



# ***The Shepherd's Staff***

***Newsletter of the  
Diocese of the Western States***

***June 2020***

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## **The Virtue of Humility**

One day, a senior devil Screwtape was crossing the African desert when he came across a group of junior devils who were tempting a holy hermit. The junior devils were in the process of trying to tempt the holy man with seductions of the flesh and pleasures of the table. They filled his mind with creature comforts, visions of great wealth and gossip. They even tried to shake his Faith by suggesting that God was not real and that his mind was failing. Nevertheless, nothing they tried worked. The holy man stood firm. Screwtape told them that their methods would never work. "Just watch me," he said. Thereupon, Screwtape, disguised as a priest from Alexandria, went to the holy man and said, "Have you heard the news? I have come to tell you the good news that your brother has been made Bishop of Alexandria." As the scowl of malignant jealousy clouded the holy man's face, Screwtape in triumph said to the devils, "That's how it's done!"

I have always loved old Walt Disney cartoons. I vividly remember the temptation of Donald Duck (I think there is a Pluto version as well). I still have this mental image of Donald trying his best to resist the temptation to be mean spirited while his tiny angel-of-conscience (a little version of himself complete with halo) flies around his head and pleads with him not to be mean and nasty. However, also flying around his head is a tiny devil-duck who whispers in his ear how stupid it is not to get ahead and that he shouldn't listen to that fool angel. Finally, the tiny devil clobbers the angel-of-conscience with a pitchfork or giant club. Fortunately, the Disney cartoons of that era still taught Judeo-Christian morality and Donald finally does the right thing. Nevertheless, Donald's dilemma – however humorous - reminds us that we have what some theologians have called lower and higher souls.

Our lower souls or natures are autocratic, arrogant, rebellious, and ever striving to be gods. Our lower nature is rooted in the same malignant pride that made Lucifer cry, "I will not serve. I will elevate my throne over the throne of the highest!" Moreover, let us never forget that Satan knew this when he whispered into Adam and Eve's ears, "You will be like God, knowing good and evil." Nevertheless, we know that God sent his Son in the greatest act of humility to empty himself and come to earth. And His Son taught love and appealed to our higher souls. He died for our sins and gave us his Spirit and the Church to guide in our pilgrimages. He turned malignant jealousy into divine love.

Screwtape and Donald Duck's tiny devil-angels continue to whisper into our ears that we are gods. Do you remember the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican? Do we come into life (or into Church) as humble Publicans begging forgiveness and seeking salvation? Or do we pridefully stand in front of God and declare how righteous we are? Now let us be honest! We all have a little book of names of those who tempt us to play the Pharisee and look down on others. Therefore, may we ever by grace practice humility like the Publican so that we may be found righteous in the eyes of Almighty God.

# Photos from Westcliffe and Berkeley

[Special thanks to Peter Schroepfer]



## Saint Joseph of Arimathea Seminary

With all of the uncertainty going on around us, it has been decided that the on-site Saint Joseph of Arimathea Summer Session is cancelled, **BUT plans are being formulated for an online session for the last two weeks of July (20-24 and 27-31).** Class will assemble on the Zoom platform at 9:00 a.m. and read Morning Prayer together. Instruction will follow for an hour to an hour and a half in a Seminar setting. At the end of the morning seminar instruction, a question will be posed to the students and auditors. The class will re-assemble at 4:00 p.m. and the question will be discussed with each student contributing their work. The afternoon session will conclude with Evening Prayer.

The first week will consist of a rigorous in-depth analysis of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, specifically the Lectionary, Calendar, Morning and Evening Prayer, the development of the Anglican Prayer Book Rites, and practical applications on the 1928 Communion Office and the Missal Mass. The second week will center around in-depth Biblical studies including authorship, the J E P D question, the Synoptic Gospels and their lineage, the evolution of the Bible and the Difficult Sayings of Jesus.

An individual set of final Essay Exams for each student will be assigned on the last day and will be due on August 6<sup>th</sup>. The class will have one last meeting on August 24<sup>th</sup> to share out the work accomplished. Finally, all seminarians and recently (often “fast-tracked”) clergy (under ten years) will be strongly advised by their Bishops to set aside time and attend for credit.

We are working on Fall Semester offerings which will be announced soon. We know for sure that Bishop Hansen’s Church History class will conclude, and my Biblical Greek Class will continue. I have had one inquiry about starting Ecclesiastical Latin up again. Let me know, if you are interested in Latin or in Greek – or any other class you would like offered.

### Around the Diocese

- We are sorry to announce that due to COVID 19 and other complications, the Bishop’s Summer Camp is cancelled for 2020. Erin Salazar managed to get hold of Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center and was able to roll over our deposit until 2021. We will keep everyone informed.
- Deacon Michael Ruffino of Saint Chad’s Anglican Mission in Colorado has had a successful knee replacement and is recovering nicely and about to start physical therapy.
- My “at distance” Confirmation Class will begin on Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> and is filling up nicely. **This is important: this class is not meant as a replacement for a Rector’s/Vicar’s Confirmation Class.** All Summer Session participants are invited to audit the Confirmation Class.
- As we begin to reopen our churches, please remember that Lenten Mite boxes should be taken to your church once it is open for worship so that we can contribute to the support of St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary.
- Thanks to all the Rectors, Vicars and parish Treasurers who got their Annual Reports in to Bishop Hansen. We may not meet in Synod until September, but some budget decisions need to be made.
- It is never too late, even if you do not have an active ACW, to pay your parish ACW dues. Diocesan \$35 plus Provincial \$15 = \$50 sent to Gillian Golden P.O. Box 558 Selma OR 97538.
- We are pleased to announce the publication of Christine Sunderland’s **Angel Mountain**, a story of a holy hermit, a Holocaust survivor, a literary librarian, and a Christian geneticist who search for peace and happiness in a culture of chaos. A flyer in PDF is attached to this newsletter.
- Pray for our Archbishop and our Suffragan Bishop along with the priests and deacons of our Diocese. They are under great stress and they need your prayers and support. Pray for those who despair and struggle to find the gift of Faith. Pray for the Church, the unity of God’s People, Peace, Social Justice, those who seek Holy Orders, those who have died in the service of our Country, along with the sick (especially those struck down with COVID19), the suffering, the friendless, and the needy.

## From Saint David's San Rafael

We have our regular Sunday morning service at 10 am, which we have been live-streaming. We have a ZOOM discussion time after worship every Sunday, which sometimes goes on for an hour or two! Fr. Craig also has Evensong services on Tuesday and Thursday evening, which are live-streamed.

In addition to our regular prayer request emails (which we have done for years) we also started asking church members to send in "reports". We're on the third round right now. We ask our church members and friends to send in reports of what has been going on their lives, what they've been doing, and maybe including photos, and then send them out to all the other church folks. There are two or three members who do not have a computer; in those cases, we call them to ask how they're doing, and then write up a report to send out (and we copy all the reports and mail them to the folks who do not have computers).

We hope things will return to normal ASAP!

Mindy Isaacs

## The Mirage A Sermon for Whitsunday

Life's like a mirage. Driving through the desert, the asphalt ribbon stretches out. Then a placid blue lake shimmers ahead, but the highway goes right through it. Its eeriness draws you to watch its wispy edges steam in the sun. Surely that's water. Until, just as you're there, it fades to dry ground, weeds and a highway baking in the sun. What we know as "real life" is often no more than that lake.

The size of the sports section in this paper is evidence of what real life is to us. Headlines scream of murders, budgets, riots, political wrangling, water crises: we glaze over and scan the scores and standings, onto the desert seeking that cool mirage.

We veil our vague uneasiness with a mirage of heaven because, well, I'm a good person. Once that was all there was to offer.

Not anymore.

Ever since Christ's event-filled life, and ever since He sent His Holy Spirit to indwell us, we have within us the Life-giver. Real life. Mirage gives way to Reality.

The Holy Spirit can't be seen. Only the effects of His presence may be known. You feel Him as the trees bend before the wind. At Pentecost, God's Spirit came and filled the hall and streets with the sound of wind, invisible except by His effect.

How can I have the Holy Spirit indwelling me? Be baptized. Then make lots of room. He won't force Himself into your life. Your emptying we call "repentance." You must strip your mirage away and see the desolation. Give God full charge to dig, empty it out, show you how you've given the enemy your life.

"Real life" wasn't real after all, and it wasn't life either. Blow away that mirage, and you can finally, really live.

May you have a truly blessed Pentecost.

+The Rt. Rev. Peter F. Hansen

## People want to know...

...what your parish is doing . It may not mean much to you but others want to know. I need pictures and stories about what is going on in your parishes. I know we have been in rough times as of late, but we are "moving back in" so get me those pictures and stories so I can share them with the Diocese. **Please!**