

St Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

June 13th, 2017

FROM THE RECTOR

Marginalizing Christianity carries a very high price

*"Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned . . ."*

W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

Washington and the capitals of Europe are currently awash with scandals – both real and imagined. Revelations, for example, that the former Secretary of State casually employed unsecure e-mails to share national secrets not only with her staff but allegedly with a myriad foreign intelligence agencies have been matched by allegations that the U.S. President "colluded" (whatever that might mean) with the Russians to secure his election to the nation's highest office.

The former Secretary of State, I should note, has been absolved of any criminal wrongdoing, while, as of writing, evidence of the president and/or his associates "colluding" with the Russians has proved decidedly elusive – despite insinuations, suppositions and speculations *ad nauseam*.

Reactions to the plethora of alleged scandals has been predictably partisan both from the political class and the media – protestations of innocence, howls of outrage and demands that the supposedly guilty should be punished to the full extent of the law. Hypocrisy, as Oscar Wilde so pithily observed, has always been the tribute vice pays to virtue

Meanwhile, a genuine and truly worrisome scandal has passed virtually unremarked: The chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigations – apparently on his own initiative and for motives as yet unknown – mounted clandestine investigations into the affairs of BOTH major political parties' presidential candidates in the midst of last year's election.

One need not necessarily be unduly paranoid for this to raise the specter of the late J. Edgar Hoover and the manner in which he maintained his leadership of the FBI long past his "sell-by date."

Outside Washington's city limits the reaction all these shenanigans has, in the main, been rather different from that within them. It has less one of outrage and more a case of numb acceptance that these days this is the way that politicians and media do business.

Indeed, it's no longer surprising that the general public seems no longer surprised by such goings on – all of which is evidence of the inexorable moral decline in public, private and corporate life has been taking place over the best part of half a century or more.

Actually, the writing was plainly on the wall in the early 1960s when a U.S. President was sharing a mistress with an organized crime chieftain and a British Minister of Defense was doing the same with the Soviet military attaché.

The underlying root of the problem was graphically exposed in a casual aside by the chief of one of America's leading electronics companies in mid-1998. Asked if a company should show loyalty to its employees, he

reportedly replied: "If you want loyalty, buy a dog."

Such a sentiment runs utterly contrary to the moral ideals upon which this nation and its allies in the West were founded – ideals engendered by 2,000 years of applied Christianity.

But what makes the statement so uniquely shocking is the man apparently felt no shame in blurting it out in public. In times past, people who harbored such contempt for normal virtues would have kept their ideas entirely to themselves for fear of the consequences of speaking them out loud.

As with the current monkey business in Washington, nobody seemed shocked by it. The response was glum acceptance of this is the way things are or a resounding: "So what?"

Sadly, some even seemed to imagine that folks who espoused such ideas were admirably qualified for leadership both public and private spheres.

Christians have no alternative but to reject in the strongest possible terms the notion that virtues like honesty, loyalty and respect can be excluded from any human relationship – whether it be that of husband and wife, employer and employee, vendor and customer, or governor and governed.

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Timothy, Peter, June, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Jim, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Robert✘, David, Jan, Susie, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Cour Marie, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, David, Adrian, Michell, Aida, Mai, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey & Stephen

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey, Beth, Erin and Aubery

FOR THE DEPARTED: Margaret Carter

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN: The Carter & Cromwell Families

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; MSGT Michael Holter, USAF; Cpt Fiodor Strikovski, US Army

Honesty, loyalty and respect are not simply options to be exercised when convenient and ignored when inconvenient or unprofitable. Such notions run entirely contrary to Jesus Christ's most important command – to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Non-believers, moreover, are no less threatened than Christians by the notion that honorable behavior is of no account. It is dangerous not simply because it is ugly, immoral, antisocial and anti-Christian, but because it is a positively suicidal philosophy for any society to embrace.

A society that rejects the concept that honorable behavior is a virtue is doomed to destruction. Societies that accept dishonorable behavior as a norm do not long remain free. Political leaders who did not treat their their followers honorably tended to become ex-political leaders in short order – not so apparently today..

And that which applies to nations and political parties also holds true in the world of both in private life and the world of

commerce.

Happy marriages, like true friendships, are based on trust, loyalty and respect. Similarly, since prehistoric times, successful business people were the ones who treated their suppliers, their customers and those who worked for them honorably. It shouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure out why.

An amazing aspect of the "buy a dog" episode is that the company's shareholders didn't demand the executive's head on a platter.

After all, if folks like him feel no loyalty to the people who work for them, how much loyalty can their shareholders, customers and suppliers expect from them? And how much loyalty should we show to a political class that clearly puts its interests way ahead of that of those of the nation?

Answers to such questions lie in the widespread corruption in the public sphere – not least in lavish salaries and benefits enjoyed by politicians and government workers; the extravagant remuneration corporate bosses award themselves; in the way employees cheat on employers; and in the deceptive trading practices of many corporations.

This sad situation has not come about by chance. It has marched in lock step with the marginalization of the faith upon which Western culture is based. Europe, for instance, has deliberately refused to acknowledge its debt to Christianity in its constitution and the U.S. is undeniably moving in the same direction.

The squawks emanating from Washington are the sound of chickens coming home to roost. Moral vacuums are no different from physical vacuums. Alternative moralities arise to fill them. This should be a terrifying prospect for a culture locked in mortal combat with fundamentalist Islam.

GPH*

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School starts on June 19th: Register now!

The Sunday School is calling for every child in the neighborhood to put on "The Armor of God" this summer at St Stephen's Vacation Bible School. It starts on June 19th and runs to June 23rd. Every "new squire" will learn the Shield of Faith, the Shoes of Readiness, the Helmet of Salvation the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Belt of Truth and the Sword of the Spirit!!! VBS runs from 9:00AM-12:00PM-Monday thru Friday. Snacks will be provided. There will be crafts, water play, and games. The cost is \$20 per child. Please call the church office to register or see one of the Sunday school teachers. Hope to see your child at this faith-filled adventure!!!! DIANE NOVICK

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Rev. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*
The Venerable Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*
The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki and
The Rev. Robert Ludwig, *Associate Rectors*
The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, *Pastoral Care Chaplain*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

9.15am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6pm: Choral Evensong (as announced) –

evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Tuesday, 7am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Parish Youth Play Group

Every Sunday After the 9.15 Eucharist

Ladies Service Award

Recognition Tea

Sunday, June 11th, 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

Parish Life Meeting

Tuesday June 13th 7.00 pm

The Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, June 21st, 12.00 pm - 2.00 pm

Peppermill Restaurant

call Joyce Perlberg to reserve a place 410-252-2680

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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