

~ The Epistle ~

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST
THE ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CANADA • TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION
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THE MOST REVEREND SHANE B. JANZEN, ARCHBISHOP AND RECTOR



"I therefore invite you, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditation upon God's holy Word."

(BCP, p. 612)

LENT provides each of us an opportunity to reflect on our lives and on God's place in it. We are exhorted to examine our thoughts, words, and deeds in light of His commandments; and to undergo a change of heart and mind that our old lives may be transformed into the likeness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the Lenten Exhortation, the Prayer Book reminds us that, "in the primitive Church it was the custom to observe with great devotion the days of our Lord's Passion and Resurrection, and to prepare for the same by a season of penitence and fasting." As Anglican Catholics we continue this observance and devotion in preparation for the great Paschal Feast of Easter.

Before experiencing the joy of Easter, however, we must first go through Lent -- a season of preparation, purification, and fasting: Preparation by tuning our minds and turning our hearts to God in prayer and in meditation upon His holy word. Purification by cleansing our hearts and our souls through examining our consciences in light of the Gospel; and then to repent of our sins (availing ourselves of the Sacrament of Penance, whereby God provides us with His saving grace and the sure knowledge of His pardon and mercy). In fasting, bodily and spiritual, whereby we rid ourselves of all that is sinful, superficial, petty and mortal in our lives -- the unwanted 'fat' of our spiritual selves.

During the forty days of Lent, the faithful here at St. John's will be afforded the opportunity to renew their spiritual life through attendance at Mass on Sundays, and during the week on Thursdays and Holy Days, as well as Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 7:00 pm. In addition, the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) is available by appointment, and at scheduled times in Holy Week. On Saturday, March 14th we will hold our annual Lenten Quiet Day, providing a time for quiet reflection, prayer and meditation in preparation for Passiontide and Holy Week.

The Thursday morning Study Group classes on the Holy Scriptures will be suspended during Lent so that we may return to our study of the traditional Anglican expression of the Christian Faith -- new comers are always welcome.

Each of us must find our own way to prepare for the coming celebration of Easter. Just don't let this holy Season of Lent slip by without making some concerted effort to prepare yourself for the Paschal Feast. Our lives, as with the seasons of the liturgical year, are always that of preparation and fulfillment. If we are to enter into the wedding banquet of the Lamb, then we must ensure that we are clothed with the wedding garment -- a life attuned to God and filled with the presence of Christ.

Finally, don't forget to practice acts of charity and self-discipline, in honour of our Lord's great act of love and self-denial on the Cross. 'Give up' something in order to 'give of' yourself to God and others. Do all as true acts of penitence and discipline; remembering that your Father in heaven sees what you do 'in secret' and will reward you, both in this life and in the life to come. I pray you a blessed and holy Lent.

+Shane B. Janzen

Carter v. Canada (Attorney General)
Supreme Court of Canada
Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia

IN *Carter v. Canada (Attorney General)* the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's laws that prohibit assisting someone to commit suicide. The Supreme Court ruled on February 6, 2015 that the prohibition against physician-assisted suicide is unconstitutional in certain circumstances, and has given Parliament twelve months to regulate when and how assisted suicide can be legally practised.

As the definition of "physician-assisted death" includes the provision or administration of medication that intentionally brings about a person's death, both assisted suicide (provision of lethal drugs) and euthanasia (administration of lethal drugs) will be legal for people who meet certain criteria.

The person must be "a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition," according to the Court.

As Christians, we believe that life is a gift from God which should be respected and protected through all its stages. Each human life has inherent worth, regardless of age or physical, mental or other disabilities. Care for the sick and the elderly is part of God's call for Christians. We must not abandon those in need, and we must not deliberately bring about their death, even for compassionate reasons.

We affirm the sanctity of human life. The Supreme Court also affirms the sanctity of human life, calling it "one of our most important fundamental societal values." On this basis the Supreme Court had previously upheld the ban on assisted suicide and euthanasia.

However in this controversial decision sadly the Court has overturned its previous decision and has now ruled that in some circumstances the autonomy of the individual supersedes the interest of society in having a legal system that unambiguously affirms the sanctity of human life. A threshold has been crossed and in some cases assisted suicide and

euthanasia will be condoned. Canadian law formerly adhered to the biblical principle, "Thou shalt not murder." This has changed.

The decision refers to physicians assisting in someone's death by providing medication, which suggests that both the medical profession and the health-care system will be involved. As such, it is not a private act between two people, but a public act regulated by a process designed and monitored by the government, and possibly publicly funded. It concerns us all.

The Court noted the concerns of medical professionals, who requested that any legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia must include a robust protection of their freedom of conscience and religion. While affirming physicians' *Charter* rights of conscience and religion and stating its view that "nothing in [this decision] would compel physicians to provide assistance in dying," the Court left the specifics to legislatures, regulators and future court cases, noting that patients' rights (to access assisted death) must also be considered.

This raises the question whether physicians who refuse to euthanize their patients may be compelled to refer their patients to a doctor willing to do so, as proposed by draft regulations in Ontario and Saskatchewan. Many Christians consider a referral for abortion or voluntary euthanasia to be impermissible participation in the act of killing itself.

The Court has given Parliament twelve months to draft new legislation in keeping with the decision, which acknowledges that the "risks inherent in physician-assisted suicide" call for "a carefully-designed system imposing stringent limits that are scrupulously monitored and enforced." Parliament will now need to define the terms "grievous" and "irremediable," and put in place safeguards to ensure the process is not abused, that the vulnerable are protected, and that the newfound "right" is only exercised by those who truly consent, free of cognitive impairment, judgment-clouding depression or coercion and manipulation, and after being fully informed of their diagnosis, prognosis and available treatment options including palliative care and dignity therapy.

Medical technology's ability to prolong life complicates questions regarding when and how life should end. Many people do not

want machines to keep them alive, particularly if they are in pain; real problems arise, supporting life. At the same time, we must distinguish between a patient refusing medical treatment when death is inevitable and choosing death when it is not.

When someone struggling with a terminal or debilitating illness asks to die, the questions which face us as family members and friends, as neighbours and society, include: "What is the merciful response?" "What does compassion require of us?" Such suffering is real; the desire to end the pain and suffering of terminally ill patients may be understandable. There is indeed a growing tendency to promote "mercy killing" as a solution to pain and suffering resulting from age, illness, or mental or physical disabilities.

Since all human lives are precious, euthanasia or assisted suicide is never a right or acceptable solution. God has created medical practices that treat extremely effectively pain and other distressing symptoms of terminal illness. Palliative care and emotional support are necessary and appropriate responses to those who suffer from terminal illnesses and/or are near death.

The Supreme Court of Canada in its ruling in the *Carter* case went beyond the issues of terminal illness and those near death. The Court ruled that the "enduring and intolerable suffering" that would confer the right to assisted suicide is not limited to physical pain, but includes psychological pain. Furthermore, the Court did not define "suffering" but ruled that the threshold of when "enduring and intolerable suffering" warrants death is solely up to the determination of the individual. The Court declared that it is enough that the condition of the individual be incurable, it need not be terminal in order for the individual to exercise his or her right to an assisted death. Which begs the question, what is there to prevent a person suffering from chronic depression who sees their condition as "enduring and intolerable" to demand their right to die (by means of assisted suicide)? There is nothing in the Supreme Court ruling which would prevent or ensure that the 'right to die' will not be expanded or abused. In Belgium, assisted suicide is now provided to children on demand – what makes a future Canada any different?

Furthermore, as Christians and Canadians, we should be concerned about the expansion of this so-called 'right to die'. For some day, someone is going to bring a case before the courts arguing that a child with an incurable disease who is in 'enduring and intolerable' pain should have the right to assisted suicide. In light of the *Carter* case, can we really say that the courts are going to rule that such children must endure years of pain and suffering until they are of legal age to consent to their death? What about the mentally incompetent who suffer unbearably? What about those suffering from dementia or the permanently disabled who are mentally incompetent? We may well ask ourselves whether under this new regime, where the 'right to life' does not mean a 'duty to live', it is enough simply for a person to want to die in order for them to exercise their right to an assisted death?

So what can we do? As Christians we have a message of hope and compassion. In all we do we must act in ways that bring Christ's compassion into the lives of suffering people. We must communicate our compassion to those who suffer and find their lives to be meaningless so they would rather die than live. Furthermore, we must be prepared to offer more than words in response to those who say that they have no hope in life and wish to die. We cannot proclaim the truth of God's law without bringing Christ's compassion and live in a real way. If we truly reflect Christ in our lives we will take action to show that God suffers with the suffering and offers hope to those who despair. We must equip ourselves to minister to the disabled, the elderly and those who are terminally ill in informal ways and more structured ways, especially when opportunities arise to participate in hospice care or palliative care.

As Christians, as family members, we need to reassure older members of our families, and those who are disabled mentally or physically, of their value and the meaning of their lives. It is important to involve them in the regular routine of family life. Try as much as possible to alleviate any loneliness they may feel. It is important that we don't make any member of our family (or indeed among our friends and fellow parishioners) feel burdensome or forgotten.

Church Outreach & Growth

Pray for those who feel life is not worth living and for those who are suffering. We need to remind them and ourselves of God's love for each person, of the value God places on each person, and of God's compassion for the suffering. We should also find ways to express love to seniors and the disabled. In our own Cathedral Parish, Father Jack Archbold, together with other members of our congregation, hold services on Saturday at the All Care Home in Sidney, spending time in prayer, worship and fellowship with the residents. In all of this it is important that we understand and provide good teaching about death and dying, illness and disability, within a Christian faith context and worldview; maintaining and defending the sanctify of life and the dignity of every person.

With a federal election due this year, it is important that Christians across our country urge Parliament to move quickly to design and implement stringent safeguards to ensure the practice of physician-assisted death is rare, and to ensure that good quality palliative care is available to all who require it. As Christians and as Canadians, we need to ensure that those suffering are comforted and cared for, and that no one will come to the place where they would be so desperate as to choose to die.

I would urge you to write to your Member of Parliament, as well as to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice. Raise with them your concerns about the impact of this ruling on our society, especially upon the vulnerable – the aged, the disabled, the mentally challenged. Let them know the importance of legislating proper safeguards to ensure that the practice of assisted suicide is regulated, and that good quality palliative care is available to those suffering from chronic or terminal illness. Press Parliamentarians to use the 'notwithstanding clause' in the *Constitution*, which allows the will of the Canadian electorate to prevail over the rulings of an appointed nine member court.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendents may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice, and cleaving to Him; for that means life to you and length of days.
Deuteronomy 30:19,20.

With acknowledgement to materials and resources provided by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (of which the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada is an affiliate member).

SURVEYS of Canadians over the last several years have repeatedly indicated that in matters of religion, men and women of all ages and income brackets continue to look for answers with respect to three fundamental issues: God, self, and society. Close to 90 percent of Canadians still identify themselves as men and women of faith. Yet on a national average, only 25 percent attend Church weekly -- a number which is expected to drop in half over the next 20 years. The rites of passage continue to be important to the vast majority of Canadian adults -- baptism, marriage, funerals -- and church continues to play an important role in these rites of passage but increasingly on a marginalized, consumer basis.

While the so-called 'younger generation' in our society does not in large numbers frequent weekly services, they do reflect upon matters of faith. We know from surveys that Canadians, young and old, are increasingly fascinated with supernatural ideas, yet often don't associate that interest with church. Men and women are seeking for God but are not sure where He is to be found or how to know Him. With respect to self, many Canadians are searching for personal meaning, hope, and fulfillment, but again frequently don't associate those kinds of quest with what the Church offers. And Canadians of all ages and backgrounds value nothing more highly than relationships. However, once again these same men and women do not associate enhanced social life -- from personal relationships to global concerns -- with what the Church has to offer and say. Why?

Part of the answer lies in our culture. The sharp decline in church attendance since the 1940s is directly tied to the inclination among Canadians to adopt a belief here and a practice there; to want religion to speak to some areas of their lives but not others; to resurface for the rites of passage -- baptisms, weddings and funerals -- all the while not really coming to church and yet not really leaving either. What has been called 'cafeteria Christianity' -- where one goes along the religious smorgasbord picking and choosing what one wants depending upon one's current needs or wants, leaving the rest behind, has become

an all too familiar trend. Yet this trend is not restricted to matters of religion; it is happening in every sphere of Canadian life. Selective consumption, pluralism, individualism, and relativism are being felt everywhere -- just ask retailers, educators, the media, or politicians. But this is only part of the answer, or problem if you will. The other part lies in ourselves as Church.

Both empirical and anecdotal evidence shows clearly that the image of the isolated individual who finds God or a church on his or her own is a figment of the imagination. The dominant sources of religious commitment and involvement remain *relational* -- individuals are introduced to God and Church by others. God Himself deigned to come down from His throne in heaven to become man and to walk among us, introducing Himself, telling others about Himself, and involving Himself personally in the lives of His people. We, as Christ's disciples in this moment in time, need to model this divine initiative, and to build credible relationships with people outside the church; inviting them to join us in worship and fellowship; and to talk with them about *their* faith, *their* concerns, and *their* needs and questions -- and through these relationships introduce them to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, in the community of believers, the Church.

It is a simple fact that churches 'grow their own' through members sharing faith with their children and grandchildren, with their neighbours and co-workers, and with the person who walks in on a Sunday morning and sits nervously in the back pew. Individually and collectively we need to be a place in which the authentic Christian faith is transmitted and Christ-centred relationships are fostered.

Research tells us that most Canadians are not looking for churches -- or even religion, at least in terms of 'organized religion'. But people do express spiritual and supernatural interests, have personal desires and needs, and want to experience enhanced interpersonal lives. And therein lies our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity.

The formula for successful Christian outreach and parish growth is simple but demanding: Know your Faith; pray with faith; be confident in that faith, and then reach out with faith.

WE are soon going to share in the Passover, and although we still do so only in a symbolic way, the symbolism already has more clarity than it possessed in former times because, under the law, the Passover was, if I may dare to say so, only a symbol of a symbol. Before long, however, when the Word drinks the new wine with us in the kingdom of his Father, we shall be keeping the Passover in a yet more perfect way, and with deeper understanding. He will then reveal to us and make clear what he has so far only partially disclosed. For this wine, so familiar to us now, is eternally new. It is for us to learn what this drinking is, and for him to teach us. He has to communicate this knowledge to his disciples, because teaching is food, even for the teacher.

So let us take our part in the Passover prescribed by the law, not in a literal way, but according to the teaching of the Gospel; not in an imperfect way, but perfectly; not only for a time, but eternally. Let us regard as our home the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly one; the city glorified by angels, not the one laid waste by armies. We are not required to sacrifice young bulls or rams, beasts with horns and hoofs that are more dead than alive and devoid of feeling; but instead, let us join the choirs of angels in offering God upon his heavenly altar a sacrifice of praise. We must now pass through the first veil and approach the second, turning our eyes toward the Holy of Holies. I will say more: we must sacrifice ourselves to God, each day and in everything we do, accepting all that happens to us for the sake of the Word, imitating his passion by our sufferings, and honoring his blood by shedding our own. We must be ready to be crucified.

If you are a Simon of Cyrene, take up your cross and follow Christ. If you are crucified beside him like one of the thieves, now, like the good thief, acknowledge your God. For your sake, and because of your sin, Christ himself was regarded as a sinner; for his sake, therefore, you must cease to sin. Worship him who was hung on the cross because of you, even if you are hanging there yourself. Derive some benefit from the very shame; purchase salvation with your death. Enter paradise with Jesus, and discover how far you have fallen. Contemplate the glories there, and leave the other scoffing thief to die outside in his blasphemy.

If you are a Joseph of Arimathea, go to the one who ordered his crucifixion, and ask for Christ's body. Make your own the expiation for the sins of the whole world. If you are a Nicodemus, like the man who worshipped God by night, bring spices and prepare Christ's body for burial. If you are one of the Marys, or Salome, or Joanna, weep in the early morning. Be the first to see the stone rolled back, and even the angels perhaps, and Jesus himself.

From a homily by Saint Gregory Nazianzen.

MY LENTEN RULE OF LIFE

The Season of Lent affords Christians an opportunity to renew their faith and devotional life. You are invited to fill out this Lenten Rule of Life, sign it, and keep it close at hand as a guide for your Lenten observance this year. This Lenten Rule of Life is your free offering of devotion, self-denial, and sacrificial giving that you may continue to grow in grace and Christian discipline, to the glory of God and the deepening of your own life of faith, prayer and service.

I UNDERTAKE, AS MY LENTEN RULE, THE FOLLOWING:

1. I will set aside the following time daily for Prayer and Meditation:

2. I will attend the following Service(s) in addition to my usual Sunday worship:

3. I will read a chapter or portion of the Bible daily or weekly:

4. I will read at least one religious or devotional book during Lent, other than the Bible:

5. I will serve others by undertaking the following volunteer activities:

6. I will give up the following food(s), activities, or pleasures during Lent:

7. My Lenten fast will take the following form in the meals I eat during this Season:

[The Lenten Fast is generally observed by simple, traditionally meatless, meals; the exact nature of the fast is up to you. Medical diets must be observed; nutritional needs should not be ignored. Sundays in Lent are not days of fasting and abstinence.]

8. My Lenten Offerings I shall devote to:

ALL THIS I UNDERTAKE TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND BY HIS GRACE.

~ ~ ~ **CATHEDRAL CALENDAR** ~ ~ ~

- February 18 ASH WEDNESDAY
Blessing & Distribution of Ashes and Holy Communion ~ 7:30 & 9:30 am
- February 19 *Lenten Feria ~ 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.
- February 22 **FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**
Mattins 9:15 am & Sung Mass 10:00 am
- February 24 **FEAST OF SAINT MATTHIAS ~ Mass 5:30 pm**
- February 26 *Lenten Feria ~ 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.
- February 27 *Stations of the Cross ~ 7:00 pm*
- March 1 **SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**
Mattins 9:15 am & Sung Mass 10:00 am
- March 5 *Lenten Feria ~ 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.
- March 6 *Stations of the Cross ~ 7:00 pm*
- March 8 **THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT**
Mattins 9:15 am & Sung Mass 10:00 am
- March 12 *Lenten Feria ~ 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.
- March 13 *Stations of the Cross ~ 7:00 pm*
- March 14 **LENTEN QUIET DAY ~ 9:30 am to 3:30 pm**
- March 15 **LENT IV: MOTHERING SUNDAY 'Laetare Sunday'**
Mattins 9:15 am & Sung Mass 10:00 am
- March 17 **FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK ~ Mass 5:30 pm**
- March 18 *Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm*
- March 19 **FEAST OF SAINT JOSEPH ~ Mass 9:30 am**
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.
- March 20 *Stations of the Cross ~ 7:00 pm*
- March 22 **LENT V: PASSION SUNDAY**
Mattins 9:15 am & Sung Mass 10:00 am
- March 25 **FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION ~ Mass 9:30 am**

March 26 *Lenten Feria ~ 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.

March 27 *Stations of the Cross ~ 7:00 pm*

March 29 *PALM SUNDAY ~ Beginning of Holy Week*
Mattins 9:15 am
Blessing of Palms, Procession & High Mass 10:00 am

April 2 *MAUNDY THURSDAY*
Mass of the Last Supper ~ 7:00 pm

April 3 *GOOD FRIDAY*
Mattins & The Litany ~ 9:30 am
Liturgy of the Passion ~ 2:30 pm
Evensong & Stations of the Cross ~ 4:00 pm

April 4 *HOLY SATURDAY*
Mattins & Ante-Communion ~ 9:30 am
Preparation of the Church for Easter ~ 10:30 am
Easter Vigil & First Mass of Easter ~ 9:00 pm

April 5 *EASTER DAY*
Mattins ~ 9:15 am
High Mass ~ 10:00 am
Parish Easter Pot-Luck Luncheon ~ 11:30 am

April 12 *OCTAVE DAY OF EASTER (LOW SUNDAY)*
Mattins ~ 9:15 am
Sung Mass ~ 10:00 am

April 16 *Feria in Eastertide ~ 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.

April 19 *EASTER II: 'GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY'*
Mattins ~ 9:15 am
Sung Mass ~ 10:00 am

April 23 *Feast of St. George of England ~ Mass 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.

April 24 *FEAST OF SAINT MARK ~ Mass 9:30 am*

April 26 *THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER*
Mattins ~ 9:15 am
Sung Mass ~ 10:00 am

April 30 *Feria in Eastertide ~ 9:30 am*
Study Group at 10:30 am in Church Hall.

May 1 *FEAST OF ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES ~ Mass 9:30 am*