

December 2007 Newsletter

S. CLEMENT'S CHURCH

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From the Rector

My dear People,

Though I am writing before the beginning of Advent, I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas. Advent and Christmas are intimately connected: without the message of Advent, Christmas hardly makes sense. God prepared for the Incarnation of his Son through patriarchs, prophets, S. John the Baptist and Our Lady, and then came Christ, not at a random moment but “in the fullness of time.” The Incarnation was not a panic measure, but part of God’s great strategy from all eternity.

So, in perfect trust and hope, let us celebrate Christmas with joy and even merriment. Canon Colin Stephenson, one of my dearest friends and mentors, called his autobiography “Merrily on High,” an echo of the Christmas carol “Ding dong, merrily on high; In heaven the bells are ringing.” It also referred to the fact that his whole ministry in the Church of England was as an Anglo-Catholic, a High Churchman, and that the hall-note of being a Catholic (in contrast to Calvinist gloom!) is to live joyfully and merrily in God’s world, rejoicing in all its gifts. Catholicism expresses the truths of the Christian Faith not only in the words of the preacher and the bible reader, but also in feasts and processions, in Christmas cribs and May crownings of the image of the Mother of God, in holy water and incense, in glorious altars and beautiful shrines. The Puritan spirit is highly suspicious of all these things, and indeed

Cromwell did his best to stamp out Christmas celebrations in England during the Commonwealth. But the human spirit is *anima naturaliter catholica*, and the restoration of Charles II was greeted throughout the kingdom with an upsurge of relief and happiness.

So come to Christmas in S. Clement’s in this spirit of simple, childlike thankfulness for God’s great gift of his Son. Give all your Christmas gifts to those whom you love in the same generous spirit (including your pledge to the church to enable her to continue the work of salvation.) Kneel in all simplicity before the manger and offer the Christ child your gift of loving service; kneel in all simplicity in the confessional and wipe the slate clean of your sins; and then kneel at the altar rail and receive into your very being the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ, the dynamic life of God himself.

Then, when we wish each other a Merry Christmas after Mass, it will be no empty phrase, but a heartfelt blessing.

May the Christ Child and his blessed Mother watch over you and those whom you love this Christmas-tide.

Affectionately, your Rector,

Kalendar

December 2007 – *The Nativity of Our Lord.*

- 1 Sa BVM on Saturday. [Preparation for a good Advent]
- 2 Su **Advent I.** S Bibiana, VM. [Parish]
- 3 M S Francis Xavier, C. *Feria.* [For foreign missions]
- 4 Tu S Peter Chrysologus, BCD. S. Barbara, VM. *Feria.* [Guild of All Souls]
- 5 W *Feria. S Sabbas, Ab.* [Increase & renewal of monastic life]
- 6 Th S Nicholas, BC. *Feria.* [The poor & oppressed and those who serve them]
- 7 F S Ambrose, BCD. Vigil. *Feria. Fast & Abs.* [Archbishop of Milan & Churches of the Ambrosian Rite]
- 8 Sa **Immaculate Conception BVM.** *Holy Day of Obligation.* *Feria.* [Parish]
- 9 Su **Advent II.** Of the Octave. [Parish]
- 10 M Translation of the Holy House of Loreto. S. Melchaides, PM. *Feria.* [Society of Mary]
- 11 Tu S Damasus I, PM. *Of the Octave.* *Feria.* [Pope Benedict XVI]
- 12 W OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE. *Feria.* [The Church in Mexico]
- 13 Th S Lucy, VM. *Of the Octave.* *Feria.* [The blind & those who care for them]
- 14 F Of the Octave. *Feria. Abs.* [Living Rosary of Our Lady & S. Dominic]
- 15 Sa Octave Day of the Immaculate Conception. *Feria.* [Clients & Benefactors of the Shrine of Our Lady of Clemency]
- 16 Su **Advent III.** S Eusebius, BM [Parish]
- 17 M *Feria.* [For those being ordained this Embertide]
- 18 Tu Expectation BVM. *Feria.* [Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham]
- 19 W Ember Day. *Fast & Partial Abs.* [Greater devotion in the last days of Advent]
- 20 Th Vigil. *Feria.* [Increase in Faith as we prepare for Christmas]
- 21 F **S Thomas, Ap.** *Ember Day. Fast & Abs.* [The Bishop & Diocese of Pennsylvania]
- 22 Sa S Frances Cabrini, V. *Ember Day. Fast & Partial Abs.* [Increase in Hope as we prepare for Christmas]
- 23 Su **Advent IV.** [Parish]
- 24 M Vigil of the Nativity. [For peace in the world]
- 25 Tu **Nativity of Our Lord.** *Holy Day of Obligation.* [Parish]
- 26 W **S Stephen, First Martyr.** *Of the Octave.* [S. Stephen's on 10th Street and S. Stephen's, Providence, Rhode Island]
- 27 Th **S John, ApEv.** *Of the Octave.* [S. John's Church, Newport, R.I.]
- 28 F **Ss Innocents, Mm.** *Of the Octave. Abs.* [Children threatened by war & vice]
- 29 Sa **S Thomas of Canterbury, BM.** *Of the Octave. Abs.* [Rowan, Archbishop of Canterbury & the Church of England]
- 30 Su **Within the Octave of the Nativity.** *Of the Octave.* [Parish]
- 31 M S. Sylvester, P.C. *Of the Octave.* [In thanksgiving for the closing year]

Agenda:

- 1 December **Quiet Morning in Preparation for Advent** conducted by Father Wall: 9.30 a.m., Rosary, 10.00 Sung Mass with Homily. Refreshments will follow the Mass. Address, 11.15 a.m. and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, 11.45 a.m. Sponsored by the Parish Wards of the Catholic Societies.
- 8 December **Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Holy Day of Obligation.** Low Mass, Procession & High Mass, 11.00 a.m.
- 16 December **Advent III. Rose Sunday.** High Mass in the Presence of the Most Rev'd Frank T. Griswold, Sometime Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church. Bishop Griswold will be present to preach and confirm.
- 18 December Monthly meeting of Vestry, 7.00 p.m. [Anchor Room]
- 24 December First Vespers of Christmas & the Office of Compline will be recited in S. John's Chapel at 12.45 p.m. (following the 12.10 Low Mass of the Vigil of the Nativity). Matins of Christmas Day will be recited at 9.45 p.m.
- 29 December **S. Thomas of Canterbury, B.M.** Sung Mass, 10.00 a.m.
- 30 December **Sunday in the Octave of Christmas.** High Mass followed by the Te Deum in thanksgiving for blessings received in 2007. Solemn Vespers will be offered at 4.00 p.m.
- 1 January 2008 **Circumcision of Our Lord.** High Mass, 11.00 a.m.

Christmas 2007

Christmas Eve

Monday, 24th December

Confessions, 5 – 6 p.m. [The Rector]; 10.30 – 11.30 p.m. [The Rector, Fr Wall & Fr Sipe]

Procession & High Mass, Midnight

Christmas Day

Tuesday, 25th December

Low Mass of the Dawn, 8.00 a.m.

High Mass of the Day, 11.00 a.m.

Music for the Month – December 2007

2nd December, Advent I:

Ordinary: *Orlandus Lassus*, Missa 'Surge propera'

Motet: *Juan Esquivel*, Veni, Domine

Organ: *Herbert Howells*, Master Tallis' Testament

Alexandre Guilmant, Allegro, from Sonata V

8th December, Immaculate Conception:

Ordinary: *Tomás Luis de Victoria*, Missa 'Vidi Speciosam'

Motet: *Victoria*, Vidi Speciosam

Organ: *Marcel Dupré*, Magnificat (from 15 Pieces)

Marcel Dupré, Ave Maris Stella

9th December, Advent II:

Ordinary: *Bartolomé de Escobedo*, Missa 'Philippus Rex'

Motet: *G. P. da Palestrina*, Canite tuba

Organ: *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

Bach, Fugue in g (the Little)

16th December, Advent III:

Ordinary: *Johannes Eccard*, Missa 'Mon Coeur se recommande à vous'

Motet: *Orlando Gibbons*, This is the record of John

Organ: *Hugo Distler*, Partita on Nun komm der Heiden Heiland

Johann Sebastian Bach, Fugue in G ('Jig Fugue')

23rd December, Advent IV:

Ordinary: *Johann Fischer*, Missa 'Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland'

Motet: *Samuel Scheidt*, Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland

Organ: *Bach*, Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland

Bach, Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland

24th December, Midnight Mass:

Ordinary: *Franz Joseph Haydn*, Saint Nicholas Mass (with orchestra)

Motet: *Jan Sweelinck*, Hodie Christus natus est

Organ: *Marcel Dupré*, Nativité (from Symphonie-Passion)

Keith Chapman, Bring a torch, Jeanette Isabella

25th December, Christmas Day:

Ordinary: *Tomás Luis da Victoria*, Missa 'O Magnum Mysterium'

Motet: *Victoria*, O Magnum Mysterium

Organ: *Jean Langlais*, La Nativité

Johann Sebastian Bach, In dulci jubilo

(over)

30th December, Within the Octave of the Nativity:
Ordinary: *Ludovico Viadana*, Missa 'Cantabo Domino'
Organ: *Thomas Matthews*, Prelude on 'Orientis partibus'
Arthur Wills, Carillon on 'Orientis partibus'

Notes:

Envelopes for Christmas Flower Offerings and the Special Christmas Offering are enclosed. Please return Christmas Flower offerings as soon as possible; as our wholesale flower costs have increased significantly from last year it is difficult to plan decorating without knowing availability of funds.

Ordo Kalendars for 2008 with full color photographs are available from the Parish Office @ \$15.00 (add 3.00 for postage & handling).

Some Principles & Practices of the Spiritual Life

by Basil W. Maturin, Mission Priest of the Society of S John the Evangelist, Oxford

IV. The Christian Motive

There is nothing more sad to see than an aimless life. Such a life does not necessarily mean that the person who lives it never has an aim, but that the aim is constantly being changed. Many a day may be lived very intensely: sometimes an object of interest may fill and absorb every thought for several days. Indeed it is surprising the amount of force and enthusiasm that is expended upon some passing interest altogether out of proportion to its value. Yet a life with all these changing interests and excitements may, after all, be an utterly aimless life; its characteristic is, that it is taken up with passing things, not with anything that is permanent. The chief bond that binds such a life together is its most marked characteristic, changeableness, instability, uncertainty.

For in the end it is the aim that interprets the life; we judge people not so much by their attainments as by the tendency, the bent of their life. One may use great and excellent gifts for some unworthy purpose, and even though the purpose may never be attained, we know that it has demoralised the character. We judge one another not so much by what we are as by what we are becoming, trying to be. A person who aims at some noble end in life is noble; the difference between the commonplace life and that which is above the commonplace lies mainly in the region of motive. Before you can understand why one man, with all his failures and blunders, is so different from another, who is in many things more successful, you must understand what it is that inspires his life. The person whose life from first to last is inspired by the noblest aim, however constantly it may fail, however devoid it may be of the brilliancy of natural gifts, lives the most noble of lives.

For all the world's coarse thumb and finger could not plumb,
So passed in making up the main amount;
Which count not as the work, but swell the man's account.
Thoughts that could not be packed into a single act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped.
All that I could not be, all men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God.

What, then, ought to be the aim that inspires the whole character of one who would live the best and noblest life on earth? Many things at once occur to us that would appeal to ambition and call for applause; some necessitating one great gift, some another; but the greatest and most perfect life does not necessarily require great gifts; it lies open to all: it has, not rarely, been lived by those who have been below the average so far as natural endowments are concerned. It is, indeed, a wonderful homage to the power of a great motive to stamp itself upon and develop character, that there are not a few whose names are known in history only on this account, who otherwise would have been lost in the crowd of the commonplace; but they were lifted up and made great by the motive that formed and governed their lives.

And what motive, then, lies open to all, can equally be followed by all, and makes all great who follow it? It seems a very simple one, yet it involves much; it is to fulfill as perfectly as possible the purpose for which one was created by God and placed here upon earth. As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called everyone, so let him walk. No one can do better with his life than that, no one can put it to a better

use. Any life must be perfect in proportion as it does what it was made to do. There are many lives that are brilliant failures; they strive after many things which they were never intended to do, and fail in that one thing. In proportion as this purpose is considered and aimed after the life is a success. It seems strange that a reasonable being should never ask himself why he was put upon earth, or that it should not occur to him that the reason must be found in the will of his Creator. I employ a man to do a certain piece of work for me at a certain price. He comes to me at the end of the day and says, I have been very busy all day; I have spent all my time in doing some work of my own that I was anxious to finish. I answer, But you have not done the work that I employed you to do; you have been full of your own plans, not mine; therefore, I shall not pay you. At the end of the day of our earthly life we have to answer to our Maker whether we have been employed about our own work or about His, whether we have even made an effort to find out what He would have us do.

A life which is inspired by such a motive is sure to be a success, for of this we may be absolutely certain, that each of us can fulfill in our life that for which we were created. We cannot be sure that we have the gifts needed for any other purpose; there is at least a risk about it, but in this there is no risk. For God, in creating us, equipped us for the work for which He created us. We have every gift of nature and of grace, of mind and body, which is needed for this work. These gifts can no doubt be used for other ends, and the more brilliant they are the more diverse the uses to which they can be put. Many, not caring to find out what they were given for, may altogether abuse them, or use them for purposes that can never develop them to their full capacity, and consequently the character of the person who possesses them will suffer, and the life will fall short of real success. Often the source of discontent, and restlessness, and lack of peace in a life, which from its power and influence and many gifts is the envy of others, is the half

consciousness that the aim is not right, that the powers are not being used for the purpose for which they were given.

It will be an inspiring thought then to keep before us: I have all the powers necessary for a true success in life; no one is so fitted to do the special work I have to do, to fill the special place which I have to fill as I am myself. God wished a certain work to be done; He is almighty and all wise, He saw exactly the person best fitted to do it. He might have created one endowed with every conceivable gift, but He created me; He knew what He was about, it was no accident, I did not come here by chance, but as the result of an intelligent Will. We may try after something that is more to our taste or more showy, or that calls for less exertion and discipline, and so may fail: or we may live in total forgetfulness that we were put here on earth for any purpose at all, or we may waste our life and gifts in fretful discontent with the lot that we are powerless to escape from; but if we take as the key to life the Will of God, and strive to realise His purpose in our creation, and then to fulfill it, we must succeed; and that success will crown the character with a beauty, an attractiveness, a harmony, and an inward peace which will leave the soul without a doubt that the end is right.

Then, too, God has withheld from us what would not be serviceable to this end; it is in His goodness that He has not overweighted the soul with what would be useless, or with what might dissipate its strength or obstruct its path. There are many gifts that we may envy in others, yet if we had them they would only be a hindrance; if they were necessary for us, God would have given them. We do not stud the handle of a hammer with precious stones; if we did, we should be afraid to use it for its ordinary work; and God has not so encrusted out nature with gifts and talents as to blind us to its real purpose. By this means life is made more simple; many doors are closed at the outset : we feel, or we ought to feel, shut out from

various positions and spheres of work or influence that pride or ambition might call us into. Indeed, we know well how difficult it is often to accept our limitations; and how many people spend their lives in trying to push their way through doors that are very clearly closed against them, but they will not believe it.

Thus each of us has all that is necessary for fulfilling God's purpose in life, and what we have not we need not regret or envy in others. God did not withhold anything in a grudging spirit, but only because it would be in our way.

And the work of life which God calls us to do has one great end, the development and perfecting of our character. It has, no doubt, its own intrinsic value; it would be a most uninspiring view of the work of life to suppose that in itself it was worthless, like some piece of work given a child, only to teach her how to use her needle. We cannot estimate the value of what is done upon earth, we cannot see its issues; but that it has an intrinsic value we cannot doubt. Yet the great end for which we have been chosen to do it is for our own development and perfection. We may no doubt do the very work God has put us on earth to do in a way that injures ourselves; but if this be so, we may also feel assured that the work of God must suffer also; if the machine gets out of order, it cannot do its work perfectly.

It is by the work of life, and in the place chosen by God, that the character is to be formed and perfected, and it is by the character deepening in perfection that the work is to be most perfectly done. There is the work and there is the man; they were made for one another; no one can do the work so well as he, and no other work can do so much for that man. Such a thought will give interest and value to all we have to do, and raise the smallest and most insignificant duties out of the commonplace. Those uninteresting surroundings, and dull people, and that round of

duties, they are the tools with which God carves and chisels out of our nature the likeness of Christ; to neglect anything, to do anything in a careless and perfunctory way, will not only spoil the work but will injure the worker.

This, then, must be a fundamental and ruling principle in life, the principle of Vocation, of a purpose which we are called to fulfill; everything will go wrong if the aim is not right. If the aim be true, it will give force and directness to the whole character, and every power of nature and grace will be developed in its perfect proportion.

The idea of Vocation must not be limited to one or two of the more clearly marked calls of God, such as the call to the priesthood or the religious life; we read in the Gospels of one who thought he had a call to such a special following of our Lord as the Apostles had, and our Lord forbade him, and said to him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee. He would have mistaken his Vocation if he had given up everything to follow Christ; his Vocation, therefore, was as distinctly to the home life as was S. Peter's to the apostolic life. It is important that we should remember this: Vocation is the call of God to whatever form of life He may please to call one. The realising of one's position in life as a Vocation is like a conversion, it is the opening of the eyes to see the purpose and Will of God behind and through the ordinary events of life. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard shows us the monotonous and commonplace life of a day labourer transformed by the hearing of the call, "Go, work in my vineyard."

In the manifold works and obligations of life, all that keeps the world going, the fundamental difference lies in this, that multitudes who fulfill those duties do so because they are obliged; some few do them in obedience to the Will of God, and this makes all the difference in the character of those who work. Therefore, while some Vocations

are no doubt more clearly marked than others, everyone, no matter how humble his position, has his place and work assigned by God, and consequently has in the true sense of the word a Vocation, the realising and fulfilling of which is the condition of perfection.

We must consider further that all God's action towards us will be directed to perfect us through our Vocation, This is the Will of God, even your sanctification; it is true, He does care for our happiness and temporal welfare. Everything that affects us is of interest to Him, but all is subservient to our true happiness and the real success of life. If health is necessary that we should reach this end, we may be assured that we shall have health; if health would hinder us, it shall be taken from us; if success is good for us, He will allow us to succeed, but if it would stand in our way, if we would rest in it, or it would elate us and make us worldly, we shall not have success. And so with everything: all is in His hands, and all is ordered with a view to this one end the fulfillment of the purpose for which He placed us here. And God cannot be won round to forego this. No prayers will move Him. He would be unfaithful to us and to His promises if He failed to fulfill His part. The opportunities, the temptations, the troubles, the blessings will come, the ordering of the outward circumstances of our life all this we may be sure of, whether we correspond or not. This mighty Will goes on ordering all as it should if we were faithful.

There is something at once alarming and bracing in this thought: it is alarming, indeed, if we do not care to correspond, to think that the strong currents of God's Will, working towards an end from which we have turned away, still keep beating around us, beating upon us, filling the spaces of our life with movements that all tend in the opposite direction to our own, and that must eventually crush us if we do not turn and yield. And yet bracing too: is it not a bracing and

inspiring thought to think that there is the Will of Him who orders all things working towards one end the end towards which we have turned our life and that it is always on the side of our best selves, always waging unceasing war against any one-sided or partial view of life; that if we get lax or weak He will not be so unkind as to yield to us; that if we swerve for an instant to one side or the other, it, as it were, strikes us and forces us back again. What a strength to think that we have no plan, no purpose in life but His whose Will orders all things.

We have thus but to look out upon the circumstances of our life at any moment to see the operation of this Will on our behalf. All things work together for good, if only our will is directed towards the same end as His. A few suggestions may be helpful with a view to training the will to correspond with God's purpose.

1. Try to see the Will of God in little things. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. "Not a sparrow shall fall on the ground" without His will. Nothing happens in our daily life without His permitting it, even what happens through the sin of others. God does not will sin, but He does permit that, sin being committed, we should be tried by it. It needs the constant exercise of faith and watchfulness to see the Will of God constantly operating towards us.

2. Keep the will free when anything naturally pleasing offers itself, some opportunity of enjoyment, some plan that you would naturally like; wait before you decide, and look to God, consult His Will before you choose, that pause and prayer may make all the difference in the result of your choice.

3. So, too, in times of uncertainty, make constant acts of self-oblation, keep your will free till you know the Will of God. Many a time such periods of uncertainty are permitted as times of preparation; during that time of waiting the will learns to accept what it perhaps could not have accepted at once.

4. Do not throw too much intensity into the legitimate choices of the will in ordinary things that give enjoyment. Hold much of the power of the will in reserve; don't spend and exhaust its powers in things which are not worth it. With certain temperaments the tendency is to choose passionately and with all the intensity of one's nature the passing pleasures or superficial things of life as well as the deeper and more important, and consequently there is a lack of proper detachment and readiness to forego what one may have to give up. Keep yourself in hand and reserve the whole power of the will's choice for those things that are worth it.

5. Remember there is a vast difference between willing and wishing; you can't help what you wish at any given moment, but your will is in your own power. Your wishes are the inclinations of your nature, as you find them now, from whatever cause, temperament, taste, or perhaps past sin. It can't be helped now, but often the greatest triumphs of grace consist in the will choosing in direct opposition to what nature wishes. You can't help wishing not to say your prayers, or not to fast, or not to get up in the morning, but you can will and determine to act in opposition to these wishes and so to grow in strength and grace. Therefore don't be anxious because many times you don't wish to do God's Will. Will to do it, do it, and the triumph and the reward will be all the greater.

And so, in spite of, and through, all the obstacles both within and without that beset the pathway of the soul, it presses on to fulfill the purpose of God.

A Catholic Alphabet

S is for Sacrament

According to the Prayer Book Catechism, “A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” The Western Church has named seven sacraments as of supreme importance: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, Penance, Matrimony, Ordination and Unction.

A sacrament, to be valid, must have the right matter, the right form, and the right intention. For example, in Baptism, the right matter is water; the right form is “I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”; and the right intention is to incorporate the person baptized into the Church, the Body of Christ.

The use of common materials in the sacraments—water, bread, wine, oil—testifies to the Church’s teaching that the material creation radiates to us the spiritual creation, and that both body and spirit are to be redeemed by God for eternal life.

T is for Tabernacle

In the centre of the High Altar stands a gilded safe where the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is “reserved.” This is called the Tabernacle.

The name is taken from the Jewish shrine constructed by Moses in the wilderness which was held to contain the presence of God with his chosen people in their wanderings before they entered the Promised Land.

The sacramental Body of Christ, the consecrated bread from the Mass is kept in the Tabernacles on our altars, first for the Communion of the Sick, and also for the adoration of the faithful. Because we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in his Sacrament, we reverence the Tabernacle by genuflecting when we pass in front of it. The presence of the Sacrament is indicated by the white light that burns before it.

U is for Unction

The Sacrament of Holy Unction is the practice, mentioned in the Epistle of S James, of the clergy of the Church anointing sick people with oil as they prayed for their health of body and soul.

In time, the Sacrament came to be thought of as only for use on a person’s death-bed, and so became known as “the Last Rites.” But recently, the Church has restored this rite as a normal part of the visitation of the sick, which is given for healing and not just for a terminal illness. As such, it can be repeated. Unction, anointing with oil, may also be used in both Baptism and Confirmation and Ordination to show that such a person is identified with Christ. The Greek word *Christos* literally means *Anointed One* and is the translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*.