
"Line Up, Line Up! Respect Those Guys!"

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

I was highly impressed with the coaches of the Little League Playoffs last Friday night. Like many Atlantans, I was rooting for our hometown Buckhead team, and they played a terrific game. Alas, they did not advance to the Little League World Series itself, but they had a tremendous season. Congratulations to them!

I was glad, however, that ESPN had outfitted the coaches on both teams with microphones, and we could hear their beautiful words of encouragement and support throughout the game. All of us have a lot to learn from them. After the game, the words quoted above were from the coach of the winning team, demanding that his boys line up to shake hands with the other team. "Respect those guys. They played a great game!" I pray that all of us might respect the other team. Aretha Franklin was right: R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Our Episcopal Church baptism promise is right: "With God's help, I will respect the dignity of every human being" (page 294 in the Book of Common Prayer).

This Sunday, I travel to Jerusalem out of respect. First of all, I am traveling with respect for my fellow pilgrims. There are about 38 of us who call ourselves "World Pilgrims;" we are all from Atlanta, and our group is almost exactly divided between blacks and whites. Furthermore, 13 of us are Christian, 13 are Jewish, and 12 are Muslim. We are traveling together on a specific interfaith pilgrimage, learning to respect one another.

I live for respect. Where there is respect for God's creation, there is honor for God the Creator. Where there is respect, there is God.

With my fellow pilgrims, I am also traveling to Jerusalem out of respect for two different sorts of people: for the Israelis who should live in security and independence, and for the Palestinians who also should live in security and freedom. As most of us know, the political situation there is complicated. Whether we like it or not, religious impulses and arguments are deeply embedded in the political complexities. I ask each Cathedral parishioner and each friend of the Cathedral reading this article to pray for us. This has been a volatile and historic week in Israel.

The Episcopal Church tries over and over again to model its life on God's love and respect for others. We attempted, perhaps sloppily, to respect the personhood of gays and lesbians two years ago. But now, we must show ourselves-and the world-how to respect those people who disagreed with those 2003 General Convention decisions. Can we show respect for both sorts of people? I hope so. I am giving my very life toward that ministry. I will always want to respect the other person, and especially the person who has lost, or who is outcast, or who has been persecuted. God lives for those people who have been poor, or poor in spirit: Jesus called them "blessed."

As we prepare for a tremendous year at the Cathedral of St. Philip, I am overwhelmed with respect for two particular people. The first is George Maxwell, who has served beautifully here as Canon for Congregational Life. He will be ordained priest at the Cathedral on Saturday, August 20, 2005, at 11:00 am; and what a great event that will be.

If you are reading this on that Saturday morning, you still have time to get here! Show up and give us your witness! George will celebrate his first Eucharist services on Sunday, August 21.

The other person for whom I have tremendous respect is the Very Reverend Harry Pritchett, who begins his ministry with

us this Sunday, August 21. His title will be Pastoral Associate to the Dean, but I hope that means he will be a pastoral associate to anyone here! He will preach August 28, while I am away; and he will also present the first of our Dean's Forums on Sunday, September 11.

Line up! Line up! Respect those guys! I loved the respect that we showed the retiring St. Agnes Guild last Monday. They have served the Cathedral of St. Philip for over seventy wonderful years. The ECW honored them with a special lunch on Monday, out of well-earned respect.

The last group I want to renew our respect for is our young people. We continue hard at work finding new youth volunteers and a new youth director. But I am eager for the entire church to serve our young people with respect. We truly have some great young people at this church.

I told the Chapter of the Cathedral two months ago that my priorities for the Fall were two: to re-invigorate our children's and youth programs here, and to re-invigorate the Cathedral's mission to the world around us. Both these priorities will involve our learning respect again. Both these priorities will also involve our losing ourselves and our losing some of our customary ways of doing things, so that others can enjoy the grace of God. Can we do it? Yes we can.

Yes, the summer is winding down, but the Cathedral is just winding itself up again! We are renewing our ministries of service and respect. Line up! Line up! Respect those guys!

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler