



# Evangelion

Monthly Newsletter of St. Luke Anglican Catholic Church, Augusta, Georgia

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## A Time of Remembrance: Giving Thanks with the Living & the Departed The Rev. Fr. Daniel S. Trout

When the calendar turns to November, most of us look with expectation to the immanent delights of the “holiday season.” This month, particularly, we equate with Thanksgiving, knowing that soon after will follow Advent and then Christmas. But November also begins with the sobering realities of All Saints’ and All Souls.’ Suddenly, we pause ourselves when we are reminded that before our joyful celebrations, we are first given this time of remembrance. Do these chapters of our annual journey contradict each other? No. However, considered together, they should help us recognize that, on the one hand, any of our earthly festivities pale in comparison with heaven’s celebrations; and, on the other hand, that not everyone who once shared in our seasonal events is present like they used to be. Thus, the lessons of All Saints’ and All Souls.’ Any **authentic** Christian feast **must** be part memorial and part celebration.

For those of us who have said goodbye to loved ones, especially in recent years, we might just wonder, “And what is the **state** of that Christian friend/family member of mine? What does their soul now experience?” This is a question about what we commonly call the “intermediate state” or “interim state.” Since the earliest days of our Faith, Christians have certainly believed in it, although many have resisted over-characterizing it in order to distinguish it from the definitive fates of Heaven and Hell. What is the most appropriate view for us as Orthodox Anglicans?

Article XXII of the 39 Articles might lead some Anglicans to reject the concept as heresy since it repudiates the “Romish doctrine of purgatory.” This view proposes that Anglicanism, as a Reformation church, cannot give credence to a Catholic doctrine which, by the late Middle Ages, was used to scare Christians into piety, often to mask the real intention of extracting money. Historically, it is true that the sale of indulgences helped greatly to popularize Rome’s particular doctrine of “Purgatory,” not to mention fund numerous papal building projects. **This** was the self-serving trickery that English churchmen were principally against. But, the Anglican founders never denied the existence of an “intermediate state,” nor offering prayers for the departed. Even Thomas Cranmer included in his original 1549 Book of Common Prayer a prayer for the departed in the Holy Communion service that is extant toward the end of the “Prayer for the Whole State of Christ’s Church” in our own

1928 Prayer Book: “And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to grant them continual growth in the thy love and service....” We call this the rule of “*Lex orandi, lex credendi*” (the law of praying is the law of believing). Showing our solidarity through prayer with the departed in the “intermediate state” is part of our liturgy and therefore true for us, as Traditional Anglicans. However, as was the case in the sixteenth century, we just have difficulty supporting a version of **Purgatory** predicated on the need for the Christian to make atonement for his unsatisfied sins after death. While we agree with Rome that few people are perfectly sanctified at death, Anglicans emphasize that it is only Christ who atones (on the cross). Our interim preparation before heaven, therefore, is a perfecting work, not a painful expiation. Again, our own Anglican extended H.C. rite (found in the Missal) calls this preparation “**a place of refreshment, of light, and of peace.**”

Does Scripture support our Anglican view? It would seem so. Belief in the intermediate state is based in Jewish doctrine, to which Christ Himself apparently subscribed. In His parable of Lazarus and Dives (St. Luke 16), Jesus took the Jewish concept of *sheol* and subdivided it into “Abraham’s Bosom” (for the godly) and “*Hades*” (for the ungodly). As the Apostles’ Creed teaches, Jesus entered this setting when “He descended into hell” to free these souls to join Him in Paradise. St. Peter echoes this teaching twice in his first epistle (3:19 & 4:6), describing that Jesus “preached to the dead in prison.”

As Anglicans, we believe that because of the great redemption that Jesus accomplished when He entered the spirit world (sometimes called the “harrowing of hell”) true believers need not dread entering an interim place of torment. Even to the thief on the cross—who hardly had sufficient time to make satisfaction for his sins—Christ promised His company in Paradise. The remaining witness of the New Testament echoes this heartening truth that what lies beyond for Christians is better than what we experience here. St. Paul particularly makes this implication with phrases such as: “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8) and “[I have] having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:23). Even facing judgment, St. Paul remains optimistic.

Perhaps the final word on the matter is that death does not separate us from the Church, and thus from **Christ**. We are always **His**, and never stop being a member of His Mystical Body. That is why the best description of the intermediate

state is the “Church Expectant.” It is the place where the faithful wait, but hopefully and thankfully—they are **safe**. Yes, our departed loved ones do have to give account (as we all must) for the kind of Christians they were in life, *i.e.* how well they cooperated with God’s grace and lived it. Everyone will need refinement with that. St. Paul briefly alludes to this in I Corinthians 3:13ff.: “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire...If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” God will purify and nurture out of our souls the best version of ourselves, however short we may have fallen. Interpreted thus, our Anglican understanding is that the Church Expectant is not a state that should frighten us, but one that we should welcome as that final stage wherein God will complete us with virtue and illumination.

We do have much to be thankful for this month—and many with whom to share it—perhaps more than we realized, on both accounts. Thanksgiving gives us occasion to celebrate our material abundance in the company of the living, but All Saints’ and All Souls’ likewise remind us that the **whole** Church—Militant, Expectant, and Triumphant—celebrates as **One** (Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic). This season, probably most of us have loved ones with whom we’d rather be joined at dinner than separated by death. But if we give thanks **for** them and **with** them, we will always be together...no matter the **state**.

### Wednesday Evening Prayer and Bible Study is Changing Time to 6:30.

A survey of the minor prophets will begin on Wednesday, Nov. 8.

### "What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?"

Seventeen verses in the New Testament describe Jesus as the “son of David.” But the question arises, how could Jesus be the son of David if David lived approximately 1,000 years before Jesus? The answer is that Christ (the Messiah) was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12–16). Jesus is the promised Messiah, which means He had to be of the lineage of David. Matthew 1 gives the genealogical proof that Jesus, in His humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus’

legal father. The genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus’ lineage through His mother, Mary. Jesus is a descendant of David by adoption through Joseph and by blood through Mary. “As to his earthly life [Christ Jesus] was a descendant of David” (Romans 1:3).

Primarily, the title “Son of David” is more than a statement of physical genealogy. It is a Messianic title. When people referred to Jesus as the Son of David, they meant that He was the long-awaited Deliverer, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Jesus was addressed as “Lord, thou son of David” several times by people who, by faith, were seeking mercy or healing. The woman whose daughter was being tormented by a demon (Matthew 15:22) and the two blind men by the wayside (Matthew 20:30) all cried out to the Son of David for help. The titles of honor they gave Him declared their faith in Him. Calling Him “Lord” expressed their sense of His deity, dominion, and power, and calling Him “Son of David,” expressed their faith that He was the Messiah.

The Pharisees understood exactly what the people meant when they called Jesus “Son of David.” But, unlike those who cried out in faith, the Pharisees were so blinded by their own pride that they couldn’t see what the blind beggars could see—that here was the Messiah they had supposedly been waiting for all their lives. They hated Jesus because He wouldn’t give them the honor they thought they deserved, so when they heard the people hailing Jesus as the Savior, they became enraged (Matthew 21:15) and plotted to destroy Him (Luke 19:47).

Jesus further confounded the scribes and Pharisees by asking them to explain the meaning of this very title: how could it be that the Messiah is the son of David when David himself refers to Him as “my Lord” (Mark 12:35–37; cf. Psalm 110:1)? The teachers of the Law couldn’t answer the question. Jesus thereby exposed the Jewish leaders’ ineptitude as teachers and their ignorance of what the Old Testament taught as to the true nature of the Messiah, further alienating them from Him.

Jesus’ point in asking the question of Mark 12:35 was that the Messiah is more than the physical son of David. If He is David’s Lord, He must be greater than David. As Jesus says in Revelation 22:16, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David.” That is, He is both the Creator of David and the Descendant of David. Only the Son of God made flesh could say that.