

# THE MAGDALENE

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**FROM THE DESK OF  
FR. NEIL...**

## **GOD DISCERNs OUR CALLING**

We hear the word 'calling' from time to time. It sometimes refers to what kind of job we will have. We sometimes equate calling with 'vocation'. The two words *can* be used synonymously, but they also can also be used quite differently. In Christianity, we use the word 'calling' to signify what we believe God desires us to be doing to serve Him and the people we are affiliated with in the local Church. Every Christian has a calling. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) Our calling is based on our gifts.

Once God calls us to be Christians we are to become an active member or part in the body of Christ. To do so, we are told to discern what sort of gifts God has endowed us with. We ask ourselves, "Do I like to serve?" "Do like to sing?" "Do I like to teach?" "Do I like to do outreach projects?"

In Christianity, we believe that God gives all Christians certain gifts. Some have many gifts and some have fewer. Some appear to be very effective and others are not so discernable sometimes. Paul uses the analogy of a body and each member of the Church is like an organ or a limb in that body. Each person is to discern how he can be an effective member of the body so he can be a useful instrument for God. When each of us puts our gifts to use, then the body of Christ, the Church, functions more smoothly. There can be a pitfall however. We might think we are called to a certain area of service in the

Church, and yet we are not. A desire to do something does not necessarily equate to a calling. This is one of the arguments liberal Churches use to justify ordaining women as pastors. A particular woman may be a very good preacher, or she may be very nurturing or pastoral which are all important qualities for a pastor. However, because God does not intend women to function as a pastor, she is not 'called' to it. It is easy to confuse a desire with a calling. A woman's skills and abilities may certainly be there, but women in a pastoral capacity contradict the hierarchy God designed for the Church.

Consider a simpler comparison. Just because you sing well and may desire to be a member of a Master Chorale does not grant you a seat. Maybe the Director does not want any more singers in your vocal range.

The calling of the Christian includes some discernment, not just because it is a desire of ours, but also because it is something that others are truly being edified by. We must be keenly aware of how we are serving and how we are perceived by others. We should be keenly aware of our skills as we discern 'vocation' verses our 'calling' in the Church. We may be called to serve the Church for a season in a position that we are *not* comfortable with, yet God may work with that discomfort for some greater end.

Each of us, as members of the Church have been called by God. He desires that we serve one another by being an asset in whatever way we can. God supplies the gifts and we are to apply them. God will direct, sanctify and govern the Church for His good pleasure. His desire is for each of us to find our place in the Church somewhere. There is no excuse for apathy. \*\*\*

Everyone should participate. But we must always seek to do so, by seeing where we are being led, serve in that capacity and not be afraid, insulted or hurt if we find that the gift we though we had was not really a useful gift after all. Perhaps there is another time or place or way in which we might use that specific gift. Nevertheless we are still all members of the body of Christ.

## Acquiring Truth

### ***“A Christian Turned Atheist. Is He Lost Forever?”***

This is an issue with which the Church has been dealing since Judas. In the 4th – 6th centuries, the Donatist Controversy broke out with St. Augustine taking a critical position of Donatist claims. There was severe persecution during this time under the Roman Emperor, Diocletian, and Christians, under this persecution, sometimes relinquished their copies of Scriptures and clergy, their vestments, to stave off further persecution, even death. St. Augustine taught that, all of these “backsliders” should be allowed to return to the Church after a proper period of penance as prescribed by their Bishop.

The Donatists, on the other hand, taught that, anyone that repudiated Christianity and turned

over the Scriptures, should not be allowed to return to Church unless they were re-baptized, i.e., re-saved. Requirements were even more strident for clergy. The Donatists believed that clergy were required to be “perfect” otherwise their administration of the Sacraments was invalid. Clergy and parishioner alike, who failed to live up to these standards or who gave up their “religious” items (Scriptures or vestments) were considered *traditores* – the Latin term from which we derive our word – traitor.

What this and the initial question point to is, the focus upon outward behaviors and circumstances. If someone is truly regenerate, they have been taken from spiritual death to spiritual life, then their outward behavior, i.e., moving “out of Christianity” into “Atheism” must be viewed as a time of struggle and challenge for them. We, as humans, are incapable of seeing into another person’s soul. Therefore, we must give them the benefit of the doubt; encourage them, pray for them, and exhort them that this “falling away” can still be reversed.

On the other hand, if one is a “Christian” in outward appearance only and repudiates Christianity and turns to Atheism, it is irrelevant because they were never saved in the first place. The most important point to remember is, we are only able to “judge” people based upon their behavior – and interact with them accordingly. We are incapable of seeing someone’s heart. We are NEVER to say, “You are absolutely going to hell!” That is a violation of Matt 7. All we can say is, “If you continue down this path, you risk God’s eternal judgment.”

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (NKJ)

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[www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org](http://www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org)  
Rev. Fr. Neil Edlin, Rector

Sunday Services:  
8am Mass  
10am Choral Mass &  
Children’s Sunday School

Wednesday Service &  
Anointing of the Sick: 9am

## **“WHY DO WE GENUFLECT AT A CERTAIN POINT DURING THE CREED?”**

When we confess the Nicene Creed in our service, we get to a place where we say, “Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man.” The ‘Who’ here is Jesus. The genuflection is made at “...came down from heaven...” The word ‘genuflect’ means ‘to bend the knee’. The New Testament tells us that Jesus, before He became man, was with the Father and the Holy Spirit, dwelling in heaven. He was not even called Jesus yet. This was an earthly name given to Him. But to keep it simple, we will just say Jesus here. One of the most explicit examples of this is found in Philippians 2:5–8. “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, *but emptied himself*, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, *he humbled himself* by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” In this passage, Jesus is here, lowering Himself for a time from His heavenly status to a more humble human status. And as we get to this point in the Creed, we are acknowledging this fact. We humble ourselves recalling Jesus’s humbling move of coming down from heaven to save us. The genuflection may also include an understanding that “...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth...” (Philippians 2:10, ESV)

So the genuflection is a sign of adoration, respect, veneration and even remembrance...things that we owe to Christ. External gestures made by the body during the liturgy and even at other times in worship, remind us that as creatures, made by God, we worship Him not only in thought and word, but with our whole bodies as well.

## **CURRENT EVENTS**

### **PAC-A-SAC EVENT FOR 200 VISITORS AT MARY’S KITCHEN**



**Saturday, August 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am**, join us for a little fellowship as we make sandwiches and pack lunches for the homeless at Mary’s Kitchen. Come casual and expect to work for about 2 hours. After all the sack lunches are made, boxed and ready for transport, volunteers will be needed to drive them to Mary’s Kitchen.

Please sign up in the Narthex if you intend to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, pack a lunch or just transport.

### **PART 2: THE FOUNDATION OF LITURGICAL WORSHIP, THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING**

August 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am, Fr. Paul will be speaking about the theology behind our liturgical style of worship.

The Guild will be selling brown bag lunches (sandwich, chips and fruit) which must be preordered for only \$5.00. Look for the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Anyone interested in making lunches, please contact Shirley Wicketts.

### **LOOKING FOR A BIBLE STUDY GROUP ANYONE CAN JOIN?**

St. Mary Magdalene church has a walk-in Bible Study every Wednesday from 10:00am–11:30am in the Parish Hall (front building). Anyone can join. You don’t even need to own a bible. One will be supplied.

Fr. Neil also holds a “Bible For Everyone” Study every Thursday from 10am–11am at the Orange Senior Center. This is a great way for all of us Christians to come together to talk and learn a little at the same time.

### **CRAFT BOUTIQUE & FABRIC FAIR** **SCHEDULED**

On October 6<sup>th</sup> from 9am – 2pm, a huge Craft Boutique & Fabric Fair will be held on the church grounds. Plans are already underway to have a ‘Christmas Store’, ‘Estate Shop’, ‘Homegood’s Craft Shop’ and New2You Holidays Boutique Store with lots of goodies. We are looking for at least 9 volunteers to work any time during this event. Please contact Elizabeth or Sharon if you would like to volunteer to work or contribute hand made items with Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas in mind.

Most items will be sold at \$15 or less.

## **NEWS**

### **THE BISHOP’S BURGER BASH** **AT 95 DEGREES**

No, it’s not the name of a new restaurant per se but the 90 percent lean beef burgers cooked medium rare and served up with all the fixin’s were delicious thanks to Senior Warden, Brian.

Bishop Scarlett came to perform a Confirmation for Barbara Talbert and receive the Taylor’s and the Strate’s into the ACC.

Thanks to the purchase of two new high tech fans and the A/C in the Parish Hall, 50 of us stayed calm, cool and collected over a great meal and wonderful fellowship.

### **BROWN BAG 3-PART LECTURE SERIES** **KICKS-OFF WITH A BANG**

Fr. Paul Castellano kicked-off this summer’s Brown Bag Lecture Series, The Foundation Of Liturgical Worship. He spoke for about 2 hours on “Heavenly Worship On Earth”. He spoke about how our worship in the church on earth reflects the worship that takes place in heaven.

The Parish Hall was packed. The Turkey and Egg Salad lunches were a hit. Thanks to those who bought lunch, we added about \$200 directly to our Outreach Missions funds.

### **“ACQUIRING TRUTH”** **IS ON FACEBOOK**

Check it out everyone! The clergy are spearheading “Acquiring Truth” linked to our Facebook Page. There are lots of interesting topics to read. Check it out and chat a little. Answers to questions previously submitted and written in **The Magdalene** are also displayed there for your reference.

### **THE DIOCESE VOTES FOR AN** **OVERSEES MISSION PROGRAM**

Fr. Neil will be spearheading an Oversees Mission Program for the Diocese of the Holy Trinity (DHT). The mission of this program is to build a foundational relationship with recipients and provide humanitarian aid.

The program will be governed by representatives from each of the churches with equal representation.

Look for news about this program as it unfolds right here in **The Magdalene**.