



Michael's Messenger

ST. MICHAEL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

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"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus"

Philippians 2:5

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I was inspired to write this Christmas message while in the midst of reading an advent reflection from Adele Finney's "Living in the Edge."

In one of the daily meditations, I paid a special attention on the theme about "Kenosis". A Greek term which means "emptying." (*An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*)

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. *Philippians 2:5-7a (NRSV)*

Perhaps, your question would be, how do we empty ourselves in order to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen! Listening is an effective tool that we can all use to minister to one another. It enables the other person to tell a story or a life experience on how God has manifested His great love and unceasing compassion. For me, this is Kenosis. This is how we can empty ourselves. This is how Jesus and His disciples ministered to people at their time.

Reflect! This is our own ability to listen to the voice of God. What God is calling us to do for ourselves, for our church community and to the wider community that we are a part of. This is also our ability to listen to ourselves. To empty ourselves in the busyness of our lives is to pause and take some time to be in the stillness of our God.

Act! This is about doing the will of God and responding to God's call in loving service. It should focus on uplifting the name of Jesus Christ and His message more than anyone else including our very own self. This to me is a concrete expression of Kenosis or Self-Emptying.

May God's love and Peace be with you and your loved ones this Christmas Season.

Prayer: creating God, you call us to live in harmony with nature, one another, and with you. Now fix our eyes upon Jesus to whom your purpose for the world has been revealed, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

The Venerable Louie Engnan

Rector, Saint Michael's Anglican Parish, Surrey

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UPCOMING READINGS

January 6 – Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6
 Psalm 72:1-7
 Ephesians 3:1-12
 Matthew 2:1-12

January 13 – Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7
 Psalm 29
 Acts 18:14-17
 Luke 3:15-17 & 21-22

January 20 – 2nd after Epiphany

Isaiah 62:1-5
 Psalm 36:5-10
 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
 John 2:1-11

January 27 -3rd after Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
 Psalm 19
 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
 Luke 4:14-21

February 3 – Presentation of the Lord

Malachi 3:1-4
 Psalm 24:7-10
 Hebrews 2:14-18
 Luke 2:22-40

February 10 – 5th after Epiphany

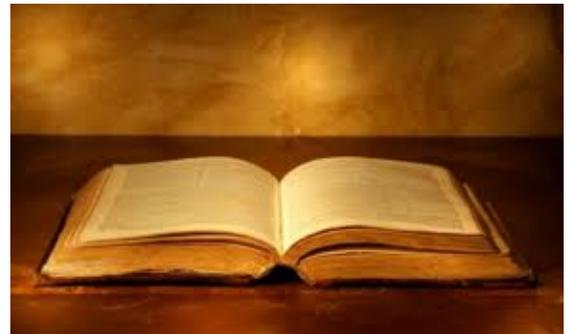
Isaiah 6:1-8
 Psalm 138
 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
 Luke 5:1-11

February 17 – 6th after Epiphany

Jeremiah 17:5-10
 Psalm 1
 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
 Luke 6:17-26

February 24 – 7th after Epiphany

Genesis 45:3-11, 39-40
 Psalm 37:1-11, 15
 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
 Luke 6:27-38



Why Go to Church?

Last Sunday morning a mother went in to wake her son for him to ready himself for church, and she was shocked when he replied, "I'm not going." "Why not?" she asked. "I'll give you two good reasons," he said. "One, they don't like me, and two, I don't like them."

His mother replied, "I'll give you two good reasons why you SHOULD go to church: - you're 59 years old, and you're the pastor!"

Carrot Cake ~ from Sow-Yuen

Ingredients

1 ½ cup oil
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
2 cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
2 cups grated carrots



Mix oil & sugar; add beaten eggs and blend thorough. Add flour, sifted with baking powder, baking soda & salt. Add nuts, pineapple & carrots. Bake in a grease pan (13 "x 9" or 12"x 8") at 325°F for 1 hour.

Icing

3 ounces package cream cheese
2 teaspoon vanilla
¼ pound butter or margarine
½ pound icing sugar

Blend together with electric beater and spread on cooled cake.

Serves 16-18

Do Bad Things Happen to Good People, and do Good Things Happen to Bad People

Have you ever wondered during times of turmoil in the world, why we may be lucky, or exempt from some of the tragedies that we hear about? Or is it that we as Christians have a security, knowing that the Lord's Angels are watching out for us? Are we as believers "Blessed" more than others? What about those who are believers elsewhere that we read about embroiled in suffering and loss – are they not also under protection? Here are some verses from the Bible that promises us protection:

"No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord. (Is. 54:17)

The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still. (Ex. 14:14)

Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (Is. 46:4)

As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. (Ps. 18:30)

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (2 Tim. 4: 18)

The above verses are only a few, but our Bible has hundreds more. I'm sure you have heard many say: "Why would a God who is all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful, allow bad things to happen to good people?" Seeing good people suffer is horrible, but by the same token, it's not much fun seeing evil people having fun either.

This question is often asked by people who have suffered, or who have lost a loved one. They honestly want to know: *How could God let this happen to me and to mine? Why wouldn't God stop this pain and help me?* Looking back not that long ago, what about the Holocaust and the suffering and the devastation that took place there? What about those that suffer through abduction or the murder of a loved child?

If we have read our Bibles, we also have read of some of the characters that have suffered, even though they were faithful to God. Take Job for example. He had money, wealth, a good name, and a beautiful family. Then Satan asked God for permission to mess with Job's life. Tragedy struck, he lost his wealth and all his children. Then disease riddled his body. His wife even turned against him calling him a loser according to some Bible versions, and encouraged Job to curse God, but Job was so loyal to God, that God rewarded him because of his unwavering faithfulness. Job was patient and waited for God's deliverance. Job's wealth was restored, double in fact and much more so than the former.

I'll not take you through other characters who suffered in their own situations, and were still faithful to God, you can read up on your own. Joseph, Moses, Gideon and Peter to name a few others. God does allow things to happen to all people as this is a sinful world. Here's an article for reflection that I came across that might be worthy of our consideration. (Andy Whitmore)

Our Life on Earth

“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matt. 5: 45)

Wherever we live in the world and whether good or evil people, we know everyone sees the same sun and that the rain falls on all of us alike. So what did Jesus mean in the above statement He made in the Sermon on the Mount?

From God’s perspective, we all stand on equal ground, but can we honestly say that is our perspective? When we look at this world, what do we see? Children dying of malnutrition while other children have to be coaxed to eat their dinner; people who have the world at their fingertips while others are struggling to survive; victims of horrendous crime, their lives torn apart, while their perpetrators are still at large, or if caught only to serve a nominal amount of time; hundreds of casualties and deaths from erupting volcanoes; lives and livestock lost due to floods and forest fires; countless suffering from chronic disease while others barely catch a cold; tens of millions living under extreme oppression while tens of millions enjoy freedom of religion and speech. The list goes on. Where is this equal ground?

In the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned, God withdrew His Spirit from mankind, which left humanity to its own devices. But before the foundation of the earth, God had His plan in place that would reconcile humanity to Him. That plan, of course, was Jesus Christ. In our humble acceptance of Christ and Lord and Saviour, we are forgiven, cleansed, indwelt by His Spirit and made righteous before God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

In Jesus Christ we are made righteous and will stand before God on Judgement Day clothed in His righteousness. An unbeliever has yet to be forgiven, cleansed and made righteous. However, unlike the unbeliever, Christians are not exempt from tragedy, illness, temptation, loss, pain or suffering. The righteous and unrighteous experience the same aspects of life on earth, which is what is meant in the opening verse.

What then is the advantage of being a Christian? Inheriting heaven is a wonderful consequence, but Jesus also said, *“for they will inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5)*. Jesus is what makes sense of our life on earth. He is the way to contentment, fulfillment and purpose for He created us. Our times of hardship and suffering are often when He does His best work in our lives and in them, He becomes our peace, comfort and strength. The equal ground on which we stand is the invitation of Jesus to “Come to me”. There are no exception, no rules, no requirements. Regardless of who we are and how entrenched in sin we think our lives to be, Jesus is willing, ready and waiting to receive us. *Taken from the Living Truth periodical, by Rev. Charles Price.*

Memorial days in the Anglican Church ~ submitted by Corri

In the front of the Book of Alternative Services are monthly lists of Holy Days, Memorials and Commemorations. Listed below are the memorial days for the first four months of the year. Memorial days have prayers and readings taken from the Common of Saints (a part of the Christian liturgy that consists of texts common to an entire category of saints, such as apostles or martyrs. reference: Wikipedia).

January 2nd: Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus (Bishops and teachers, 379 AD and 389 AD)

13th: Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, teacher, 367 AD

17th: Antony, Abbot in Egypt, 356 AD

26th: Timothy & Titus, companions of Paul

27th: John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, 407 AD

28th: Thomas Aquinas, teacher, 1274 AD

February 5th: martyrs of Japan, 1596 AD

14th: Cyril & Methodius, missionaries to the Slavs, 869 AD and 885 AD

15th: Thomas Bray, priest & missionary, 1730 AD

23rd: Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156 AD

March 1st: David, Bishop of Menevia, Wales, 544 AD

7th: Perpetua & friends, martyr, 202 AD

9th: Gregory of Nyssa, 395 AD

17th, Patrick, Missionary Bishop in Ireland, 461 AD

April 21st: Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1109 AD

24th: Martyrs of the 20th Century

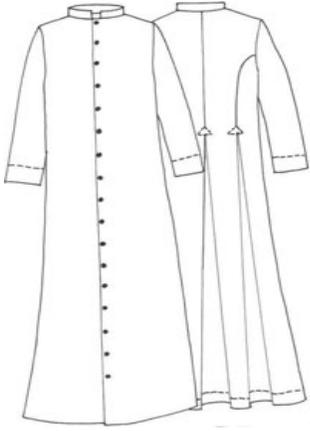
29th: Catherine of Siena, reformer & teacher, 1380 AD

Hilary of Poitiers, born in 315 and died in 367, was a bishop who introduced the Greek doctrine to Western Christendom. He also wrote a book of lyrics or hymns and was made a Doctor of the Church in 1851 by Pope Pius IX. Hilary was a strong opponent of Arianism – the belief that Jesus was created by God, not one of the Trinity.

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, lived from 69 – 156 AD. He was one of the early Christians who worked hard at converting Gnostics to Christianity. He was involved in a number of disputes about when to celebrate Easter due to arguments between Western and Eastern churches. He was eventually arrested by Roman officials who made him a martyr by burning him at the stake.

Perpetua and friends were a group of women who refused to deny their faith when arrested by Roman officials. She was arrested with her baby daughter whom she gave up to her parents so she would be save. Perpetua, 22 years old, and friends were martyred at Carthage in the Roman province of Africa.

Clergy vestments



cassock: a close fitting, ankle-length robe, often black, worn by the clergy or choir members or acolytes

stole: a long, strip of cloth worn draped around the neck and down the front of the body. It is often a liturgical colour (purple, red, white, green) and decorated with images.



alb: a long white gown, often tied at the waist and with snaps on the side, and usually worn over a cassock. It is not as tightly fit as the cassock and is worn by clergy (deacons and ministers)

(Information taken from various websites including Wikipedia, Pinterest, and Cross Designs)