think that when things are at their best for us, we would be at our best for God. It turns out, though, when we feel like we are in control, we often refuse to listen to God. We tell Him

that we are doing just fine, thank you very much, we can take it from here.

“When we feel we are in control, we often refuse to listen to God.”

The prophet Jeremiah points out this hypocrisy for his own generation and names it for ours as well. If your life is going well right now, don't forget to look up and remember that we need God in both in hardship and in prosperity.

Fr. Scott Greene  
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Farragut, TN

# Lent 5 – Wednesday, April 9

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## Morning Prayer - Psalm 128

*“Blessed are they that fear the Lord”* (Psalm 128:1a)

**I**t is wonderful that this Psalm begins with the promise that all will be blessed; but the notion that the blessing is to those “that fear the Lord” is something that distresses many people.

The fourth-century Bishop, St. Hilary of Poitiers suggests looking at Chapter 2:1-5 of the Book of Proverbs:

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”

When you have done all this, “then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord.” In his own words, St. Hilary’s wrote, “For us, fear of the Lord is a part of love; and its expression is the practice of perfect charity: obey the counsels of God, hold fast to his commandments, trust in his promises.”

This “fear of the Lord” is not a slavish dread, so much as a wonder and awe springing from love. Think of the Summary of the Law which we hear regularly at the Eucharist: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is

the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

A challenge often seems to be, “who is my neighbour?” The Psalms have interpretations based on their original context under the Old Covenant and under the New Covenant. With the above understanding of the “fear of the Lord” as love, we can consider the family home and the possibility that it is a place from which we may live out our Christian calling and commitment and a place where our Lenten discipline will have its first impact.

Another interpretation of the home is modeled on the fact that the Holy Family begins before the creation with the eternal and Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Who are Love and Who enjoy Unity. This is followed by the Holy Family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in Nazareth—a perfect, loving, relationship where, we are told in Scripture, that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”

The reference to Jerusalem in verse 6 suggests a family to which we belong through Baptism. We were baptized in the Name (i.e., the very being) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul tells us that the Church, “Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26). As Children of God, we are gathered about the Lord’s Table in our true home, the Church.

Fr. Robert Mansfield  
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Parry Sound, Ontario

# Lent 5 – Thursday, April 10

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Morning Prayer - First Lesson - Exodus 11:1-8

*“All the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill... But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.”*

(Exodus 11:5, 7)

**P**haraoh was seen as a god among his people. Anything that he commanded would come to pass. At least that would have been the way his subjects viewed him. It would not be much of a surprise if the Israelites viewed him the same way. After all, they had been subjected to slavery in Egypt for hundreds of years. The Israelites’ time in Egypt was so culturally impactful that Moses and the later prophets would continually identify God as the one who brought them out of Egypt. Their salvation from Egypt was identity forming. The last step that led to Israel’s release was the final plague of Egypt—the death of the firstborn sons. But this time Moses would be taking a back seat in the process. God himself would be the messenger and judge to the people of Egypt.

This announcement by God can be understood in a literal and spiritual way. Literally speaking, God’s announcement to Moses that he will be the guarantor of Israel’s deliverance is enough to encourage us. Just as God fought for the Israelites, he will fight for us. In a world that thinks and does more evil every day, this passage of

scripture is a small opportunity for us to remember the presence of God to those who are weary and downtrodden. Spiritually speaking, this passage can be understood in a very practical way for our spiritual growth. Egypt is understood in the Bible where the Israelites were held captive. Sin is something that we either have freedom from, or are held captive to (Romans 6:18, 20). Just as God killed Pharaoh's son and freed the Israelites from their captivity, God has freed us from the captivity of sin through the death of his own Son.

God protects the Israelites from the malice of a dog, a small thing to worry about considering their circumstances. This is so that "ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel" (Exodus 11:7). If God treated the Israelites with favor in this way, he will treat us similarly, we who are spiritual sons and daughters of Israel. God has defeated the false gods in Egypt, and he will kill the false gods that rule in our day. Let us run the race with endurance, treating our season of fasting as a participation in God's act of releasing us from the vestiges of captivity to worldly things. For our God fights for us so that we may have true freedom—freedom from sin for the service of God. Amen.

Fr. Ian Jarrells

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Alto, GA

## Lent 5 – Friday, April 11

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Evening Prayer - Second Lesson - John 12:44ff

*“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”*

(John 12:46)

**T**he events of the night of that first Passover have been portrayed in cinema as the stuff of horror movies. There is an interesting commentary in the Apocrypha, the Wisdom of Solomon, that recounts the events of that awful night. The writer of the Wisdom of Solomon describes a nightmare that had come to life. “No power of the fire might give them light: neither could the bright flames of the stars endure to lighten that horrible night...yet being scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents... they sleeping the same sleep that night, which were was indeed intolerable, and which came upon them out of the bottoms of inevitable hell, were partly vexed with monstrous apparitions, and partly fainted, their heart failing them: for a sudden fear, and not looked for, came upon them” (Wisdom 17: 5-15).

Movie adaptations portray the breaking of dawn with mourning and weeping over the dead. The Israelites, though, obedient to God’s command, had made their Passover sacrifice, and painted the doorposts of their homes with the blood of the Passover lamb. They were spared the horror of that awful night, spared the death of their firstborn, and according to Scripture, spared even from that horrible darkness.



Later, in Jeremiah, we hear finally of a break from the prophetic doom and gloom of the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Israel. Israel had an uncanny ability to need a series of Passovers throughout her history. Jerusalem would be destroyed, Israel would be taken captive, but God would lead them out of their captivity, just as He did in the Exodus, in the days following the first Passover.

The prophet foretold that they would be led out of the darkness of sin and death, from every country in which they have been scattered, and they would be brought back to Jerusalem. This indeed happened, just as God had promised. Yet, this prophecy from Jeremiah is also for us today. God promises to lead us out of our captivity of sin, He promises to lead us out of the horrible darkness, even from the darkness of our own self-imposed hells. God does all of this and more through Jesus Christ whom we celebrate as the Paschal Lamb.

Let us remember as this Lent draws to a close, as the Glory of Easter begins to shine brighter, that even amid the darkness of this world, Christ is still “...the Light [that] shineth in darkness, and the darkness overcometh it not” (John 1:5).

Fr. Geordan Geddings

Rector of St. Peter’s Anglican Church (ACC-DHC)

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## Lent 5 – Saturday, April 12

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Evening Prayer - First Lesson - Jeremiah 33:1-9, 14-16

*“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”*

(Jeremiah 33: 14-16)

**T**oday is a pivotal day - the last day before the beginning of Holy Week. Until now, during the Lenten season, we have felt an increasing anxiety and anticipation. Beginning tomorrow: confrontation, persecution, and impending death will be upon us. Even though we know calamity is coming, we have comfort that it is not yet here. We feel safe, somehow, because we will not have to face catastrophe today.

While the culmination of Jesus Christ’s purpose for coming to save our world will begin tomorrow, on Palm Sunday, today at least we are still safely outside of Jerusalem and can hope that the tragedy we expect may somehow, miraculously, pass us by.

In the Orthodox Church, today is an important day of remembrance, called “Saturday of the Akathist.” On this day the faithful are aware that, although we face catastrophe, the power of God may still save us from destruction.

In 625 AD, Constantinople was under imminent attack from land and sea forces of the Persians. The threat was overwhelming, and the people felt a sense of doom. Into almost certain defeat, Patriarch Sergius took several Christian relics, including a robe that had belonged to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and he walked to the sea and dipped the robe into the water. Strong winds followed and the Persian fleet retreated in fear. Then the Patriarch walked around the city with the relics, and the troops rallied, and the Persian army was defeated. The people of Constantinople were saved that day. Miracles do happen.

The impending doom of Holy Week, that we foresee, threatens to weigh us down with fear and sadness. The anxiety of Lent has been difficult to endure but seems better to us than the impending death of Jesus and the loss of our hope for salvation. Yet, we will learn after this coming week is over, that it is only through Christ's persecution, death, and resurrection that we are able to gain true hope. We can never reach our destination unless we travel the journey. On that journey, God will protect us.

Let us pray:

*Strengthen our faith, Almighty Father, that we might endure nights of darkness, so that we may find hope in the light of the dawns that follows. In the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.*

Fr. Robert E. Powers  
St. Francis of Assisi Anglican Catholic Church (ACC)  
Gainesville, Georgia

# Palm Sunday – April 13

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Homily for Palm Sunday

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – Matthew 27:1-54

by Saint Leo the Great

*(Sermon 2 On the Passion of our Lord*

*Anglican Breviary C279-80)*

**D**early beloved, the solemnity of the Lord's Passion is come; that day which we have so desired, and which same is so precious to the whole world. Shouts of spiritual triumph are ringing, and suffer not that we should be silent. Even though it be hard to preach often on the same solemnity, and do so meetly and well, a priest is not free to shirk the duty of preaching to the faithful concerning this so great mystery of divine mercy. Nay, that his subject matter is unspeakable should in itself make him eloquent, since where enough can never be said, there must needs ever be somewhat to say. Let human weakness then, fall down before the glory of God, and acknowledge itself unequal to the duty of expounding the works of His mercy. Let us toil in thought, let us falter in speech; it is good for us to feel how inadequate is the little we are able to express concerning the majesty of God.

For when the Prophet saith: "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore," let no man thence conclude that he will ever find all that he seeketh. For if he cease his seeking, he will likewise cease to draw near. But among all the works of God which weary the

stedfast gaze of man's wonder, what is there that doth at once so ravish and so exceed the power of our contemplation as the Passion of the Saviour? He it was who, to loose mankind from the bonds of the death-dealing Fall, spared to bring against the rage of the devil the power of the divine Majesty, and met Him with the weakness of our lowly nature. For if our cruel and haughty enemy could have known the counsel of God's mercy, it had been his task rather to have softened the hearts of the Jews into meekness, than to have inflamed them with unrighteous hatred. Thus he might not have lost the thralldom of all his slaves, by attacking the liberty of the One that owed him nothing.

But he was undone by his own malice. For he brought upon the Son of God that death which is become life to all the sons of man. He shed that innocent blood which was to become at once the price of our redemption and the cup of our salvation. Wherefore the Lord hath received that which according to the purpose of his own good pleasure He hath chosen, He submitted Himself to the ungodly hands of cruel men which, busy with their own sin nonetheless ministered to the Redeemer's work. And such was His loving-kindness, even for His murderers, that His prayer to His Father from the cross asked not vengeance for Himself, but forgiveness for them.

# Holy Week – Monday Before Easter, April 14

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - St. John 14:1-14

*“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”*

(St. John 14:6)

**A**s he begins his Last Supper discourse on Maundy Thursday, our Lord prepares his disciples for his departure, although they do not realize the manner in which he will be taken from them within the next twenty-four hours. He knows that their hearts will be troubled, but he turns their direction to the Father and to his own obedience to the Father’s will, through which obedience he will prepare a place for them. This prompts a question from St. Thomas as to how they can possibly know the way to follow him. Our Lord answers in a threefold self-revelation: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” It is a three-dimensional description of what it means to follow Jesus: the way is the front-and-back axis in which each one of us walks as we follow him, the truth is the up-and-down axis which reveals him as the Son of the Father sent down from heaven, and the life is the side-to-side axis in which we experience the communal Christian life with each other. So, Thomas’ desire to walk in the way of Christ (which is the way of the cross) opens up the discussion to the next two dimensions of the Christian experience.

Next, St. Philip asks him to show them the Father. Christ upbraids him a bit for having been so long with him and yet not understanding that whoever has seen him has seen the

Father. The “truth” portion of this chapter is the longest of the three, since the heart of the Christian faith is the proclamation that Jesus is the human revelation of God. We may expect truth to be listed first of the three, but rather truth is right at the center, for the truth of Christ as God Incarnate is common both to the way in which we individually walk with him and the life in which we corporately live as his Body on earth.

Finally, St. Jude (not Iscariot) asks how it is that he will manifest himself to them and not to the world. This third section is an example of when the King James Version makes the point clearer, because it retains the distinction between second person singular (“thou/thee”) and plural (“ye/you”). To translate it into Southern, Jesus is referring to them as “y’all.” He assures the whole Body, his entire Church (not just the individual member), that he will dwell within us through the presence of the Holy Spirit, that our life together with him will be Trinitarian, since we have believed that he is the Son of the Father. And it is through that indwelling life of the Trinity that he will give us his peace, his “shalom,” which is the very first word he will speak to this same Church three days hence as he is in the midst once again in this same upper room, risen from the dead.

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# Holy Week – Tuesday Before Easter, April 15

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Morning Prayer - Second Lesson - John 15:1-16

*“Abide in me, and I in you.”*  
(St. John 15:4)

**W**e were made to enjoy communion with God. Into the nostrils of the man that He had formed, the Lord God breathed the breath, His breath, to give him life. There was never a moment when Adam’s life was not with the life of the Lord God. At the creation of Eve, the Lord God split open Adam’s body to make the woman, who then shared of the life that Adam shared with God. But then the Lord God did something seemingly strange, hiding Himself from the sight of Adam and Eve as they confronted the temptation of the serpent. After their transgression, He then made His presence to be heard, causing them to hide themselves. Curt Thompson notes that God does not ask what have you done? but, rather, where are you? He makes Adam and Eve realize how, for the first time ever, their life was no longer shared. Their trespass had indeed brought guilt and shame, but beneath all of that it had ruptured their communion. From that rupture came death.

Even so, in the opening chapter of St. John’s Gospel, St. Andrew perks up when St. John the Baptist points to our Lord and says “Behold, the Lamb of God.” As he trails behind the Lord, the Lord turns and faces him, asking what it is he wants. St. Andrew, perhaps caught off guard, asks



Him, “Rabbi, where are you abiding?” At this, our Lord extends His invitation to “Come, and see.” Years later, gathered with the Lord at the Last Supper before His Passion, the Lord provides His answer to the first question of the first called: “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you [...] Abide in me, and I in you.” There, in the Institution of the Eucharist, Christ reveals how they have come back at last to that place of awful rupture. As Fr. Schmemmann notes, our first parents took and ate what was not given and died; now we are given to eat that we may live. Or, in the language of the Preface of the Holy Cross “that so whence death arose, life might also rise again.” The rupture is to be healed, our communion restored, and our life regenerated.

Today, we find Christ abiding where the Lord God has always desired to abide: with us. As He made a place for Adam and Eve in the Garden so to abide with them, so now He makes a place for us in the new Eden of the Church, which is His Body given for us. There, He waits for us with longsuffering, loving kindness, abiding on His throne of glory in heaven, in the Blessed Sacrament, and in the hearts and minds of all the faithful. As Fr. David Michael recalls from a prayer his mother taught him: “O Lord, who has made ready a place for me, now make me ready for that place. Amen.”

Fr. Hayden Butler

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Newport Beach, CA

# Holy Week – Wednesday Before Easter, April 16

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Evening Prayer - First Lesson - Lamentations 3:1, 14-33

*“For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.”*

(Lamentations 3:31-32)

**H**oly Week is the perfect time to make one’s Sacramental Confession. Have you ever made an auricular Confession? If not, now is the ideal moment. One should consider receiving the Sacrament of Penance in preparation for the making of one’s Easter Communion. This Sacrament is vitally important, and should certainly be received by any person who is troubled and disturbed in conscience, or by any Christian who wishes to deepen one’s spiritual life and advance in the way of holiness. No one should approach Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin; for this reason, if there is any question at all about the state or health of one’s soul, one should seek the spiritual counsel and advice of a priest, and receive this Sacrament for the forgiveness of all sins— then one can approach the Holy Mysteries properly and reverently.

As the 1662 English Prayer Book reminds us in the exhortation: ‘let him (a penitent) come to me, or to some other Minister of God’s Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God’s holy word he may receive the benefit of Absolution, as may tend to the quieting of the

conscience, and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness.' To use a version of the old Anglican adage about auricular Confession: All may, none must, most should. All Anglicans can and should use this great sacramental gift to their spiritual benefit, which gift increases grace, deepens repentance, strengthens the will, combats temptation, guarantees forgiveness of all sins, and allows the penitent carefully to examine the conscience and the soul— as one faces the brutality and banality of sin and its consequences, and seeks to amend one's life. By confessing our personal sins to a priest, who awaits in love to offer spiritual advice and counsel, and to provide the gift of forgiveness, we can recognise the impact, consequences, and error of our sins, and the need to eliminate sin from our lives. No one should 'enjoy' the painful process of Confession, but all should rejoice in its ultimate benefits and graces for the soul.

We all should use this Sacrament at every opportunity for our spiritual welfare, for it is a 'school of sanctity,' a teacher of repentance and new life: it is the divinely-appointed means by which God imparts forgiveness to penitent sinners, a Sacrament of grace in which God and God alone forgives sins and communicates His life, through the instrumentality of His priests in the Church. Always please remember that priests do not, from any individualised or personal power, forgive sins: they administer a Sacrament of forgiveness as they act in the Name and Person of Jesus Christ, representing in their ministry the Holy Catholic Church.

What three actions are necessary for a penitent rightly to receive the Sacrament of Penance?

1. Repentance. True repentance from sin begins with contrition, true sorrow of heart for sins committed, for without contrition there is no desire for forgiveness and for the amendment of life. Contrition, which should arise from Faith, is the hatred of sin because of love for God. A contrite heart sees sins as a horror, an outrage against God's love for us, and perceives the Passion and Death of Our Lord as the necessary result and cure of its sin. Real repentance through contrition brings us reconciliation with God and forgiveness of sins. Our repentance should flow from our love for the Blessed Trinity and for God's Church. Even attrition is a grace of God, because it is a prompting of the Holy Ghost which leads a person, albeit through fear of hell or punishment, to seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Absolution. However, contrition is the true source of life-changing, life-healing repentance.

2. Confession. If we are truly repentant, truly contrite for our sins, we will naturally confess our sins, that is, we will acknowledge before God our sins and trespasses in order that we may be forgiven. Real confession is self-accusation, the truthful and honest admission of speaking, acting, and thinking wrongly. The fact that we confess our sins demonstrates that we are really sorry for our sins, we really are repentant. Confession is the proof of contrition, and of our desire to be forgiven and to be granted the grace to change. For this reason, God requires us to confess our sins to Him. 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins' (1 St John 1.9). In confession, we are set free from slavery to sin: we take responsibility for our sins and reopen ourselves to the grace and mercy of God. In the Sacrament of Penance, one should confess all known and remembered serious sins committed since one's last

Confession. We should not withhold any known sins, for 'if we, as sick persons, are unwilling to disclose every wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know' (Saint Jerome). Regular reception of this Sacrament helps us to develop a right conscience, and empowers us to fight temptation and evil desires. In Penance, we are healed, sanctified, and transformed.

3. Amendment of life. We must forsake sin and change our lives– this is the ultimate test of genuine repentance; amendment is the sustained and determined resolve to sin no more and to live a better and holier life. If we have hurt others, we must make restitution for the injuries done. Real repentance demands that we do better, and change, by God's grace. In the Sacrament, before Absolution is given, the priest may give the penitent an act to perform, such as a prayer or a reading from Scripture, as a sign of the repentant person's willingness to change: this is called a 'penance.' Doing the penance demonstrates our willingness to amend our lives and manifests our union with the Crucified Lord– it helps us to contemplate the change which is required for the health of our soul; our spiritual father gives it to us for our own good.

Bp. Chandler Holder Jones

Bishop of the APA Diocese of the Eastern United States

Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Province of America

St. Barnabas Anglican Cathedral

Dunwoody, GA

# Holy Week – Maundy Thursday

## April 17

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From the Treatise on the Psalms  
by St. Augustine of Hippo (Appointed for Maundy Thursday  
in the Anglican Breviary - C295)

*“Hear my prayer, oh, God, saith the Psalmist, and hide not thyself from my petition: take heed onto me, and hear me: how I mourn in my trial, and I am vexed; because of the crying of the enemy, and of the tribulation which cometh from the ungodly.”*  
(Psalm 55:1-3b)

**T**hese are the words of one who is disquieted, beset by trouble and anxiety. He press as one under much suffering, desiring, deliverance from evil. Let us see from what evil he does suffer: and as we hear what that evil is, let us recognize that we also suffer from the same thing; so that, as we share his tribulation, we may also join in his prayer. “I mourn in my trial,” saith he, “and am vexed.” When does he mourn? When is he vexed? “In my trial,” saith he. He has in mind the ungodly that caused him tribulation, which seem he calls his trial. Therefore, think not that the wicked conserve no good purpose in this world, and that God is unable to accomplish good by means of them. Every wicked person is permitted to live in order that he may be made righteous, or else that the righteous may be tried by him.

I would to God that the ungodly, who now try us were converted, and so we're on trial with us. Yet, though they continue to try us, let us not hate them: for we know not whether any of them will continue to the end in his evil ways. And mostly, when thou thinkest thyself to be hating

thine enemy, thou hatest thy brother, and knowest it not. Only the devil and his angels are shown to us in scripture as doomed to eternal fire; their amendment alone is hopeless, against whom we wage a hidden strife. For which strife, the Apostle would arm us, saying, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood (that is, not against men whom we see) but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Mark that he says not “the rulers of this world,” lest per chance thou should think that devils are rulers of heaven and earth; but rather, he saith “the rulers of the darkness of this world.” When he speaketh thus of the world, he would have us understand the lovers of the world, that is to say, the ungodly in the wicked, which comprise the world whereof the gospel saith, “And the world knew him not.”

For (saith the Psalmist) I have spied unrighteousness and strife in the city. Give heed now to the glory of the Cross itself. On the brow of kings is now placed that Cross, which once enemies did deride. Effect hath proven strength. He hath subdued the world, not with a sword, but with Wood. The Wood of the Cross seemed a worthy object of scorn to his enemies; and standing before that very Wood they wagged their heads, saying, “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross!” Thus did he stretch forth his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people. If he is just who doth live by faith, then is he unrighteous who hath not faith. Wherefore, when he saith, “Unrighteousness,” understand that it is the disobedience of unbelief. The Lord, then saw unrighteousness and strife in the city, and stretched out his hands unto an unbelieving and gainsaying people. And yet, looking upon the very same, he saith, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

# Holy Week – Good Friday, April 18

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From Hymn 8 - *On the Crucifixion*  
by St. Ephrem the Syrian

2

**B**lessed are you, (Gethsemane), for through your  
prayers

You made joyful the Garden of Eden,  
In which Adam's will was divided

Against his Creator, so that he stole and ate.

Jesus entered into a garden and prayed, to reconcile  
the will which had been divided in a garden.

In his prayers, he said, "Let not my will be done,  
but your will."

5

Blessed too are you, O Golgotha.

Heaven has envied your smallness.

For it was not when our Lord was hidden

in heaven above that reconciliation occurred.

Upon you was our debt repaid,

for from you, the thief opened up and entered Eden.

Heaven could not become our place of refuge.

It is the slain one who through you saved me!

10

His cross they raised and placed on high,

and went down to stand beneath him.

They depicted a symbol for him who sits upon the throne,  
and makes them a "footstool for his feet."

Golgotha is a mirror of his church,

which he lifted up and built upon the height of his  
truth.



Even today, the church  
is established upon the same Golgotha.

11

Blessed are you who bore the same name as Joseph the  
just,

you who covered and buried the living departed one.

For you closed the eyes of the wakeful sleeper  
whose soul slept, and plundered Sheol.

Woe to Death, since he has overcome its wakefulness -  
that wakeful one who slept that he might deceive it.

Our plunderer is plundered! Our captor is captive!  
Come, let us rejoice and praise him!

12

Blessed are you, unique tomb,  
for in you, dawned the only-begotten light.

In you, proud Death was conquered,  
when in you, the living dead one expelled it.

Blessed is your womb, in which was shut  
that all swallowing, never sated mouth.

The watchers crowned your entrance with rays  
for they rejoiced at our resurrection.

13

His tomb and his garden are a symbol of Eden,  
in which Adam died a hidden death.

For Adam fled and hid among the trees,  
and entered and was concealed as within a tomb.

The living buried one, who was resurrected in a garden,  
raised up him who fell in a garden.

From the garden's tomb to the garden's wedding feast,  
he made him enter in glory.

# Holy Week – Holy Saturday, April 19

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From the Treatise on the Psalms  
by St. Augustine of Hippo (Appointed for Holy Saturday in  
the Anglican Breviary - C320)

“They commune among themselves, how they may lay  
snares; and say that no man shall see them. They have  
searched out iniquity, they have failed in their search; a  
man shall come, and a deep heart,  
but God shall be exalted.”

(Psalm 64:5b-7, Old Latin Version)

**N**ow one known as Man came up against these  
communings, and in the form of Man, he did suffer  
himself to be laid hold upon. For they could not  
have laid hold upon him, had he not been Man; neither  
could he have been seen, had he not been Man; nor been  
scourged, had he not been Man; nor been crucified, nor  
died, had he not been Man. As Man, therefore, he came to  
endure all those sufferings which could have had none  
effect upon him had he not been Man. And further, had he  
not been Man, in no wise could man have been redeemed.  
So it was, as the Psalmist saith, “that he came as man unto  
a deep heart,” that is, something that passeth human  
understanding. For he showed his Manhood to the eyes of  
men, but kept his Godhead hidden deep within: thus  
concealing the form of God wherein he is equal to the  
Father, but exhibiting the form of a servant wherein he is  
inferior to the Father.

How far did they encourage themselves in those diligent searchings, wherein they failed so greatly? So far that even when the Lord was dead and buried they set a watch over sepulchre. For they said of Christ to Pilate, “that deceiver.” By this name the Lord Jesus Christ was named, to be the comfort of his servants when they be called deceivers. “That deceiver (say they to Pilate) said while he was yet alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, ‘He is risen from the dead.’ So the last error shall be worse than the first.” Pilate said unto them, “Ye have a watch. Go your way. Make it as sure as ye can.” So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

They placed a watch of soldiers over the sepulchre. The earth quaked! The Lord rose again! Such were the miracles wrought round about the sepulchre, that the very soldiers who kept watch might have become witnesses, if they had been willing to declare the truth. But that covetousness which possessed the disciple and companion of Christ, possessed also the soldiers who guarded his tomb. “We will give you money,” they say, “and say ye that his disciples came and stole him away while ye slept.” Truly, they failed in their snare and communings. What is this thou saidest, O wretched cunning? Dost thou so far forsake the light of prudence and duty and plunge thyself so deep in craftiness as to speak thus, “Say ye that his disciples came and stole him away while ye slept”? Thou producest sleeping witnesses! Surely thou wast thyself asleep, who didst thus snare thyself in such a snare.

# Easter Day – Sunday, April 20

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Homily For Easter Day

Holy Communion Gospel Proper – John 20:1-10

by Saint Gregory the Great

*(Homily 22 on the Gospels, The Anglican Breviary  
C326-7)*

**B**rethren, the lesson which ye have just heard from the holy Gospel, is clear enough if it be considered in its historical sense only. However, not only does it contain history, but also suggestions of a mystic import, into which it is meet that we should at least make a brief inquiry. The evangelist saith that Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre early, when it was yet dark. By these words, according to the historical interpretation, is known the time of her visit. But according to a mystical interpretation, there is also set forth the state of mind of her who just came, and sought the sepulchre, namely, in these words, “It was yet dark.” For Mary was seeking after the very Author of life. But she was seeking Him as though He were lifeless, even as she had seen Him, in bodily fashion. And because she could not on this wise find Him, she thought that His body had been stolen. Therefore, truly, she was as yet in darkness.

And she ran quickly, and told Peter and John; of whom we read that they also ran. Verily, those who are most exercised by love, do go more quickly, and

further, than other folk. So Peter and John ran, both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. But note that he paused there, and waited, and did not at once enter in. Peter, however, when he came, went at once, and that boldly, into the sepulchre. Brethren, of what does this haste put us in mind? Is there no subtlety here, no mystic meaning? Doubtless the evangelist would not have said of himself, "Yet went he not in," if in that reverent shrinking of his there had been no mystery. For John, like the synagogue of the Jews, waited upon knowledge; whereas Peter, like the church of the Gentiles, came at once, although blindly, to the mystery of the empty sepulchre.

We have also heard how, according to the evangelist Mark, Mary Magdalene, and the other holy women who had followed the Lord, came to the sepulchre, bringing sweet spices. For him whom they had loved in life, they also served in death, and that with all care and tenderness. But in this there is indicated something which is to be done by all of us who are members of holy Church. If we, who believe in Him that was dead and is alive again, do come, seeking the Lord, and bearing with us the perfume of good works, and the sweet odor of holiness, then do we come as it were to his empty sepulchre bearing spices which are sweet indeed.

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