

The Messenger...

November, 2017

A publication of St. James on the Lake Episcopal Church

An orthodox parish that welcomes everyone!

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FR. MELTON'S MYSTICAL MUSINGS:



Will My Pet Go To Heaven?

Animals, especially our pets, are very special and blessed gifts of God's creation. I've been an animal lover my whole life having grown up with dogs and horses. When I was 16, I wanted to be a veterinarian, and visited the vet school at Texas A&M with a 4-H club group. But I wasn't good enough in science and math.

As many of you know, Karen and I took Riley, our beloved Maltese, to be euthanized October 19, the result of two years of increased suffering with Cushing's disease. It was one of the worst days of our lives. When Riley's ashes come back, Karen and I will offer some prayers as we commend Riley to his maker and offer profound thanks for this wonderful little dog and all that he has meant to our lives. Saying goodbye to a family dog who has been such a treasured friend for almost 15 years is difficult to say the least. The grief is hard work, just as it is when a human loved one dies. Such is the price of love, which wounds us deeply in times of separation, especially the permanent loss felt at death.

Over the course of my priesthood, I've been asked by dozens of children whose pet died, "Will my pet go to heaven?" Many adults also wonder the same thing. This controversial question, debated by Christians for centuries, is still relevant to folks of all ages. The church has never made a definitive statement on this as far as I know. So I hope that what follows will help others when the time comes that a

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beloved pet dies. It's a slightly updated version of an article I wrote for the Christian Formation Magazine's Q&A section in the Diocese of Dallas almost 30 years ago.

Admittedly, my initial response to the question, "Will my pet go to heaven?" is simply that I really don't know for sure! Since the Bible doesn't specifically address it, at least in an overt way, we have to draw inferences based on what it says about other things. So here goes:

The Lord promises that nothing can compare to what awaits us in heaven. We can't even begin to imagine the wonder and magnificence of it all (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17). God is there, loving us, taking away all of our hurts and sadness, and filling us with joy and peace. There the Lord heals, transforms, perfects and completes his people with his merciful love. Clearly Jesus loves animals and all the rest of creation as much as he loves us humans as we're told in John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." The salvation of the ENTIRE world (and all that is in it) is at stake from what Jesus says. So it seems strangely incomplete for animals to be left out of God's Kingdom. Dare we believe that his grace will exclude our beloved pets, who bring such joy and love into our lives? Here they teach us love for our own sake, but in heaven we learn love for God's sake.

I'm not aware of anything in the Bible that specifically states that animals will not or cannot enjoy eternal life in heaven, but there are a few texts that imply that they might. I only have room to cite a couple. Psalm 36:6 says "Your justice is like the great deep; you save both man and beasts, O Lord." Biblical images of life after life-after-death, include many animal images, the most famous being Isaiah 11:6-9 and the peaceful coexistence of wolf/lamb, leopard/goat, calf/lion, cow/bear, children/snakes, where the animals belong in the "new earth" as much as the trees, rivers and mountains do in Revelation 21-22.

It's commonly objected that animals have no souls and so cannot go to heaven. But some theologians believe that animals do indeed possess souls, as perhaps do plants, though not rational souls. Only human beings, created in the Image of God, possess rational souls, with a capacity for abstract thought and the ability to reason from premise to conclusion. These powers are present in animals, if at all, only to a very limited degree. Animals act by instinct whereas people are capable of making free and conscious decisions, both virtuous and sinful.

Others object that Christ came to save us, not animals. Truthfully, Jesus came to save the whole world (as previously mentioned in John 3:16-17), and that happens through the salvation of humankind, the crown of God's creation (Psalm 8:5), which has fallen from its intended state of grace. This objection presupposes that animals need salvation. If it's true that they don't have rational souls and cannot make moral choices, but rather act on instinct, then they are incapable of sin. They do, however, require redemption in that they live under the God-given dominion of humanity, which is itself sinful and fallen through our choice to rebel against God.

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We humans are designed to be caretakers and mediators of Creation. As such, our own salvation involves also the reconciliation and transfiguration of the whole animate and inanimate created order around us...i.e. its deliverance "from the bondage of corruption" and entry "into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (see Romans 8:21). In the "new earth" of the Age to Come, there is surely a place not only for humans, but also animals. In and through our redeemed humanity, I believe they too will share in God's re-creation, and so perhaps will rocks, trees, plants, fire and water (see Romans 8:18-25)! It's at least possible methinks...even likely! But we can only know these things by faith, not certainty, on this side of the thin veil. Still, it is in faith that I look forward to seeing sweet Riley again some day!

Fr. Randy+

EPISCO-QUIZ!!

Get a piece of paper and jot down the question numbers, then see how much you really know about the Episcopal Church. This is the first of a series over the next few months. We'll start with some easy ones! The answers can be found on the last page of the newsletter. Don't cheat!

I. More Multiple Choice

1. Which TWO are NOT one of the 4 identifying marks of the Church:

- a) Catholic b) Holy c) Apostolic
- d) Reformed e) One f). Prosperous

2. The name "Episcopal" comes from:

- a) A special method of building beautiful church buildings
- b) An orderly pattern of living as a disciple of Christ.
- c) The Greek word for "Bishop" or "overseer"
- d) The Ten Commandments

3. The Episcopal form of Church government has:

- a) All-powerful leaders who are not elected.
- b) Weak leaders who are only figureheads.
- c) No leaders.
- d) Leaders with moderate power who are elected.

4. The two Great sacraments are:

- a) Baptism and Holy Matrimony
- b) Baptism and Holy Eucharist
- c) Holy Eucharist and Confirmation
- d) Ordination and Installation

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5. The Sacrament where water is put on a person is:

- a) Ordination b) Holy Matrimony
- c) Baptism d) Confirmation

6. The water stands for:

- a) The pilgrims crossing the ocean to get to America
- b) Christ cleansing us from sin when we believe in Him
- c) Christ calling us to be fishers of men
- d) Christ giving a thirsty person a drink of water.

7. Circle the following that ARE sacraments:

- a) Holy Matrimony b) Holy Orders
- c) Holy Roller d) Holy Communion
- e) Holy Cow f) Holy Unction

8. Circle the 4 things that the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral states will be the minimal requirements necessary for the Episcopal Church to be in full communion with another denomination:

- a) Eucharist and Baptism as essential to salvation
- b) Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of our Faith
- c) Same sex Marriage recognized and blessed
- d) Historic Apostolic Succession of Bishops
- e) Anyone who desires may receive Holy Communion
- f) The Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God
- g) Options to Bread and Wine are allowed to accommodate special needs

9. Jesus said that when we partake of the Holy Eucharist we are partaking of:

- a) His Body and His Spirit
- b) His Body and His Blood
- c) The Fruits of the Spirit
- d) The Gifts of the Spirit
- 3) The Passover Lamb

10. The main job of a Priest is:

- a) Teach Sunday School, type Sunday bulletins and take up the offering
- b) Preach, administer sacraments, bless and forgive in God's name.
- c) Play the organ and direct the choir
- d) Manage the church's money and take care of the building
- e) Grow the Church numerically and financially

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11. The main job of the Bishop is:

- a) Writing books, telling jokes and giving speeches at church meetings
- b) Directing pageants, religious television programs and radio broadcasts
- c) Supervising the churches and mission units within his diocese
- d) Telling about the history and traditions of the Episcopal Church

12. Each parish is governed by:

- a) The rector
- b) The Sunday School Committee
- c. The Vestry
- d) The Rector and Vestry
- e) The Board of Governors

13. The members of the vestry are:

- a) Appointed by the Rector
- b) Elected by and from the congregation
- c) Appointed by the Bishop
- d) Elected by the highest financial givers

14. Before a baby is baptized, the parents must:

- a) Dress it in waterproof clothes
- b) Promise to teach them God's Word and God's ways
- c) Promise to have them confirmed at the age of 12.
- d) Give it a flu shot

15. Before a person is ready to partake in Holy Communion, they should

- a) Be able to drive a car
- b) Be able to get a job
- c. Be baptized
- d) Be able to vote
- e) Be able to understand what communion means

16. Someone who is sent to work for Christ in a place of special need is called a:

- a) Prophet
- b) Trustee
- c) Missionary
- d) Curate

17. Number the following in order of institutional authority (highest being #1)

- _____ PARISH / MISSION
- _____ GENERAL CONVENTION
- _____ DIOCESE

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How'd ya do?

What is "The Faith" of the Episcopal Church?

The Faith taught by the Episcopal Church is none other than the Christian Faith. No more and no less. Nothing taught by Anglicans is peculiar to Anglicanism. All teachings are those of the ancient and undivided Church. Christians doctrine (i.e. teaching), as taught by Anglicans, must conform to three criteria: Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. No doctrine can be taught which is not at the same time scriptural, traditional, and reasonable. Episcopalians must therefore know the Bible, and the traditions and history of the Church. Especially important to Episcopalians is the Bible. No Episcopal priest may teach unbiblical doctrine, and no Episcopalian is required to believe anything except what is contained in Holy Scripture. *(Borrowed from St. George's in Carmichael, California via the Anglican Digest)*

TIME CHANGE November 4: Fall Back one hour!

Turn your clock back one hour on Saturday night, November 4! If you forget, you'll get to church an hour early!! I love the fall change because we gain an hour of sleep!! Those of us who are delegates to the Diocesan Convention that weekend are definitely happy about this!



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FR. RANDY'S RAVE REVIEWS

(Books to Buy, Beg or Borrow)

SAME KIND OF DIFFERENT AS ME:

By Ron Hall, Thomas Nelson Press © 2008
[5 STARS: True Story that you can't put down!]

I'm repeating my review of this book from a couple of months ago since the movie is now out in the theaters. Karen and I saw the movie today (October 30) in Gun Barrel City and we both highly recommend it. Based on a true story, it's not only inspirational but thought provoking. Take some tissues!

Back to the book...my two older sons recommended this book to me 9 years ago. I was totally engrossed because, like me, one of the main characters grew up in the DFW area and had relatives in East Texas. He attended East Texas State University (my alma mater) because it was the cheapest college in Texas at the time. Then he transferred to TCU so he could meet some pretty, rich girls. I never had that luxury, but I did just fine at ETSU because that's where I met my wife! Anyway, the other character is a black man from Louisiana who was the son of a sharecropper and describes his life as modern day slavery.

The lives of these two men are eventually brought together by a remarkable woman. The story of the breakdown of racist stereotypes begins and a lifelong friendship is developed. Having lived through much of the racism in this area from the 50's onward, it was an eye opener to see the elements of racism that we sometimes are blind to. Seeing this from two very divergent perspectives was especially helpful, and seeing how those who perspectives can come together and actually create a loving bond was inspirational.

I remember staying up all night until I finished the book because I couldn't put it down. The last few chapters of the book were so emotionally moving (and draining) that I had to stop reading several times because my eyes were filled with tears and I couldn't see the pages.

This is a true story, very inspirational, and a must read. It will give you lots to think about, especially for those of you raised in the south, and you won't want the book to end! Don't forget to catch the movie as well!

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THE DAVE TEST:

A Raw Look at Real Faith in Hard Times

By The Rev. Frederick W. Schmidt, Abingdon Press, 2013

(5 STARS: Honest Authenticity is a Gift)

THE DAVE TEST is written from the human heart of love and experience based on a journey taken by two brothers, one an episcopal priest and one a physician. The wisdom learned is passed along in a very engaging manner filled with heartwarming stories that will encourage and challenge anyone who may be facing what Dave faced, or what Fred faced in being there with and for Dave.

Having grown up in a household where several sick and elderly relatives were cared for till the end of their life, and later being involved in this kind of ministry as a nursing home administrator prior to seminary, and then spending a great deal of my 34+ years as an ordained pastor ministering to the dying, I resonated with the truth in this book from beginning to end. Fred pays homage to his brother Dave in a way that both honors his courage and memory while helping others learn from his experience.

The book speaks of the painful transitions of life that lead toward the fearful reality of death in honest, candid and authentic terms. It speaks of how to be with people in such vulnerable circumstances when they are traveling a journey filled with sadness, unfulfilled dreams and no small amount of fear and trepidation about the unknown future. One learns of the value of humor and normalcy in the midst of somberness, and how to be with someone who is struggling with isolation and loneliness. Fred doesn't mince words when it comes to distinguishing what is helpful and unhelpful in what we say to a person who is suffering from a terrible terminal disease, thanks to Dave's transparency with his brother.

Fred makes clear that the desire to fix, cure, solve or offer explanations of difficult life transitions is unhelpful. Instead, developing a deep sense of trust that facilitates a relationship that helps the hurting person to process their situation, feelings, beliefs, etc, requires the helper to lean into our own mortality and explore the same issues as the one we're trying to assist. Talking about the future together, making plans, asking the right questions, the hard questions, and exploring answers that are not easy to find, are so important to a person who is undergoing such incredible stress and difficulty.

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THE DAVE TEST will challenge your thinking about your own mortality, your views of God, your ability to be truly authentic, real, honest, candid, vulnerable and caring in a way that is truly helpful to a friend or loved one who is filled with fear, anxiety, heartache or hopelessness. The book will show you how to be there for them in a way that's not only meaningful to them, but you as well.

All Saints' Sunday Celebration

Sunday, November 5 (Honoring our Dead who Live in Christ!)

All Saints' Day is November 1, and falls on a Wednesday this year. This celebration is so important that the Church allows it to be transferred to the Sunday after. It is one of four liturgical feast days highlighted for Holy Baptism since we're made saints and children of God through baptism. The Greek word "Hagios" means both "saint" and "holy" signifying one who is set aside for the service of God's glory. The Communion of Saints is the great celebration of God's holy Church here in this life, in our death and in the greater life. What better time to remember those who have died in the Faith. For us Christians, death means that life is changed, not ended!

November 1, All Saints, is traditionally when we commemorate capital "S" saints of the Church calendar, and November 2 (All Souls) is when we remember lesser known lower case "s" saints who make up the bulk of the church and are no less holy than the better known Saints. On All Saints' Sunday, we pray for all of the vast Communion of Saints, living and dead, for all are alive in Jesus.

Fr. Randy's Institution as Rector

Fr. Randy will be officially instituted as Rector of St. James on Wednesday, November 29 at 6 PM. Bishop Sumner will be here to preside. Fr. Randy's son, Fr. Jonathan Melton, will be the preacher. This is a great celebration for both the priest and the parish as we pray for our new ministry together and the bishop blesses our pastoral relationship. Feel free to invite friends from other churches. It is a community-wide celebration when a new minister of the gospel arrives to share in the life of that community as a whole as well as the local parish.

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Teen Ministry Off to Great Start!

Quality is far more important than quantity, and this is a truly special bunch of teenagers. Two are parishioners and two are from outside the parish. Thanks to Carol Mayo and Karen Melton for providing adult leadership for the group. Carol led the teens in baking communion bread that we have enjoyed in our worship the past several weeks. Their natural creativity contributes to this sacred ministry of bread making offered for the benefit of the whole church. Karen helped them initiate a project to create some inspirational posters for November Kairos. Fr. Randy has been doing some spiritual Q&A with the group. He will soon lead them in a study of Genesis 1-11, tapping into their theological inquisitiveness and desire to explore how the Christian Faith addresses contemporary issues that interest them, such as creation vs. evolution, scriptural contradictions, archeological findings, environmental issues, etc. This is a fun group of very sharp, young people who are interested in faith issues. We have high expectations of growing in our Christian faith over the course of our time together. **Food and prayer are essential components of our fellowship together. If anyone would like to help in providing an occasional meal, please let Carol know.**

UPCOMING EVENTS TO CALENDAR!

Kairos Prison Weekend (November 8-12@Beto Prison)

Confirmation (Discipleship Formation) Classes, Sundays, 6 - 8 pm, Nov. 5, 19, 26

Teen Youth Ministry, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 6-7:30 pm, Nov. 1 & 15

Noon Healing Eucharist each Wednesday (except November 15)

Sunday Morning Healing Prayers (8:30-8:45 am Sundays)

Praise and Worship, 2nd Sunday, 6:00 pm, CANCELED for KAIROS

Evening Prayer & Dinner Fellowship, Last Wednesday, 6 p.m.

Daughters of the King, 2nd Sunday, 4:30 pm CANCELED FOR KAIROS

Men's Group Reunion, Tuesday, 7 a.m.

Women's Group Reunion, Tuesday, 9 a.m. (1st and 3rd)

Weekly Prayer Group, Tuesdays, 4:00 pm

Women's Bible Study, 2nd and 4th Monday, 6:00 pm

Men's Bible Study, Thursdays, 6:00 pm

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*****Noon Wednesday Eucharist CANCELED on Nov. 15 as Fr. Randy drives to Gonzales to prepare for the movers arrival Nov. 16.**

Office Hours & Contact Information

Monday: Fr. Randy's Day off
Tuesday: 9:30 am - 1:30 pm
Wednesday: 9:30 am - 1:30 pm
Thursday: 9:30 am - 1:30 pm
Friday: 9:30 am - 1:30 pm
Saturday: Office Closed

NOTE: There may be exceptions to those posted hours due to outside appointments, errands or pastoral needs. If you don't see Fr. Randy's car, it's because he parks in the back near the shade. Appointments may always be made at other times if necessary.

FR. RANDY'S EMAIL: soulman4jc@gmail.com

FR. RANDY'S CELL: (830) 481-8290

EPISCO-QUIZ ANSWERS!

Answers to More Multiple Choice:

1-d,f, 2-c, 3-d, 4-b, 5-c, 6-b, 7-a,b,d,f, 8-a,b,d,f, 9-b, 10-b, 11-c, 12-d, 13-b, 14-b, 15-c, 16-c, 17-3,1,2

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS...

3	Clayton Sawyers	18	Craig Wilson
6	Mary Ann Gowan	29	Carolyn Fuston
14	Rita Brezniak		

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES ...

23 Don and Mary Lynn Loomis

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NOVEMBER MEMORIAL...

4	Larry Trotter	19	Bertha Clendenen Pipes
7	Kenneth McDaniel	22	Hal Collins
8	Mary Jane Richardson		Jerry Hess
10	Everett Ricks	25	Irene McGlothlin
11	Robert Clements	26	Fletcher Horton
	Jacob Antoine	28	Becky Margaritis
17	Fred Fuston	29	Marlin Richardson
18	Bill Brimer		Jackie Pittman

SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRIES NOVEMBER...

Remember, it will be up to you to get a replacement if you cannot fulfill your obligation.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Altar Guild</i>	<i>Acolyte</i>	<i>Crucifer</i>	<i>Lesson Reader</i>	<i>Chalice</i>	<i>Coffee Hour</i>	<i>Sunday School</i>	<i>Fred</i>
5	Jenkins	Nancy Willene	Carol M	Paul	Sunny	Paul Gail	Gail Deanna Dawn	<i>Young kids:</i> Gail <i>Older kids:</i> Bob	Vicki
12	Tissy Gail	Sharon Denise	Kelly	Bill	Marian	Bill Paul	Nancy Marilyn Shirley	<i>Young kids:</i> Kelley <i>Older kids:</i> In church	Phil
19	Millers	Sharon Denise	Phil	Terry	Tina	Gail Sharon	Susan D Patsy Rita F	<i>Young kids:</i> Martha <i>Older kids:</i> Linda	Paul
26	Hortons	Shirley Susan H	Terry	Tina	Ray	Sharon Gail	Carol M Annette Dot	<i>Young kids:</i> Sharon <i>Older kids:</i> In church	Gary

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