
Holiness Is Not Always Quiet

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
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If spirituality is ultimately some sort of mystery, then Sunday, August 17 was certainly a most spiritual day at the Cathedral of St. Philip.

As friends, parishioners, guests, and visitors all walked into the church all last Sunday, they could sense a mysterious presence. I could sure sense it, too. The atmosphere was thick with preparation and expectation. Conversation was somehow louder and more frequent. Old friends began recognizing each other. Young children began running through the halls.

Yes, the volume of the Cathedral's morning grew louder, but the sense of mystery also grew stronger. Something holy was happening, but it sure wasn't quiet. It was not a "Be still and know that I am God" kind of holiness. This was becoming an exuberant holiness, a loud and laughing holiness.

By the time the 8:45 service began, the nave was more full than it has been in weeks. Twenty minutes into the service, almost 700 people were present. Still more were on the Cathedral campus somewhere else, teaching chapels or setting up exhibits. We baptized and took communion together. Once again, the lines of people receiving communion thrilled me the most. I am always exhilarated when I watch and pray for each person walking up the aisle for communion; and the lines on Sunday were long.

Yes, last Sunday was Homecoming Sunday at the Cathedral of St. Philip. And what a homecoming it was! This Sunday has begun to rival Mardi Gras in our parish life! During education hour, Child Hall was throbbing with joy and conversation. Almost every one of our tremendous Cathedral ministries and guilds and committees had some sort of presentation or booth set up. It was a Ministry Fair that rivaled the county fairs I used to visit as a child. Our 11:15 Eucharist continued the power of that morning with even more majesty. We baptized nine more children. I was moved and thrilled to hear our Cathedral Choir back among us in great force.

Homecoming Sunday reminded me that holiness is not always some sort of quiet contemplation. "Mystic sweet communion" is also loud and boisterous. Holiness is also about laughing with each other, telling stories to each other (and on each other), checking out how the children have grown over the summer, and singing "You are my sunshine" in the Atrium. In short, holiness can be fun and boisterous.

Then, on Sunday evening, our homecoming was truly completed. What is a southern homecoming without barbecue? We fed many more than we had planned for, and I had to pray over the food to make it last. (I also prayed for more chairs and tables, and my prayers were answered by some great muscles!) "Barbecue and Bingo" was definitely a hit. From toddlers to teen-agers, from young singles to old marrieds, every segment of Cathedral life was represented. We were all having fun, and I think the person having the most fun was our God.

At the risk of excluding some of the most faithful, I want to thank four special people for a fantastic Homecoming Sunday. Ann Fowler and Mary Hunter Strange were our staff coordinators for the day. Sara Chapman and Bobbie Williamson were

the parish life committee leaders. Each of them, and scores more, have helped the Cathedral surge to a roaring start this year. I don't think even Michael Phelps or Usain Bolt started any faster last week. Blessings and joy to all of us!

Sam Candler signature



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