

THE RECTOR'S CHRONICLE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

You have probably heard by now that the (Roman Catholic) Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican has announced a new Apostolic Constitution which will allow for a new structure for Anglicans to enter into communion with the Roman Catholic Church while retaining essential elements of Anglican heritage and practice. This has met with considerable press coverage and commentary from those within and outside the church. Bishop Campese has written a pastoral letter to the diocese, which I shared at both Masses last Sunday. (If you would like a copy, let me know.) Bishop Campese aside, much of what has been written is speculative, since the text of the Apostolic Constitution has not been released; it is expected in a couple of weeks. Please bear this in mind as you read the press accounts and comments. Writers may well sound as though they know things which no one else does, and not clearly distinguish between established fact and their own ideas about the facts.

The Traditional Anglican Communion, of which we are a part, has been in contact with Rome about the possibilities of establishing inter-communion for many years. These contacts have been close and frequent in recent days. It is to be hoped that the new provisions will allow for such inter-communion. When the details are known, the Anglican Church in America and the other national churches within the Traditional Anglican communion, will each convene a national Synod to consider what our response should be. Each parish in the ACA will also need to consider its response, and St Michael's is no exception. Meanwhile, I think it best to wait and see what the document holds, rather than trying to speculate about what we should do in this or that possible situation. When the details are known, you may be sure we will make them known, and that the vestry will devote time to a thorough consideration of what they might mean for us in our situation. There will also be opportunities for the congregation as a whole to hear and consider what the new Roman canons mean.

It is probably safe to assume that most folk at St Michael's wouldn't be at St Michael's if they were committed to being Roman Catholic – since we are Anglican, and for the last 450 years Anglicans have not been in communion with Rome, though, of course we were before that. So an initial reaction might well be, “I don't want to be Roman.” This is understandable, and is do doubt based on the real differences which exist between Anglican and Roman practice. Yet such an initial reaction should be tempered first by our not knowing at this point whether the Apostolic Constitution offers an easier way for Anglicans to become Roman (as some have reported it), or rather a means for Anglicans to establish inter-communion with Rome (as Bishop Campese suggests). The two are significantly different, since the latter would allow for the healing of a long-standing schism in the Body of Christ while allowing Anglicans to retain their integrity.

We should also remember that as Christians we must have a commitment to the visible unity of the church. Christ intends for His church to be one – united on earth as well as with the church in heaven. Certainly things have changed since the break between Rome and England in the 16th century. Even if the break was justified then, it may be that the time is now ripe for the breach to be healed. We should hope and pray that this is the case. Bishop Campese has asked us to ponder John 17:20-26, as we pray for unity according to His will. It is part of Christ' High Priestly Prayer at the Last Supper:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

We should keep in mind our Lord's prayer for the unity of the church, and be ready to shoulder the

obligations which it lays upon us. As always, this is not a matter of what *I* want to do: it is what *God* wants that matters. So stay tuned. When the details become available, we will share them, and then take counsel as to where God is leading us.

Stewardship

It's that time of year again. I invite you all to a congregational meeting on Sunday, November 15th (the Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity), for a consideration of parish giving. It is a privilege as well as an obligation to give to the church. In the Wednesday Bible study, we've been looking at II Corinthians, and we are now in the middle of chapters 8 and 9, where Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to be generous in giving to the needs of the poor Christians in Jerusalem. This makes for interesting and timely reading – and perhaps it is a good opportunity to make a plug for the Wednesday Bible study: meets in the rectory at 11 every Wednesday. You can also call in if you cannot be present in person – I'm happy to provide instructions on how to do that.

In any case, I expect that all parishioners will make every effort to be present at the meeting on the 15th. Others are welcome as well. As usual, we will talk about what Christians ought to do about giving to the church, and how they ought to go about it. For Scripture, the *how* is often more important than the *what*. We will also review the parish's financial situation, and hear from a parishioner about her Christian life at St Michael's. This last has long been the high point of these meetings. To add suspense, I won't tell you now who is doing it this year. Come and find out!

November Events

Movie Night at the Rectory returns Friday, November 6th. We continue with the *Barchester Chronicles*, an adaptation of the Trollope novels, *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers*. Popcorn provided. Come at 7. Movie starts at 7:30.

We will be participating in the “**shoe box**” project again this year. This involves the preparation of Christmas gifts, for a boy or girl, aged 5-9, which are fitted into a shoe box and distributed around the world by The Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian service organization. They include with each gift some Scripture in the language of the child. The boxes not only supply some welcome treats to a child; they also teach in a small way about the love of God in Jesus Christ, coming as they do on the celebration of His incarnation. The assembly is scheduled for November 22nd, during coffee hour. Adults are welcome to help along with the Sunday School children. If you would like to contribute items, a sign-up sheet of suggested items is available in the porch on Sundays.

There will be Mass on **Thanksgiving Day** (November 26th) at 10 in the rectory Oratory. I hope many of you will come to join in giving thanks to God in the Great Thanksgiving of the Mass for all His blessings to us, including those of a good harvest, enough to eat, and the other material and spiritual blessings He has bestowed upon our land.

Should you receive this before then, let me remind you of **All Souls' Day** on November 2nd. There will be a Requiem in Commemoration of the Faithful Departed at the rectory oratory at 6 p.m. Please come and add your prayers at the Mass that day.

Also coming along before you know it: Advent, with its focus on Christ's three-fold coming: in the incarnation at Bethlehem, in His second coming at the end of the age, and His coming to our hearts. Advent Sunday is November 29th. The **Advent Quiet Day** is scheduled for Saturday, December 12th, 9:30-2 at All Saints', Wynnewood. It follows the usual routine with Mass, breakfast, silence, addresses (which I will be giving). It is a great opportunity to prepare spiritually for our Lord's coming at Christmas. As always, we are grateful to our friends at All Saints' for their generosity in providing us the space to have the Quiet Day.

Kudos

Thanks goes this month to:

- my mother for doing the last *Chronicle* mailing.
- parishioners who contributed to the ACA “assessment” over and above their regular pledge.
- the Sugdens who designated St Michael's for memorials to Mrs Celia Sugden, and to all (many!) who have contributed.
- Gary Sugden for providing altar flowers several times this past month.

Faithfully,

