

ALL SAINTS' BULLETIN  
The Monthly Newsletter of All Saints'  
May, 2019  
228-9242  
[www.allsaintsthasville.org](http://www.allsaintsthasville.org)

Dear Friends,

In normal years, April 24 marks the date when the Anglican Church of Melanesia celebrates the feast of the Seven Martyrs of the Melanesian Brotherhood. This year, however, April 24 fell within the octave of Easter (the eight days following Easter), when all liturgical celebrations are superseded by the commemoration of the Lord's resurrection – as is meet and right. I wanted nevertheless to share with you about the seven martyrs, and what they mean to me.

The Melanesian Brotherhood is an Anglican religious order (like monks) in, as you might guess from the name, Melanesia – the islands north and east of Australia, from Papua New Guinea to Fiji. The Brotherhood's headquarters are on the island of Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, which is the center of their activity. The history of evangelization in Melanesia is interesting, if not entirely unique. Early evangelists from the Church of England, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, were sensitive to the indigenous cultures of the South Pacific, perhaps having learned from their mistakes in other parts of the British Empire, like east Africa. As a result, evangelization was more successful in Melanesia, and Melanesian Christianity, and Anglicanism in particular, has maintained an indigenous "flavor" ever since. The

faithful remove their shoes when they enter churches, for example, and Christian clergy are distinguishable by necklaces made of tortoise shell and dolphin teeth, as were the pagan religious leaders of former times.

The Melanesian Brotherhood was founded in 1925 by a policeman from Guadalcanal named Ini Kopuria, with the help of the English missionary Bishop, John Manwaring Steward. The brothers spend three years of formation as novices, then take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, for five-year terms which are renewable. Groups of three to six brothers go out into the islands and villages and establish working households, living and praying together, and teaching the villagers among whom they live about the Gospel, and sharing the local community's work.

In the late 1990's, a low-grade war, known locally as the "ethnic tension," broke out in the Solomons, focused on perceived economic grievances between the different ethnic groups from Guadalcanal and Malaita islands. Because the Melanesian Brothers are comprised of Melanesians from all the islands' tribes and ethnic groups without distinction (as well as a few Polynesians and at least one European), they were well-placed to seek peace and reconciliation, and they indeed devoted themselves to this effort with fervor. Thanks in no small part to their efforts, a peace agreement was signed between the warring tribes in 2000, and the brothers set about convincing villagers to turn over their guns, which the brothers would throw into the sea while praying and singing hymns.

This work was ongoing when I lived with the brothers for several months in 2002. The islands were humming with stories of the brothers, who were loved and even revered by seemingly everyone in the Solomons. But there was one warlord on the south coast of Guadalcanal, named Harold Keke, who did not sign-on to the peace deal and persisted in causing trouble. A month after I left Guadalcanal, Keke murdered a Catholic priest named Augustine Geve. In 2003 one of the Melanesian Brothers named Nathaniel Sado went to speak with Keke, whom he knew, to see if he could be convinced to commit himself to peace. Brother Nathaniel did not return. In April of 2003 six more brothers, two of whom I knew – Brother Alfred Hill and Brother Robin Lindsay – went to investigate rumors that Brother Nathaniel had been murdered by Keke and, if so, to bring his body back to the brothers' mother house. The six brothers did not return. It would later be revealed that all had been tortured and killed by Keke and his men.

As a result, though, of their witness, and of the prayers and further appeals of the brothers, Harold Keke eventually agreed to give up violence and turn himself in. He is now serving a life sentence for the murders. The bodies of the seven martyrs were returned to the Brotherhood, and they were interred with great solemnity at the Brotherhood's mother house, Tabalia. In 2004 Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, visited Tabalia, celebrated the Eucharist at the graves of the seven martyrs, and blessed them. In 2008, at the conclusion of the Lambeth Conference (the once-a-decade meeting of all of the world's Anglican bishops), the seven martyrs were honored, and an icon depicting them was placed on the altar of the Chapel of Saints of Our Times inside Canterbury Cathedral. Likewise some relics of

the martyred brothers – their walking sticks and some of their clothing – have been deposited in a chapel of the Basilica of St. Bartholomew in Rome.

The memory of these witnesses to the power of Christ's cross to overcome the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31) is very dear to me, not least because I lived among the brothers and knew them. They are a reminder of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called the "cost of discipleship" – a cost that can be obscured to us Western Christians living, as we do, in comfort and security. Their memory is an impetus to solidarity with and prayer for our brethren throughout the world who bear the cost of discipleship in some sense on our behalf. And their memory is a reminder never to compromise our commitment to the Truth for the sake of getting along with Truth's enemies.

I will close with the collect for April 24, the feast of the Seven Martyrs, in the lectionary of the Anglican Church of Melanesia:

"Eternal Father, in the lives and deaths of the seven martyred Brothers you show us that the Cross is not a past experience but a present reality. Help us to recognize its power to liberate your people, and, like Brothers Nathaniel, Robin, Francis, Alfred, Ini, Patteson and Tony, to live and die in humility and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

Pax,  
Fr. Will +

### **VESTRY MEETING**

The Vestry will hold its meeting this month on Sunday, May 19 at 8:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall Library.

### **POP UP BAZAAR UPDATE**

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the Pop-Up Bazaar and to all the parishioners who donated items to the bazaar. We were able to raise more than \$1,500 to donate to various Thomasville charities. We are planning another for some time in the fall so continue to bring your treasures to All Saints.

Libby Bracken

### **ALTAR GUILD NEWS**

The Altar Guild is very grateful to everyone who helped make Holy Week so meaningful and memorable. A special thanks goes to our members who helped strip the altar (and then put it all back together again!): Robyn Enright, Eleanor Lilly, Lisa Penhallegon, and Lisa Scott. We also thank Father Paul, Father Will, and Ram, for their amazing support and encouragement. As we continue to celebrate the Easter season, our paraments will be the liturgical color of white, which symbolizes gladness, purity, light, and the joy of Christ.

Patti Poppell

## **BOOK CLUB NEWS**

The All Saints Book Club will meet on Wednesday May 8th at 11:50 am in the Parish Hall. The book to be discussed is "A Gentleman in Moscow" by Amor Towles. The Wall Street Journal described this award winning 2016 novel of historic fiction thus, "The novel buzzes with the energy of numerous adventures, love affairs, [and] twists of fate." "A transporting novel about a man who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel." "He can't leave his hotel. You won't want to."

Here is the preview available online: In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.

We hope you will join us May 8th for what should be a lively discussion of this award winning fiction. Feel free to bring guests and your bag lunch. Beverages will be provided.

## **SENIOR AWARD AND COURTYARD CELEBRATION**

Congratulations to our graduating Seniors:

Woodberry Forest School:

Parker Watt (Stanford University)

Brookwood School:

Reid Myers (University of St. Andrews - Scotland)

Bridger Middleton

(University of St. Andrews -Scotland)

Raleigh Rollins (University of Georgia)

Jack Moreton (University of Mississippi)

Peyton Middleton (Auburn University)

Crichton Bryan (Auburn University)

Sewanee:

Mary Elizabeth Benton

Florida State University:

Mary Katherine Moreton

University of Mississippi:

Anna Kelly

Please join us on Sunday, May 12th for a special service of Morning Prayer honoring mothers, graduating seniors and choristers. The service will be followed by a courtyard reception.

## **OFFICE CLOSING**

The parish office will be closed on Monday, May 27 in observance of Memorial Day.

## **CHOIR SCHEDULE**

Adult Choir - May 5th

St. David's Choir - May 12 (Mother's Day)

Adult Choir - May 19 and 26.

Margit Miller

## **USHER SCHEDULE**

May 5                      Holy Communion                      10:30 a.m.

*The Third Sunday of Easter*

James Tyson

Charlie Whitney

May 12                      Morning Prayer                      10:30 a.m.

*The Fourth Sunday of Easter*

Warren Bicknell

Mother's Day

John Brinson

May 19                      Holy Communion                      10:30 a.m.

*The Fifth Sunday of Easter*

Bob Balfour

Vestry Meeting

John Carico

May 26                      Holy Communion                      10:30 a.m.

*The Sixth Sunday of Easter*

Claud Davis

Rogations Sunday

Walker Davis

**TRANSITIONS:**

**Happy Birthday in May to:**

Ford Faulk	5-2-98
Samuel Harrison Watts	5-8-04
Taylor Hill Middleton	5-10-04
Natalie Paige Moreton	5-11-99
Eliza Fontaine Miller	5-15-03
Ella Simmons	5-18-01
Ella Claire Thomas	5-19-08
Christopher C. Watt	5-27-99
Samuel Bruhn	5-28-01

**Happy Birthday in June to:**

John Brigham Daniel	6-1-07
Emmett Clark Overton Griffith	6-6-12
Robert Amos Rollins	6-11-11
Peggy Boltja	6-13-05
Will Bracken	6-18-10
Jack Anthony Hodges	6-19-03
Claire Louise Hodges	6-23-01