

POINTS OF INTEREST

Congratulations. ... to Anthony Joseph VIOLA on his Baptism at St Ann Maronite Church on Sunday April 12th. May our Lord continue to guide and bless him and his family.

Daughters of St Ann. The Daughters meeting, originally scheduled for April 16, has been **changed** to **April 23** at 6:30 p.m. Thank you!

Family Movie Night. All are invited to join us for our monthly family movie night at 7:30 pm on April 24 to watch the movie "Mary". This epic new motion picture spans the life of Mary, mother of Christ, from her childhood through the Resurrection of Jesus.

Pancake Breakfast. Our monthly Pancake Breakfast will be held on April 26 in the church hall, following the Divine Liturgy.

Second Penance. Our First Communicants will celebrate their Second Penance on Sunday April 26 at 9.30 am, in preparation for their First Communion to be celebrated on May 3rd.

First Communion. Join us on Sunday May 3rd at 10:00 AM as we celebrate the First Communion of three of our parish children: Rhea Frangieh, Leah Rafka Akiki & John Floyd Merrifield Jr.

Save the Date. Our Lebanese Food Festival will take place on June 13. Details will follow. Please mark your calendar.

Bus Trip to Yankee Stadium on July 18th to attend the New York Yankees vs Seattle Mariners game. The cost is \$100 per person. Only **20 tickets** are still available. For more info, contact Mike Rezey 339-9468; Al Patnode 225-3335 or Richard Peters 272-2934.

Thank You. Father Elias thanks all those generous people who gave gifts in appreciation for his ministry.

Verse Of The Week

"Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!"
(Cf. Lk 24:25)

St. Anselm

Born: 1033

Died: 21 April 1109

Birthplace: Aosta, Piedmont, Italy

Archbishop of Canterbury, England
1093-1109

Saint Anselm of Canterbury, also called Anselm of Aosta after his birthplace and Anselm of Bec after his monastery, was a Benedictine monk, philosopher, and prelate of the Church, who held the office of Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109. Called the founder of scholasticism, he has been a major influence in Western theology and is famous as the originator of the ontological argument for the existence of God and the satisfaction theory of atonement.

He entered the Benedictine order at the Abbey of Bec at the age of 27, where he became abbot in 1079. He became Archbishop of Canterbury under William II of England. He was exiled from England from 1097 to 1100, and again from 1105 to 1107 (under Henry I of England), as a result of the investiture controversy, the most significant conflict between Church and state in Medieval Europe. Anselm was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1720 by a Papal Bull of Pope Clement XI. His feast day is April 21.

Saint's Quote

"Faith seeks understanding. I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand."

Saint Anselm of Canterbury

The Facts: Atheism is Dying Out

We often hear from atheists how religion is dying out as mankind comes to see the clear light of reason. Atheist “intellectuals” speak disparagingly about religion and predict that mankind is on the cusp of a new age in which religion will simply disappear as science, technology and reason are in the ascendant.

The facts indicate exactly the opposite. It is religion which continues to grow around the world while the statistics indicate that agnosticism and atheism are dying out.

A new report by Pew Research chronicled at the Daily Telegraph tells a very interesting story.

While the numbers of those who are “religiously unaffiliated” is predicted to rise in Western Europe and the United States, in global terms their numbers are shrinking as Christianity and Islam continue to wrestle for spiritual domination in the world.

According to the Pew Research Centre, the religiously unaffiliated – referring to atheists, agnostics and other people who do not identify with a religion – are declining as a share of the population.

16 % of the population was unaffiliated to a religion in 2010 and Pew predicted that by 2050, this would fall to 13% mainly because individuals in this group are older and have less children.

The huge growth rate will be among Christians in Africa.

Furthermore, while the rise of Islam is looked on with dismay, by 2050 Christianity will still be predominant. It is widely known that Islam is increasing globally but despite this increase, by 2050, only two more countries (51 in total) will have a population of Muslims that is more than 50 %.

According to the projections it is not until the turn of the century that Muslims will begin to overtake Christians, and then only by 1% worldwide.

In Europe, however, the decline of Christianity and the rise of Islam will continue.

By 2050, the Pew report predicted that 30 % (2.8 billion) of the population will identify themselves as Muslim compared to 31 % (2.9 billion) identifying themselves as Christian. In Europe, it is suggested that by 2050, 10 % of the continent will be Muslim and in the US, it will become the second-largest faith.

These projections are based only on demographic trends. We should remember that most predictions like this end up being wildly inaccurate because they cannot predict a whole range of other variables. Here are some unpredictable variables which could affect these predictions:

A revival of Christianity in the West. In the late 18th century atheism, rationalism and Freemasonry seemed to have taken over Europe. By the mid to late 19th century religious revival had swept through Europe and Christianity was surging forward. This revival was a result of fervent preaching, supernatural occurrences like Lourdes, new saints and evangelization.

War or natural disaster or plagues can affect the religious demographic—both wiping out whole populations and turning people back to religion.

Mass conversions – history has shown (Mexico in the 16th century) that there can be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and whole populations will suddenly convert to Christianity. While missionary efforts to Islamic countries are largely unsuccessful a supernatural conversion of Muslims to Christianity could change the landscape.

Unexpected change in human reproduction. Many of the predictions are based on the assumption that artificial birth technologies will continue to advance throughout the world. Things could go either way: Muslims who are reproducing more than Christians might start to use artificial contraception and abortion or Christians might stop using them. Social trends might be reversed by economic conditions and people may start wanting large families or the unimaginable might happen: birth control pills might stop working and everyone will start having more babies.

The bottom line is that religion is here to stay, and the predictions are that all religious groups will experience growth through the end of the century.

Atheists and agnostics are the only ones (along with Buddhists) who will see their numbers decline.

Source: Patheos.com [April 8, 2015 by Fr. Dwight Longenecker]



The Pope Tweets

“We can bring the Gospel to others only if it has made a deep impact in our lives.”

@ Pontifex / Apr 10, 2015