

August 31, 2018

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

This weekend our attention is focused on the value and sacrifice of those who labor. In Genesis, the idea of labor was seen as part of the curse for the original disobedience. Subsequently, we have been taught to find our value and meaning in the work we do. The lazy one is shunned the industrious one is lauded. Both understandings fall short of helping us to find our true meaning.

Jesus looked at the laborers and realized that a lot of what people did allowed them to be exploited by others. His solution was to re-orient the efforts of individuals to see their work as participating in salvation history. Instead of fishing for fish, he says, "I will make you fishers of people." It is this transformation and reorientation of our energies, to seek the things that are above, that make life worth living. Yes there is still mundane labor, but through faith we see all our efforts are somehow helping us to workout our collective salvation with reverence.

Faith takes the mundane necessities we are called to do and translates them directly into a participation in the cosmic work of redemption through love and justice. This "translation" also serves to bring our lives depth and meaning. In short, by faith our work and our lives move from the quotidian to the eternal.

Whether we see ourselves as workers in the vineyard, harvesters in the field, fishers of people, or some other vocation, when we labor for the love and justice of others, we follow Christ into the world inviting others to participate in the eternal presence of divine grace. By giving ourselves to others, with the consciousness of faith, we find our true selves.

Introducing our Interim Organist, Jim Hopkins

Jim Hopkins has served in many Episcopal and Anglican churches as an Organist and Choir Director. He was Director of Music at Grace Church in Newark, NJ until late 2017. Since leaving Grace, he has filled in at several prominent churches in the city, including a period as Interim Organist at the Church of St. Agnes near Grand Central, and served as Interim Director of the Washington Heights Choir School at Holyrood Church during the last academic year. He also directed the Diocese of New Jersey Choir Camp in Cape May this summer. In addition, he has held posts at St. James' Anglican Catholic Church in Cleveland, and at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio. He has performed as an organ soloist and a continuo player in early music ensembles throughout the country. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Westminster Choir College.

Book Study this Fall:

This fall we will initiate a theological study program of the writings of Rene Girard. The first book we will study together is "I see Satan Fall Like Lightning." In these readings we discover certain truths about human community and the ways in which religion can be a force that liberates people but also can subtly and insidiously enslave people.

Faithfully,
The Rev. Steven Yagerman