
In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida

**An article for *The Cathedral Times*
by the Very Rev. Sam Candler, *Dean of the Cathedral*
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When I hear the song, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, no matter how expertly or even poorly it might be played, I am thrown back into the briar patch of my teen-aged years. I was actually one of those earnest keyboard players, back in the early rock years, longing for organ riffs that could match the driving electric guitar parts. And some people think the organ part to that song is a brief (very brief) reference to Bach's Toccata in D minor.

So, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* worked for me. If you don't know the song, check out some of the early hip hop uses of it. Or, check out the 1995 episode of *The Simpsons* (titled "Bart Sells His Soul"), where the Reverend Lovejoy is tricked into using the song as an opening hymn. The sheet music that was distributed to the congregation that day was titled, "In the Garden of Eden," by I. Ron Butterfly. Homer remembers when he "used to make out to this hymn."

Last week at the spectacular "Welcome Home" event of "Cathedral Giving By Design," there was design galore, for sure; but there was also music galore. Welcoming us in the atrium was the North Atlanta High School Jazz Band again (one of whose members is in our office suite hallway photographs as a youngster!). Outside the parish hall was a great jazz pianist who let me play Duke Ellington's *Take the A Train* with him.

Then, there was the musical entry to the program itself, which featured a local Atlanta favorite group: "The Seed and Feed Marching Abominable." Like many of you, I have been delighting in their music for over forty years. I guess one might call them a street band, full of rag-tag fun and energy and music. They know how to play, too!

I had heard, from someone or another, that they do not usually play "church events." Maybe they just don't want to get tangled up in church things, but I had heard that they intended to depart before "the prayer." Maybe I heard wrong, but no matter. However, they did depart, before I was able to speak, when I welcomed everyone to the Cathedral of St. Philip. My welcome was the phrase familiar to many of you. As usual, I reminded everyone that we are a house of prayer for all people. We love being a house of prayer for all people.

But last Friday night gave me another way of reminding us that we are a house of prayer for all people. The Marching Abominable had begun their set with a very fun rendition of that very rock song that I used to enjoy, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*. So, in my welcome remarks, I began with that song, too. Except, I used the words that the band had originally used for that song: "In the Garden of Eden." Yes, that was the title, before some sort of inebriation apparently slurred the words into "In A Gadda Da Vida."

Yes, the original words to that song were, "In the Garden of Eden," a religious allusion. (The *Simpsons* episode had it right!) The song, very generally, was about Adam taking Eve's hand. And that's about as far it goes. But it is religious!

At the Cathedral of St. Philip, we accept that prayer takes different forms. We thrive in that reality. Inspired by the deep and broad Spirit of God, this church contains many different kinds of prayer, from low to high, from jazz to classical, from choir to marching abominable. But we all pray. Even those of us who don't think we are praying, are praying! We are a house of prayer for all people!

I thank God for the spirit of such grand occasions as "Cathedral Giving By Design." It was a tremendous event, one of many that expands our life and our prayer. In fact, one of the design themes for Friday night was the garden! Thus, it was fitting that one of the night's musical pieces was an allusion the garden of Eden, that place

where we all began. This beautiful cathedral parish is indeed a garden, a tremendous garden of prayer. We are a garden big enough to contain prayer for all people; we are a house of prayer for all sorts of people.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

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