

St. Luke's Email Newsletter August 22, 2011

The red letter feast day on the church calendar this week is St. Bartholomew. He is mentioned four times in the New Testament and each time he is part of the list of the apostles (which, incidentally, do not always agree). Thus we know nothing about him except what comes through legend and the writings of the early church fathers, which is precious little. I have mentioned before that the art of "making" saints is mysterious and variegated. However one of the rules is that anyone mentioned as being part of the early group of apostles or disciples is automatically in. So Bartholomew is in. He is said to have been martyred in Armenia.



This is an old picture of the putative site of Bartholomew's martyrdom in Armenia. It was a great place of pilgrimage for the Armenian people but is now surrounded by a Turkish military base and is in ruins. The Turks committed mass genocide against the Armenians who are one of the oldest traditions of Christianity in the world. St. Bartholomew was said to have been flayed alive and in the 15th century Italian painting below, is shown with his skin wrapped around himself like a garment.



St. Bart's in New York City

To my mind there are two kinds of virtue, active and passive. Christianity gradually became more and more concerned with passive virtue, that is a listing of things you are and things you refrain from doing. This can be defined as museum-display-case Christianity. The useful sort of virtue is active virtue in which you are defined by what you do. In *Schindler's List*, the wonderful movie by Steven Spielberg in which Schindler saves a great many Jews from extinction, Schindler himself wasn't such a wonderful guy. He was not a particularly good husband or businessman but in the end what he DID, saved hundreds of lives. That is ultimately what counts. St. Bartholomew reminds me of these things. We know nothing about what he was as a person but we have reliable traditions telling us of his missionary work and his eventual martyrdom. What he DID changed life for thousands of people.

Sunday 8:00 A.M. service - I don't think the decision about the cancelling the Sunday 8:00 A.M. service is cast in stone. Worship is at the center of what we do and the time and way we worship is important to many people. I have made some propositions to the vestry about this. If you haven't expressed your opinion about this, do so. Everyone counts equally.

Please note I will be on vacation for a while. There will be a priest at the Saturday evening service and the Sunday morning service this coming weekend. Thinking of vacation, I am reminded of the theme of my sabbatical many years ago: "The Four Chief Apostles as Fisherman, Coincidence or Divine Mandate?"

HYMN BOOKS V DATA PROJECTORS

THE PROS AND CONS

THE ADVANTAGES OF HYMN BOOKS

SOMETHING TO
LOOK AT DURING
IDLE MOMENTS



PICKING UP AND
PUTTING DOWN
A BOOK IS GOOD
FOR FITNESS



YOU CAN SEE
HOW MANY VERSES
YOU STILL HAVE
TO GET THROUGH

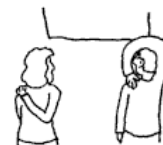


THE DISADVANTAGES OF DATA PROJECTORS

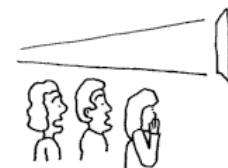
YOU ARE RELYING
ON SOMEONE ELSE
TO FIND THE
CORRECT VERSE



HANDS ARE FREE,
SO THERE IS A
TEMPTATION TO
SCRATCH OR FIDDLE



THERE IS A RISK
THAT OPERATORS WILL
USE INAPPROPRIATE
BACKGROUNDS



THIS ANALYSIS WOULD SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT HYMN BOOKS ARE BETTER