

THE MAGDALENE



From the Desk of Fr. Neil...

A COMMINATION

On Ash Wednesday, to prepare for the long penitential season of Lent, we began our services with the The Commination. Note the word closely. It's not *combination*, but *commination*. Dictionary.com says, that commination is, 1. A threat of punishment or vengeance. 2. A denunciation. 3. (In the Church of England) a penitential office read on Ash Wednesday in which God's anger and judgments are proclaimed against sinners." All three of these are incorporated into the Commination service. This service is found in the Book of Common Prayer of 1662. Later editions modified it and only a remnant remains in the 1928 Prayer Book today where most of it is incorporated into the Penitential Office. Here are the opening words to the Commination service. "Brethren, in the primitive Church there was a godly discipline, that, at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this word that their soul might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend.

There are a few things to note here. First, in the primitive or early Church, they deemed it a "godly discipline" to put those who were found to be notorious sinners to open shame. First, this is godly because the Church is tasked to keep itself clean and pure. It is tasked with keeping the wolves out and the sheep safe. One of the ways to do this, is to root out threats to

the sheep. From rebuking the sinner all the way to excommunication if necessary is the role of the Church as laid out in scripture. Jesus gave us the example of how to handle problems that arise in the Church. He said, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (ESV).

What must be said here immediately is that Church discipline is never to be taken lightly. The intent, as the Commination service says, is so that the sinner in question would have their "...soul saved on the Day of the Lord." In other words, the soul is very important. More important than the body in this case.

But restoration to the Church is of the utmost importance. God does not delight in the death of the sinner. He would rather have the sinner turn and be saved. Notice what St. Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 5:1–5. He hears of some sexual immorality in the Corinthian Church. He says they ought to be ashamed of themselves for putting up with it. Then he says, "Let him who has done this be removed from among you, though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.

When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.” (ESV)

Now handing one over to Satan is probably better understood to mean that the notorious sinner has been in some way severely disciplined and probably removed from the Church. When one is outside of the Church and the Body of Christ he is considered to be still in the possession of Satan. We are only released from that bondage when we are in Christ.

But again, the restoration of the sinner is always the priority. When someone has sinned in the Church, the Church must do all it can to bring him back into fellowship. The open penance of the early Church was always to bring about sorrow for sin and reconciliation with the Church. The punishment that they undergo in being put out of the Church is always designed first and foremost to save that person’s soul. We should want all people to be saved, no matter how badly we think they have sinned. None of us have deserved the salvation we have inherited in Christ, so, we should want that for our fellow man as well.

There is another aspect to the Communion as well that should be noted. It also stated, “...and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend.” How far we have fallen from this concept today!! We call it deterrence today. Deterrence is also a biblical concept and one that is lost on many in society today. When someone is held responsible for his crime, and others see the consequences, they are usually less inclined to commit the same crime. If a child sees the consequences of disobeying his parents, he is certainly going to give it a second thought before he does it again. The same goes for adults. If we see crimes being taken seriously and punished severely, we will

certainly be more afraid to commit the same crime. This is in no way cruel. It is the best way to handle it because it is what God prescribes. It keeps (most) people from committing crimes. This is also why crime is so prevalent today. Criminals are not punished as they should be. Their sentences are very short. Sometimes the victims of crimes are found to be at fault! Prisons are set up with many of the same amenities as we enjoy at home. So a return to Biblical principles would certainly have an impact on crime.

Finally the Communion says in part, “It is thought good that at this time should be read the general sentences of God’s cursing against impenitent sinners, from Deuteronomy 27, and other places of Scripture; and that ye should answer to every sentence, Amen: To the intent that, being admonished of the great indignation of God against sinners, ye may the rather be moved to earnest and true repentance; and may walk more warily in these dangerous days; fleeing from such vices, for which ye affirm with your own mouths the curse of God to be due.

So, this is good for all of us. We should say *Amen* to what God commands, so that we would be moved to repent when we do sin and so that we may walk more attentively to God’s precepts as we should...for our good and for His glory.

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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 ARE THE MAIN ETHICAL THEORIES AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO CHRISTIANITY?”

This is a good question, one which requires a more in-depth answer. Over the next three issues, I will be discussing the three main theories in normative ethics: deontology, virtue/personalist ethics, and consequentialism. Each of these approaches find support in the Bible and defenders among Christians. These theories may overlap and may be described as emphases. Nevertheless, distinctions between them are significant. In short, deontology emphasizes duty or obligation, virtue ethics emphasizes the virtues, moral character, and growth of the person, and consequentialism looks at the effects or outcomes of an action to determine or argue for its ethical nature.

Deontology emphasizes duty or obligation. Deontology comes from the Greek word *deon* which refers to “ought,” “duty,” or “obligation.”¹ This theory of ethics appeals to a norm or ultimate absolute, oftentimes divine command or natural law. The Christian deontologist would argue that murder is wrong because it violates the Sixth Commandment or it’s against God’s will. Given that the standards being appealed to are ultimate and absolute, a deontologist neither argues beyond them nor validates the position by evaluating the consequences or effects. The appeal to God’s commandment is the reason given in Exodus 16 for observance of the Sabbath, “This is the thing which the LORD has commanded.”

It is argued that “in some form, deontology is an essential feature of all Christian ethics.”²

¹S. McKnight, “Ethics of Jesus,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, Second Edition* (Downers Grove, IL; Nottingham, England: IVP Academic; IVP, 2013), 244.

²Robin Gill, *A Textbook of Christian Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), 4-5.

Augustine and Martin Luther utilized deontological thought for many of their arguments. The Reformation teaching of *sola scriptura*, with its appeal to Scripture as the highest authority, employs aspects of deontological thinking. Today concepts of fundamental or God-given rights, such as the “right to life,” are examples of deontological ethics being used. In summary, the deontologist acts morally because it is right or because it is his duty and sees acts as moral by appealing to a norm or ultimate absolute, such as God’s word.

Don’t Forget, This is Part 1 of 3.

CURRENT EVENTS

BREAK BREAD WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Join our church family during in Lent. Father Neil will be conducting a **Lenten Program on Tuesday evenings beginning March 3rd until the end of the month.** A Meatless Supper will be served followed by Stations of the Cross or Evening Prayer and Devotions. Please check the “Calendar At-A-Glance” for more details. Please sign-up on the Volunteer Sheet in the narthex if you would like to bring a meatless item.

PROCESSION & PASSION PLAY

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

(Matt21:9)

Palm Sunday Services will be held on **April 5th at 8:00am and 10:00am.** The **10:00am service will include a Children’s Palm Procession** followed by the congregation in the breezeway. During the mass, the congregation will reenact

the Passion of our Lord narrated by our own Patric Taylor.

THE LAST PASSOVER

Maundy Thursday is the name given to the day on which Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples, known as the Last Supper. We celebrate Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples through the sacrament of Communion (Luke 22:19-20). The Mass draws to completion as the Tabernacle is emptied and the Sacrament is moved. The Altar is stripped and washed. The priest reenacts Jesus washing the feet of His Disciples as an act of humility and service. Your personal prayer may be given to Our Lord at the Altar of Repose. All exit the church in silence.

Service will be held on April 9th at 7:00pm.

WHAT IS GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE?

Good Friday Service begins at our Lord's crucifixion and ends commemorating the time of His death. Come for the liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion at this moving service on **April 10th at 12 noon.**

RELIVE THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Can you imagine walking with Christ on the day of his crucifixion?

During Lent, we recreate His walk down the "Via Dolorosa" or "Way of Sorrows", using a series of pictures (or Stations) that line the walls of the church that represent certain scenes in the Passion of Christ. Each one corresponds to a particular incident or a special devotion connected with such representations. These Stations have been used to replace the ancient tradition of taking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to

walk the Via Dolorosa starting at Pilate's House to the end at Golgotha since the 1600s.

Why do we do this?

"The Stations of the Cross" is the most intimate and spiritual journey you can participate in. Each of us who walk, experiences their own journey of thoughts and feelings provoked by the narrative and prayers recited. In the end, most feel a deeper more meaningful connection to Our Lord Jesus, Son of Man, who struggled down the Via Dolorosa and was crucified for us. **Check the calendar for The Stations of the Cross services held in March and April.**

CHRIST IS RISEN, ALLELUIA!

"On the third day he rose again according to the scriptures..."

Hundreds of people saw Jesus after he rose from the tomb. (I Cor. 15:6)

We are excited to announce the 10:00am Easter Service will be enriched with specially selected music surrounding the service from early composers. Our special thanks to these talented vocalists for making this day an uplifting and beautiful musical celebration of our Lord's Resurrection. See you there! **Easter Service will be held at 8:00am and 10:00am on April 12th.**

A stupendous Easter Egg hunt will be held at both 8:00am and 10:00am services. Easter baskets will be provided.

CELEBRATE TOGETHER ON EASTER II

A glorious Potluck Celebration will be held on April 26th after the 10:00am mass in celebration of our Risen Lord and in anticipation of Pentecost. Please sign-up on the Volunteer Sheet in the narthex.