
It's All True

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
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It's all true.

Yes, the last week of Jesus's life was full of bitterness and betrayal. As the disciples's expectations were so drastically upended, at least two of them jumped ship. Jesus himself sweat drops of blood in his prayer. Civil authorities experienced the identity of Jesus as a kind of "wedge issue" in first-century Jerusalem. Finally, Jesus, our Lord, was indeed crucified and we gazed upon his pain.

It is all true in our lives, too. We go through days of anguish and confusion. People we love betray us. We betray people we love. Bitter words feel like nails piercing us. We think we are doing the right thing, and yet our children suffer. We stand for peace, and folks perceive it as war. Sometimes our lives feel totally incomplete.

It is all true at the Cathedral of St. Philip, too. We are certainly not complete! Almost our entire facility is under construction, and we are tired of having to drive over nails in the parking lot. We do not know which door to use on Sundays-or on any other day! Some of us are sweating blood in the construction process. It is harder and harder for our classes to build momentum.

It is all true. Some of our young people are curious about other churches. Some of our adults find it easier to be away from Atlanta on the weekends. Some of our folks find reasons, true reasons, not to be around. Some are keeping secrets. Some of us are re-evaluating our most trusted relationships. The season is ripe for "opportunistic polarization." It's all true.

It is also true that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter. On Easter Sunday, a new fire at Peachtree Street caused the Cathedral to glisten with splendor in the rain. The walls throbbed with great hymns, with great people, and with great words of joy. A beautiful community of faith celebrated new life again.

It is also true that the Cathedral of St. Philip continues to attract young families with children. Folks are finding community and intimacy here, not just on Sundays, but in the various small fellowship groups that gather on weekday nights. It is true that people are attending Bible studies and volunteering for mission activities. It is also true that our financial gifts are actually way up in the past three weeks. Furthermore, our construction is actually ahead of schedule; we should be able to use the new building by the end of May!

It is true that the Cathedral of St. Philip will always be in need. That need is for resurrection and new life. The Cathedral, and any church we might belong to, will always need Christians who believe that the resurrection emerges from the crucifixion. This is, indeed, the essence of our faith. The more impossible that transformation seems, why, the more true it becomes! God really does bring joy out of sadness. "Weeping may endure for the night; but joy comes in the morning."

It is true that opportunities for division, betrayal, and departure are always present in the community of faith. This has always been a part of the Christian faith. But the opportunities are just as strong for the opposite. In fact, the opportunities are stronger. There are even more opportunities for trust, reconciliations, and commitment! These are the virtues that lie at the foundation of Christianity! They are the virtues we preach and learn!

But Christian virtues do not come easy. They require work. They require choices for the good, and choices for the common good. In the resurrection life of Jesus, these virtues-trust, reconciliation, commitment; love, mercy, and peace-are what give us life, time and time again.

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