
O Taste And See That The Lord Is Good! (Psalm 34:8)

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
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The other night some friends came over and we drank a bottle of wine together. That is what friends and wine are for, to enjoy together. We talked, we laughed, and the night flashed by. The next morning I woke up feeling more refreshed than I have in a long time. I was excited; I was happy; I was inspired. Somehow, I could still taste the friendship and excitement of the previous night.

The same thing happened again this past Monday. I woke up thrilled; I woke up inspired; I woke up eager and hopeful. But I had not had a lovely dinner with friends on the previous night. No, what I was tasting in my spirit was the entire previous day, this past Sunday at the Cathedral of St. Philip.

I live for mornings like the morning of August 20, 2006, at the Cathedral of St. Philip. It was Homecoming Sunday at our lovely church home, and people were coming home. My thanks to all of you who never left for the summer! But I extend my thanks also to each of you who returned last Sunday!

Our classes were packed, from young infant to classic veteran. The hymns were sung twice as loud. The sermons fed our hunger with joy and wonder. The smiles were infectious. The conversation was hopeful. The teachers and flower arrangers and worship guilds had left evidence that holy energy had been expended. And wherever holy energy is spent, Jesus shows up. Jesus was indeed with us. "Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place!"

A grand Sunday at church is worth savoring, like a fine wine. Even when we have had plenty of good wines before, plenty of good suppers before. Even when we have been to plenty of church services before. There is something wonderful about enjoying again the presence of love and grace. Of course, I know that some people do not like wine, and some people do not like church. There are reasons that some folks should not drink alcohol; but there is no reason one should not gather with the church community. It is when we are gathered together that God puts a new spirit in us, a fresh spirit, a spirit of hope and energy.

Friends, it simply cannot happen when we are alone. We might "feel spiritual" when we are alone, but that spirituality has not yet been incarnated. As I noted to my Christian Education class on Sunday, the difference between "spirituality" and "religion" is people. Healthy spirituality will always involve being with people; and then we people, in community, get religion together. I want to make the claim that good religion is a good and holy thing; it results from good spirituality. Spirituality is just not meant to be consumed alone (just as wine is not meant to be consumed alone!).

I imagine that everyone reading this newsletter has felt some sort of spiritual experience before. That is what drew you to church somehow, or what has led you to read this far in a church newsletter. I invite you to act on that experience and to connect to someone. Don't eat alone. Taste and see that the Lord is good and alive, in community, and in the Cathedral of St. Philip.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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