

2015 CANVASS



I feel we need a more active ministry [beyond the parish]. I don't see us feeding the hungry or clothing the poor.

Although there is always room for further development, for many years now we have done ministry beyond the parish in a truly remarkable number of very impressive different ways. First, like many parishes in this diocese, St Paul's parishioners participate in the programs of **REVIVE**, the distinguished agency of Episcopal Charities on the Near West Side of Chicago which does just that. In fact, St Paul's was recently named as the **REVIVE** Parish of the Year. However, because we are a "destination congregation" with our parishioners coming from literally all over the Chicago metropolitan area, it is difficult for us to maintain a food pantry or feeding program here in Riverside ourselves.

Secondly, there are the outstanding agencies of St Paul's Community Services Corp. which work in the areas of housing rehabilitation for lower income families; care for the involuntarily homebound; and the building of solid values among pre-school children and their families here in the Near Western Suburbs. Thirdly, there is the work of St Paul's Foundation that makes grants to those in need through Anglican agencies throughout the world and eventually will be able to make annual gifts at the six-figures level.

It is important to remember that our ministry to others is fundamentally and essentially the ministry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first Christian: presence, intercession, and mediation of God's Grace. The immediate tangible ways in which we mediate God's Grace – the particular things we do in the Name of the Triune God – are necessarily changeable and depend not only on the vocation and tools that God has given us as individuals and as a parish family but also on the needs of the people we are serving (not on what we want to do in order to feel good).

Why is the Hail Mary said at the 10 am Mass every Sunday, instead of just in Advent or on the feasts of the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception?

At St Paul's "*we believe, practice, and teach the full Catholic Faith and support and promote authentic Catholic culture.*" The fundamental difference between Catholic theology, spirituality, and culture and Protestant theology, spirituality, and culture, from which all other differences evolve, is "Catholic Imagination" versus "Protestant Imagination," that is, the way one sees the relationship between the Triune God and His creation.

In general Protestantism sees Christianity theologically as an *individual* matter between a person and Jesus. Catholicism understands the Christian Life as being an active member of the *Church Family*: the Body of Christ here on Earth today, a divine and sacramental – not human – institution in which we can grow in *Theosis* by means of God's Grace given to us principally through the seven Sacraments. As Catholic Christians we are united and indissolubly related by parentage, birth, and blood and are intended by God to be in intimate relationship and interaction. We are not, as Protestantism generally holds, a group related only by common interests/beliefs essentially gathered as individuals in the community's activities.

As one contemporary theologian has said, "Catholic Imagination is all about mutual mediation." As a Church Family we are all to give as we have been given; we are each to give to others the Grace we ourselves have received. The Blessed Virgin Mary is, as the Second Vatican Council declared, "the Mother of the Church;" that is, she is both maternal and prototype: historically the first Christian and now the first among the Saints. What she is as the first Christian, we as Christians are also to be. Her ministry of loving presence, intercession, and mediation of the Grace she has received is exactly what our ministry is to be. She is the principal, thus most important, role model and criterion for all Christian Life and ministry. We say the Hail Mary at Sunday Mass as a weekly reminder of Mary's ministry which is exactly what our own response is to be to the Christ we actually

encounter and take into our lives in the Sacrament of the Eucharist validly celebrated as well as to the fullness of God's Grace we receive as "engrafted members" of the Body of Christ.

The Rector is stuck in 1957.

Actually the Rector is stuck in doctrine and dogma in A.D. 787 and in spirituality and church culture in A.D. 540. The Early Christian Church taught, and hence the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Anglican Churches hold, that Jesus Christ gave the *Magisterium* – the power to "bind and loose," that is, to authoritatively interpret and reapply His once-for-all-revelation – solely to His Apostles as a body, not to every Christian individually nor to any one Bishop (*see St Matthew 18*). Therefore only an "Ecumenical" or "General" Council of all the Bishops validly ordained in the Apostolic Succession can interpret a matter that is *de fide* ("of the Faith"). The last Council of all the Bishops in the Apostolic Succession was in Nicea in the year A.D. 787.

In its decade-long self-study and renewal in the 1980's, St Paul's officially made the decision to adopt an intentional and authentic Benedictine spirituality and church culture. This style of church life was defined in *The Rule of St Benedict* which dates from about A.D. 540.

Where is the reaching out? There was a parishioner who was recovering from a fall recently. I didn't know about this, and it didn't seem to be common knowledge based on recent coffee hour conversations at St Paul's.

Throughout all of my over-41 years at St Paul's we have tried both to honor the level of personal privacy that each individual parishioner has wanted to have (and it varies greatly!) and also to make it possible for the whole parish family to reach out to our members in time of need. For decades it has been our official policy that health information is not disclosed through the Parish Office (and that includes the *public* Prayers for the Sick at Mass as well as "Network News Updates") without the specific permission of the person or, if unable, her/his immediate family.

However, now federal law has also stepped in. On December 28, 2000 the Federal Government issued the HIPAA Privacy Rule which legally "establishes national standards to protect individual's medical records and other personal health information.... The Rule requires appropriate safeguards to protect the privacy of personal health information, and sets limits and conditions on the uses and disclosures that may be made of such information without patient authorization." So now it is not only parish policy but also federal law.

I have had some personal family concerns and haven't been able to attend church regularly ... but no one has asked me why I have not been here....

I grew up in the 1950's, and like many of the Baby Boom generation whose parents were trying to produce "well rounded" children, I was pushed into many lessons – piano, golf, tennis, horseback riding, dancing, etc., etc. – none of which I wanted, have never gone back to as an adult, and regrettably have never been able to do. However, thankfully my parents wisely never pushed my sister or me into church participation ... and we have both had significant lifelong involvement!

In the Fall of 1974 when Father Lundberg was leaving St Paul's, Bishop Montgomery gave my name to the Vestry and asked me to come talk with what we now call the Parish Council. The divisive controversy that was raging in the Episcopal Church at that time was Prayer Book revision, so very understandably liturgy and liturgical participation were issues of major concern to the parish leadership. I told them that as Rector of St Paul's – or any parish for that matter – I would always welcome everyone on whatever basis he/she chose to come to church (unless, of course, her/his behavior interfered with the rights of others), and I would never ask any person whose attendance was not regular why he/she was not present, the only exception being parishioners holding canonical church offices where every-Sunday attendance is a matter of legal eligibility. It is a commitment I have kept for 41 years; but more importantly, I firmly believe based on my own personal experience, it is "elbow room" without which a person will never have any authentic mature commitment to Christ and His Church.

Father Fraser does not like to be known as the boss, but he is. He says he follows orders, but he's in charge. And he's done a good job with St Paul's. Who will fill that role next...?

It is, of course, a canonical as well as a civil legal fact that in the parishes of the American Episcopal Church the not-for-profit corporation "The Rector, Churchwardens, and Vestrymen of St _____ Parish, _____(city)_____, _____(state)_____" as a body are responsible for and in control of raising operating funds, budgeting those funds, and maintenance of the parish buildings and grounds. All other areas of parish life – liturgy; administration of the Sacraments; religious education; pastoral care; all programs and ministries; guilds, parish agencies and their funds; control of the buildings and grounds, their furnishings and appointments; determining who is a canonical parishioner; as well as all parish employees, clerical and lay – are solely the responsibility and in the control of the Rector.

While that is true both in Canon and Civil Law, the Rector or even "The Rector, Churchwardens, and Vestrymen" as a body are not why St Paul's is and remains what it is. Sister Helen Cahill, OP has said, "...the function of the leader is to be the guardian of the process [of the culture, life, and mission]; the life and mission of the group are the responsibility of the members." As I am fond of saying, this is both prescriptive and descriptive. If you look at Canon Law, it becomes clear that this is exactly what the authority of the Rector (which is abbatial) is about: "being guardian of the process." Descriptively, the nature of the life of an organization is determined by its "DNA" which is a given that no leader can control on an ongoing basis nor change except by destroying the existing "DNA," which can only be done by replacing all the existing members with new members. Only in the very rare, extraordinarily long rectorates or the even rarer total collapse and then successful complete resurrection *creatio ex nihilo* of a parish does this ever approach happening.

Bishop Montgomery said to me several years ago, "St Paul's is a 'tight ship' but a very happy one." I believe this is true, and the reason is that the vast majority of parishioners here are "on the same page." What the Rector does is facilitate the life that the vast majority of parishioners want to have. The principal reason, I believe, for this unanimity – especially in a time of "culture war" in the Church and society – is that St Paul's has in reality virtually no geographic parish; there is hardly a handful of Episcopalians left living in the Village with no new ones at all moving in. Because St Paul's is a "destination congregation" with members coming weekly from quite literally all over the Chicago metropolitan area, there is no reason for anyone to come to this parish unless St Paul's specifically intentional Benedictine Catholic life and culture is what they want and want enough to drive in many cases quite long distances. In a sense, like all destination parishes – liberal, conservative, Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical, Charismatic, etc. alike – the congregation is "self-selecting." That – not the Rector's control – is why the parish is what it is, remains so, and will continue to remain so even after the present Rector leaves.

There should be a course for adults which conducts a comprehensive study of the Old and New Testaments.

There is; it is EfM (Education for Ministry), which makes available by extension the full core curriculum of an Episcopal seminary as required by Canon Law. The first two years of this advanced four year program of the School of Theology of the University of the South present the Old and New Testaments chronologically. St Paul's has been an EfM center since 1985 and has a number of trained EfM Mentors.

The mandatory core required of Episcopalians is (1) the life of prayer ("Responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words," *BCP* page 856) and (2) every Sunday and weekday Holy Day of Obligation attendance at a valid celebration of the Eucharist. Everything else in the life of a healthy parish exists to support and develop persons' understanding and meaningful participation in the life of prayer and the celebration of the seven Sacraments. Furthermore there need to be many different options on many different facets of the Faith on many different levels so that people can have their needs met, both when they themselves are ready and their life permits.

The Church has very appropriately provided needed agencies and programs such as schools and colleges, social service programs, hospitals and health care, advocacy programs, even credit unions, etc. when the secular society could not or would not. However, this is never a primary mission of the Church corporately (as opposed to the mission of individual Christians); and the Church's corporate involvement is properly terminated when the need is otherwise being met. As Father Daly said in

a recent homily, “The primary mission of the Church is not to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and care for the prisoner. The primary mission of the Church is to make saints who do these things.”

Because the paradigm of St Paul’s is a Benedictine religious community, not a program-driven suburban parish, education and formation programs are offered in response to people’s expressed needs (not scheduling programs and then trying by hook and by crook to fill them with the critical mass of people). We have available a wide range of education and formation opportunities which we do upon request:

- *monthly*: the Marian Study Group, the Lunch with St Benedict Group, and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for Adults (in preparation)
- *semi-monthly*: the Anglican Spirituality Group (seminary level)
- *weekly*: the Sunday Adult Bible Study (between the 8 and 10 am Masses)
 - the six-week Canterbury Pilgrimage program (introductory orientation)
 - the four-semester Adult Theology Class (comprehensive introductory foundational course; the “novitiate” for canonical membership in St Paul’s)
 - the eight-semester Education for Ministry program (seminary level)
- *seasonally*: a wide range of “short courses” on subjects of interest to parishioners, including “Lunch ’n Discussion” (after the 10 am Sunday Mass) and skills courses such as singing Gregorian Chant, Christian management of money and other material possessions, etc.

There is an effort [here to have a parish] where changes made since 1972 [in the Larger Episcopal Church] are ignored or rebuffed.

It is the publicly and widely stated intention of St Paul’s to be a fully authentic Anglican parish. One of the things that means is that – as articulated by the Primates, Archbishops, and diocesan Bishops of Anglicanism world-wide at the 1988 Lambeth Conference – decisions are made on the basis of the historic theology of the Church, not on emotions, sentimentality, or individual preference. In addition the Church’s paradigm is the Patristic (Early Christian) Church, not the Medieval Western Church or the 16th Century Reformation.

Beginning with the 1976 General Convention, radical changes affecting the heretofore unbroken historic doctrine, discipline, and practice of the Episcopal Church have been made. In almost all the matters *de fide* (that is, the Faith as revealed by Jesus Christ, not “matters indifferent” merely of style or local custom) they have been made on political, not theological, grounds in a time of often-vicious always destructive culture war and rapid church-wide decline. Furthermore, and of supreme importance, they have not been made by the one single body commanded and empowered by Jesus Christ Himself to interpret and reapply authoritatively His once-for-all revelation: a General or Ecumenical Council of all the Bishops world-wide validly ordained in the Apostolic Succession. This is the only *Magisterium* recognized by the original, that is Early Christian, Church and thus by Eastern Orthodoxy and Anglicanism for whom it is the paradigm.

As I have pointed out a number of times, beginning in 1976, the Episcopal Church has become radically permissive, not, as so many people think, radically liberal. All, absolutely all, of these alterations are completely optional on the parochial level of the Church, with the authority to implement or not implement them in almost all cases solely in the hands of the rector of the parish.

The “DNA” of St Paul’s is Benedictine Catholic; that is the principal reason the vast majority of parishioners come here, often from great distances weekly. As a Catholic (literally “universal”) community St Paul’s accepts, practices, and teaches only those things *de fide* recognized by the undivided Universal Church whose last definitive Ecumenical Council was in A.D. 787. In its spirituality and church culture St Paul’s is Benedictine, and the definitive statement of that spirituality and culture is *The Rule of St Benedict* (c. 540). This is, and is alone, authentic historic Anglicanism. It is a major, non-negotiable, and unchanging element of the very essence of St Paul’s parish as well as being the thing which attracts the overwhelming majority of parishioners and without which they simply would not bother to come the distances involved.

The Vestry has very little visibility. Does Father want the Vestry to be quiet and stay out of his way?

In some ways the Vestry is like Commonwealth Edison: crucially important to our life but as long as everything is working well and we have the electric power we need, we never think about it. The parishes in which the Vestry is continually the center of parish consciousness and attention are inevitably parishes that are in serious trouble and/or in intractable conflict. Happily neither is the case at St Paul's.

As you know, the Vestry – the Rector, Churchwardens, and Vestrymen as a body – is a legal corporation, in this State an “Illinois Religious Corporation.” For that reason there are very specific non-negotiable legally enforced requirements for membership in the corporation as well as the requirements of Canon Law. In a small, and particularly in a very stable, parish the Vestry can be one of the chief causes of parishioner burn-out as a very limited group of people repeatedly rotate on it and off it. To deal with this problem St Paul's Vestry in 1998 restructured itself to deal only with their canonical and legal responsibilities at their regular meetings, which has kept these meetings short, workable, and efficient as well as effective. The parish leadership body – the Parish Council – of which all the Canonical Vestry members are part but which being extra-canonical can include a much larger, broader, and widely representative group of parishioners, does the work of planning, evaluation, and envisioning done (though in far too many cases not done) in most other parishes in sometimes very long and exhausting Vestry meetings, often late into the night. The Rector, incidentally, not only does *not* want the Vestry members to be quiet but is in fact extremely proud of the excellent and highly responsible work they do!

[St Paul's] is still missing that heart thing. It doesn't have to be the total focus, but that component has to be there. ... Again, it's the heart side; you have to have some balance. Really, it's a balance between head and heart – we need to move beyond the head [alone to include the heart].

If what you mean by “heart” is building an existential (“feeling”) relationship with the Triune God and in turn being pastoral and “nurturing” to all His creation, I agree with you emphatically and completely. Indeed if that component is missing from parish life we are not being balanced as St Benedict calls us to be – his great enduring insight – and we are not being authentically Anglican as we strive to be.

For me, a concrete example of this is the life of the Atrium of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Throughout her/his time in the Atrium the child is presented with objective elements of the Christian Faith – the liturgy, the Sacraments, the Church Year, the Bible, the History of Salvation – but it is all within the context of and has its meaning in an existential relationship with the Good Shepherd and the sheep. The early 20th Century English Bishop, the Rt Rev. Handley Moule, said, “Beware equally of an ‘undevotional’ theology [mind without heart] and ‘untheological’ devotion [heart without mind].” This is one of the reasons I am so pleased, excited, and looking forward to the inauguration of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for Adults at St Paul's. This balance of head and heart must be a life-long part of every formed and intentional Christian, and the Catechesis is one of the most effective ways I know to develop and support it.

When I speak to the Rector about an issue he listens, but nothing happens. There's no follow-up or follow-through.

Like any family, the members of a parish family cannot have everything they want when they want it. There are constraints within which we all have to live. Some are financial; some are other kinds of resources, such as human, space, and demography; some are theological or Canonical or even civil legal; some are the corporate “DNA” of the parish which realistically isn't going to change for any individual or small group interest, including the rector's! In addition in every parish there are controlling factors known only to the rector that he cannot disclose because of the requirements of confidentiality and in most cases those matters are actionable legal matters.

However, that does not mean that St Paul's does not continue to develop. One life-long parishioner has said, “I have been here 54 years. It is the same buildings, but it is not the same parish.” We in fact are continually doing things parishioners suggest to improve our life and mission, but most often they must be on God's timetable not our own. This does now include generally

small but vital building repair projects. (In the case of our severely financially-constrained building maintenance, there is definitely “light at the end of the tunnel” with two Foundation endowments “in the pipeline:” one for maintenance itself in perpetuity and another for support of the Office of Rector which will provide literally lifesaving relief for the very tight parish operating budget as this is always far-and-away the largest single expense in a small parish.)

Only one version of the Nicene Creed is sung now. Are there other versions of the Creed to sing? We have various versions of the Mass settings.

The great Episcopal Gregorian Chant authority, the Rev. Canon Winfred Douglas (1867-1944) wrote that “This is the ancient and all but universal melody of the Creed...” Yes, there have been several other melodies: one written by John Merbecke in the 16th Century for Archbishop Cranmer’s translation for the First Book of Common Prayer, and there is a *Missa de Angelis* melody as well as several contemporary versions written for the ICET (Rite II) translations. We use this “all but universal melody” at St Paul’s because it is Benedictine usage which, of course, is the criterion for virtually all of our liturgy decisions.

Put our mission Statement on the parish website! Question: is the stated Parish Mission meaningful to the rest of the congregation [as it is to me]?

The Parish Mission Statement – *To inspire growth in Christ* – along with the Parish Vision Statement – *to live in union with the Triune God as an authentic Anglican community* – have been on St Paul’s website [link “About the Parish // Anglican parish family”] since it was adopted by the Parish Council, but perhaps they need to be placed in a more prominent position. Judging by the responses of parishioners in the Every Member Canvass, its importance at St Paul’s is virtually unanimous.

St Paul’s Parish represents the Church that I thought I had entered in 1960 [at the Chapel of St John the Divine at the U of I in Champaign-Urbana]. The tradition of reverent worship, solid theological scholarship, and a welcoming congregation provides great promise for the future. ... My wild fantasy for St Paul’s is that it ultimately become a west suburban, Anglican center of continuing Christian education (in a much larger venue) – i.e., a profoundly worshipping community with a rock-solid intellectual foundation.

As I have said so often, we at St Paul’s are truly blessed in many ways. One of the things “in the pipeline” is a significant designated endowment in St Paul’s Foundation, in memory of Helen Jablonski, to promote, develop, and support adult Christian Education and spiritual formation (which includes the Parish Library) both for St Paul’s parishioners and for all those throughout the Western Suburbs who want, as our Parish Mission Statement says, to “grow in Christ.” Together with the Foundation’s Merian Gunnar Memorial Endowment support for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, this can make your “wild fantasy” a tangible reality in perpetuity.