

As of late a development is being constructed on property immediately in front of St. Mary Magdalene in Mastic Point. While we encourage any sort of economic activity in the area there are definite planning issues involved in this construction. All attempts to negotiate with the developer have proven ineffective. St. Mary Magdalene is one of the few remaining historical sites on the island of Andros. It is not a ruin, it is a living and breathing church. The land that the church is built on was granted to the Lord Bishop of the Bahamas on November 30, 1870 by the crown. Over the course of two years the current building was built and consecrated in 1872 by Bishop ARP Venables (the exact date is unknown). At the turn of the century, Neville Chamberlain settled in the Mastic Point area of Andros to begin his sisal plantation. When the enterprise failed (an all too common reality for Andros agriculture) he left a piece of property to the church. We have the deeds for it but we don't know where it is. It would be helpful if we could find it. In any event, Chamberlain, it is believed, was a worshipper at St. Mary Magdalene. In his autobiography he and FB Matthews, the English Anglican priest were friends. It is documented that before leaving to go back to Birmingham England he left a donation

of 10 pounds (lots of money in those days) to the youth group at St. Mary Magdalene. What history! A young man who went on to be one of the most famous Prime Ministers of England (if only for his naïveté) used to sing the praises of God in our little church.

Peter Scott, who was priest here in the 1980's encountered a similar problem in Nicholl's Town. In his wisdom he erected a stone wall around the church's property. That still didn't stop the government from building a warehouse in the church yard (which we use today for our Sunday School Room) and a toilet block (which has been demolished). It seems like people like to build near our churches for whatever reason. A word of advice to my colleagues, find out where the church boundaries are and either fence it in or build a wall around it; further, any land that can be bought, buy it! This is not an attempt to desire more earthly possessions but rather to prevent the construction of buildings that can very easily take away from the sacredness of the holy ground that a church is planted on. There is a similar row going on now in Nassau with a development being built near the caves. Just how important are our historical sites in the Bahamas?

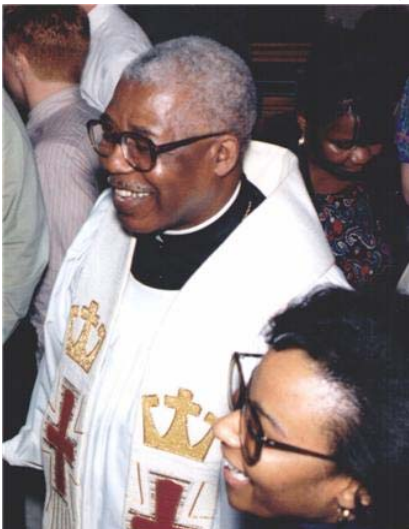
Welcome – Parish Property Concerns



Mastic Point Church with construction going on in front of the building

A Tribute to the simple things in life

RIP Fr. John Taylor Feb 14, 1924 – Jan 23, 2009



Fr. Taylor was ordained to the sacred Priesthood in 1957 and served in several churches in Nassau, Dallas, TX, Evanston, IL, Annapolis, MD, Brooklyn and Hempstead, NY before his retirement.

This week, one of the heroes of the Anglican Church passed away. The Revd. Fr. John Taylor was an inspiration to me and countless others who knew him. I can remember from the early days of playing the organ for the evensong at St. Mary the Virgin there was this grey haired priest, who never went anywhere without his dear wife, who greeted me at the door. We exchanged introductions and it was then that I got to know Fr. Taylor. He had a beautiful voice and sung the evensong with passion. My favourite was hearing him sing the divine praises. The old organ at St. Mary's wasn't robust enough to keep up with him, but the new Wicks would have done him proud. He preached with authority, drawing on his many years of ministry, he taught with elegance and simplicity, never condescending but loving and thoughtful. As a writer his works continue to live on after him. His 'Simple Things' column is a classic of the church. I am happy that someone took the time to compile all of his

writings and I am even happier that he took the time out to sit down and write them. We have so much knowledge, history, information, character, presence, richness ... in the Anglican Church. So many of our senior clergy have words of wisdom to share with us but they choose to take it to their graves instead. **(I must commend Canon Kirkley Sands for two excellent new books, one on the history of the Church and Education in the Bahamas and an intriguing look at Bahamian culture and the Church)**

Where would we as a church be if the Doctors of the Church Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, Ambrose, Athanasius and others didn't take the time out to write something down? What if the Apostle Paul couldn't be bothered to write his simple letters? What would we have to read? I salute you, John Taylor, and I pray God's blessing upon your family as you tell the stories in the palaces of Heaven. RIP.

Graduation from the Anglican Church

This week while visiting one of my parishioners, who is gravely sick in hospital, I visited a very special friend of mine who works at one of our hospitals. While chatting, a young lady popped by. She had just given birth to a baby and was on maternity leave. We exchanged pleasantries and then as she was leaving she said something interesting. I asked her which church she attends and she answered, "I've graduated from the Anglican Church, but my daughter still attends mass at school." I found this intriguing. You can learn a lot about what people say.

Over the past few months I have been meeting people who have moved on from our church for whatever reason. There was the young lady from the hospital and three other young professional women, two of them bankers, and one an engineer. One had joined the Seventh Day Adventists (along with her young professional husband and family) another had for a long time been a very strong member of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the last was a lapsed Anglican. Always curious, I asked two of them what prompted them to search elsewhere. Their answers were interesting. She felt more at home with the SDA because they were more welcoming to her. They followed up with her. They cared about her. They called to say happy birthday, to just catch up and say hello and she liked that. The second young lady had very deep theological convictions and concerns. Although confirmed an Anglican she began her search when certain things didn't seem to make theological sense (the ever perplexing concept of the Trinity), concepts of salvation etc. This I found very interesting. The Trinity is perhaps one of the most difficult concepts to appreciate and understand. The final young lady became disillusioned when,

after giving birth and trying to become a part of Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, she wasn't made to feel welcomed at either event.

These things got me to thinking. What resources do we have as a church that can address these concerns that young, professional, thinking people have.

While browsing through the latest Synod Folder (I do that from time to time) I realized that there is a wide variety of programs and organizations for members of our church and others to be a part of. The hospital ministry, Order of St. Luke, Prison Ministry, ACM, ACW, Youth Department, Diocese 2000 and Beyond (7 whole ministries), ACEA, Schools, St. Ambrose Guild etc. There is no shortage of things to be a part of, the challenge is actually being a part of them. But more of this later.

St. Agnes has recently started a prayer ministry and this is commendable. There is an episode of Fox's *The Simpsons* where Revd. Lovejoy gets burnt out and decides to play with his train set in his basement and there is no one left to run the church. Marge Simpson steps in and begins to answer the phone in the church office. After a time, people keep calling in to speak to Marge and tell her their problems and she inherits the title of 'The Listen Lady'. Maybe a random telephone 'Touching Bases' ministry might be effective in keeping in touch with our members.

If you read through the Scriptures, Jesus was in most instances referred to as teacher. We have such a wealth of knowledge in our church that needs to be shared with others. St. Barnabas runs a teaching session on the radio at 6.30am and the reviews for it are very good. 6.30am is a bit early for

me and I am sure for young professionals getting up to go to their highly stressed jobs, getting their kids ready for school, and trying to get out the door by 7.00am to beat the hour long grid lock traffic, the last thing they're able to do is listen to teaching on the radio. A handy resource, more cost effective too, might be recording the same message, putting it on a website, and emailing an encouraging link to the busy young professional every week where they can sit on a tea break at work and hear the same thing.

Revd. Dr. Fraser Watts (Cambridge University Religion and Psychology Professor) has a written work on church socio-dynamics which is very interesting to read. Church will be church, the whole world over and the challenges being faced in England are similar to our challenges. He has noted that the population group with the highest density ratios in churches are the elderly and the very young. This is very evident here in Andros, especially at our Mastic Point Station where we have lots of dedicated pensioners and very keen children. The missing link is the adult group. It has long been the notion that once a person is confirmed and able to take part in Holy Communion there is no more need of church except for the odd Baptism, Wedding and Funeral. In speaking with contemporaries from other denominations, they hold the view that they are 'burnt out' from church. Some become junkies and others get burnt out. They lament that 'mama' and 'papa' forced them to go to church morning, noon, and night and as such, once they were able to make decisions for themselves, they chose not to attend, or if at all very infrequently. Herein lies a crucial observation, a properly structured, proactive, intentional youth program is essential. Fr.

McCartney, the university trained youth officer, has always said (at least to me) the Anglican Church in the UK is investing heavily in its young people because for too long it didn't and now it is reaping the consequence. Church attendance is at an all time low in the UK among all age groups. I salute all the dedicated leaders of Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, the Sunday Schools, the St. Ambrose Guild, the marching bands, and any other youth organization for their time, talent and treasure. Your reward will be great.

There are so many groups to be a part of in our various churches. The sad reality is that new persons are not always welcome. For some reason many believe the dynamics of the group will somehow change. However, fret not, if you're not welcomed in a group, take the initiative and start one of your own. Look at the Sons of Thunder for example. You'll be surprised at the number of like minded people who will come and join because they too were probably shut out of the established organizations. This is true too with churches, the newest church in our Diocese, in my opinion, is flourishing because young, intelligent professionals (the missing links) found a home there after probably being snubbed at other doors. The danger is when they are welcomed at the doors of other denominations and not our own with open arms.

Feb 1, 2009
The Eve of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

CONTACT US

St. Margaret's Rectory • Reeves Street • Nicholl's Town • North Andros

Tel/Fax: 1-242-329-2283 • Vibe Phone: 225-2820 • Website: www.stmargaretsandros.org • email: saturnquest@hotmail.com