



Trinity Topics

September 2020

Phone = (217) 245-5901

info@trinitychurchjax.org

Website = www.trinitychurchjax.org



“Let all that you do be done in love.” —1 Corinthians 16:14

We are entering the home stretch of an election year, which is a good time to consider what it means to be a Christian voter. Mixing religion and politics is always a fraught matter. Rest assured that I, as a priest, will not, and cannot, tell anyone how to vote, for that is a matter of the individual’s informed conscience. Christians have the duty of knowing the Bible and of applying what they find there to their decision in the polling booth, but they can and will disagree about what the best policies are and who the better candidate is. What is the best way to help the poor? What is the most moral way to defend the nation? What is the best way to ensure for all life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? I have my beliefs about these things, but I can hardly claim to be an authority on any of them. Ask the economists and sociologists about the best policies. It is my place, on the other hand, to remind us all of the values that should motivate and unite us. We all should be deeply troubled by the anger and hate that have infected our politics today. Elections are a great exercise of what makes us American. They should bring us together rather than dividing us.

Both parties need, I think, the strong reminder that our fellow Americans on the “other side” are not the enemy. I have known earnest Christians on both sides of the political spectrum. A Christian should be motivated by concern not only for himself, and not only for other Americans like himself, but for all his fellow human beings, including the ones he disagrees with. We all surely have common enemies—ignorance, poverty, tyranny, violence, and the rest. Our disagreements with our fellow Americans, I think, are primarily about the best way to fight our common enemies and what the priorities in fighting them should be. Any politics motivated primarily by hate of other people should therefore be rejected, and we must enter American politics with some measure of charity for our fellow human beings. We should choose to believe the best of our fellow Americans even if we feel their beliefs are misguided. They are not out to get us—most people ultimately want the same things we want. Even if you think certain leaders fail to live up to the values of the office they aspire to, their voters have any number of reasons for supporting them.

Second, we Christians should try to keep political discourse in its proper place. I fear today that people invest their whole identity into their political affiliation. When this happens, politics becomes something like a sport. The focus is on winning for its own sake and crushing the other side rather than principles and policies. Elections are a way for the nation to make collective decisions. They are a means to an end—a functioning government that represents the will of the people as much as possible. They should not become a locus of meaning for Christians. We find our meaning in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ who made very clear in the Gospels that *His Kingdom is not of this world*. As St. Paul reminds us, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (Colossians 3:2)

This is not to minimize the gravity of our decision in the polling booth. We are accountable for how we vote. *Of course* there are truly important issues at stake. As the Jewish theologian Abraham Herschel wrote, “In a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.” We must be prophetic in our political participation in a world that is broken by sin and death. As St. Paul writes, “But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?” (Romans 10:14) Voting is our opportunity to have a Christian say in a society that is growing ever more commercialized and secularized. We can point our nation to the values that will make it great. Let a Christian nation, which I for one believe can and should exist, begin with us.

Father Zachary Brooks +

A Course in Anglican History: Part XXI

Though the Mass was back in England, reforming Church law needed a longer-term plan. Queen Mary bided her time ensuring a Catholic future for her realm. She had to prevent her Protestant sister from inheriting the throne by producing an heir. She married the son of the Holy Roman Emperor Prince of Spain Phillip II in 1554, connecting England to the most powerful Catholic realm in the world. Despite assurances of the independence of England, the match was a matter of great suspicion among the English people. She then set about purging Protestantism from the land with vigorous enforcement of heresy laws starting in 1555. Protestants of means fled the realm, around 800 in all. These “Marian Exiles” would prove to be of pivotal importance to Princess Elizabeth and her own Church reforms. Most, of course, had nowhere to go. In just three years around 300 Protestants, from humble apprentices like John Leaf, to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer himself, were burned at the stake. While the English were generally happy to have Catholicism restored to the land, Mary’s persecution of Protestants had an apprehensive reception. The Protestant name for Mary stuck: Bloody Mary.

This column is the twentieth-first in the monthly series on the history of Anglicanism and the Episcopal Church.

News & Announcements

Fall Bible Study

Starting in September, Fr. Zach will lead a Bible study via Zoom, an online video conference program. The 45 minute meetings will take place on second and fourth Tuesdays starting at 7 p.m. The first session will be September 8. No “homework” will be required. We will begin by focusing on the Gospel of Matthew. Please email Fr. Zach if you are interested in joining us. After you have emailed Fr. Zach, a link will be sent to you before the meeting. Contact: brooksz@gmail.com

Thanks!

Doorbell Dinner coordinator would like to thank these parishioners who delivered meals during the week of July 27 to 31: Kip & K-Lou Ashmore, Forrest & Helen Keaton, Hilda & Abby Radcliffe, and Dana Ryan. Trinity Church is blessed to have such caring people!

Congratulations!

Jospehine Ann Smith, daughter of Dennis & Margie Smith and granddaughter of Skip & Jo Ann Nelson, was born on July 31, 2020. Welcome to the world, Josie!

Jett James Cisne, son of Adam & Katie Cisne and grandson of Jim & Janet Cisne, was born on August 1, 2020. Welcome to the world, Jett!

Dr. Susan Weller and **David Mumford** have both retired this summer. Congratulations, Susan and David. Enjoy your retirement! (But now we know you’ll be busy!!!)

Owen Paul Blackorby was named the King of the Beaux Arts Ball by The Art Association of Jacksonville. He is the son of Mary & Brian Watts and the grandson of Bill & Gayle Pollock Clark. He earned this honor by his personal activities and achievements and his family’s support of The Art Association of Jacksonville. He joins other “royal” members of Trinity Church who have served as Queens of the Ball through the years: Dr. Susan Weller, Susan Bellatti Green, Dr. Susan Pratt, Cynthia Dooling O’Hanlon, Dr. Elizabeth Worrall Angerman, Lindsay Keaton Jones, and Marguerite Nelson Smith.

**If you have news you wish to share, please contact the Parish Office.*