
A Retreat, A Mystery, And A Move

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
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I have exciting news, overwhelming news, and then some more exciting news.

The first exciting news is that the Chapter, the Canon staff, and I had a hard-working and lively retreat last weekend. What an impressive breadth and depth of commitment in this year's chapter members! We represent many various constituencies of the Cathedral, and we all have different stories to tell of how God has acted in our lives. We vary in our interpretations of history and the state of the Cathedral. But last weekend, we united in prayer and concern for one another in a renewed way. Moreover, of course, we united in our common commitment to Jesus Christ and his work here at the Cathedral. It was a retreat which invigorated us. Thank you so much for your prayers. Keep them coming!

The overwhelming news is the number of folks who are responding to the Sunday morning class on Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* (thanks to Fred Jones for leading that class this past Sunday). On Sunday, January 4, the parish hall was truly packed. Almost five hundred people sat all over the place, even behind the Christmas tree, to hear my take on this "provocative quasi-historical mystery!" Was Jesus married? Of course not. Did the Church suppress early gospels? No. Was Mary Magdalene a great saint? Indeed so. Is *The Da Vinci Code* a truly fun book? Yes, it is, and I will probably read Dan Brown's next book.

My course on *The Da Vinci Code* began to investigate some of the provocative claims of the characters two weeks ago, and I will return to that subject on January 18, at 10:10 am. We will use some more slides, too. However, I will also discuss how that book touches some of our deep spiritual hungers. It should be no surprise that people are reading *The Da Vinci Code*. We are all spiritually hungry. Deep down, we're looking for mysteries that are strong enough to sustain us. Ultimately, God is himself that mystery, and God acting in history is even more a mystery! (I noticed that more people packed the parish hall to hear about *The Da Vinci Code* than were there to hear us talk about last summer's General Convention,.)

My last piece of news is more exciting still. The time has come. Construction work is now beginning in the present Cathedral facility itself. You'll notice it when you walk along the hallway to the Cathedral. Within three weeks, the entire bottom floor of the Cathedral (music areas and offices and such) will be sealed off. This is going to be big. In fact, while I have as much an idea of what will happen as anyone, I also realize today how little I am prepared.

The staff will move to temporary offices this week, at the Buckhead Center, a complex next to Brio's Restaurant on Peachtree Street. Many of the staff will still be present in the Cathedral itself, attending to services, pastoral needs, and the lunchtime crowd. But it is about to get very, very different around here.

I am truly excited. This parish is doing something we have not done in forty years: renovate our entire facility (outside the worship space) after constructing a beautiful and completely new education wing. I believe we will be renewed in this move. In fact, it is God who is on the move, like Aslan. God is building a renewed parish community to match our construction efforts.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, to so many of you are part of this enterprise. This is amazing. Wait till you see it. Better still, pray, pray, pray.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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