
St. Paul's Red Door Chronicle

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May 2011

From the Rector:

Back when I was in college, a rather famous theologian and man of letters, Stanley Hauerwas, visited campus to deliver a lecture on the intersection of religion and politics and to take part in a panel discussion with several of our professors. At one point during the panel discussion a political science professor (who had discerned what he took to be a lack of patriotism in our guest scholar) asked “am I not entitled to be proud of my country?” Hauerwas, who was known for being rather shocking, quickly replied “You know as well as I do, buddy, that pride is a sin, and it will send you straight to hell!”

There is, it seems to me, a fine line between appropriate patriotism and inordinate pride. There is a difference between a love and devotion to a national ideal which may have offered one a degree of opportunity or a certain quality of life and (as another country's national hymn puts it) “a love that asks no question”. Sadly, the former can almost imperceptibly transform into the latter, and particularly during times of either national crisis or national triumph.

I was reminded of this fine line between patriotism and jingoism after seeing the reactions to last week's news of the death of Osama bin Laden. It is difficult to comment on such a touchy subject without putting bees in a few bonnets, but I for one feel a certain conviction to highlight what I took to be a rather troubling phenomenon. It is *natural* to rejoice at the defeat of an enemy; read through the psalms sometime and you'll see them full of this very human tendency. But is rejoicing over the death of anyone—even a monster—Christian? Are joyous celebrations in the streets or gloating about some enemy's presumed “arrival in hell” ever appropriate?

My firm belief is that our natural tendency to *celebrate* something like the death of Osama bin Laden (or, for that matter, the execution of a prisoner) is a result of sin, plain and simple. This is not a popular belief in this day and age, but there it is. This is not to say that state-sanctioned violence (whether it be in international affairs or in the application of domestic law) may never be justified. That is, it seems to me, an open debate, and the Church is large enough to have within Her bounds both total pacifists and those who would affirm the state's right to apply force to one degree or another.

The moral and spiritual danger comes in when a government and a people do not exercise power with humility. A humble approach recognizes that justice may have been done, at least by our dim lights, but that one may never have moral certainty, especially in matters of life and death. A humble warrior does not lift up the head of Holofernes and a humble nation does not have punch and cake to celebrate his birthday in hell.

We live in a messy world, and it so often seems that we are obliged to choose between equally morally ambiguous courses of action in both our personal lives and our life as a commonwealth. The answer, I think, is to try our hardest (whether we be the man on the street or the President of the United States) to approach those morally ambiguous situations with humility and repentance. May God forgive us our pride, and may we learn to grow in humility and love in the midst of a wicked world.

Yours in service to the Gospel,
John+

**ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
FOR 2011/2012**

**U.T.O. INGATHERING
Sunday, May 22, 2011**

As you know, our interests are quite varied. On Sunday, May 22, at 9:30am in the Parish Hall, we will plan our “curriculum” for the 2011/2012 year. Come and be a part of our discussion. If there is something you have always wanted to learn (or teach) about, bring your ideas on May . The class is always lively, and your ideas will help it continue to be so.

**USHER SCHEDULE
May 2011**

- 1– Pam & Byron Skinner
- 8– Amy & Darren Plaster
- 15– Alan Bufford & Dwight Ford
- 22– Paul Hance & Tim Dunlap
- 29– Anthony Milam & David Wade

PARISH WORK DAY

Sunday, May 15, will be St. Paul’s annual Parish *Work Day*. Come to church in your work clothes if you wish. Bring your tools. There will be inside and outside jobs to do. A pizza lunch will be provided. Fun and work with the Parish family!

HOW ARE WE DOING?

**Average Cost Per Week
to Operate St. Paul’s: \$4590.35**

Pledge/Plate Giving Per Week:
 Mar 27-Apr 2 \$3383.66
 Apr 3-Apr 9 \$4156.00
 Apr 10-16..... \$4422.13
 Apr 17-23..... \$3739.66
 Apr 24-30..... \$4992.08

Average Giving Per Week: \$4138.71

Is your U.T.O blue box getting heavy? If “yes”, that’s a sure indication that many prayers of thanksgiving have been sent to God as we add coins to our boxes.

Perhaps you have never had a blue box. If not, there are bright blue boxes in the Narthex of the church. Who is eligible to use one? Anyone- man, woman or child. Take as many as you need. They’re free! Then begin using your box by dropping a coin into it each time you feel thankful for anything. It’s amazing how rapidly the box gains weight!

What happens to the money? Twice a year, there will be an in-gathering of all the coins (currency and checks are welcome, too) that will be sent to the Diocese of Arkansas along with in-gatherings from other parishes. In turn, the collected money will be sent to the national U.T.O. headquarters where a committee will decide which mission and ministry causes will be funded. ALL of the money collected will be used in this way.

Please mark Sunday, May 22, on your calendar, empty your blue box into the U.T.O. envelope and bring it to church.



Sunday School Celebration Sunday

Sunday School Celebration

Watch for it!

Please join us on Sunday, May 22nd, at the 10:30 service for our Sunday School celebration. The music, sermon, readings—all will be presented by Sunday School kids, and it is always a lot of fun. We will be preparing for this service each Sunday until then, so...

Parents, please bring your children to Sunday school so they will be prepared for this joyful event!