

THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church
Livingston, Alabama



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May 2016

This Month's Cover

Out cover painting this month is *The Visitation of Mary (Die Heimsuchung Mariens)* by Luca Giordano. Completed in 1696, it is oil on canvas, and is displayed in the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart in Stuttgart, Germany. It depicts the Visitation (May 31) of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her kinswoman Elizabeth, the mother of Saint John the Baptist (Luke 1:39ff). Both Mary and Elizabeth are pregnant, both by miraculous circumstances. Mary conceived as a virgin, and Elizabeth conceived in her old age, when she was no longer “after the way of women.” Behind each are their husbands, Saint Zachariah and Saint Joseph. It was at that occasion that Mary uttered the beautiful canticle *Magnificat* (“My soul doth magnify the Lord”), and their greeting is blessed by heaven above, symbolized by the presence of two *putti* in the clouds.

Luca Giordano (1634-1705) was an Italian painter and etcher in the Late Baroque style, who worked in Naples, Rome, Florence and Venice before spending ten years in Spain. He was born in Naples, the son of the painter Antonio Giordano. At the age of 16 he was apprenticed to José de Ribera, a noted Spanish painter who had established a studio in Naples. His style was strongly influenced by that of Ribera for the rest of his life.

Giordano was noted for the speed with which he worked. He came to be known by the epithets *Luca Fa Presto* (“Luca Works Fast”) and *Il Fulmine* (“The Thunderbolt”). Despite his speed, however, he was also noted for the careful detail of his work. He developed a unique and elaborate Baroque style, and was compared to Titian for his use of color.

In 1692 Giordano was invited by Charles II to become the

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court painter in Spain, where he painted some of his greatest masterpieces. It was there that he painted *The Visitation*. He remained in Spain for ten years until Charles' death in 1702, when he returned to Naples, where he remained until his death in 1705. During these last three years he developed a style that laid the seeds for the Rococo Period that was so popular later in the 18th century.

During his life Giordano made a large fortune, with which he was extremely generous to poor struggling artists who had talent, but had not yet gained public notice. He always maintained that a good painter was one whom the public liked, and that the public was more attracted by color than by design or style. Because of this many critics dismissed him in much the way that later critics would dismiss artists like Norman Rockwell, saying that his popular appeal denied him the right to be acknowledged a great artist. His influence was widespread, however, as a vast number of contemporary and later artists recognized Giordano's influence on their work. Today he is acknowledged as one of the great masters.

Richard R. Losch+

A Word From the Editor

It is sometimes tempting to become discouraged as we look around today and see the world crumbling into chaos. The dysfunction in our society, in our moral structure, on the political scene and even in the Church is daunting to say the least. People look at the chaos and ask, why doesn't somebody do something about it? The obvious answer, of course, is, "Why don't *you* do something about it?" And the answer to that is that resistance can be very risky. The powers of evil and disorder are strong and dangerous, and they lash out unsparingly when challenged. The usual response to chaos is to seek a strong and resolute leader who will straighten things out and put the world back into order. Frankly, that scares me. We saw this a hundred years ago in Russia, Italy, Japan and Germany. We cannot rely on human ingenuity or power to

solve our problems, because we are not sufficiently ingenious or powerful by ourselves. What we need to remember is that we already have a strong and resolute leader. He is God, and whether we like it or not he is still in charge. What most of us don't like is that he is very patient, while we want things done right now. When he does act, however, it is thorough and final. As Longfellow wrote, "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all."¹

The good news is that God often uses chaos to achieve his ends. The bad news is that he usually uses us as his agents to create order out of that chaos, and there is no guarantee of our safety in this world if we act for him. The mortar of the Church is the blood of martyrs. It is easy to become discouraged, especially if we do not have faith that there is a reason for everything, even though it is often not revealed to us. God's plan does not include the details of life, but in the overall picture there is a purpose, and it is always good.

In physics, Chaos Theory says that order will always degenerate into chaos unless there is an exterior force to sustain that order. The exterior force is God, and we are his agents. As such it is our responsibility to maintain order, using all the tools that God has given us—wisdom, courage, strength, and most important, the power of prayer and the sacraments. If we rely on our own abilities, we will sink. If we rely on God, we will be victorious over all.

Father Rick Lorch

Be Wordly Wise

Correct Mistakes

Many words have come into our language by mistake. In the King James Version, in the story of the creation of Eve, God says, "I will make an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). In 1611 this would have made perfectly good sense to the read-

¹ "Retribution", *Poetic Aphorisms*, 1846

er, who would have understood it as meaning, "I will make a helper appropriate for him." A little over a century later the use of "meet" as meaning "appropriate" was fading away, and at the same time the use of "mate" for a spouse was becoming common. The obvious result was misreading the passage as "a helpmate for him," and the word "helpmate," originally a mistake, soon embedded itself into the language as a correct and acceptable word.

A similar example of a mistake that became a word is redingote. A redingote is a man's double-breasted topcoat with a long full skirt. It is also sometimes used to mean a similar woman's coat. It was a very popular garment in Victorian England. The word is actually French (many French words have come directly into English). In the early 18th century the British developed a full-skirted coat that would not bind when the wearer was on a horse. They logically called it a riding coat. The French picked up the style and broadened the skirt, and also attempted to call it a riding coat. That phrase did not roll off the French tongue easily, however, and it came out *redingote*. Soon thereafter the British adopted the French version of the coat, and not realizing that it had once been an English word, called it a redingote.

Richard R. Losch+

Thanks, Hiram

St. James' owes a lot to Hiram Patrenos, not only for his many years of volunteering as our organist, but even more for all he does behind the scenes that we so often tend to take for granted. For years he has served on the Vestry, prepared our bulletins, organized special services, set up and prepared for our parish suppers and men's breakfasts, and overseen the maintenance of the buildings and grounds. His work in preparing everything for the Community Easter Sunrise Service, of which we were the host this year, was thorough and thoughtful, with every detail taken care of. Thank you, Hiram.

Richard R. Losch+

Sunday School Summer Recess

Our last day of Sunday School for children and adults this school year will be Sunday, May 15th. Sunday School will resume in the Fall on the first Sunday after Labor Day. Thank you to our dedicated children's teachers, Ethel Scott, Rosalie Dew, and Madelyn Mack, who give their time and energy to make Sunday School available for our children and to Fr. Losch for teaching the adult classes.

Hiram Patrenos

Forward Day by Day

The new *Forward Day by Day* daily devotional booklets for May, June and July are available in the tract rack in the parish house. In addition to the small booklets we have large print editions available. Please feel free to take either size.

Hiram Patrenos

ECW Yard Sale

The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) will have a yard sale May 12th - 14th during the Highway 11 Antique Alley Yard Sale. Everyone is encouraged to keep this in mind as they clean attics, storage buildings, and closets. Furniture is especially sought after during this sale and we will be happy to help you arrange to move any items you wish to contribute.

Hiram Patrenos

Fifth Sunday Community Service

The 5th Sunday Community Service this month will be hosted by the Livingston First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, May 29th at 11:00 a.m. Please make your plans to attend and support this Livingston tradition.

Hiram Patrenos

“Holiness is not for wimps, and the Cross is not negotiable, sweetheart, it’s a requirement.”

—Mother Angelica

Safe and Secure

Most of us are familiar with the old hymn “Leaning On the Everlasting Arms” that tells us that we are “safe and secure from all alarms.” If we go back to the Old Testament language, the words for trust and security have the same root. Remembering that in written Hebrew there are no vowels, the word most commonly used for security is *betach* (b-t-ch, בתח). The call to trust God, “O Israel, trust thou in the Lord” (Psalm 115:9) is *Israel, betach b’elohim* (ישראל בתח באלהים).

To trust in God is to be safe and secure. Faith and trust are the same thing. If we have faith in God we trust that whatever happens will ultimately be for the good. If we do not have such faith, we can have no such trust. This is why so many atheists tend to be negative and pessimistic. It can be a real “downer” to have something bad happen and have no trust, no *betach*, that eventually some good will come out of it. Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, then, will indeed make us safe and secure from all alarms. It will not free us from bad things happening, but it will give us the assurance (*habetachah*, הבתחה) that there is some reason for their happening, and that they are not simply meaningless calamities.

Richard R. Losch+

Interfaith Men’s Breakfast

The Interfaith Men’s Breakfast will be held on the first Sunday of May, May 1st, at 7:45 a.m. at St. James’ Church. Men of all denominations are welcome. We meet on the first Sunday of every month that has five Sundays. Treat yourself to one of Hiram’s great breakfasts and bring a friend! This month’s program will be on the origins of the State of Israel.

Richard R. Losch+

I read that last year 4,213,257 people got married.

*I don’t want to start any trouble, but
shouldn’t that be an even number?*

The Day of Pentecost

One of the most important days of the Church year (and these days, sad to say, one of the most ignored) is the Day of Pentecost (May 15 this year). It is equal in importance to Easter and far more important than Christmas.¹ Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. Although Christ established the foundation of the priesthood when he gave Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 16:19)² and consecrated the first bishops soon after the Resurrection (Jn. 20:22f), the Church itself was not established until the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles on the first Christian Pentecost and deposited the Faith in them (Acts 2:1ff).

Pentecost is actually the Jewish feast of Shavuoth, which falls fifty days³ after Passover (the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai fifty days after leaving Egypt). It celebrates the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai and the sealing of the Covenant with a sacrifice (Ex. 24). The name comes from the Greek *pentecosten hemera* (πεντηκοστην ἡμερα), fiftieth day. It was a singularly appropriate time for the Holy Spirit to deposit the Faith with the Apostles and establish the Church. It marked the beginning of Christianity as a religion, just as the giving of the Law and the confirming of the Mosaic Covenant marked the beginning of Judaism as a religion.⁴

At Passover Jews from all over the known world would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. For many this was an ex-

¹ Christmas was not a major feast until the Middle Ages.

² This was a symbolic statement—he obviously did not physically hand him a set of keys. The ancient symbol of investing a steward with authority over the business of a household was the master's giving him the keys to all he household doors and gates.

³ It is the Day of Passover plus the following seven weeks. *Shavuoth* is the Hebrew plural of "weeks."

⁴ Before the giving of the Law the people were Israelites, not Jews. While they had been established as a people, they were not yet bound by an established religion. The Covenant was bound by the sacrifice at Sinai that Moses offered after they had received the Law.

tremely long trip, so they would stay in Jerusalem until Pentecost before starting the long journey back home. Every year during this time the population of the city would double and sometimes even triple. The crowds were dense and excitable, and there was always the danger of riots; also, there had been several rebellions at that time. For that reason the soldiers did not dare arrest Jesus in the Temple during the day. He had many followers, and a riot would almost certainly have ensued. There was no room in the city to house all these people, so they would camp in the hills outside the city wall. This is why Jesus and his disciples were staying on the Mount of Olives. It is also why Judas had to lead the soldiers to Jesus when he betrayed him. Finding someone in that crowd at night, even if you knew what he looked like, would be almost impossible if you did not know exactly where he was camped.

On that first Christian Pentecost the disciples were “all together in one place (Acts 2:1). We do not know where they were, but ancient tradition says that it was in the house of Mary the mother of Saint Mark. The Holy Spirit descended upon them with the sound of a mighty wind, and it appeared that tongues of fire rested on their heads.¹ At that moment they were infused with an understanding of all that had happened before, and were also given the strength and courage to go out and face the hostile world and preach the Gospel. The streets were thronging with people from all over the world who were celebrating Shavuoth. When the disciples began to preach, each person heard them in his own tongue. This was not a babble of many tongues (such as was probably heard in the streets with so many foreigners present). Rather, each per-

¹ In both Hebrew and Greek the word we translate “wind” (Hebrew *ruah*[רוח], Greek *pneuma* [πνευμα]) also can mean both breath and spirit. A literal translation of Acts 2:2 would be “a sound as a rushing of a violent breath” (ἤχος ὡσπερ φερομενες πνοης βιαιας). In John 20:22 Jesus “breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” In most cases the symbol of the Holy Spirit is a dove, the emblem of peace, but from ancient times fire has been a symbol of zeal.

son heard them as if they were speaking his own language. Pentecost was the exact reversal of the event at the Tower of Babel. At Babel all were united by a common tongue, and because of their arrogance they became divided by different languages;¹ at Jerusalem all who were divided by different languages and understandings were reunited by the common language of the Gospel of Christ.

Richard R. Losch+

Separation of Church and State

Despite the common misunderstanding, the United States Constitution makes no mention of the separation of Church and State. In fact, unlike the Declaration of Independence, the only mention of religion in the Constitution is in the First Amendment, which states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The clear intent of this amendment, evidenced by the writings of those who composed it, is to protect religion from the state, not vice versa. The phrase “separation of Church and State” comes from a letter of Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury, Connecticut Baptist Association. A religious tax law that would suppress their activities threatened them, and they appealed to President Jefferson to intervene. In his letter he paraphrased Roger Williams, the founder of the Baptists in America, who wrote in 1644 of a “hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world.” Garden walls are built to protect the gardens from the encroachment of the chaotic wilderness, not to protect the wilderness from the order of the garden. Jefferson shortened the quote, using the simple phrase “a wall of separation between Church and State.” Whenever the term Church is used in this context, it refers to religion in general, not to

¹ Whether we take the story of Babel literally or as an allegory, it is actually based on fact—the very first humans, who were descended from a common ancestor, all had the same language. As they increased in number and went their separate ways they became divided by languages.

any specific religion or denomination.

Thomas Jefferson was a Deist, not a Christian, although he readily acknowledged the importance of Judeo-Christian moral, ethical and family values in maintaining a stable society. Deists believe in God, but they believe that God created the universe and then left it to its own devices without divine intervention.¹ Benjamin Franklin, also a Deist, said that God was the Great Clockmaker who created the universe, wound it up, set it, and then left it to run by itself. The Founding Fathers of the United States ranged from Deists to the devoutly religious, although all had the deepest respect for Christian moral and ethical values, which they recognized to be deeply rooted in Judaism. To say that the United States is a Christian nation is to imply that Christianity is the legally recognized religion of the country, as it is in England, and this is patently untrue. There is no question, however, that the moral and ethical values enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are clearly Judeo-Christian.

While many of the Founding Fathers were deeply religious, many were not at all so. All however, including the Deists, recognized the importance of religion in civil life. They believed that a society devoid of religion has no moral incentive to be ruled by law. Judaism and Christianity are rooted in obedience to law, and the touchstone of American society is that we are a nation of laws and law-abiding citizens. Without respect for the law and obedience to it, society becomes degenerate and corrupt. Religion does not guarantee respect for the law, but the only atheistic societies that are at all successful are police states where the people are terrified to disobey the law because of harsh retribution. America would be bankrupt if it had to hire enough police to enforce the law. It is the voluntary obedience to the law that has made our system so successful. Police states almost inevitably fall to rebellion when the people have had enough, and the result

¹ Deism, a product of the 17th century intellectual movement called the Enlightenment, was popular in the 18th century.

is often anarchy and chaos. Because of this the Founding Fathers encouraged the practice of religion, and made the very first item in the Bill of Rights the protection of it. They also recognized the dangers of a government-supported religion, and therefore prohibited that. They were equally adamant, however, that the government should not interfere with any religion or religious practice except where it is a threat to the most basic tenets of civil society.¹

Separation of Church and State, at least as it is commonly interpreted today, is not only a bad idea, it is unchristian. This is not to say that the Church should control the State, or that the State should control the Church. Either of these would be equally unchristian.² We do not want a bishop in the White House, or congressmen at the altar. What we need is a distinction between Church and State, not a separation. Jesus recognized this when he said, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” (Lk. 20:25). This saying, along with Peter’s admonition, “Fear God, honor the emperor” (1 Pet. 2:17), proclaims the working together of the Church and the State. Only when one encroaches upon the rightful authority of the other should there be any conflict between them.

Admittedly, cooperation between religion and civil government is difficult, as history attests. The State rules the secular world and the Church the spiritual, so it is the Church’s responsibility to see that the State rules morally, and the State’s to see that the Church does not get corrupted by the usurpation of secular power. It is a check-and-balance relationship that ideally keeps both working hand-in-hand, but more often than not results in a head-to-head clash between the two. The Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman

1 For example, a religion that espouses human sacrifice could not be tolerated and would have to be suppressed.

² This is one of our major objections to Islam. The Qur’an urges the establishment of an Islamic State, a theocracy, in which the civil government is subject to the oversight of a religious leader. This is inconsistent not only with Christianity, but also with basic American principles.

Empire were constantly at each other's throats, each vying for power over the other for centuries. Likewise, the conflict between Henry II and Thomas Beckett resulted in the murder of Beckett and the decay and total dysfunction of Henry's empire. When the State feels threatened by the Church it will use all its power to crush it; when the Church feels threatened by the State it will rally the people to rise up against it. It is in the very nature of things that the State will support the Church only as long as it thinks it can get something out of it, and vice versa. Because of this the Church, especially when it serves as the moral and spiritual mentor of its people, is always under persecution, sometimes subtly and sometimes openly. There has never been a time that the Church has not been under open persecution somewhere in the world. The State without the leveling hand of religion, however, will always become a tyranny, as is evidenced in modern times by China and the Soviet Union and their various lesser imitators. On the other hand, when religion becomes the ruling power, as in a theocracy, it too becomes a tyranny. We see this in several of the Islamic States, especially Iran.

The concept of the separation of Church and State, then, is an absurdity. Neither can function adequately in the world without the other, and they cannot simply go their separate ways without one or both becoming either ineffective or corrupt and tyrannical. The ideal is a working relationship between the two, where there is a distinction, not a separation between them. For two centuries of American history this distinction served both the Church and the State well, although in recent decades the relationship has begun to decay. When the moral and spiritual teachings of the Church are uncoupled from the society and culture, the only result is moral anarchy such as we see infusing Western culture today. This then opens the way for total government intrusion into daily life, and the only result of that is tyranny.

Richard R. Losch+

Parish Annual Reports

St. James' Church, Livingston, AL

	2014	2015
Total Active Baptized Members	33	32
Total Communicants in Good Standing	27	29
Average Sunday Attendance	23	23
Easter Sunday Attendance	44	33
Total Sunday Holy Communions	51	49
Total Weekday Holy Communions	5	2
Private Holy Communions	0	0
Daily Offices held on Sunday	4	2
Daily Offices & other services held on Weekdays	11	6
Burials conducted	0	1
Marriages conducted	1	0
Baptisms under 16 years of age	0	1
Confirmations 16 years & older	0	1
Confirmations under 16 years of age	0	2

St. Alban's Church, Gainesville, AL

	2014	2015
Total Active Baptized Members	4	4
Total Communicants in Good Standing	4	4
Average Sunday Attendance	14	6
Easter Sunday Attendance	N/A	N/A
Total Sunday Holy Communions	11	12
Total Weekday Holy Communions	1	0
Private Holy Communions	0	0
Daily Offices held on Sunday	1	0
Daily Offices held on Weekdays	0	0
Burials conducted	0	0

A Touch of Trivia

What's the greatest thing since sliced bread? Otto Frederick Rohwedder, an optometrist and entrepreneur, owned three jewelry stores in St. Joseph, Missouri. As a hobby he used his mechanical knowledge to create a machine that would automatically slice bread and then wrap it. He obtained a patent in 1927, and sold his three jewelry stores to fund its manufacture. His first buyer was a friend and baker, Frank Bench, who sold the first commercial loaf of sliced bread on July 7, 1928. In 1930 the Continental Baking Co. of New York (the inventor of the Twinkie) purchased several of the slicing machines. They introduced Wonder Bread, and the sales of sliced bread surged across the country.

Richard R. Losch+

Sucarnochee Purls

Most of our non-local readers see the Sucarnochee Purls in our calendar, but do not know who they are. The Purls are a group of women of all denominations who meet at St. James' every Monday afternoon to knit. They took their name from Livingston's Sucarnochee River, an important landmark around here. At their own expense they knit shawls, blankets and caps (for chemo patients), and bring them to patients in area hospitals and at home. Before they are distributed these garments are blessed at the altar of St. James' Church. I never fully appreciated how much this work means until they brought me a beautiful knit blanket when I was in the hospital. It was a constant reminder of the prayers of my friends, and I still treasure it.

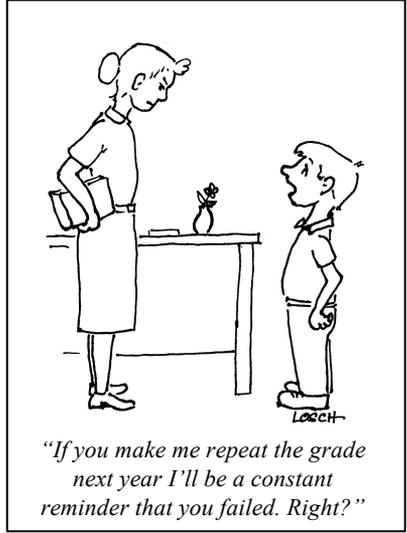
Richard R. Losch+

*If I had a dollar for every time I get distracted,
I wish I had a puppy.*

Don't Forget
INTERFAITH
MEN'S
BREAKFAST
MAY 1, 2016
7:45 A.M.
Mark your Calendar

**SAINT JAMES'
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

JAMIE by Richard R. Losch



*"If you make me repeat the grade
next year I'll be a constant
reminder that you failed. Right?"*



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