

The Parish Paper

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

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The Sixth Sunday after Trinity (Eve of Independence Day)

July 3, 2016

SERMON FOR SS. PETER & PAUL

Part II of a sermon of Father Ralston in 1990

Suppose it was not St. Peter's, but St. Paul's kind of faith which was at the root of things, and the measure of our life in the Church? We would be in trouble; at least almost all of us would be. Not many of us are struck by lightning in the middle of the road, or are carried up to the third heaven of visions and revelations. St. Paul is a special case – what we may call a "royal peculiar." It is impossible to make St. Paul a norm for anyone else.

Suppose for a moment it was even faith like St. John's which was the norm. St. John loved Jesus so much and so absolutely that the Lord was for him like his "other self." St. John knows Jesus more closely and is united with him more nearly than any person other than the Blessed Virgin herself. He is again a very special case. Who can even begin to love the Lord as St. John did? So it is impossible to make his kind of faith a norm for anyone else.

And that leaves us exactly where we are today – with dear and blessed St. Peter. What kind of rock *is this*?

Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ. And within five minutes he's trying to tell Jesus *how* to be Christ. Peter wants Jesus to be the kind of Christ Peter expects him to be. He mistakes the whole thing. He does not see that for Jesus to be Christ means that he must suffer and must die. Peter

says "Be it far from thee." And Jesus tells him: If you can't accept this, be ye far from *me*. And yet, Peter's mistake is so ordinary and so comprehensible. After all these years the suffering and the sacrifice of Jesus are still hard to comprehend, and mysterious. I dare say we would have made the same mistake Peter did. It is the natural mistake of flesh and blood.

And then later on: Peter's brave avowal – "I will never desert thee"; "I will never deny thee." And on the same night three times to repudiate Jesus, even to his face, in his very presence. Isn't this worse than Judas? Judas was always a little suspect. He was a conniver. He had an angle to play. But Peter was the leader of the disciples. He had made the great confession. He was already exercising the beginnings of his great prerogative in the Church. He was Jesus' friend. His denial is the worst of all – the betrayal of friends and benefactors. Peter did it. He was afraid. And again, I guess we might have done so, too. There are not many of us so brave who would not have. The important part of this story is that Peter, who had betrayed the Lord, nevertheless went out afterward to repent and weep bitterly.

Right at the very end, after the Resurrection, Peter is still recognizably himself. He's been fishing again, and he's out on the lake once more. When John – love recognizing its proper object

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STANDING NOTICES

The occasional Sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Penance, Communion and Unction of the Sick, and the Office of Burial of the Dead are always available by appointment, at announced times, or as necessary. Please call the Church Office to notify the clergy if you or a loved one is in the hospital.

VESTRY OFFERING CHAIRMEN

8:00 Mr. Arthur D. Weed
10:30 Dr. James S. McClellan, Jr.

USHER CHAIRMAN

Mr. John D. Riley

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flowers at the altar this Sunday are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Paul Godfrey Hass by Dr. Thomas Philbrick.

CHANCEL SOCIETY

Mrs. Jayne G. Holland, Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard,
Mrs. T. Herbert Guerry III,
Mrs. Richard C. E. Jennings,
Mrs. Jeanne W. McMillan, Miss Caroline McMillan,
Mrs. Joseph R. Ross

ACOLYTES

8:00 a.m. Jamie McClellan
10:30 a.m. Turner Stevens Hawkins Pindar
 Hunter Wasden William Taylor

COFFEE HOUR CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Robert J. Merritt, Jr.

SUNDAY 9:30 A.M. BOOK DISCUSSION

Lachlan Ivy will lead a discussion of Tim Keller's *Prayer* in the Reading Room at 9:30 a.m. on July 3 & 10. All are welcome. Handouts provided.

MEN'S WEEKDAY STUDY & DISCUSSION

Tuesday- Breakfast with Father O'Brien
Why Read the Bible?
6:45 a.m., Parish House

Thursday- NO MEETING THIS WEEK
NEXT MEETING ON JULY 14
Romans with Father Dunbar
7:00 a.m., CH Reading Room

WOMEN'S WEEKDAY STUDY & DISCUSSION

Wednesday- C. S. Lewis Women's Fellowship
2nd & 4th Wednesdays (July 13)
11:00 a.m., CH Reading Room

Thursday- Michael O'Brien's novel,
Island of the World with Fr. O'Brien
9:15 a.m., CH Reading Room

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR CHURCH IN YOUR WILL

over on the shore – says, "It is the Lord," Peter jumps right in the water, to swim over to Jesus, just as he rushed right into the tomb on Easter day. He is still himself.

And after Jesus has feasted with his disciples beside the lake – "Come and dine" – Jesus asks Peter three times: "Do you love me?" Not, "do you believe in me?" but, "do you love me?" It is not too many times to ask one who betrayed and denied him three times. Peter answers, and is vexed to have the question repeated. Jesus' reply is exactly what he told Peter at his confession: "Feed my lambs" – "Care for my sheep" – "Upon this rock I will build my Church."

What a marvelous thing this is. After all of it, on the other side of Jesus' ministry and death, on the other side of Peter's misunderstanding and denial, here in the time of his Resurrection, Jesus reaffirms Peter's vocation and authority. It is the second great moment in Peter's life. Jesus reaffirms him – *nevertheless*, no matter what.

But just as before – and indeed the two moments echo each other precisely – flesh and blood intervene. Peter is still himself. He is jealous of St. John. Even in the presence of the risen Lord, and after this wonderful word of Jesus to him, he can't help himself. He looks over at St. John and says: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus tells him to mind his own business. Never mind about John: You do what *you* are given to do. "Feed my sheep."

To be continued

PARISH KALENDAR THIS WEEK

Monday, July 4

Church Office Closed.

No Daily Services.

Tuesday to Friday

8:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Morning and Evening Prayer

In addition, on Wednesday

9:45 a.m. *The Litany*

10:00 a.m. *Holy Eucharist*

THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

The Children's School Summer Session is underway! Weekly/Monthly sessions are available through August 19.

We also have a few openings left for the 2016-17 school year!

To register, contact Director, Cathy King at childrenschool@stjohnssav.org.

JANE'S CANNERS

The Canning Ladies will be cooking in the kitchen beginning at 10:15 a.m. each Wednesday throughout the summer. All are welcome to join them! Donations needed: sugar, raisins, figs, pears, apples, squash, onions, etc. Call Jane Pressly at 233-6551.

GENTLE YOGA CLASSES

Just a reminder that the weekly yoga classes continue through the summer each Tuesday at 9:30 a.m., 3rd floor Cranmer Hall! If you are looking to try something new or just hoping to exercise out of the heat, call Cathy Baxter at 912-704-5111. All are welcome!

8:00 A.M.–HOLY COMMUNION

COLLECT, EPISTLE, and GOSPEL..... Prayer Book, page 197
A continental breakfast is available in Cranmer Hall following this service.

9:30 A.M.-10:15 A.M. - CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR ADULTS (Cranmer Hall)

10:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (Noon) - **Nursery (Cranmer Hall)**

10:30 A.M. - JOYFUL NOISE, JOYFUL HEARTS (Cranmer Hall)

Music, Teaching, and Active Fun for Pre-School through Kindergarten.

10:30 A.M. - MORNING PRAYER & SERMON

VOLUNTARY: *Festival Prelude on "Thaxted"* David Howard Pettit
 (Christopher Heldt, trumpet & Sarah Eliasoph, timpani)

HYMN: #518 *Judge Eternal* St. Leonard
 Sentences, Confession, Absolution and Lord's Prayer Prayer Book, pages 3-7
 Versicles and Responses 7-8

VENITE EXULTEMUS DOMINO: #609 9
 Psalm #18:1-20 359
 First Lesson: Deuteronomy 8 *Remember the Lord thy God* *Insert*

BENEDICTUS ES, DOMINE #626..... 11
 Second Lesson: Romans 6:3; St. Matthew 5:20..... 197

BENEDICTUS #634 14
Children may exit following the cross for PSALM PSINGERS (Grades 1-5).

Apostles' Creed 15

Versicles and Responses 16

Collects for the Day 263, 197

Other Collects, Prayers and the Grace 17-20

HYMN: #521 *O God of Earth and Altar*..... King's Lynn

THE SERMON Father O'Brien

OFFERING

Sentences

Anthem: *Lord, While for All Mankind We Pray* Eric H. Thiman

Presentation of Alms: Doxology #139

#142 **NATIONAL ANTHEM** (both stanzas).....

For Our Country 36

General Thanksgiving (*said by all*) and Aaronic Blessing..... 19

HYMN: #143 *God of Our Fathers*..... National Hymn

VOLUNTARY: *Trumpet Voluntary in C*..... Maurice Greene

Everyone is invited to attend Coffee Hour in the Parish House immediately after the 10:30 a.m. service.

If you are a guest and visiting our Parish, please make yourself known.

12:00 P.M. (Noon) HOLY COMMUNION in the Chapel (Collect, Epistle, Gospel as at 8:00 a.m.)