

Tidings

The Newsletter of St. Paul's Anglican Church

April 2018



St. Paul's Anglican Church

333 E. Chimes St.

P. O. Box 86866

Baton Rouge, LA 70879

stpaulsbr.org

(225)372-2254

In This Issue

A Message from Fr. Toms

Important Events This Month

A Quick Look at This Month's Calendar

Birthdays

A Message from Fr. Toms

The month of March was filled with so many opportunities for us draw nearer to the Lord as we observed the feasts and fasts of the Church. As we entered into acts of discipline and repentance during the season of Lent, we marveled again at the mercy of our Lord who has been so gracious to forgive us our sins through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Maundy Thursday service was a time of thanksgiving to our Lord for having instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion, a means by which we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. On Good Friday, we drew near to the cross and meditated on the sufferings of the Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world. Overwhelmed by the price that had to be paid for our sins, we could only stand amazed at how God could love us so much that he would not spare his own Son, but deliver him up for us all.

The penitential season of Lent having come to an end, we now enter the joyful Eastertide, celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the guarantee of the resurrection of the bodies of all who have died in Christ. St. Paul tells us that we will be given bodies like the glorious body of Christ. Bishop John Henry Hobart in his book, *A Companion for the Feasts and Fasts of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (1851), writes concerning the change that will happen to our bodies when Christ returns:

A great and glorious change will be wrought at the resurrection, in the bodies of the righteous. For thus the apostle argues concerning the resurrection of the body: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body"... The body which has now in it such manifest principles of mortality and corruption, liable to pains, diseases, and to death, shall, at the resurrection, be perfectly refined and purified; shall spring up an incorruptible and immortal substance, which shall be fitted to endure as long as the soul to which it is united, even to all eternity—"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption"....

That body which, at death, seems so base and abject, so vile and contemptible, shall, at the resurrection, be transformed into a bright, and beautiful, and glorious body, "fashioned like unto the glorious body" of our blessed Redeemed and Head, by whose mighty power this change shall be wrought. How glorious this body of the Saviour is to which our bodies shall be fashioned, may, in some measure, be gathered from the history of his transfiguration, when his face is said "to have shined like the sun, and his raiment to have become shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them ;'" and from the description of his appearance to St. John --"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, ass if they burned in a furnace."—"It is sown in dishonour it is raised in glory."

...That body, which is now so weak and feeble, so subject to diseases and indispositions; so slow, heavy, and inactive, that it clogs the soul, and retards its spiritual flights and operations; shall then become so strong and powerful, so active and vigorous, as even to assist the most spiritual motions of the soul, to become every way a fit organ and instrument of its most exalted operations; and in this perfect strength, health, and vigour, it shall continue for ever.—"It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power."

During Eastertide let us think of often of the resurrection of our Lord and meditate on how we will be conformed to his image.

In addition to Easter, the Church also celebrates the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, which is usually celebrated on March 25, but was transferred to April 9 this year because of the date of Holy Week. During this season we think of the purification of the Virgin Mary and the descriptions of Simeon and Anna who lived to see the coming of the Lord's salvation. Describing the significance of this season, Bishop Hobart writes:

Our Saviour, when an infant, was dedicated by his pious mother to the service of God: hence we should learn the duty of devoting our children to God in baptism, and of bringing them up in the knowledge and fear of him. The legal rite of purification to which the blessed Virgin submitted, should impress on us the necessity of that purity of heart and mind, without which we are unworthy to approach the most holy God. The poverty of the family in which Christ was born, which appears from the meanness of the offering that the blessed Virgin presented, should powerfully impress upon us the infinite condescension of our blessed Redeemer, and teach us, that poverty and meanness of condition in the world, are no obstacles to the divine favour. Imitating the pious zeal of the holy Simeon and Anna, we should devoutly bless God that he has manifested to us the Saviour, the consolation of Israel, the desire of all nations; that he has shed the light of salvation on us who sat in the region of darkness, and in the shadow of death, and has guided our feet in the way of peace. Above all, the meekness and lowliness which the blessed Virgin uniformly displayed, and which rendered her the distinguished object of divine favour, should teach us the high importance, obligation, and excellence, of the virtue of humility.

Also, this month, the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist on March 25. One of the chief things we remember on the festival of St. Mark is the need to study the Scriptures. Bishop Hobart writes,

The principal instruction which we may receive from this festival, is that to which the Church directs us in the collect for the day; that we should diligently seek to establish our faith in the truth of that holy gospel which the evangelist St. Mark was, with others, an instrument in promulgating. We should, therefore, diligently read and study those divine writings which contain the words of eternal life.

The sacred Scriptures explain the conditions of salvation, without the knowledge and practice of which we can never attain happiness. The articles of our faith proposed in Scripture, and the precepts for the direction of our lives, necessarily affect all the members of the Christian Church; and, therefore, the holy Scriptures ought to be read and studied by all people. The apostles, in their epistles, address Christians in general; which is a proof that their writings were designed for general use. The Bereans are commended for searching the Scriptures, and Timothy praised for "having known them from a child."

Among the Jews, the law was read and expounded every Sabbath day in their synagogues; and it is made the character of a good man among them, to meditate upon it day and night. The primitive fathers press the reading of the Scriptures upon the people, as a duty of indispensable obligation; as the best preservative against heretical opinions, as well as a bad life. In order that the Bible might be generally read, it was early translated into all languages.

Bishop Hobart also provides a prayer to be used on the feast day of St. Mark:

O GOD, who dost, on this day, summon thy Church to celebrate the festival of the blessed Evangelist St. Mark; grant that *we* may humbly adore thee for the glorious truths of salvation promulgated by his ministry, and may also show forth in *our* lives, *our* faith in that blessed Gospel which he proclaimed, through Jesus Christ *our* Lord. *Amen.*

Let us take advantage of these important festivals in the life of the Church in order that we might continually be drawn into closer fellowship with our Lord.

Important Events This Month

Women's Bible Study (Tuesday Evenings at 7:00 P.M.)

The Women's Bible Study is becoming one of the strongest activities of our church. At the present time, the ladies are studying *Resurrection*, by Kristie Berglund. The Women's Bible Study is not only a time of learning the Scriptures, but a means of enriching the fellowship of our church and sharing our prayer concerns. Come be a part of this growing ministry of our church.

A Quick Look at This Month's Calendar

April 10 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

April 17, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

April 24, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

Happy Birthday!

Father Toms

Jacqui Birkett

Bettyna Toms