

THE MAGDALENE



From the Desk of Fr. Neil...

THROUGH JESUS

If you are in a liturgical setting, the prayers that are said usually end with words like, “through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen” ... or something very similar. In other settings, mainly extemporaneously, prayers are usually ended with words like, “in Jesus’ name. Amen.” Both of these are correct. Both are true. Neither is better than the other and they essentially mean the same thing.

Jesus taught, “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13, ESV) This is one verse that demonstrates that all of our prayers are to be in the name of Jesus. Paul writes to the Romans, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:25, ESV) Here, the Apostle Paul gives thanks to God, through Jesus. Since both are found in Scripture, both are valid ways to end prayers.

In the liturgical setting, however, we almost always end our prayers with the words, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Since most of our prayers do end this way, we might actually miss what this means since we say it so much. It has great significance. We should think about what it means to pray *through* Jesus or ask God for something *through* Jesus.

Since the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden, there has been a certain separation from God. We are always in the presence of God, but Adam and Eve were removed from the Garden,

banned from reentry and separated from God’s presence there for their disobedience. In Eden, they fellowshiped with God in a very intimate way. Adam’s disobedience caused him and his descendants to lose that immediate access he once had with God. God promised at that time, however, that He would make things right again. Man would have access to God, but it would not be as it was before.

As the Tabernacle and then later the Temple were built, there was a place where the presence of God would dwell, and yet not just anyone could enter and stand in God’s presence. This was called the Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest could enter. He could only enter once a year, and he had to take the blood of a sacrificed animal with him. Access to God was granted, but it had to be through blood. There needed to be some sort of mediatorial device or element that had to accompany the person who was to access God. Blood will play a central role in accessing God in the future as we will see.

When Jesus came, one of the offices or functions He filled was that of mediator. A mediator is a go-between. A mediator is the one you must go *through* to get to someone with whom there is no direct access. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus told His Disciples among many other things, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6, ESV) In saying this, He cut off all access to the Father by any other ways or means other than through Himself. One can only come to the Father, *through* Jesus.



Because Jesus is one with the Father, He has intimate fellowship with Him. If we also want to fellowship with the Father, we must go *through* the Son. There is no other way.

Here are some of the prayers we encounter in our own Prayer Book and notice what we are asking and how important it is that to receive what we ask it must be *through* Christ.

Our worship begins with the Collect (prayer) for Purity. We ask that God the Holy Spirit would cleanse the thoughts of our hearts unto worship, *through* Jesus Christ. This means that our worship will be acceptable to God on account of God receiving our worship of Him *through* the mediation of Christ.

In our General Confession we pray for forgiveness for all of the sins we have committed as of late, in thought, word and deed. And we ask God to grant us forgiveness and that He would incline us to live holy lives from this time forward to His glory, *through* Jesus Christ. Only *through* Christ is our worship holy to God.

Of course, the Absolution that comes immediately after also is a pronouncement by the priest on behalf of God to His people that God pardons and forgives them of their sins and that finally we are brought to eternal life, *through* Jesus Christ. Eternal life then, is granted only to those who repent, believe and trust in Jesus Christ and His holiness and righteousness for us to be acceptable to the Father.

I will mention one more...the Prayer of Thanksgiving said after Holy Communion. Here, in one of the best written prayers in the Prayer Book, we give most hearty thanks that Christ has just fed us with His Body and Blood. This meal assures us of God's favor toward us and they are pledges and promises that in eating and drinking we are 'very members incorporate' in the mystical body of Christ with all other

members of Christ's body. We ask God then for His assisting grace to walk in all of the good works He has prepared for us to walk in. All of this we pray, *through* Jesus Christ. It is only through Christ that we are fed by Him, that we are members of His Body and that we can do any good works.

Finally, recall the blood of the Old Covenant mentioned above? Now, St. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:13 that, "...now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." (ESV) The blood of Christ shed, is the access point to God the Father. All that the Father gives us, comes through the Son, and all that we offer to God in praise, prayer and anything else, must go through Jesus for it to be sanctified, received and accepted by the Father. So keep in mind in the future, just how important it is to say *through* Jesus Christ, for it is only *through* Him that we have anything at all.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Confirmation classes will **begin on February 2nd at 9:00am** in the small conference room. These intimate classes are limited to in enrollment. You must attend these classes regularly **through June**. If you are interested in making this commitment, please contact Sharon Edlin.

**St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church
205 So. Glassell Street
Old Town Orange, CA 92866
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**

Acquiring Truth

“WHAT’S THE MEANING OR PURPOSE OF CIRCUMCISION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?”

“By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation; by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, Good Lord, deliver us.” – The Book of Common Prayer

Like baptism now, circumcision was a multifaceted sign and seal of the covenant. Most theologians believe that baptism replaces or fulfills circumcision. Colossians 2 reads, “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism.”

Circumcision first appears in Genesis 17 as a “sign” of the covenant God made with Abram in Genesis 15. The aspects of the covenant which are dominant in this chapter are that the Lord will be Abraham’s God, that he will receive a promised Seed (the Messiah), cause him to multiply, and be a father of many nations.

Circumcision marked one as a member of the covenant. Only those who had been circumcised were allowed to participate in the Passover including “foreigners” or “strangers” (Ex. 12). Marrying anyone uncircumcised was considered “a reproach” (Gen. 34). Circumcision also “rolled away the reproach of Egypt” in Joshua 5. Circumcision can be seen as a cleansing or purification ritual. In Isaiah 52 the words uncircumcised and unclean run parallel, “Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer come to you.”

Being uncircumcised denotes an obstruction which impedes proper function. Moses claims that the Israelites and the Pharaoh will not listen to him for he has “uncircumcised lips” (Exodus

6). Jeremiah 6 says that the people cannot hear God’s word, for “Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot give heed.” However, the most often used metaphor in the Old Testament is circumcision of the heart. Deuteronomy 30 states, “And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” The prophet Jeremiah pronounces in chapter 4, “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts.” Thus we see as early as Moses that circumcision in the flesh must be accompanied with the circumcision of the heart. As Paul states in Romans 2, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit.”

CURRENT EVENTS

CHRISTMAS TEAR DOWN

All parishioners are asked to stay after the **10am mass on January 5th** to box and put away the Christmas tree and decorations. Please sign up in the Lobby if you can spare some time during Coffee Hour. We need at least one man to carry boxes upstairs.

ALL CHURCH 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting is the official reporting of the Operational and Financial affairs of the church for the year. Theological topics are not covered in this meeting, so please direct your questions to Fr. Neil at a more appropriate time. This year Fr. Neil will be presenting a new format for the meeting. You will hear reports from all of the Officers and Guild/Group leaders

about their accomplishments over the year. Most importantly, you will **hear Fr. Neil's Vision for SMM in 2020.**

This meeting requires a quorum, so all members of the church are encouraged to attend. The Annual Meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 23rd at 11:15am** in the Parish Hall. Yes, this is permanent date change in our Church Calendar.

A no-host catered Brunch will be served for \$8.00 per person. Childcare will be provided. You are also welcome to bring your own brown bag lunch. Watch for a "Sign-Up" sheet in the Narthex.

PLEASE STAND UP AND BE COUNTED
AS A MEMBER

The good news is that all persons, eighteen years or older, who are baptized, confirmed, attendees for at least three months and contributing to the church may be considered a member of the church. All you need to do is provide Fr. Neil with a copy of your sacramental paperwork. If you do not see your name on the Members List posted in the Lobby, please contact Fr. Neil. **All bona-fide members of the church are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting on February 23rd.**



THE SEASON OF LENT

WHAT'S COOKING FOR
SHROVE TUESDAY

Get ready for some mouth watering southern style chicken, potato casserole, dirty beans and rice, and lots of delicious waffles!!

How about a little fun? How about "hot potato" blind folded? No selfies permitted. 😊

Tuesday, February 25th, 6:30pm to 8:30pm.
\$7.00 - Adults, \$5.00 - Kids (9-17yrs old), Children under 9yrs old are Free.

ASH WEDNESDAY
AN EARLY CHURCH RITUAL

The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday. The name came from the ceremonial use of ashes as a symbol of penitence during Mass. Today, the ashes we use are obtained by burning the remains of the palm branches blessed on the previous Palm Sunday. During mass, the priest marks your forehead with the sign of the cross in ash and says: "Remember, O man, that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return." **Masses will be held on February 26th at 9am and 7pm.**

LENTEN PROGRAM

Father Neil will be conducting a **Lenten Program on Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm** following our Meatless Supper where we will do Stations of the Cross, Evening Prayer or other bible based activities. Please check the "Calendar At-A-Glance" on the back page for more details.

MEATLESS SUPPERS
NOW ON TUESDAYS

Come to our simple Meatless Suppers. Bring your friends and family. It's free. If you would like to volunteer to cook, please sign-up on the Volunteer Sheet in the lobby. This is not a potluck and no desserts will be served.

Suppers begin on March 3rd at 6:30pm.