

Christus Rex

Anglican Province of Christ the King

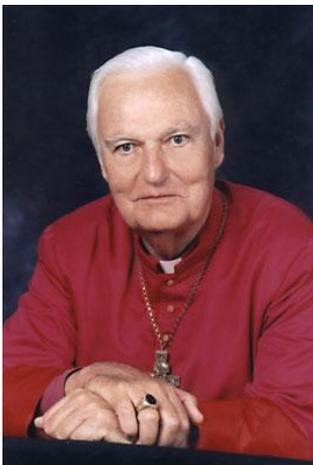


Special

Apostolic Christianity in the Anglican Tradition June, 2015

In Memoriam Archbishop Robert Sherwood Morse April 10, 1924 – May 28, 2015

The Most Reverend Robert Sherwood Morse, the revered first Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Christ the King, has gone, as he would say, to gather at the river.



Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.
(Robert Lowry, 1864)

Archbishop Morse died peacefully, at age 91, on Thursday, May 28, at 2:25 a.m. in his house in Berkeley. His wife, Nancy Morse, and their daughter, Nina Gladish, were at his bedside. The cause of death was pancreatic cancer.

“All I ever wanted to be was a college chaplain,” he once said, but God had greater plans for him. On Jan. 28, 1978, in Denver he was consecrated Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Christ The King, an orthodox Anglo-Catholic church body formed in 1977 to ensure the continuation of historic Anglican Christianity in America. This traditional Diocese arose in response to radical changes made in the fundamental faith and practices of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA).

As other traditional priests and churches joined this movement, the Diocese became a nation-wide Province and he was elected Archbishop. He retired as Archbishop of the Province on January 25, 2008.

In his 64 years as a priest and bishop, Archbishop Morse created college ministries at Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley, founded the York School in Monterey, and established many churches in the Bay Area, including St. Stephen’s in Yountville, St. Thomas’s Church in San Francisco, and St. Ann Chapel in Palo Alto. At the time of his death he was acting provost of the traditional St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological Seminary in Berkeley, which he founded in 1979.

Archbishop Robert Sherwood Morse was born April 10, 1924, in San Francisco, California, to Carl Lambert Morse and Estelle Scott Morse. He grew up in Burlingame, graduating from Burlingame High School.

As a young boy, he often accompanied his father to Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton to converse with his father’s mentors. The visits inspired the future Archbishop with a wonder-filled curiosity at the infinite space of the universe. He later said that he “backed into theology” through history while trying to understand “why mankind was so mixed up”.

In 1942 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the Infantry Signal Corps in Alaska until his discharge in 1945. He received his B.A. from Pacific College (now University of the Pacific), Stockton, California, in

Special

Christus Rex - Page 1

June, 2015

1948, where he excelled in intercollegiate forensics. He graduated from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Illinois in 1950.

Archbishop Morse was ordained an Episcopal deacon on July 8, 1950, and a priest on February 22, 1951. From 1950 to 1952 he served as an assistant at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Burlingame, California. In 1951 he established St. Elizabeth's Church in South San Francisco and was its Vicar until 1957. He also established the Episcopal Chaplaincy at Stanford University in 1952. And in 1954, he established St. Edmund's Episcopal Church in Pacifica, California. In 1957 he moved to Berkeley and established the Episcopal Chaplaincy at the University of California at Berkeley, working there from 1957 to 1961.

In 1962 he co-founded York School in Monterey, California, originally as an Episcopal college preparatory school for boys, and was Assistant Headmaster until 1965. In 1966 he was called to be Rector of St. Peter's Church in Oakland, California, where he served until 1984.

In 1977 Archbishop Morse and other concerned Episcopal clergy and laity gathered in St. Louis, Missouri. They set forth a statement of faith called the 'Affirmation of Saint Louis,' which expressed their commitment as Episcopalians to orthodox Christian doctrine and discipline. In separating from ECUSA, they created the Diocese of Christ the King, which included six western parishes. In 1978, then Father Morse was consecrated Bishop by The Rt. Rev. Albert A. Chambers, retired Episcopal Bishop of Springfield, Illinois, acting as chief consecrator with two co-consecrators to ensure the transmission of the Apostolic Succession.

As new congregations were established across the country they petitioned to affiliate with the emerging Diocese. Soon Archbishop Morse was responsible for a nation-wide Anglo-Catholic diocese. In 1991, the Diocese of Christ the King voted to divide into three geographical dioceses, and later added a fourth diocese, under a provincial structure creating the Anglican Province of Christ the King. The bishops of the dioceses then elected Archbishop Morse as the first Archbishop of the Province.

Archbishop Morse was a charismatic figure, standing six feet three inches tall with a deep resonant voice. He was an avid reader of T.S. Eliot, Boris Pasternak, and C.S. Lewis and often quoted them in his sermons. His favorite lines from Pasternak's poem "The Wedding" were: "For life, too, is only an instant, / Only the dissolving of ourselves/ In the selves of all others/ As if bestowing a gift."

The former Episcopal priest and Zen philosopher Alan Watts discerned a passionate spirit in the young Robert Sherwood Morse and wrote in his memoir *In My Own Way* that "His subsequent success as a priest derives from the fact that he is one of the few people who genuinely feels that God is exuberant love."

In 1957, Archbishop Morse married Nancy Burkett Nickel, a beautiful widow with two children, at St. Mary the Virgin Church in San Francisco with Bishop Karl Morgan Block officiating. Years later, a young student once asked Archbishop Morse, "How do you separate out the love for your wife and your love for Jesus?" His response: "I don't."

The Archbishop's love for God would be translated into a medley of friendships with non-believers, seekers, the lonely, and the unloved. His parting words with a friend were nearly always, "All is Grace." In 2010 the 91-year old architect John Carl Warnecke, a former agnostic who had been diagnosed with cancer, asked his old friend to baptize him. During the ceremony, the Archbishop poured a jug of ice-cold water over his head "To wake him up!"

The Archbishop developed a ministry to the oarsmen of the University of California Crew Team, who lived in rooms in buildings of the Seminary in Berkeley. Aside from their rent, the oarsmen were required to serve at chapel services. Here they were likely to hear the Archbishop say, "Life is a journey with God, into God." Just before his death, the crew team named one of their boats *Archbishop Robert S. Morse* in his honor.

Archbishop Morse was also the executive director of the American Church Union, editor of *American Church News*, founder and editor of the *New Oxford Review*, and a director of St. Dorothy's Rest, a retreat complex near Sebastopol, California.

Archbishop Morse is survived by his wife Nancy, a daughter, Mrs. John (Nina) Gladish, a son Mr. John Nickel, nine grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Memorial contributions can be sent to the Anglican Province of Christ the King, 2725 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94115, or to St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological College, 2316 Bowditch, P.O. Box 40020, Berkeley, CA 94704. A funeral mass was held on June 6 at St. Peter's Church, Oakland, CA. R.I.P. ✕

**Sermon at the Funeral Mass for Archbishop Robert Sherwood Morse
June 6, 2015 The Pro-cathedral of St Peter, Oakland, California
The Most Reverend James E. Provence**



In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

“Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through His great power from the beginning. Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies: Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instruction.”

So begins the forty-fourth chapter of the book of Ecclesiasticus, and it seems written for Robert Sherwood Morse. He became famous by his courage and strength standing up to the hierarchy of a church that was losing its way. He appeared on national television as a guest on William F. Buckley’s *The Firing Line*. He debated the recreational drug guru, Timothy Leary, calling Leary’s drugs “the devil’s sacrament”. Archbishop Morse appeared on television programs and in countless interviews. His wisdom, straight talk and charisma attracted many people from across this nation and challenged them to take a serious look at the Christian Faith.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, Robert Sherwood Morse publicly debated with the heretical bishop James Pike in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He was known to journalists and politicians; industrialists and financiers; authors and actors. But the people he talked about the most were the people in the pews. In his eyes, they were heroes – they were the brave soldiers who sacrificed time, talent and treasure to ensure that catholic Christianity in the Anglican expression would remain alive for generations to come. It was through his vision, courage and leadership that we have the Anglican Province of Christ the King.

He was the spiritual father who begot many of us in the Faith. He ruled the people committed to his care with a shepherds diligence and courage. He led us from the confusion of the Church in the 1970’s to a place where we could worship God Almighty in peace and safety, maintaining the catholic faith.

Most all of us who are wearing a clerical collar today owe our orders to Archbishop Morse. His willingness to take on the burden of episcopal orders ensured that the people would have proper deacons and priests. He helped to form us, provided for our education through the seminary and was always available to talk with us. For all the people of this province, he has been our Father in God. He has been a strong and faithful leader of the people, our own Moses who led us out from the church of our former obedience when it had gone so far astray.

I had the privilege of spending many hours in the presence of this great man – in the office, on airplanes and in churches and am honored to be able to speak about him today.

But Archbishop Morse would chastise me for talking about him. He would prefer that I talk about God. But it seems impossible to even think of this great man without also thinking about God because he devoted his life leading us to our heavenly Father. He guided us by his leadership, his discipline, his godly counsel, afternoon tea in the office, and mostly by his example.

Uncompromising in the faith, Archbishop Morse was a leader of catholic minded clergy back in his days in the Episcopal Church. His vocal opposition to the liberalism entering the church in those early days came with a cost. He told the story of being in a class on the New Testament where the instructor was, yet again, trying to explain away the reality of our Lord’s miracles. In this particular case, the instructor said that Jesus walked on the water because God told him where the rocks were. In that famous loud voice, which sometimes he thought was a whisper, Seminarian Robert Morse said “Wouldn’t it be easier if Jesus, God incarnate, simply walked on the water?” That was the last time his objections were heard, as the Dean suggested that perhaps Robert Morse had learned all he could from Seabury Western, and that he should go home and report to his bishop.

He did report back and Karl Morgan Block, Bishop of California, ordained Robert Sherwood Morse a deacon, and then later a priest. Archbishop Morse had a great fondness for Bishop Block and quoted him frequently. Two of his favorite quotes are “Christianity is not taught; it’s caught” and “The judgments of time are always moral.” How often did we hear those bits of wisdom? I don’t know the source, but another favorite of his was “God writes straight with crooked lines”. And who can forget the famous “All is grace” which is imbedded in our minds and hearts.

Of course we cannot overlook the faithfulness, strength and courage of “Mrs. Archbishop”, the most wonderful Nancy. Archbishop Morse told of returning home after the disastrous 1976 General Convention of the Episcopal Church and telling Nancy that the time had come for them to leave that church. It meant sacrificing their financial security, but he said that he would rather face our Lord on the last day with his faith in his hand rather than having surrendered it for a pension check. Nancy stood by him and supported his decision. As he began to form congregations around the country, she often traveled with him and won the affection of many by her character, charm and grace.

Our beloved archbishop was known internationally and held in high esteem by many. He would walk into a room and that room belonged to him. He could be fierce whenever anyone threatened his flock. You crossed him at your own peril. But he was also gentle, compassionate, and kind. He once told me that our job was to show the compassion of Christ when dealing with God’s people. Many of us clergy heard him say that the role of a priest was to personalize the love of Christ.

You could see that in action whenever the Archbishop was with university students. He always had time for them. Who knows how many he counseled, comforted and guided over the years. Until his last days, they continued to seek his wise counsel and fatherly warmth.

One of man’s fears is reaching the end of life wondering if he made a difference. Archbishop Morse need not worry about that. He made an enormous difference and it is written in the lives of us who are here today, and many others who were touched by this most remarkable man. Some men look to build monuments so that the world will not forget who they were. You and I are living monuments to this great successor to the apostles.

Saint Paul writing to Saint Timothy says “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” These words could just as easily come from the pen of Robert Sherwood Morse.

Many of us, especially the clergy, remember Archbishop Morse closing Anglican gatherings with a very Baptist hymn. It is called “Shall We Gather at the River”. The memory of those times, with him leading us in song, brings tears to many of us now. So I would like to share with you why it meant so much to Archbishop Morse.

He told me that when he was in the Army during World War II, he was stationed briefly near a small Southern town. This post served as a staging ground for troops about to be transported to the battlefield, and of course, many did not return. Each time a train loaded with anxious soldiers headed off to board troop ships, the town would gather at the railroad station and sing to them the promise of eternal life with God. That simple act of charity touched the heart of Archbishop Morse. He, too, was shipped out – sent to Alaska to help guard against an attack from the Pacific. Throughout the war, he took comfort in these words, and I leave you with them.



Archbishop Morse’s grandsons serve as his pallbearers.

Please stand with me and sing this to our father in God; our teacher in the Faith and our warrior as he now rests by that shining river.

Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod,
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?

Refrain:

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river;
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

On the margin of the river,
Washing up its silver spray,
We will talk and worship ever,
All the happy golden day.
Ere we reach the shining river,
Lay we every burden down;
Grace our spirits will deliver,
And provide a robe and crown.

At the smiling of the river,
Mirror of the Savior's face,
Saints, whom death will never sever,
Lift their songs of saving grace.
Soon we'll reach the silver river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease;
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river;
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.



The Absolution of the Dead

New Cal Rowing Team Boat Christened in Honor of Archbishop Morse

The newest boat of the University of California Men's Rowing Team was christened April 21st in honor of retired Archbishop Robert Sherwood Morse in ceremonies at the T. Gary Rogers Rowing Center, 2999 Glascock Street, Oakland. Archbishop Morse performed the christening by pouring champagne on the bow of the boat while saying, "I dedicate this boat to all who will row in her and to all who will coach the team."

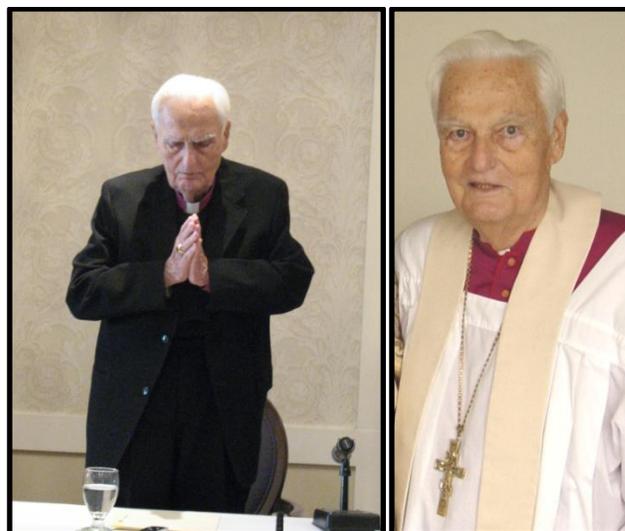
The Most Reverend Robert Sherwood Morse was in his office most days as Provost of the Provincial Seminary, St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological College, which he founded in 1979. Each year since then some members of the Cal Men's Crew have been housed in rooms in the seminary buildings just off the campus at the corner of Bowditch and Durant.

Head Coach Mike Teti spoke in praise of Archbishop Morse's strong support of the team for over 30 years. Coach Teti commented about how Archbishop Morse counseled the young rowers and helped "form their character."

Assistant Coach Scott Frandsen said, "We are here today to honor that commitment." Nearly all the Men's Crew team members and coaches attended the christening.



Abp. Morse christens the boat named in his honor



Abp. Morse prays at a recent Diocesan Synod



From Left: Coach Teti, Abp. Morse, Coach Frandsen, Jay Peart

Christus Rex is the national publication of the Anglican Province of Christ the King.
 2725 Sacramento Street
 San Francisco, California 94115
 Archbishop James E. Provence
 Copyright © 2015, Anglican Province of Christ the King.
 All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form without permission.
 Contact: Monty C. Stanford, Ph.D.
 messenger@anglicanpck.org
 The APCK Provincial web site is available on the internet at <http://www.anglicanpck.org>