
Glory in the Church

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
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Glory!

That's what I witnessed last Sunday at the Cathedral of St. Philip. It was Homecoming Sunday, the day we close out our slower summer routines and celebrate the new schedules and new relationships of Fall. I know it was not exactly Fall yet; but, hey, the weather sure was acting like it.

It was delightful to witness old friends greeting each other, to see children eager to sign up as acolytes, to glimpse all manner of ministries and classes on display at the Ministry Fair, to share communion and mission together on a Sunday morning. We were renewing our community, and I saw glory in the church!

In my sermon, I rejoiced that I was surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. Your faith, and eagerness, and joy, and life give witness to something: that God is present in this place. Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place!

"Glory in the Church!" Those four words are our theme at the Cathedral of St. Philip for this Fall, for this year. We will use it in our Christian education programs. We will use it in our stewardship programs as we seek support for ministry. "Glory in the Church." The phrase comes from Ephesians 3:21, "to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations."

What we mean to say is that there is glory in the church! The church is not simply another tired old institution in the world today, slow and outmoded, oblivious maybe. No, glory occurs here. People of all sorts and conditions gather here, we bring all manner of confusion and need, and then, somehow, God touches us here. God touches us through each other, and God touches us with a transcendence that we sometimes cannot describe. That touch is grace. That grace and glory are why church exists.

We witness to something glorious when we gather at church. We witness to something greater than our pain and the inevitable hardships of life. When we gather at church, we are claiming together another kind of strength, a grace and love that lifts our souls to another dimension. Whatever happens in our lives, God is greater. God is greater, with grace and mercy. Every one of our meetings, our gatherings, our services, our conversations, is a little cell of energy and faith. There is glory here.

Glory in the Church! We also mean, by that, an exhortation. Take pride, speak forth, glorify the church! Speak well of it! (Bring children to be baptized!) There is no other corporation or establishment or group or institution that aspires to what we aspire to. Our goal is to be the Body of Christ in a world that needs grace and mercy. Glory in the church, so that God's work is done.

Yes, we are called to be witnesses, a great cloud of witnesses. We are meant to notice, to give witness to, the realities of the world, even when they are not so good, so that we can also shine the light of God's grace on those matters. The place where

we do that is here, the Christian Church. Here is where we bring the needs and realities of the world to the light of God's grace. When grace touches the world, glory results. Glory in the Church!



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