

The Rector's Message: Common Ground?

As members of our parish continue to interact and have worship and fellowship with Anglicans from other parishes and parts of the world, we quickly discover that there is a great diversity of worship styles, ways of speaking about our faith and our Church, and even emphasis on what we see as wrong with the Episcopal Church and why we chose to leave it. This has led to questions concerning what we all have in common.

In this brief article, I intend to consider what I believe to be the central element of the common ground which unites orthodox Anglicans: namely, our experience of and submission to the living God, given to us in Jesus Christ, known and revealed by the Holy Spirit in Sacraments, Scripture, and personal prayer. In this continual relationship, we experience unconditional acceptance and transformational grace, as God, with our daily assent, continues to remake us into the likeness of Christ. Those of us who are more Anglo-Catholic tend to recognize and receive this holy Presence in the Sacraments of the Church and in Liturgy. Those whose emphasis is more Evangelical tend to recognize and receive Christ in the reading and sharing with others of Holy Scripture. Those whose emphasis is more Charismatic tend to recognize and receive Christ in the interior prompting of the Holy Spirit in times of personal prayer or "contemporary worship." In each of these, the emphasis tends to find expression in the way in which the local church orders its corporate worship, such that even in the Eucharist, the central act of Christian worship, the varieties of celebration vary widely. So, these outward variations may disguise the deeper common ground. As we continue to get better acquainted with our fellow Anglicans who often seem more different from us than they may truly be, may we make the effort to seek out this common ground, ready to share and celebrate the ways in which God is continuing to make his accepting and transforming love for us manifest in the context of this deepest of all possible intimacies, honoring the gift "that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us."

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Bausch+