
Fun and Frolic: Christian Community and Mission

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by Dean Sam Candler**

What fun! The Cathedral Thrift House Follies (The Fashion Show Follies) returned last week, and they were a frivolous and beneficial success. Thank you to everyone (especially Mary Bondurant) who made that “early Mardi Gras” evening work. We dressed up, we danced, we sang, we paraded, we joked, we enjoyed each other!

Why do we organize events which allow us to act crazy? I am always fascinated with how Mardi Gras gives us the occasion to act just as crazy, or crazier, than Halloween. Actually, I believe they are similar holidays. We dress up weirdly for both. We seem to let our inhibitions go.

Of course, if you don’t know by now, let me remind you: Sometimes it is NOT good to let your inhibitions go! It is good to have boundaries, those created by our family, our church, our culture. Sure, they can be stifling sometimes, but they are usually helpful.

Still, something inside us also wants to push those boundaries, to test them, if you will. And so, on Halloween, we dress in costumes that often reveal some of what is inside us. When I was a child dressing as a “hobo,” I thought to myself how fun and adventurous that might be. Is that why we later dress as Darth Vader or as Obi Wan Kenobi or as a witch?! Dressing as our Dark Side can often give that part of us allowable space, so that it does not sneak up and surprise us during our regular life.

Mardi Gras is the same. We know we are supposed to be disciplined and sober and somber in Lent, so we let it all go on the Tuesday before (or the week before, or the month before).

So we did, last Thursday. Thanks be to the Thrift House board and volunteers who helped organize another “Fashion Show” of follies and delight. We played piano. We paraded. We joked. We laughed. It was exhilarating. I think I saw The Beatles there. Was that Yoko? It was a clever and distinctive way to observe Mardi Gras. Thank you!

And the financial proceeds went to a great cause! An organization called Kidz2Leaders. Their mission is “to provide stability, opportunity and a Christian community for children of inmates to break the cycle of incarceration.” They are a strong group.

Here was my favorite part of the evening, an evening full of favorites. As I was leaving, after most people had left, and as housekeepers and sextons were beginning their usual fantastic job of cleaning and re-arranging, someone approached me. She said she had something to say. I had no idea whether her comment was going to be positive or negative.

“Before tonight, I did not even know the beneficiary of tonight’s event,” she said, softly. “I just want you to know,” she said, “that this is the organization that saved one of my children. She would not be where she was without it. And my other child, at seventeen years old, is now working with that organization. Thank you so much for supporting this ministry.”

Wow. That conversation right there was the delightful blessing of the evening. When the church is having fun, while also being real, and also helping the world, we have to be doing things well. That is what I call Christian community. Christian community is not just simplistic and easy frivolity together; it is revealing, disclosing community, something that reveals part of who we are. When we do that, we help the world; and when we do

that, we end up supporting organizations like Kidz2Leaders.

Thank you! Blessed Lent to you all!

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

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