THE CHEERFUL GIVER

Each year around this time, it is incumbent upon each Christian to think about how they will conduct their financial decisions in the New Year. This includes how each of us will contribute to the Church. There are different ways that a pastor can exhort his people to do this. He can make a plea for money by reminding his people of the dire need the Church has in order to survive. He can write a heavy-handed letter making demands of people. Or he can take the opposite approach and be so vague about Christian financial responsibilities that the people really receive no guidance in making their decisions.

I believe that the best approach is somewhere in the middle and that direction for this is found in the Bible. Since God inspired the Bible and the words in it are His words, then this is where we must turn to find instruction in what God wants.

Christians are not to be spoken to harshly so that they feel guilty or under compulsion to give. They should not be threatened or made to feel that God will be upset with them if they don't meet some certain goal. On the other hand they should not be left unaided to make these sorts of decisions on their own without Biblical guidance.

The best approach seems to come from the pen of St. Paul. In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, (or just read all of 2 Cor. 9) Paul is writing to the Corinthian Church telling them about the need of another Church...the Church in Jerusalem. They are a poor Church and he is reminding them of their duty as Christians that the needs of another Christian – or in this case a group of Christians – must be the concern of the rest of the body of Christ. He writes, “…whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (ESV) The last line of that passage is important.

God loves a cheerful giver. He loves a Christians who gives willingly and faithfully and joyfully. We also could conclude from this that God is not happy with or does not love a fearful, faithless, under compulsion, bitter or reluctant giver. He does not desire that Christians give from a bitter or jaded heart. Christians must give to the work of the Church because they believe in what it does...for them, for others, for the neighborhood and for the world from the heart. Theologian Charles Hodge says about us not giving reluctantly that it means literally, “Not out of sorrow; that is, do not let the gift come from a reluctant state of mind, grieving after
what is given as so much lost.”¹ Giving under compulsion means, “compelled by circumstances to give when you prefer not to do it.”²

**SHORT STUDY**

**THOMAS CRANMER AND SCRIPTURE**

“Surely there can be no greater hope of any kind of persons, other to be brought to all honest conversation of living, or to be more apt to set forth and maintain all godliness and true religion, than of such as have been from childhood nourished and fed with the sweet milk of God’s holy word” – Thomas Cranmer to King Edward VI.

Thomas Cranmer was the first Archbishop of Anglicanism, the chief author of the Book of Common Prayer, and of the 42/39 Articles. The working library he owned was probably the largest in England at the time he wrote the 1549 BCP. Amidst this vast collection, one volume stood out above all others forming the heart and foundation of his theology and work – the Holy Scriptures. This may not sound surprising to us today, but it wasn’t quite as common in the sixteenth century.

The Bible took priority for Cranmer in both his epistemology and methodology. For some, tradition and/or reason may be on equal footing with Scripture, but this wasn’t the case with Cranmer. However, he did not by any means neglect or ignore these valuable resources. On the contrary, he was well rehearsed in the church fathers, utilized them to support his position, and had an impressive use of logic as evidenced for example in his treaty on the Eucharist, *The Defense*. In this work, he writes that the “most sure” way to quiet contention “is to cleave unto holy Scripture. Wherein whatsoever is found, must be taken for a most sure ground and an infallible truth.”³ Cranmer’s high view of Scripture can be seen in numerous places including the *Annotations upon the King’s Book* where he corrects Henry VIII’s theology, often on points of justification. Cranmer was always well trusted by Henry (a rare thing) for his erudition and for his loyalty. In 1543 a serious conspiratorial plot was made against Cranmer by Bishop Gardiner and others. Henry revealed the conspiracy to Cranmer in a face-to-face meeting and protected him with his personal ring.

One of the achievements Cranmer was most pleased with during the reign of Henry VIII was the authorized publication of the Bible in the English language, which had been illegal for some time. Cromwell and Cranmer labored and lobbied tirelessly to make this happen. It goes by many names including The Great Bible, Cromwell’s Bible, and also Cranmer’s Bible since he wrote the famous preface which concludes with these words:

> Every man that cometh to the reading of this holy book ought to bring with him first and foremost this fear of Almighty God; and then next, a firm and stable purpose to reform his own self according thereunto; and so to continue, proceed and prosper from time to time, shewing himself to be a sober and fruitful hearer and learner.⁴

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⁴ Ibid., 117.
MARTYRS & SAINTS

It is believed by many scholars that the commemoration of all the Christian saints on “All Saints Day”, held November 1st, originated in Ireland, spread from there to England and then to the continent of Europe. That it had reached Rome and had been adopted there early in the 9th century is attested by a letter of Pope Gregory IV, who reigned from 828-844, to Emperor Louis “the Pious,” urging that such a festival be observed throughout the Holy Roman Empire. The term "saint" is derived from the Latin "sanctus", meaning sacred. Since the 10th century, the Church has reserved the status of “saint” to people its official canon law has recognized for outstanding Christian service and conduct. As Anglicans, we honor those individuals that carried on the Great Commission after the death of the Apostles. There are more than 120 notable Anglican saints between 200 AD and the 1900’s to include many Archbishops of Canterbury (Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Beckett, and Thomas Cranmer); bible translators such as William Tyndale, Henry Martyn and Pandita Mary Ramabai, and the famous hymn writers, Issac Watts and Charles Wesley.

All Saints Day is classified in the Book of Common Prayer as a principle feast and one of the days recommended for the administration of holy baptism. Thanks be to God for all those who have “gone before us in thy faith and fear.”

THANKSGIVING MASS

Fr. Neil will hold a Thanksgiving Day Mass on November 23rd at 9am. Although the holiday is no longer considered a Christian holiday, Thanksgiving is rooted in the history of the Pilgrims, who were Christian "Separatists". The first day of Thanksgiving was proclaimed by President George Washington, who at the request of Congress recommended to the people to be set aside "as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God."

OLD TYME CRAFT FAIRE & FASHION BOUTIQUE

Our Craft Faire & Fashion Boutique will be held on November 4th from 9am to 2pm. Please come and support your church family. All contributions from this sale go directly to our Outreach Program supporting Mary’s Kitchen and our Mission in Venezuela. Let’s make this last sale of the year the best ever!!

LOTS OF THANK YOUs FOR OUR CHILDRENS PROGRAM

Our special thanks to Jeannie Lawrence for her support in starting our Sunday Children’s Program. We were all sad to see her leave but
she was no longer able to drive the distance from Riverside. For us, the Lord continues to bless us with His guidance and support. Teacher Mattie Mackessy continues to carry on with our October reading program and has asked her sister Carla to join her upstairs. They make a fabulous team. Please show your support for our Children’s program by welcoming Carla and thanking Mattie. We also want to thank Gigi and Jennifer DeFusco for stepping up to help with the older children. But the biggest hug of all is for Daddy Carl who occasionally hangs with our itty bitty toddlers just for fun.

**THE NEWS REPORT…….**

**PROVINCIAL SYNOD**

Provincial Synod was a glorious event. Nearly 500 synod delegates from North and South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe met to pray and fellowship in Dunwoody, Georgia. Representatives from the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC), the Anglican Church in America (ACA), the Anglican Province of America (APA), and the Diocese of the Holy Cross (DHC) attended. This gathering coincided with the 40th anniversary of the Congress of St. Louis, from which all four jurisdictions are descended. The announcement of full communion (communio in sacris) marked the healing of an old rift, and a restoration of the unity envisioned by the Affirmation of St. Louis, the founding document of Continuing Anglicanism. The Agreement taken from the minutes of the XXII Provincial Synod of the Original Province of the Anglican Catholic Church held at Atlanta, GA, October 4-6, 2017 follows.

**Agreement Establishing Full Communion (Communio in sacris) Among The Anglican Catholic Church, The Anglican Church in America, The Anglican Province of America, and The Diocese of the Holy Cross**

We the undersigned, belonging to and holding the faith of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as received by the Church of England in the days of her orthodoxy, and as Continued by Anglicans in North America in response to the call of the Congress of Saint Louis in 1977, agree to the following:

> We acknowledge each other to be orthodox and catholic Anglicans in virtue of our common adherence to the authorities accepted by and summarized in The Affirmation of Saint Louis in the faith of the Holy Tradition of the Undivided Catholic Church and of the seven Ecumenical Councils.

> We recognize in each other the same faith; the same sacraments; the same moral teaching; and the same worship; likewise we recognize in each other the same Holy Orders of bishops, priests, and deacons in the same Apostolic Succession, insofar as we all share the episcopate conveyed to the Continuing Churches in Denver in January 1978 in response to the call of the Congress of Saint Louis; therefore,

> We welcome members of all of our Churches to Holy Communion and parochial life in any and all of the congregations of our Churches; and,

> We pledge to pursue full, institutional, and organic union with each other, in a manner that respects tender consciences, builds consensus and harmony, and fulfils increasingly our Lord’s will that his Church be united; and,

> We pledge also to seek unity with other Christians, including those who understand themselves to be Anglican, insofar as such unity is consistent with the essentials of Catholic faith, order, and moral teaching.