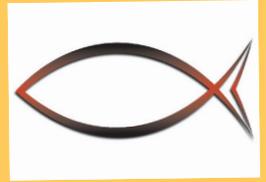


# The Line

Convocation of the West



August 2018 Volume V Number 3

Vicar-General Rev. Michael Penfield: [mapenfield@earthlink.net](mailto:mapenfield@earthlink.net)  
Editor: Susan Peterson: [smprrp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:smprrp@sbcglobal.net)

## Hello Brothers and Sisters

Take time during your busy day to read His Word. Treasures and true peace can be found within its pages. These treasures can only be found by those who dig for them.

### Digging for Treasures

When reading God's Word, take special care

To find treasures hidden there:  
Give thought to each line, each precept clear,  
Then practice it well with godly fear.

Anon



## The Vicar's Venue

On Saturday, March 4, 1933, FDR gave his inaugural speech. In it he stated:

*"So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is ... fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."*

As many times as I have heard this part of FDR's speech quoted or paraphrased, I did not fully understand the context of it until this summer.

For the past two years, I have been reading Winston Churchill's six-volume tome on World War II. I am currently in Volume III, which deals with the war in the Balkans. The dynamic was that Great Britain was trying to protect Egypt and the Suez Canal from invasion by the Italians in Libya. Meanwhile, Italy tried to invade Greece from Albania, which it had conquered under Mussolini. The Greeks under General Papagos were not only able to stop the Italian army, but push them back to Albania. Meanwhile, Great Britain was promising support to Greece,



## Vicar's Venue (continued)

even though the reality of British help looked increasingly unlikely.

At the same time, Hitler was marshaling a huge military endeavor, preparing the invasion of the USSR. He was moving his troops and air force into Romania. However, the events in Greece delayed his original plans. He needed complete control of the Balkans so that a front behind his planned invasion could not be created. Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary were all allies and soon under his control. He needed to control Yugoslavia and Greece next.

Part of Churchill's solution to help Greece was to try and get Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia to form a block alliance to stop Hitler, creating that dreaded front. Churchill thought if Yugoslavia invaded Albania from the north, they could capture the Italian army's equipment and use it to defend itself from Hitler's army. But fear killed this idea. Yugoslavia was in so much fear of Hitler that the leadership compromised the country. Turkey would not act because they too were in fear of Hitler.

This seems to be the drumbeat of the period before World War II – fear. Fear of another war like World War I, produced appeasement. Appeasement produced more fear. War became this dreaded thing that needed to be avoided at all cost. Then, after witnessing Hitler's Blitzkrieg in Poland and France, there was even more immense fear of Hitler and the German Army. They seemed invincible. They seemed unstoppable. According to the recent movie, "Darkest Hour," just before the evacuation of Dunkirk, some in the British government wanted

to sue for peace. And the result of all of this, as we all know today, was not the avoidance of another world war, but the guarantee that another war, even more terrible than the first, would happen.

After reading this section and seeing this movie, it finally hit me. Fear, especially among the elite, the intellectuals, and the leadership of many countries, paralyzed the world in the '30s and '40s. Fear coupled with lethargy, convinced people that the best thing to do was the easy thing. It dictated the route of least resistance.

Fear motivates us all at one time or another. Fear, like being lethargic, stops us from doing what is right and convinces us to do what is easy. Fear of getting hurt and dying will convince us that right is wrong and wrong is right. And as a result of fear, World War II was fought. Evil almost won.

However, it is easy to look back 75 years and deduce what was happening. It is easy with hindsight to peg "fear" as the motivating factor. Yet, there are those who did peg it, even then. FDR saw it as he looked at the American public reeling from the effects of the great depression. Churchill saw it as he saw his government and other governments propose compromise after compromise. But the question is, what is our great motivating factor today?

In our churches and in our society today, I see two factors having a great effect: fear (coupled with lethargy) and anger. I will address fear in this article and anger in my next article. Fear is still playing its role. We see our numbers dropping



## Vicar's Venue (continued)

in our churches and we fear. We see the leadership of the church compromising and we fear. I also see lethargy. I see the leadership of some churches choosing to do nothing, not necessarily out of fear, but out of lethargy, and then coming up with elaborate or not so elaborate justifications for their lack of action. Fear coupled with lethargy is working its “best” on us to make sure that those of us who are traditional in our theology, in our form of worship, and in our polity, will quietly go away and die out. And the operable word here is “quietly.”

The most telling event for me (and I have told this before) is when in France, my French socialist friend wanted to know my opinion on some political event. I have been taught to be careful of what I say. I was fearful that what I would say would displease my friend. I was being very diplomatic, which did not make him happy. He just stopped me and said (roughly translated), “Michael, you are not in America, you can tell me how you really feel.”

The one thing that I always admired, and the one thing that has made me the most uncomfortable about Bishop Mott, is that he has no qualms stating his opinion. This did not mean he was not diplomatic; but it did mean, if he disagreed with you, he would let you know he did – and sometimes he did this through the use of his dry, Irish humor!

We need to adopt this same attitude. We need to state our beliefs without fear. And we must also be able to listen to others without fear. True, there will be some who try to shut us down. That is because of their fear. But the fear of that

happening should not stop us. We need to talk and speak in a respectful way. In other words, we need to speak the Truth in love.

We need to let others know how we believe; but we must also do it so that the others know we are open to their beliefs. We should not be fearful of what others will say. After all, we may learn something very important about this other person, about his or her beliefs, and about his or her fears. We may even learn where we are wrong.

But there is something more. We must not be afraid to reach out. We must not fear opening the figurative doors to all who are interested. We should not be afraid that the people who come through the door are not “the right sort” or are not “quality.” Those are all fear-based beliefs. Our communities may change; they may not be grey-haired; they may be of other ethnicities; they may be younger. They may even like different music than what we like. But fearing things that are just “different” is not going to help us preserve the traditional, orthodox faith that we have.

Lethargy works in the same way as fear. Excuses are invented or adopted to defend not doing something. It may not be based on fear; it may be just plain laziness or exhaustion. For the active clergy, exhaustion is something all of us need to guard against, but lethargy is different. It has a way of creating an image of something that is insurmountable, when in fact, it is not. A lot of times for me personally, I will make something much harder in my mind than it truly is. However, it will also become patently clear what I had done through my imagination after I actually do it.







## Parish News (continued)

stiff-necked, or proud and stubborn. The first verse of this passage states why the people should not be stubborn: the LORD their God is “God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.” (Deuteronomy 10:17) It should be abundantly clear to us today, that the authors of the 1928 Prayer Book did not believe these words applied only to Israel. They realized that just as Israel had a vocation to be obedient to God since it was His chosen nation, so derivatively, the United States of America has a vocation to be obedient to God, since it is “one nation under God.” The doctrine of American exceptionalism must be subject to the Biblical doctrine of God’s impartiality, and His love of people of all nations. America remains always both the object of God’s love and His scrutiny. He is the wholly just, supreme God, who cannot be corrupted with a bribe, or influenced to compromise his justice or holiness. In all our dealings as individuals, and in our dealings as a nation with people of other nations, we must remember who God is, to whom we belong as a nation, and the love and justice that He requires of His people.

Since God is supremely just, and gives judgment for the orphans, widows, and aliens (in ancient Israel these people were often the poorest), and loves aliens, we should treat these groups of people with justice and love also, including those widowed or orphaned because their spouses or parents died in action in the military, or in their duties as police officers or firefighters.

In particular, the command is given to Israel to love the stranger or alien, since the Israelites

themselves were once aliens in Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:19). A parallel can be drawn to the citizens of the United States, many of whose ancestors came from various nations of the world to make a new life in this land. Therefore, because God is Love, because we are answerable to God as a nation, and especially since many of us are Christians, as God has given us this command, we must love immigrants, aliens, and strangers.

Political ideology in this regard should never outweigh the Biblical imperative to show love to all. If we are to be obedient to God’s commands, we should not have any immigration policy that separates children from their parents, since this is like making temporary orphans out of children, and causing them needless distress and anguish. Always we must remember that God loves the alien and gives him food and clothing (Deuteronomy 10:18). The Greek word for “hospitality” literally means “love of strangers,” and the command to show such hospitality is reiterated in the New Testament (Matt. 5:46-48; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Tim. 3:2, for example), and is central to the Christian way of life.

As if to remind God’s people of the motivation for their love and obedience and that no other loyalty should cause them to deviate from this goal, the Holy Spirit adds the command to hold God in awe, serve Him, and be loyal to Him; since God is the object of their praise and their God, who has done for them the wonders that they have seen (Deuteronomy 10:20-21). Similarly, as we remember all the wonderful things that God has done for us in this beautiful country, and all the trials through which He has safely





## Parish News (continued)

brought us, we must be wholly loyal to Him, loving Him wholly, and not allowing ourselves to be led astray by any worldly ideology or by anyone professing a greater claim on our loyalty and love than God himself.

Furthermore, we must remember that all the freedoms we currently enjoy were won and maintained at great cost, the cost of many soldiers' lives in the Revolutionary War and subsequent wars. We must remember with gratitude all who have laid down their lives in the service of the United States of America, and all who currently serve in every branch of the Military. Let us not, by indifference to God and ingratitude for our heritage, forfeit the liberties we have received. An egalitarian society in which anyone who works hard can succeed without barriers of race, gender, class, national origin, religion or economy hampering him, is a society to be prized indeed. A community in which Christians of every denomination can gather and worship God freely is a blessed community indeed. There are countries in the world where Christians dare meet only in secret, and where they are bitterly persecuted for their faith.

Finally, let us pray that the citizens of the United States of America will always remember God's favor and be glad to do His will (Prayer for Our Country, p. 36, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1928), as well as have the grace to maintain in righteousness and peace the liberties won by their fathers (p. 263, *op. cit.*). Let us also continue to pray for our President, Donald Trump, for Congress, for the State of California, for Governor Jerry Brown, and for all in authority, that they may seek God's will, know it, and do it.

Independence Day holds reminders of our history, our heritage, our liberties, and above all, our Christian origins as a nation. Let this be a time in which we pray that many Americans return to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and honor Him through lifelong obedience and service.

**The Hillside Messenger**

**The Reverend Christopher Parrish**

**St Luke's Chapel in the Hills Anglican Church**



## Parish News (continued)

After reading a speech titled, “On Being Different,” I started to wonder how many of us actually give much thought to the subject in general, let alone to Christian differentness. Not how one worshipping group differs from another, but rather, what is it, if anything, that sets the Christian noticeably apart. We no longer have the luxury of hiding behind certain curious Christian practices from times past. For some it was a plainness in dress and refraining from alcohol, cigarettes and dance. For others it was fish on Fridays, no food or beverage after mid-night Saturday in preparation for Sunday Mass and the annual display of ashes on the forehead.

I also wondered if it can be said of Christians today what was written by an early Church father in the late 2nd century, describing the early Christians. “Though residents at home in their own countries, their behavior is more like that of transients. They take their full part as citizens, but they also submit to everything as if they were aliens. For them, any foreign country is a homeland, and any homeland a foreign country.” Obviously there was something distinctive about their behavior that did not echo the general citizenry. They were not like everybody else.

According to the speaker, “It is enormously important for Christians to learn early and remember long that lesson of differentness”; to recognize that what is lawful, and perfectly permissible for everyone else, is not necessarily lawful and permissible for us. The ways of Christ and the ways of the rest of the world are not the same, and we should not expect them to be.....Christ makes some special demands upon

us that occasionally require us to be out of step. It is only if one has that sense of differentness - not animosity toward others, but differentness - that one has a chance of being strong enough to obey the teachings of Christ.....

“Many Christian virtues make no sense to the world around us. For example, the first and foremost Christian virtue, humility, awareness of the greatness of God and hence the insignificance of self. This is a crazy idea to a world which values above all else, self-esteem and self-assertion....Or consider the Christian virtue of chastity. Except for divine command it makes no sense. The worldly ideal is not chastity but safe sex...

“When the values of Christ and of the world are so divergent, we should not feel surprised if we find ourselves now and then ”out of step.” In fact, we should be worried if we are never that way. As Christ told us, we are supposed to be out of step. We must learn to accept it. Learn to take pride in it.”

This speech was given during the penitential season of Advent. In reference to the Christian practice of self-denial, the author closed with a challenge “to recapture some sense of our distinctiveness, our positive ‘weirdness’ as the world judges.” He asks, “What can be more incomprehensible to the world than intentionally depriving oneself of pleasure or satisfaction solely in order to affirm commitment to the truth that our only lasting pleasure and satisfaction is not here, where we are alien citizens, but hereafter?”

There is much to be considered here and I leave



## Parish News (continued)

it up to you to make of it what you will. As for myself, I am grateful to be reminded that “differentness” matters.

This speech was given at the Judicial Prayer Breakfast Group, December 1992, by Justice Antonin Scalia.

St. John's Journal

Father Don Hughes

St. John's Anglican Church

## Prayer Requests

Pray for the safety of the firefighters who are putting their lives in danger to fight the many fires our country is experiencing.

Pray for our policemen working hand and hand with them to evacuate the affected areas.

Pray for those being affected by these fires. Many have lost their homes and some even their lives.

Pray for understanding and compassion in our country, so needed to combat the division we are experiencing. Pray our leaders can put away their differences and concentrate on the good of our country.

## Parting Words



“Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the One who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.”

- Max Lucado

© MYBIBLE.COM



## Hint of Humor

