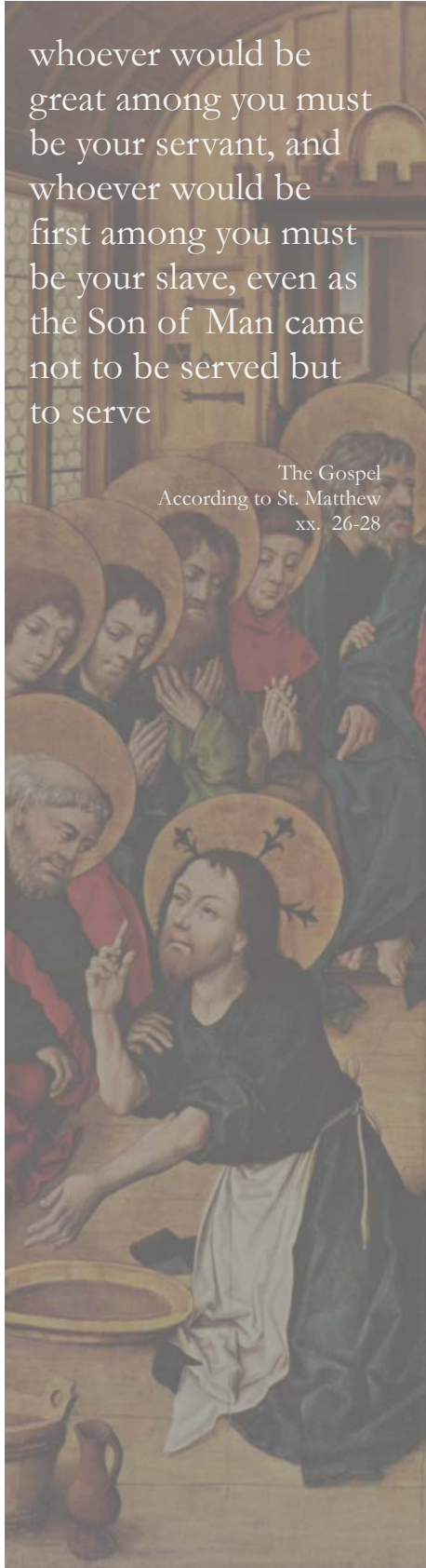


THE ORTHODOX ANGLICAN CHURCH

whoever would be
great among you must
be your servant, and
whoever would be
first among you must
be your slave, even as
the Son of Man came
not to be served but
to serve

The Gospel
According to St. Matthew
xx. 26-28



Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

At Christmas, God's people mark the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the Incarnation? The Incarnation is the taking on of human flesh by the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Incarnation is a doctrine that seems to become dearer to me each year I walk with the Lord. Rev. William S. Plumer wrote that, "When inspired men would stir up God's people to courage, constancy, humility, benevolence, adoration, and holiness, they never present old wives' fables, but the great truths of Scripture." The Incarnation is one of those great truths of Scripture.



There is a popular picture out there on social media that makes the rounds this time of year (not pictured here). It is of the baby Jesus lying in a manger. The picture itself is no great work of art, but there is a single feature of the picture that makes it thought provoking; from the manger a shadow is cast, the shadow is the shadow of a cross. In a simple way this otherwise unremarkable picture shows the truth that Jesus Christ was born for a purpose, a purpose that would take Him to the cross. He would be the perfect Lamb that would be sacrificed for our sin. He humbled himself and died for my sin. How can meditating on this truth not fill you with love and gratitude? But in the manger we see not only our Savior, but the one who sanctifies our praise and industry. He is the one that has not only made me acceptable to God, but has put my hands to work for the Kingdom, and given lasting significance to my life. In the manger, I rejoice that I have a Saviour, but also that I have someone who has put my hands to work in a meaningful commission.

May God bless you,

‡ *Thomas E. Gordon*



MAKE FULL PROOF OF THY MINISTRY

Canon Drew Darnell

Over the last several days, I have spent a considerable amount of time planning for 2018. As part of that process, I reflected on this past year, looking at what went right and what could have gone better. This is a process I repeat every year in regards to the church and my ministry. Unfortunately, I spend too much time beating myself up for what could have gone better than I do celebrating what went right.

Once again, there is a question that seems to throw the biggest punches at me. Why didn't I grow the church more this past year? This leads to additional questions. What should I have done to change things? The problem must be me, so I have to figure out what I need to fix about me, in order to help the church grow. Because, obviously that is the only thing that matters, right?



I know better. We all know better. But we still do it to ourselves despite the fact that it is the Lord who builds His church. And we end up putting so much emphasis on what we can't control that we never actually do what we can control.

“we end up putting so much emphasis on what we can't control that we never actually do what we can control..”

No matter what our ministry is, whether leading a congregation or something outside the local church, there are things directly in our control that we should focus on and do.

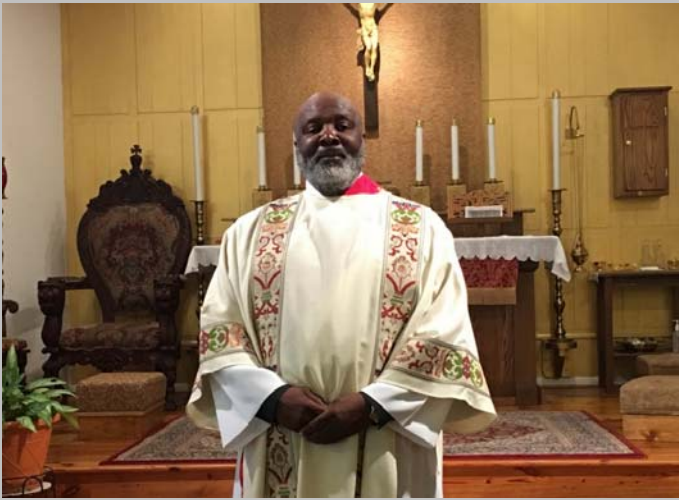
While we can't control how fast or big our churches grow, we can certainly control what we are doing to love and serve others. To paraphrase Archbishop Gordon, as long as there are people that are sick, in need of marrying, people that carry a burden that they need to confess, and people who need Christ in the Eucharist, we have plenty of work to do.

When it comes to the people that we can spiritually touch, love, and serve, the possibilities are endless. If we take the mindset of Father John Wesley and look at our world as our parish, then we are not limited in the opportunities that we have to love and serve all those around us. And that is certainly something that we can control. This is a change in approach and mindset that we all need to embrace.

“We can do the right things for the right reasons and let God take care of the results.”

By changing our perspective, we are able to focus on what is most important. We are able to do the things that we can control, all for the sake of growing God's kingdom. We can do the right things for the right reasons and let God take care of the results. Our only requirement is to be faithful to what God has called us to and put in front of us.

Sunday Next before Advent: Dr Anthony Mazak, Ordained to the Diaconate



Advent 1 : St Timothy's Anglican Church



“[Christ] came as the Physician to the spiritually sick, as the Redeemer to the captives of sin, as the Way to those who had wandered afar off, as the Life to the dead in trespasses and sins, and as Saviour to the lost.”

-John Gerhard

“The Incarnation is the medicine of the soul, undoing the Fall and bringing man to the tree of life, and the office of a priest is to administer this medicine in the sacraments.”

-Arthur Middleton

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