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DIOCESAN CIRCULAR – July 2011

Beryl Anne Shier

14 May 1953 - 6 June 2011 Church of S. Peter & S. Paul, East Burnaby, BC

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

It seems to me, that as we all die, the time to die for a practising Christian like Beryl is during this time in the Christian Year. Why you may well ask?

The Christian Year, which begins on Advent Sunday, four weeks before Christmas, follows the life of Christ in less than 6 months and culminates with His Death and Resurrection. The Fifty Days after Easter show us the Risen Christ leading up to the Ascension, and yesterday the Day of Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In that period each year, we see the meaning of the HOPE we have in Jesus. The crowning event in the Christian Year has to be Easter. The tomb is empty! He is risen; He is risen indeed, alleluia. Hope abounds!

One of my favourite Easter passages is of the two disciples walking to Emmaus. They meet up with Jesus, although they do not know it is He, on

the way, and when they arrive at their destination, they talk Him into joining them for a meal. When the bread comes He breaks it and they instantly know that it is the Lord. They hurry back to Jerusalem to the other disciples and tell them they have seen the risen Lord. As they walk, one mentions to the other, "did not our hearts burn as He opened up to us the Scriptures?" Remember, that would be the Old Testament. But we have the New Testament as well. We have so much more that can help us understand the life, death, resurrection and Ascension of our Blessed Lord.

That story and the other stories in the Scriptures about the Risen Jesus proclaim the Hope we have in Him. Then we celebrated Ascension Day just a few days before Beryl died. What a glorious event! Heaven is opened to us. Jesus has gone before us to prepare a place for us!

It is almost perfect, the perfect time to die! Hope abounds. We are people of the Promise of Christ. There is more to life than many people can see. Death is not just the end to a life! There is much more to life than death! "For those who die in Christ's grace it is a participation in the death of the Lord, so that they can share in his Resurrection." [CCC 1006]

"Death is transformed by Christ. Jesus, the Son of God, also himself suffered the death that is part of the human condition." [CCC 1009]

As St. Theresa of Avila said, "I want to see God, and in order to see Him, I must die".



For the Christian then, death is not to be feared. Indeed, St. Paul said in Philippians, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ" [Philippians 1:23]. But as we all know, we do not get to know the hour and the day of that departure. For some it is at a very young age, for others later, and for still others after attaining a great age. I wonder what things we might change in our lives if we did know when we would die.

On the other hand, I believe it is better not to know. Yet death comes as a shock to those who are left.

I do not think many of us where prepared for the news of Beryl's death. It came as a shock to us all. Father Michael, Aksinia and Thomas did not have much time to prepare for the death of wife and mother. Our hearts and prayers go out to them today and have done so since the news came to us.

Beryl was the ideal clergy wife. She was the Martha to all the Mary's that we find in the world. Mary's roll at the feet of Jesus may be better than that of Martha, and we realize that Jesus is the Word of life, but at the same time, we all need to eat. Even Jesus fed the 5,000. It will be so odd to go to the Hall and not find her in the kitchen ensuring that we are well fed. I am sure that clergy wives receive an extra diadem in their crown when they get to Heaven.

Foremost, they have to put up with the eccentric nature of clergy. We are all a little nuts, you know. Living in the Rectory or even one's own home is like living in an ecclesiastical goldfish bowl. One is constantly on show. Everyone seems to be watching you. When they phone or drop in they expect to find the home in order – neat as a pin – and the Rector immediately available.

And now....

As St. Paul says in Romans, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we are saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes in what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

Preached at Beryl's Burial/Requiem Father Donald L. Malins

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Joan de Catanzaro

November 30, 1921 – May 9, 2011

"Let not your heart be troubled ... I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14, 1a, 2b).



Is there anything in the mind of the average first-world person today that is at one and the same time so very certain, but yet at the same time so very full of uncertainty, as is death? In making that comment, it must be acknowledged that the "average" western person today is not a church-goer. Indeed, we are now living in a time where perhaps the majority of people in our society have never even heard of the message of eternal life, the life beyond the grave that was won for us by the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And, by the way, we find ourselves in Eastertide, which explains the choice of bulletin cover, portraying our Risen Lord in His encounter with two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. If one can choose the timing of one's own death, Eastertide is a splendid time.

For the aforementioned "average" western person who may not even have heard of the Life, Death and Resurrection of our Lord, death to him or her is

as unavoidable as taxes, and therefore very certain indeed. However, perhaps with a popularly prevailing life view that is based entirely on our human species being just the pinnacle of millions of years of chance biological mutation, there is at the very best a consummately vague uncertainty; and at the very worst for the most

hardened, a dreadful finality. The most hardened being those who hold to a position that would make mankind just another biological entity with no special characteristics other than that we are perhaps just slightly more complex blobs of protoplasm than that of our lower mammalian cousins, and when we die, we, like they, just rot away.

I suspect, though, that even most unchurched people feel something inside of them that tells them that there is something more to our make-up than just carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, calcium and phosphorous, along with some 54 other elements in tiny percentages, arranged more complexly than they are in other life forms. Perhaps the average person has spent little time contemplating humanity's unique capacity for complex rational thought - which we do not share with any other living thing; that human history is, without any interruption, unbroken proof that part of our most basic make-up is that of spiritual thirst; that even without any "coaching" all human societies have much or even all of what we would call the Moral Law imprinted on them; that we do long to know what happens after death. Even without thinking much about these things, many people suspect that we are more than just a purely biological *thing*, and that there is something after death.

According to various surveys conducted from time to time by reputable (sic) magazines, a significant majority of our population professes belief in God. However, one must question whether most of those being canvassed were simply giving that answer in an attempt to bring the survey to a rapid conclusion, as their lack of attendance at services of faith, and their lack of any particular theology (knowledge of God) betrays their profession of belief in the Almighty. How can one claim to believe in something about which they know nothing? Such surveys always make me think of a few things. One is C. S. Lewis' observation in *God in the Dock*, a collection of essays on theology and ethics, in which he is commenting on the mindset that holds that "a certain amount of 'religion' is desirable, but one mustn't carry it too far." Lewis condemns such a lukewarm approach by stating, "One must keep on pointing out that Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important." And thinking of that statement of his, I am always further prompted to wonder how those who attempt a "certain amount of religion" approach the day of their death.

"Let not your heart be troubled ... I go to prepare a place for you."

Joan – born in Espanola, but who spent many of her younger years in Iroquois Falls. For those unfamiliar with Canadian geography outside of the swath of heavily populated areas close to the American border, Iroquois Falls is just barely south of the 49th parallel, making it, in terms of latitude, south of Vancouver – except that it is in Ontario, some 500 miles north of Toronto. As it is not far from Timmins, where I lived in my last two years of high school as a member of an OPP officer's family, and whose next-door girlfriend took violin lessons in Iroquois Falls, Joan and I would occasionally reminisce about life in black fly country.

For those of you who have read Joan's biography of her husband, our first Canadian bishop, Carmino, or Bruno, as so many knew him, you will know that the girl from way up north met her husband to be at the University of Toronto – which helps to explain how in the world she ended up in the typically adventurous life of a clergy wife. Of course for us, Joan, having been the wife of our first bishop, was our first "mother".

And how we do miss her. At the less well-attended weekday services – and Joan was always there for every service, uncharacteristically for most Anglicans sitting at the front of the church – her thorough knowledge of ritual has left a hole. Which is to say, with her gone, some people are still uncertain as to when they should sit, stand or kneel, and not just at weekday services but also during special services.

Her presence was anything but overbearing; indeed, she occupied the position of the rector's wife perfectly – never too involved to be resented, neither so un-involved that people would grumble. When she first met my wife, she passed along that wisdom most graciously. She was also always the first to welcome newcomers or visitors at refreshment time following services – another hole that took some time to fill.

Joan also reminded me of parts of another of C. S. Lewis' books – *The Great Divorce*, wherein he muses, in an apparent dreamlike state, having fallen asleep at his desk, about life after death. The premise of the whole book is that of the divorce between heaven and hell, which divorce is absolute and complete, and that for any individual soul, there must be a *complete* abandonment of worldliness, or the beatific vision will not be ours. In

his preface, Lewis concludes by emphasizing that his book is a fantasy, even beyond speculation, stating, "The last thing I wish is to arouse factual curiosity about the details of the after-world."

Still, the book posits what I suspect is an overwhelming truth: if we hold to anything that diverts us from God, we shall miss the mark. Lewis paints several character portraits of how any of us might wish to cling to things that had become precious to us in this life; of how our intellects, by using the example of a bishop, may reach a pseudo-heightened level of sophistication that prevents our embracing the elegantly simple fact of God; of how self-righteousness over episodes in our earthly life, not necessarily misplaced, but nonetheless obstacles to eternal bliss, will cloud our vision; and perhaps most tellingly, how our earth-bound idea of a loving God has become so twisted that we can't see beyond the selfishness of our current understanding; – and so on. All must be forgiven – no grudges will be permitted; God must be the first object of our love – only then will we understand what love truly is; transient, earthly pleasures and distractions, in whatever form, must be left behind completely.

On the cover page, Lewis quotes George Macdonald, "No, there is no escape. There is no heaven with a little of hell in it – no plan to retain this or that of the devil in our hearts or our pockets. Out Satan must go, every hair and feather."

Purely fantasy? I suspect not, at least not in terms of the primary idea that in heaven there can be no vestige whatever of hell, which is anything that might separate us from God. What is much more speculative in the book is the means by which the final purging of sentiments, vices, fleshly desires and so on will be effected. Lewis paints an image of a bus, taking souls, apparently unaware that they are dead, to the heavenly realm where each of these souls takes on a ghostly vagueness. Each ghost is then met by a much more substantial Spirit, a dead family member or acquaintance, full of light and love, who attempts to guide his or her ghost to the putting off of earthly desires, to become a more solid Spirit themselves before they might see God. A sad eventuality in Lewis' portrayal is that many of the ghosts are not prepared to leave behind every "hair and feather," and so, one by one, they trudge back to the bus, to be returned to a far less happy place. Of course, I would prefer to think that Carmino would be Joan's spirit guide.

And what in Joan made me think of this book? For almost the entire 34 years that I knew her, I can't recall how many times we would be at gatherings where members of other parishes whom we had not seen for months or even years would be present, and the inevitable friendly greetings would start, Joan would say, "I am not a huggy person". As much as she practised hidden virtues of which many were unaware (driving blind people to appointments and many other acts of unsolicited kindness), her somewhat earnest distance characterized Joan in other ways also.

Fast forward to the past couple of years when Joan had fallen mostly silent in terms of vocal capacity. Several months ago, she reached out and took my hand, squeezing it, and touching it to her face. I am not a weepy person myself, but that reduced me to barely controlled tears. That was repeated often over the ensuing months for me, her family and her caregivers, even until the weekend, when I prayed the prayers for the dying and anointed Joan while she was not conscious. As soon as I had completed the prayers, she awoke, and with tenderness in her eyes, took my hand.

Now I am not suggesting that Joan's previous distance was necessarily an obstacle in terms of her being welcomed fully into the nearer Presence; however, the tenderness of the past several months did make me think of how perhaps her preparation, her purging, her leaving behind every "hair and feather" that would separate us from God, had already begun. The Great Divorce from earthly attachments and habits.

Rest 🙀 eternal grant unto her, O Lord. And may light perpetual shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Preached at Joan's Burial/Requiem +Carl Reid

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DIOCESAN NOTES AND NEWS

• Beryl Shier, wife of our Father Michael Shier of the Greater Vancouver parishes, died suddenly on June 6. May she rest in peace. Fr Don Malins' sermon is printed in this issue, as is my sermon at Joan de Catanzaro's Requiem – per the request of readers. • The Diocesan Office is moving on July 14!! Our least runs out at the end of July; and, as our "partners" in the lease (our long time auditors, Shepherd Moffatt Accountants) are not renewing, we must find new quarters. We have already "claimed" the new space, and although we will not be moving there until the middle of July, our mailbox is already active:

70 Bentley Avenue, Suite 102 Ottawa ON K2E 6T8 Telephone (613-233-3915) and email (anglicancatholic@bellnet.ca) remain the same.

• Canada Post (not that they're functioning as I write this) has changed the Hayman's address yet again. Please update your directory for Fr Doug, Carolyn and family to:

44 Sophia Street,

Johnstown ON K0E 1T1

(This removes the RR#3, and the Prescott address, giving full geographical acknowledgement to the existence of Johnstown as being separate from Prescott)

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Jesus Wept: When Faith and Depression Meet Crafton, Barbara C.; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2009 160 p. \$23.95 (Cdn)



Apart from titles suggested by episcopal sources, the Reviewer generally employs two criteria in determining what books he decides to discuss in the Circular: intrinsic interest, and the practical application from which his readership might potentially benefit.

With this in mind, July's selection requires some explanation. Stated simply, HJS has long entertained a fascination with the tension inherent between religion and mental health.

As an undergraduate at a Catholic institution, he and three like-minded students felt inclined to volunteer for community service in a Catholic/Christian context. Providentially, the Misericordia General Hospital in Philadelphia was seeking

qualified individuals to assist the professional staff in implementing an innovative day programme.

With the co-operation of our college administration, we were allowed "free" Thursdays (i.e., no classes) to assist at the hospital (conducted by the Religious Sisters of Mercy). HJS and his co-workers (duly sworn to confidentiality) observed closed-circuit group therapy sessions, attended staff conferences, met with the Director (Dr. Howard Morrison) to assess cases of particular interest, accompanied patients on day outings, and were generally introduced to the many complex aspects of mental health care in an urban setting.

After several weeks, however, the Reviewer became aware of a truly alarming phenomenon: *The overwhelming majority of patients suffering from extreme clinical depression described themselves as either devoutly religious or as products of a strict religious upbringing!*

Moreover, in analyzing case histories with Dr. Morrison, it became evident that many people had sought guidance from clergy prior to seeking medical assistance – often with woefully unsatisfactory results. To make matters even worse, it also became apparent that a significant number of patients were encumbered by feelings of profound religious guilt induced by insensitive clerics.

Hence, the appearance of Jesus Wept in this month's issue.

At the outset, a caveat is definitely in order: the author is an Episcopalian priest-ess. But this consideration in no way detracts from the validity of her compelling story.

By virtue of their vocation, clergy are expected to assume others' burdens. Depending on circumstances, these can, indeed, be stressful: dealing with a parishioner's terminal illness, an accidental death, spousal abuse etc. Obviously, prolonged involvement with such situations can assume a psychological/psychiatric dimension.

Jesus Wept is an autobiographical case history in which the author/subject recounts how her severe depression

gradually developed *without her realization*. As the narrative progresses, it becomes evident that she was actually "too successful" in her chosen ministry. Overwork and its attendant demands – physical, emotional, spiritual – inevitably exacted their toll.

Either failing or unable to discern that increased fatigue, lassitude, spiritual malaise and guilt over neglected duties were symptomatic of a disorder requiring medical attention, Ms. Crafton was given an abrupt lesson in reality when she literally collapsed before her congregation one Sunday morning.

Admitted to hospital, she was informed that not only was she suffering from clinical depression, but she had also developed a previously undiagnosed heart condition. As she describes her troubled state, she "... laboured under the crushing weight of unacknowledged despair".

Unfortunately, the author found that few colleagues in clergy, much less laity, were comfortable discussing mental illness. Some parties were even scandalized that an ordained minister, supposed to counsel others, should have recourse to a "shrink".

As might be expected, this highly readable confessional volume traces Ms. Crafton's gradual understanding of her personal limitations and how these can be overcome through a combination of realistically defined expectations, disciplined spirituality (she has derived considerable inspiration from both Dante and St. John of the Cross) and a carefully supervised medical regimen.

In the course of her experience, "Rev." Crafton has evolved a system of silent prayer to alleviate depression consisting of four steps, ranging from breath control and "holy relaxation" to meditation on a particular "holy word or phrase" of the practitioner's own device. *The Reviewer found nothing overly unique in this approach*.

If *Jesus Wept* offers anything of substance to prospective readers (apart from a not entirely uninteresting account of personal re-invention), it is this: Christians should pray for their clergy and their emotional health, as well as for all professionals who care for individuals suffering from clinical depression and related illnesses of the mind.

NOTE

Although dated, Carroll A. Wise's *Psychiatry and the Bible* (New York: Harper 1956), with sections devoted to such topics as "Guilt and forgiveness in Scripture", can provide further insight for those readers interested in the relationship between religious and mental wellness.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Stauffenberg, OSG Cathedral of the Annunciation, Ottawa

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Having Trouble Communicating with Your Teenagers?

Methods of communication are changing with dizzying rapidity, along with the language that accompanies these innovative ways of "staying in touch". Yes, I have even had some suggest to me that which I suspect would be viewed as heretical by most ACCC members – we need to alter the language of our services, as young people today speak what is quickly becoming a foreign language to the older generations. Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman, the creator of the "Zits" comic strip have captured one aspect of this most succinctly! +CR





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At the moment, it's still June, and the last day but one of the school year here. At Our Lady of Grace, the little Catholic school two of my grandchildren attend, every scrap of time is being used to polish up tomorrow's closing program, a musical drama called *Tarcisius, Boy Hero for Christ*. For it, the children have had to learn to sing, among other things, the Latin *Sanctus* and *Pater noster*, which somehow they've managed. Otherwise, it's a fairly simple play about early Christian martyrs. It's also unapologetically Catholic.

Switch to San Antonio, Texas, where a self-styled "agnostic" couple have convinced the courts that including an "invocation" and "benediction", of whatever sort, in a public school's graduation program amounts to the establishment of religion. It is apparently still okay for the valedictorian to attribute his or her academic success to God, but not okay to say "Let us pray." I expect the enrollment at Our Lady of the Atonement in San Antonio to grow exponentially. Of course, parents may prefer the establishment of agnosticism as the nation's faith, rather than subject their children to the unapologetically Catholic.

All of this brings to mind an evening a couple of weeks ago. Fr. Joe Hattie O.M.I., an older RC priest, was up from Halifax to do some "in-service" with the staff at Our Lady of Grace. I missed the afternoon presentation on Reconciliation (he prefers old-fashioned Confession), but was very glad not to miss the evening session on relativism. I gathered that his primary area of expertise over many years has been marriage prep, but his discussion of Genesis 3 went far beyond that, to what ails our present society. Eve's problem, he said, was that she believed the serpent, rather than God. Even more troubling for the fate of her progeny, she took it upon herself to decide who to listen to, rather than double-checking the serpent's version with God. And so it's been ever since.

Maybe you heard in the news that Mike Huckabee had withdrawn from the ranks of Republican presidential candidates. The CBC report was that Huckabee "claimed" he had taken the matter to God. How presumptuous of him! What made him think he has a pipeline to God? Anyway, doesn't he know that if there were a God, He would want Mike to grow up and start making decisions for himself? Just like Eve?

I'd actually never equated the national CBC with the serpent in the Garden (don't ask me why not), but it's apparent enough how the serpent's lies and distortions continue to be spread. And don't think for a moment that rational debate is going to cut the mustard. I always assumed that if, for example, the case against abortion were presented using nothing but scientific and medical evidence (which I believe it can be), the anti-lifers might be convinced. How naïve of me! I forgot that we live in the Age of Relativism, in which even sound science is dismissed as mere opinion -- as was vividly demonstrated at this year's local Campaign for Life dinner in a video of a debate at a university. Did you know that an opinion is valid simply because it is the "right" person's (or my) opinion, and that it needs no verification?

We're not dealing with mere ignorance of the Catholic faith -- which is real enough -- but with the dearly-held belief that what's good or true in my mind is good or true for me, regardless of what anyone else, even God, may have to say about it. I'll allow you your own opinion so long as you don't insist that what you believe is *objectively* good and true -- and so long as you keep it to yourself. Never mind the logical inconsistencies.

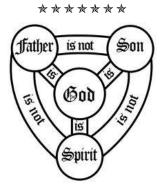
In the play, Tarcisius doesn't make it to the beasts in the arena. He is stoned to death by his heedless pagan schoolmates, who excuse themselves on the grounds that Tarcisius is a Christian. Unlike Tarcisius, none of us is likely to be thrown to the beasts for being Christian, and we probably won't be stoned by anyone, either, at least not in Canada. But did you ever consider the consequences for *not* standing up to relativism?

A glance at the Church Calendar for July is a vivid reminder of Christian witness over the centuries: the martyrdoms of Saints Peter and Paul, of St Thomas More, of St Vladimir and St Margaret of Antioch, of the Apostle James, and then the public proclamation of the Gospel by St Elisabeth of Portugal, St Benedict, St Bonaventure, and St Vincent de Paul, among many others. All of them rejected relativism. All of them turned to God to receive His version (can there be any other version?) of what is good and true. "And we, shall we be faithless? Shall hearts fail, heads hang down? Shall we evade the conflict, and cast away our crown?"

For St. Vladimir's feast day, July 15, a teacake from the Ukraine I found in my *Please to the Table* Russian cookbook:

MEDIVNIK (HONEY CAKE)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Dissolve 3 Tbsp instant coffee in 1/4 cup hot water. Separate 4 eggs. Beat the yolks with 1 cup sugar until pale yellow; continue to beat as you add 1 cup vegetable oil, 1 cup liquid honey, and the coffee. Sift together 4 cups unbleached flour, 2-1/2 tsp baking powder, 1 tsp baking soda, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 tsp ground cardamom (make sure it's fresh!), 1/4 tsp ground cloves, and a pinch of salt. Beat slowly into the egg yolk mixture, just till smooth. Wash and dry the beaters, then beat the egg whites to soft peaks. Fold a third into the batter, then the remainder. Then fold in the zest of half an orange, 1/2 cup sultanas, 1/2 cup chopped dried apricots, and 1/2 cup chopped walnuts. Pour batter into two buttered 9x5x3-inch loaf pans. Bake about 1-1/4 hours. Let cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans. Finish cooling on a rack, then wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 24 hours before serving.



TRINITY 1

"This is the Law: when a man dieth in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean." Numbers xix.14,15

In today's Gospel we hear our Lord's parable of The Rich Man [called 'Dives' in Latin] and Lazarus. Dives lived however he wished. He was rich. He ate well. He didn't keep the Law. We know he didn't keep The Law of Moses because Lazarus laid at his gate begging, sick, full of sores, desiring only to eat of crumbs which fell from Dives' table. He did not live according to the Law, which would not permit such a condition to exist in Israel. The Law assumed that we *are* our brother's keeper.

We know that he didn't keep the Law because when he died, he was buried, and went to a place of torment. Lazarus, who had been so neglected in this life, was taken into Abraham's bosom; he it was that now had good things, and, Dives evil things.

When we come forward to this present era of the Holy Spirit, we learn even more about spiritual things. We learn about how God cares for mankind, and how the Church is to be the image of that love and caring. We are to cease living for ourselves, and to live for those over whom we have been assigned responsibility, and under those who have been given responsibility for us. It is not acceptable that we decide how the church shall exist, not even our own little parish. Our parishes, our families, our clergy, our bishops, and we ourselves are all under God, and under the authority which he shares through our various callings and stations of life.

"The Law", wrote St. Paul, "is spiritual." And so our text, taken from the Law of Moses, teaches us concerning this "spiritual death", and certain facts in connection with it. In the verse or two following the verses of our text, reference is made to those "slain in the open field"; and, in our text, to those dying "in a tent". As there are animals which we call "wild", not belonging to any house or farm, but wandering in the woods and open country, so there are baptized persons who have cast off all connection with the congregations of God's people, despising what they call "organized religion". Self-dependent, self-shepherded, they are the ready prey of the spiritual lion or bear; attacked by the activities and minions of Satan they lie "slain in the open field".

Others there are who, though not self-banished wanderers, but professing to remain in the fold, do nevertheless die to the life of Christ, and live only to the flesh and to the world, "dead while they live" as Paul writes to Timothy (I Tim. v.6). These are the "nobody tells *me* what to do!" people. They do not receive ministered grace; rather, they criticize those who minister it. These persons may be spoken of as "dying in the tent". And

we have read from the Law that if a person died in a tent, everything in that tent was to be accounted unclean unless, *unless* it was effectually covered up in a vessel.

Here is a forcible reminder of an awful fact, too commonly overlooked or denied, namely, the deadly *infection* of sin; the fact that the brethren and companions of the spiritually dead may, even unconsciously, suffer grievous harm by their association with them. But it is shown, on the other hand, that there is a *protection* from such harm which God will recognize, an effectual covering. We are not here to speak to the spiritually dead, whether "in the tent" or in the "open field"; we are here to speak to the living. We are here to speak of the covering of protection which God has provided for his people.

People may rail against "organized religion" if it pleases them to do so. And people may choose to misunderstand the teachings of Scripture which are written for our learning, to give us courage and hope. But the Church is a place of spiritual order, and the world is a place of spiritual chaos. Here by faith there *can* be certainty; there, no certainty exists, indeed, no certainty is permitted! Let us then briefly examine the spiritual coverings of protection which the Lord has provided to the inheritors of eternal life. Paul gives a very sketchy outline of all this when he writes to the Corinthian Church (I Cor xi.3), "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God". What endless nonsense is spoken of about this passage; what horrible misuse has been made of it over centuries. The Apostle is not talking about who is "boss", but he speaks of the spiritual covering of protection which is afforded to his people. It is organized much more widely than his sketchy outline shows. Parents are the spiritual covering of protection for their children; husbands for their wives; the Sacred Ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons for the faithful. In the undivided Western Church, the Papal Office was the covering within the Church for the Bishops, to be the servant of and safeguard the doctrine and ministry of the Church. The Anglican Church has entered into very serious trouble because that central authority was removed. It is not a ministry of dictatorship, the Papal office [Papa=father]; rather, it is to be the servant and guarantor that the doctrines, traditions and ministry of the Church which all the Bishops have agreed to cannot be changed willynilly by any Diocesan Bishop that decides to do so. That is what has been happening in Anglican circles; synods and Bishops have changed the faith at will, with no one to impose discipline or punishment for so doing. Our Bishops in the Traditional Anglican Communion are asking that this covering and protection for their Episcopal office be restored; I trust that you will listen to them as they seek to unify us with the ancient Church of the West, to the protection of both the Bishops and those under them. The Bishops are God's planned covering for the priests and deacons, and to be Fathers-in-God to the whole Church within their jurisdiction; and the Deacons the front-line defence for the Lay People. The liturgical symbol of the Deacon's office is seen in his reading of the Gospel at Mass and his assisting in the distribution of the Holy Communion. He is enjoined in the Praver Book to teach the faith, and "to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the Parish; to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the parishioners or others." Uphold your bishops, priests and deacons in *prayer*, that they may not fall into sin; in *financial ways*, that they be not tempted to sell the Sacraments or leave their office; in *friendship*, that they be not lonely; in *love*, so they might loving be; in *discipline*, so they wander not from the path; in *obedience and quietness*, that being your minister be not too hard a burden for them to bear. Remember your own proper place in God's plan of spiritual covering and protection. Husbands, be priest in your own house, leading in prayer and understanding of the scriptures; wives, be icons of the Church, obedient to those set in spiritual places over you; and, with your husbands, care for the spiritual as well as the physical and emotional well-being of your children. Children, obey your parents in all godly admonitions, as you would obey God.

Then shall the holy Church be girt about and protected in such ways that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her, neither shall her children fall by the wayside. Love, obedience, discipline is the way of Christ, not gossip, self-centeredness and pride! Thus we invite all (of you) who are truly repentant of their sins, in love and charity with their neighbours, and intent on leading the new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways to take this holy sacrament to their strengthening, and feed on him in their heart with thanksgiving. Amen.

> Preached at All Saints, Calgary AB, June 26th (Trinity 1) 2011 Fr Michael Birch

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