

THE CHRONICLE

*Grace and Saint Peter's Church
Baltimore's Traditional Anglo-Catholic Parish*

January 2009

From the Rector

Of the Father's love begotten,
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!

A.C. Prudentius, 5th Century

Dear Friends in Christ,

Christians are an historical people. They believe in a God who loves them so much that in the fullness of time He sends His Son to redeem them from sin and death. This event is called the Incarnation. The Son of the living God comes to us “when half-spent was the night.” The old German carol printed above reminds us that Jesus is a person. He is not a philosophy or a list of rules but the Son of God. He is born of Mary, called the Mystic Rose in medieval times, and God the Father. His birth brings about a change in mankind's relationship with God. “The Son of God became Son of Man that the sons of men might become the sons of God” (St. Leo the Great). Oftentimes, in the season of Advent we are so busy buying gifts that we forget that we are freely given the greatest gift of all. For Christians this is the true Christmas gift, the Christ child given to us long ago.

The world of the first century was not prepared for such a gift, but God in His infinite wisdom chose to fulfill the words of the prophet Jeremiah: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord when I will fulfill 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.” God fulfilled the words of Jeremiah in His only Son.

I believe that one must approach Christmas with the awe and wonder of a small child. I remember growing up in rural North Carolina, and the excitement of Christmas was overwhelming. I think of Midnight Mass at St. Stephen's Church and presents under a big tree. I think of relatives and the Christmas pageant. I think of ham and turkey served with big glasses of iced tea on Christmas Day. Time has aged my perceptions, but I am still excited by Christmas. I love the red and white poinsettias and the smell of Christmas

greens. But I think that what excites me so much now is that I know God really does love me. He loves me so much that he sent His Son to redeem even my imperfections.

Each of us is called to be a child of God and an heir of eternal life. Perhaps the secret of a holy Christmas is a child-like attitude. Viewing the events of the Christmas celebrations should cause us to find in them the presence of Christ. St. Leo the Great calls Christmas the “sacrament of the day of the Lord’s birth.” For St. Leo, Christ takes an active part in the celebration of Christmas. Thus the celebration is not simply a past event which we recall but a present reality upon which we gaze. When we gaze on the figure of the Christ Child in the crèche at Christmas, we should think about the reality of Christ in our lives. When we prepare ourselves for our Christmas Holy Communion, we should remember that we are preparing to receive the gift of the ages. The Son comes to us in the Eucharist. Humanity is called to God’s own reality by the cradle, the God and Man, King and Servant.

Preparation for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament should include the use of the Sacrament of Penance. The examination of one’s conscience and the confessing of one’s sins are an opportunity to open oneself to God’s love in our lives. Confessions are heard by Father Speer every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Resurrection Chapel Confessional. On Christmas Eve Father Speer will hear Confessions from 5-6 p.m. Confessions may also be made by appointment.

On Christmas Eve, the Traditional Mass of the Vigil is at 12:00 Noon in the Lady Chapel, and the Family Mass of the Vigil at 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve is the second of our liturgical celebrations of the Feast. The story of the birth of Christ is told by St. Matthew. The Mass of Midnight begins with a Solemn Procession to the Crèche at 11:00 p.m. followed by High Mass with the music of Mozart in D Major. The Gospel is St. Luke and the Angels herald the birth of Christ. Our choir will be accompanied by strings. At 7:45 a.m. on Christmas Day, Matins will be said, followed by the Mass of the Dawn when the shepherds will arrive in the words of St. Luke’s Gospel. At 10:00 a.m. the Mass of the Day will be said. The Gospel is from St. John, who unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation.

Please remember that Mass is celebrated daily here at Grace and St. Peter’s. One can keep the days of Christmastide at Mass. The Epiphany concludes Christmas as Ascension Day concludes Easter. We will celebrate it solemnly on January 4th at the Sunday Mass. Epiphany is on the sixth of January and will be celebrated with Mass at 8.45 a.m. (Sung), 12:00 Noon, and 6:00 p.m. (Low).

Later in January we keep the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday, January 11th, with the Baptism of the daughter of Lilo and Patrick Hom. It is wonderful to welcome a child into the Church. Sunday, January 18th, is the Feast of the Confession or Chair of St. Peter. It is a Patronal Festival of our Parish. It is a Book of Common Prayer “red letter day” and may be kept on Sunday.

I would like to wish each of you a truly joyous Christmas with all heartfelt love and affection.

I remain faithfully your priest,

Frederick S. Thomas
Rector



The Epiphany

“They will go from strength to strength, and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.” Psalm 84:7

That verse occurs in a beautiful pilgrim’s psalm, written by some artist-poet, devoted to his nation and his religion. It is an appropriate verse for the Feast of the Epiphany, which represents our Christian life as a pilgrimage.

The episode of the Wise Men is a parable of life, and we can see how they went from strength to strength. At first all the light they knew was from the natural light which shone out of the eastern stars. It seemed to them that the star-strewn heavens must be the work of some mighty Being, and that one star had a special significance, and they set out to follow this star. That took them on a long journey over the wilderness to Herod’s Court. They inquired of him concerning their quest, and the Church of that time, faulty though it was, was able to give them sure guidance, and sent them on to Bethlehem. There they found a little human child, nursed by a peasant mother, but they had sufficient light of faith to recognize in that Child a Divine Mystery, the revelation of Divine Love. They went from a natural light to a human light, and from a human light to a divine light.

We are told they went back to their own country another way. This life of ours is our own country, but when we have divine revelation we come into it another way, which is not

the way of the flesh, or the world, but the way of the Spirit. Life and everything in it is uplifted, fulfilled, consecrated. Christ is made manifest in the human life of His servant, just as in His own incarnate life was made manifest the divine beauty of the Everlasting God.

- *Father Andrew, S.D.C.*

Father Andrew was a founding member of the Society of the Divine Compassion, an Anglican religious community, and the first priest to be ordained wearing his monastic habit in the Church of England since the separation from Rome in the 16th century.

January Music

4 January – Solemnity of the Epiphany

Communion Service in E Flat - *White*
Where riches is everlastingly - *Peter Warlock*

11 January – Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Missa della battaglia - *Anerio*
Asperges Me - *Bruckner*

18 January – Chair of St Peter at Rome/Confession of St Peter

Communion Service in C - *Mathias*
Christ, Whose Glory Fills The Skies - *Candlyn*

25 January – Epiphany III

Mass in the Dorian Mode - *Cabena*
De Profundis – *attributed to Mozart*

From Father Speer

Dear Friends,

The Reconciliation of a Penitent or Confession, in addition to daily Mass, is a mark of a Catholic Parish. Grace and St. Peter's meets this standard. The practical meaning of this is that every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and also in conjunction with major festivals, a priest is available in the Resurrection Chapel at the back of the nave for the purpose of hearing confessions. The altar candles are burning as a sign that the Sacrament is available.

The power to forgive sins was given to the Church by our risen Lord on the evening of the first Easter. Jesus breathed on the disciples and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

In its essence, the Sacrament of Penance is something extremely simple – we kneel beside another and confess to God our sins, laying bare the real failures of every day which honest thinking compels us to admit. Here are the four stages of this Sacrament of the Gospel of grace. First, there is contrition or sorrow for our sins. Second, in confession we own up to our sins simply, honestly, and completely. Third, in absolution, God washes away the stain of sin from our souls and gives us strength to resist sin in the future. Fourth, in satisfaction we do our penance (often the recitation of a prayer or psalm) as a sign that we will try to do God's holy will in the future.

A helpful introduction to this Sacrament and the rite are located on page 342 and following in the Anglican Service Book found in the pews of our parish church. I have quoted freely from this material in my thoughts.

Father Speer
Priest Associate

January Mass Intentions

January is the Month of the Holy Family

1 CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD	The Peace of the World
2 Octave of St Stephen	St. Stephen's Church, Providence, RI
3 Octave of St John	St. John's Church, Newport, RI
4 EPIPHANY	Our Parish Family
5 Vigil	The Mission of the Church
6 EPIPHANY	The Church throughout the World
7 Octave	The Church in Asia
8 Octave	The Church in Africa
9 Octave	The Church in Central and South America
10 Octave	The Church in Australia
11 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD	Our Parish Family
12 Octave	The Church in North America
13 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD	Rowan, Archbishop of Canterbury
14 St Hilary, BCD	Pope Benedict
15 St Paul, Hermit	Eugene, our Bishop
16 St Marcellus, PM	John, Our Bishop
17 St Anthony Abbot	Monastic vocations
18 CONFESSION OF ST PETER	Our Parish Family
19 St Wulfstan, BC	The Church in the United Kingdom
20 Monthly Requiem	The Faithful departed
21 St Agnes, VM	For holiness of life
22 St Vincent, M	The Joseph Richey House
23 Feria	Grace and St. Peter's School
24 St Timothy, BM	The All Saints Sisters
25 EPIPHANY III	Our Parish Family
26 Conversion of St. Paul (transferred)	For faithfulness to Apostolic Truth
27 St John Chrysostom, BCD	The Eastern Churches
28 St Peter Nolasco, C	The Church in Italy
29 St Francis de Sales, BCD	The Church in France
30 King Charles the Martyr	The Church of England
31 St John Bosco, C	For children

Daily Mass Schedule

Sunday

7:45 a.m. Matins & Low Mass

10:00 a.m. High Mass

5:00 p.m. Evensong

Monday

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Tuesday

12:00 Noon Low Mass and Holy Unction

Wednesday

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Thursday

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Friday

8:45 a.m. Sung Mass

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Saturday

12:00 Noon Low Mass

Grace and Saint Peter's Church

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