


Dear Parish Family,

Recently, two Episcopal priests in the Philadelphia area brewed up a controversy when it became known that they were associated with Druidism. Their assumption was that one could be a Druid and a Christian at the same time. But, this is not possible. Druidism and Christianity are two very different religions.

I (Pastor Mike) went to the website of “The Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids” to learn a little more about the Druidic movement. My description is based on material from the website. Modern Druidism is inspired by ancient Druidic lore as described by scholars of this tradition. But, the movement includes religious ideas beyond Celtic Druidism. The movement is “rooted in the green Earth”. No rigid set of beliefs exists. One can be a monotheist, polytheist, pantheist, a duotheist (believer in two gods), or remain uncommitted to any god or conception of God. The duotheists believe in a god and goddess. Pantheists identify god with the created order, believing that no distinction exists between the world and deity. Diversity, based in the notion that no one has a monopoly on the truth, is fundamental to Druidism. Nature is divine. Ceremonies, which include seasonal festivals, celebrate the natural world. The doctrine of reincarnation, that one is reborn many times, is a commonly held belief among Druids.

As you can see, Druidism and Christianity do not mix. The Christian priests who practiced Druidism were under the serious misapprehension that they could be. The Christian confession is clear that there is but One God who is not part of the world but distinct from it. Nature is not divine but a creation of God. Christians are called not to worship nature but to respect it as God’s creation. Love and wonder and respect for creation is found in the Christian tradition. Saint Francis’ hymn, “All Creatures of Our God and King” is a good example of the Christian regard for the natural world. We reject reincarnation in favor of resurrection. As Christ was raised from the dead, we too will be raised. We have a clear set of beliefs that are founded on the biblical witness and are preserved in the catholic tradition which includes the Lutheran Confessions. These beliefs differ considerably from Druidism.

Faithful Christians do not mix religions to form some sort of syncretism. We may not compromise our central beliefs. Christian pastors must shepherd the flock, and lead them to still, not raging, waters. One must choose Christian faith or Druidism, Christian faith or some



other religion. As for your pastors and our house, we worship the One true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Our best response to the Druidic movement is to remain firm in our Christian confession and in the love of Christ for other people. Though it is difficult in a post-modern world, which sees truth as relative, to maintain that Christian faith is the apex of all truth, we must nonetheless keep firm in our witness in the world.

Next month, we shall write of Saint John of Damascus, who made a Christian witness in an Islamic country in the Eighth Century. Perhaps, we can learn some things that apply today.

In Christ,

Pastor Mike & Pastor Mandy

Postscript. Ovates, mentioned above, are not egg-shaped people but herbalists, diviners, and healers in the Druidic tradition. The word ovate apparently comes from an Indo-European root meaning “to be inspired or possessed”. (This information is also from the website.)