

# THE MAGDALENE

## From the Desk of Fr. Neil...



### A SUFFICIENT CONFESSION

The article on the back page of the May/June issue of the Trinitarian - the official newspaper of the ACC was absolutely beautifully written and contained information that we all must be aware of. Bonnie Ivey, wrote about the video the world was exposed to back in February of this year when 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians, including 2 young men, were marched down a beach in orange jump suits, forced to kneel down and make a choice. Choose Christ, or perish eternally by choosing something else. In this case the choice was between Christ and Islam. They chose Christ, and were summarily executed by decapitation for that choice.

Now as I said, the entire article is worth reading, but there was one thing in particular that got my attention. Mrs. Ivey wrote that "Their last

words were, 'Jesus, my Lord.'"

The simplicity of this short three word phrase is what I want us to think about here. Jesus, my Lord. Not "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty...". Not "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith...etc.". Not defending Christ's presence at the Eucharist. Not quoting Scripture verses. But simply confessing, Jesus, my Lord.

All of these, of course, are elements of the Christian faith, and are vital and indispensable parts of it. I would not be an Anglican if I thought liturgy, ceremony, the beauty of our form of worship and the ancient and biblical beliefs and creeds we hold and practice were not important. But isn't it interesting when it comes down to it, we have only to confess, Jesus, my Lord, or Jesus is Lord, and salvation is granted to us by the grace of God. "...no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3 ESV)

Honest Bible readers will see that the Church has differed, not in essential beliefs, but in practice and language and style since its beginnings. It was only later when one group within the Church decided to make proclamations and power-grabs beyond what the early Church could tolerate that schism happened. It was only when a massive Church structure that had become so overburdened and top-heavy with bureaucracy and unbiblical beliefs and practices, and refused to reform, that schism happened...again!

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

*Wednesday Service: 9am*

But despite the schisms and separations, Jesus, my Lord can be said by anyone who desires to be saved, and they **will** be saved. Jesus, my Lord can be said by anyone within the Church and all barriers and differences and arguments and splits become insignificant. Someone once said that the walls that divide us as Christians do not reach to heaven. Perhaps so. So, let's look at a few places in Scripture, where the simplicity of faith is found and the promise of salvation follows.

The disciples at one point as Jesus, "'What must we do, to be doing the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.'" (John 6:28-29 ESV). I don't see here any other requirements. Obviously from other places in Scripture, we see that faith that is inactive is not true faith, but the entrance, the starting point, and the minimum requirement, seems to be faith....belief. There is something about the confession when tied to sincere belief that God accepts as saving faith.

Or, recall this exchange from Luke's Gospel during the crucifixion. "One of the criminals who were hanged railed at [Jesus], saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:39-43 ESV). This man's nine word phrase is accepted by the dying Christ, and an entrance into Paradise is granted to him....that very day!

How about Paul? He writes, "'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord

and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.'" (Romans 10:8-10 ESV). The heart believes and Paul says that is what justifies us before God. The lips confess and Paul says that is what saves. Belief and a confession of that belief.

Remember what happens in the Book of Acts? "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God." (Acts 16:25-34 ESV)

I am not simplifying Christianity into just making a short statement of belief and saying that is all that is necessary, but on the other hand, **that is all that is necessary**. All who read this are not at this moment being called to make a life or death decision. This is all that was needed from the lips of those Coptic Christian men and boys to enter everlasting life. At baptism, our god-parents confess the faith in our stead. When we

grow it is up to us to confess with our lips and believe with our heart that Jesus is Lord. From that confession, when truly believed and embraced, ignites a passion and a love for God – for saving us through such a simple confession – and a love for neighbor...who also needs to make the same confession to gain eternal life.

If you were forced to put on an orange jump suit and were being marched to your death, what would you be thinking about? That annoying person talking during the service or the new person who took your pew? Knowing that Jesus is Lord is the confession of the martyrs and that is what is required of you and me as well, aren't you just that much more inclined to think about that first and foremost and let the simplicity and truth of that saving confession be your primary concern? ...And everything else secondary? It is knowing that our confession that Jesus is Lord saves us and the joy of knowing that is what makes us better at handling all of the much less important stuff.

How would we be in the situation of the 21 men? It's hard to say. I'm not sure how I would be either. I can tell you at this moment what I think, but would I...would you... be as calm and serene as those 21 men? Would you be saying, Jesus, my Lord? Or would you be considering recanting all that you have believed about Christ? It's a difficult question. Yet the answer is as simple as, Jesus, my Lord.

## **SHORT STUDIES**

### **THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH, Part 5 – Chalcedon 451AD**

We come now to our 5<sup>th</sup> Church Council. I hope as we have been going along that you are seeing a pattern in these councils. The Church has been gathering not only to define truth and correct error, but also to lay down once and for all, the doctrines concerning God, His nature,

the Persons that make up the Godhead, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

By the time you will read this, we will have already surpassed Trinity Sunday and will be into what we call the Trinity Season. This is the season we contemplate the great works of our Triune God; The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I hope these short essays are informative and give you a clearer understanding how difficult it has been for the Church to “define” God, and the struggles the Church went through early on to secure for us the final truth on the nature of God.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Church Council began on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 451AD in Chalcedon. Chalcedon is now a district of Istanbul. More than 500 bishops were in attendance at the Council. This was the largest gathering in a Church Council thus far. This council, like the others, was called because there were differing views that had to be discussed. Some ideas had to be discarded. And one unified view had to be sought after.

The Council of Nicaea, way back in our first study, left some unanswered questions about Jesus that lingered for another 125 years. What is the relationship between the man, Jesus Christ, and the eternal Son of God? We call Jesus a man, and we also call Him God. And we are correct in both cases. He is both. But how is this? Well, if you think human words and finite minds can ever fully comprehend this, you are mistaken.

However, the early Church Fathers did a very good job of putting the best words and descriptions to the person of Jesus Christ into their arguments and eventually into the Creeds we confess today. And we can be certain that the Church has done its best to describe in the most honorable, respectable, precise and accurate way who Jesus is.

We have three main players in this event. First, Eutyches, a monastic priest, on the one side taught that at the incarnation or birth of Jesus, had only one nature. This came to be known as Monophysitism. (*Mono* meaning one and *physis* meaning nature) Eutyches believed that the human and divine natures of Christ came together to form a completely new third nature.

Second, on the other side, Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, which I wrote about in the May edition of the Magdalene claimed that Jesus was host to two separate persons: the Son of God and mortal man. This was known as Nestorianism.

Third, Pope Leo I, wrote in response to this debate, that the “two natures are united without change, and without division, and without confusion in Christ.” This statement or “Tome” as it was called, struck the right balance between the extremes of Eutyches on the one hand and Nestorius on the other.

Think about the language now of our Creed. Jesus is very God of very God...but also born of the virgin Mary. A fully divine and a fully human nature in the one person Jesus Christ. Both coming together in Christ, but are not combined or confused. The Greek word used is hypostasis. This means God did not convert into a man when He came in the person of Jesus Christ.

St. Anselm of Canterbury would write in the 11<sup>th</sup> century that Christ had to be fully man, so that He would be like us and He had to be fully divine so that He could have the full power of God to save us.

Next month, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Constantinople in 553.

## ORDO CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

What’s happening on the church calendar this month...

The **Nativity** (birth) of **John the Baptist** on Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup>. Read Luke 1:5-25.

## GUILDS, GROUPS & EVENTS

### LECTURE ON GEORGE WHITEFIELD

You won’t want to miss this exciting and informative lecture. On **June 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am** Fr. Neil will be speaking on the life of The Rev. George Whitefield and the impact he had on the Anglican Church in England and America. Bring a Brown Bag Lunch to eat in the Parish Hall.

### MEET THE BISHOP ON JUNE 14TH

Bishop Scarlett will be attending 10am service with us on **June 14<sup>th</sup>** to perform the sacrament of **Confirmation** for Patty O’Donoghue and Mary Merino.

**Adults wishing to formally join SMM may be received at this service as well.** Please contact Fr. Neil for more information.

### BURGER BASH FOR THE BISHOP

Join in having a scrumptious grilled hamburger or hot dog lunch on **Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup> after the second service** and meet Bishop Scarlett.

The donation is \$5.00 per person. Children 10 yrs and younger eat for free.

## **THE MEN'S MOVIE NIGHT**

Thursday May 28th. at 7pm, the men will gather in the breezeway with their movie goodies to watch "POLYCARP Destroyer of Gods".

## **HOW CAN YOU HELP THE POOR?**

Every time you drop in to buy a shirt or a blouse from a New2You Sale you are helping the poor. Every time you stop in and spend 30 minutes helping to fold clothes or move a table, you are helping the poor. Your offering, whatever it is and in whatever form, when combined together, is our gift to the poor.

The next Sale is **Saturday, June 27 from 8:00am to 2:00pm**. Volunteers are needed on Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm for set up and Saturday at 2pm for clean up.

## **A BOUNTIFUL PENTECOST**

What a great way to celebrate the birth of the Church...a baptism and a celebration! Thank you to everyone who brought food for the potluck. We had a wonderful variety of delicious homemade foods.

The highlight of the day was the baptism of Zachary Zaradich into Christ's church and the presence of the entire Zaradich family to share in this blessed event.

## **BUSY HANDS ARE MAKING SCARVES**

Yes, we have 7 scarves ready to sell for our Outreach Program with more in the works. Some have been sewn and some have been knitted and all are beautiful. Special thanks to all of the women who have answered the call to support this church wide ministry.

Our goal is 20 scarves by October 30<sup>th</sup> to sell at the November New2You Boutique and Jewelry Sale. Every dime made at this sale and all New2You sales are given to our Outreach programs. Your commitment in making just one scarf will help us raise money to give to the poor here in Orange and at our Anglican missions in third world countries.

Please contact Shirley Wicketts and let her know you are committed.

## **WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL**

The Women's Devotional Group will continue their discussion on **Prayer Basics**.

The Group meets on the first Sunday of the month at 9:15am in the Parish Hall. All women are welcome.

## **MEN DISCUSS THE BOOK OF JAMES**

Join the Men's Christian Fellowship (MCF) Group on the first Sunday of the month at 9:00am in the Church Sanctuary as they discuss the Book of **James, Chapter 4 & 5** in the context of the role of men in society.

Following the meeting, the men participate in Morning Prayer.

## **A LOVELY DAY AT THE ARBORETUM**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Women's Day Retreat was held on Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 12pm at the beautiful Fullerton Arboretum. The day started with a nice walk around the Arboretum followed by a special prayer service designed just for women. Karen Carlson then lead the remainder of the day's lecture and discussion on **Women as Vessels in the Hand of God**. It turned out to be a great day with an enjoyable lunch at Panera Bread. Our special thanks to Karen for all her hard work in making the day special.

**ALL ABOUT OLIVE OIL,  
TASTING & MORE**

There definitely was more to the Olive Oil Tasting demonstration than was expected with olive oils from Spain and Italy; infused olive oils like rosemary and garlic; and a wide variety of vinegars such as lemon and apricot. The favorite part of the demonstration, however, was the food samples made with different olive oils and vinegars. The best sample was the Tuscan Bean soup.

**NEWS, NOTES &  
REMINDERS**

**CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES**

Rick Andrews – MFA, Film Production and Editing, Chapman University.  
 Amy McBeth – BFA, Film Production and Editing, Chapman University.  
 Ida VonMizener, BS, Library Science, USC.  
 Gino Defusco, High School.

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS**

There will be no Wednesday evening Bible Studies in June.

**A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER**

First, thank you all for your devout tithing. If you need tithing envelopes and don't have a set, please talk to Lynn Pence. If you do have envelopes, please use them whether you give cash or a check. Most importantly, if you are using envelopes that are in the pews, **please write your name on the front of the envelop** so that Lynn can keep a record of your charitable contributions. She will give you an Annual Statement at the beginning of the New Year. This also helps her and the Budget Committee

with budget planning if the money can be included with the regular givers and not visitors.

**CALENDAR AT A GLANCE**

JUNE		
Men's Fellowship	6/7	9:00am – 9:30am
Women's Devotional-Prayer Basics	6/7	9:15am – 9:50am
Speaker Series – George Whitefield & Brown Bag Lunch	6/7	11:30am
Vestry Meeting	6/10	7:15pm
Confirmations and Burger Bash	6/14	10:00am
Men's Christian Fellowship (MCF)	6/14	11:30am
Women's Guild	6/14	11:30am
Craft Guild –Knitting & Crocheting	6/21	11:30am
New2You Sale	6/27	8:00am – 2:00pm
Sunday Brunch - Restaurant	6/28	12:00pm
JULY		
Men's Fellowship	7/5	9:00am - 9:30am
Women's Devotional	7/5	9:15am - 9:50am
Speaker Series- Isaac Watts & Brown Bag Lunch	7/5	11:30am
Vestry Meeting	7/8	7:15pm
Women's Guild	7/12	11:30am
Men's Group	7/12	11:30am
Patronal/Community BBQ	7/19	After 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mass
Sunday Brunch – Restaurant	7/26	12:00pm
Bible Study	7/1, 7/15, 7/22, 7/29	6:30pm