

# The Carpenter's Helper

*This Week...*

## Note from the Rector

“The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.”  
proverbs 16:9

## Weekly Parish Schedule

Add your group's event to the calendar: email  
stthomassoftware@googlegroups.com

## The origin of Sunday School

A brief history of the work of Robert Raikes

Almost every Sunday afternoon at this time of the year, I find myself thinking, “I don’t have any meetings on Tuesday,” or “Thursday won’t be that busy,” so maybe this is the week for a trip to the Italian market in Philadelphia, or to one of half a dozen museums on my to-do list, or to have dinner with old friends in Washington.

And yet, most of the time the meetings and chores and obligations pile up and so I carry on with the usual routine and before I know it Sunday has come again. For that reason, I may not be the best spokesman for spiritual journeys, but perhaps you will indulge me as you pack your bags for the beach or the mountains or Paris or Pago Pago.

It seems to be part of our nature to want to see what is on the other side of the next hill. America was practically built on road trips. And humankind in general seems to have an unquenchable desire to go everywhere, see everything, and – maybe most significantly – to profit from what we find along the way.

This can be quite positive. What we see, hear, and bring back can expand our understandings and imaginations. But it can also lead to endless wandering and dissatisfaction. Samuel Johnson said, “when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life,” but he had never seen Las Vegas.

Something similar can happen in our spiritual lives. We think of “seekers,” and people who describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious” as a modern phenomenon. Yet Saint Benedict felt the need to write in his monastic rule (in about 545 AD!) that monks should not wander from one monastery to another looking for ideal conditions – spiritual or physical. So it seems that travel can have spiritual, as well as more worldly, hazards.

Yet despite all this, I must commend travel to you as a spiritual opportunity. Simply seeing those in an unfamiliar place going about their daily routines is very restorative – it reminds us that we work and rest, celebrate and mourn, live our lives in much the same way as all of humanity. And even though we live in a place with great natural beauty, seeing some other remarkable bits of creation can put us squarely in the presence of the One who created them.

And if we should find ourselves in a place made holy by the faithful journeys of many before us, so much the better. Sanctity seems to “stick” to certain places, and our going and returning may let us both leave a little more and bring a little back with us.

Where will you go – or where have you already been – this summer? Is Toledo (Ohio) any less worthy than Toledo (Spain)? I say not – as long as you go with a heart open to find and be found by God. So buen camino as they say on the road to Santiago. May your travels be blessed and may you return again to our door.

-Fr Howie Sasser

*Some historians have posited that the Sunday school movement did more to empower the lower class than any other thing in the early 19th century.*

Robert Raikes was like a lot of cause-oriented millennial evangelicals. As a writer, he stuck to impartial reporting instead of sensational “fake news.” He fought against inhumane prison conditions and founded a program to educate underprivileged children.

But Raikes wasn’t a millennial. He was born in 1736, not 1936. He was, however, part of a generation of Christians who sought to live out their faith in the public square for the good of others. And part of those efforts included the founding of Sunday school.

Visiting a friend outside his hometown of Gloucester, England, Raikes observed local children cursing, gambling, and fighting, according to Thomas Walters’ 1930 biography *Robert Raikes, Founder of Sunday School*. Horrified, he asked a local woman standing outside her door about it. She replied, “This is nothing [compared] to what goes on on Sundays. You’d be shocked indeed if you were here then.”

The woman told Raikes people couldn’t even read the Bible in peace at church due to the chaos caused by the children. They, along with their parents, worked at a factory every day of the week except Sunday. So on that day “they behaved in a most unrestrained way.” Raikes returned home determined to help children like those he saw. He was the publisher of a local paper, so his mind probably went quickly to literacy and education.

During that time, education was primarily the realm of the middle class or higher, according to John Mark Yeats, associate professor of church history at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. “Many children of the poor worked horrible hours in factories during the week—often in excess of 12 hours a day,” says Yeats. “Those on the lower end of the economic spectrum often did not have access to educational opportunities due to their overburdened work schedules, which kept them trapped in a cycle of poverty.” Walters writes that when Raikes opened his Sunday school in July 1780, he spent the next week inviting children from poor families to participate. Many objected that their children did not have proper clothes for school. Raikes responded that if the children’s clothing was fit for the streets, it was fit for them to come to his school.

full article by Aaron Earls available at <https://factsand Trends.net/2018/07/17/sunday-school/>

# PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday, August 4

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I

9:15am (DO) Coping with Grief

10:30am (U) Nursery

10:30am (GH) Children's Worship

10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II

11:45am (GH) Parking Commission

Report

6:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

Monday, August 5

6:00am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA

7:30pm (GH) Scottish Dance

Tuesday, August 6

6:00am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA

5:00pm (CO) AIDS Delaware

6:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

8:00pm (U) KIS AA meeting

Wednesday, August 7

6:00am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA

10:30am (C) Bible Study Group

4:00pm (C) Blue Hen Bounty

5:30pm (P) Centering Prayer

8:00 (GH) South College Speakers AA

Thursday, August 8

6:00am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA

12:00pm (C) Property Committee

3:00pm (C) Blue Hen Bounty

Friday, August 9

6:00am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA

12:00pm (C) Al-Anon

6:30pm (P) Women's AA

Saturday, August 10

-available-

Sunday, August 11

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I

10:30am (U) Nursery

10:30am (GH) Children's Worship

10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II

11:45am (GH) Coffee and Fellowship

6:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

location key:

(C) Classroom

(GH) Great Hall

(N) Nave

(P) Parlor

(MR) Music Room

(U) Undercroft

(DO) Deacon's Office

(RO) Rector's Office