



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

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

***September 2021***

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Let's not kid ourselves. The last decade has been tough! The hearse and the moving van! A society more unhappy than any of us could ever have imagined! Privilege, entitlement and wrong-called-right on all sides! Some say it all began when Archbishop Morse and so many of our most faithful brothers and sisters went to God; others choose a far too easy cop-out blaming contemporary society or politics; still others have lost their vision or their faith. But the truth has ever been among us from the Garden of Eden on. We are the children of Original Sin. No matter how hard we try, we just can't seem to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. In the Covenant of Moses, the Law was spelled out with some harsh penalties. And yet it is sobering to remember how much of the Old Testament is passed on to us in the New Testament for our spiritual growth back when times were supposedly easier as well as now.

Consider Matthew 5. 5 (*Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth*) with Psalm 37. 11 (*But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace*); or Matthew 9. 13 (*But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*) with Hosea 6. 6 (*For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*); or Luke 10. 27 (*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself*) with Leviticus 18. 19 (*You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord*) - our Summary of the Law.

My point is that NOTHING has changed. NOTHING! Men and women have always faced the same dilemma, to obey or not to obey. To choose God's mercy and not empty ceremonies! The Letter or the Spirit! Love of self or love of neighbor! Yes, other ages and places have been worse than others but that doesn't change the point. The Episcopal Church had lost its moral compass long before 1976 and that is our Raison d'être, our reason for being. But not just for a worldly crusade, no matter how noble, but for our own soul's sake. Indeed the last decade has been tough! Satan is exultant and never more so than when we lose our vision and our resolve. For those who think our movement is dead I am truly sorry. I wish they knew the history of the Church in general and the Anglican Church in particular. I wish they knew the power of the Holy Ghost!

One of the reasons I came to love the Episcopal/Anglican Church happened fifty years ago when, on Easter morning in a Low Episcopal Church, I looked across the aisle and saw an old husband and wife on their knees telling God they were sorry for their sins. Such humility printed on my mind an indelible mark which has remained with me to this day! Do we want to make the world better? Do we want to reinvigorate the Church? Well, it begins with each of us on our knees praying for God's forgiveness; praying for our brothers and sisters; praying for our friends and enemies; praying for God's will to be done. Only then will we be able to pick up our crosses and follow our Lord and Saviour. Only then we will see the hearse as a moving van to heaven; and an entitled society as irrelevant because God is in command!

# A PASTORAL LETTER TO BE READ TO ALL PARISHES AT ALL SERVICES

on Sunday, August 29th, AD 2021

August 28, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the effort of full disclosure and transparency, I have an emergent health challenge which I must relate to you. On August 16th I was diagnosed with what has now been identified as Stage T-1 bladder cancer. I underwent surgery to remove a large fibrous tumor on Tuesday, August 24th which was partially successful. Subsequently, I am meeting with a urologic oncologist on September 7th to map out a strategy of treatment options and eradication. Pathology indicates the stage and type of cancer makes treatment options various and highly successful, with small chance of recurrence.



As the doctors and I determine a treatment plan and my energy levels remain strong, I will be working from home administering the Province and seeing to both my diocesan and archiepiscopal duties and responsibilities. By God's Grace there has been neither pain nor the need for narcotic pain medications. My mind is clear, and I have a tremendous support system in both my family and in you, my extended spiritual family. To that end, the Council of Bishops has pledged its unending support, as well as Canon Jones, who will assist me daily as needed – to whom I am greatly indebted.

Because we have yet to determine treatment options and because I take my teaching responsibilities very seriously, I have decided to postpone my Ecclesiology course slated to begin September 1st and push it forward to the Spring Semester of 2022, God willing. I apologize for the inconvenience, but I must deal with these health concerns first. Likewise, my travel calendar is suspended as of now, with one notable exception, until we know more.

The Synod of the Diocese of the Atlantic States is scheduled to proceed as planned and, at present, I have been cleared by my oncologist to attend and preside, given that no treatment options/surgery could be scheduled to occur before September 20th, when I return to Raleigh.

As Archbishop Morse said, "All is Grace," no matter what outcome, God is in control, and I am truly thankful. No phone calls are necessary. That said, if you feel you must speak with me, please call. Otherwise, direct your Provincial or Diocesan business to Canon Jones, who will discuss matters with me.

Finally, I solicit your prayers of healing and wholeness at all Masses and in your private devotions as well. As plans progress, the Bishops and the Province will be informed. I look forward to serving all of you in God's Holy Church well into the future as we move the APCK forward.

With God's Blessing and In His Peace,

I remain,

**✠ John**  
*Archbishop*

## ACW Notes, September 2021

September already, and Fall is in the air. The days are still warm, but the nights and early mornings are chilly, and we are glad of sweaters to keep us warm. Our country is going through tough times, and God is our sweater, keeping us safe and comforted in the dark days. Now, more than ever, the power of prayer will get us through the dark and into the light. St. Paul says, 'pray without ceasing', and we need that now. Pray for our clergy, our country, our servicemen and for each other. Please consider joining St. Jude intercessory prayer group (email Debra Ponec at ponec@msn.com to include your name on the list).

On a brighter note, Provincial ACW has raised \$3,135.03 with Lenten Mite boxes! This money goes to St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary for much needed student support. Thank you all for your support.

As some churches look ahead to Christmas Bazaars and sales, don't forget to think about items for the ACW Drawings at synod, small items for the Welcome Bags, and of course preserves for "Preserving the Priesthood"

(I just opened a Plum Brandy Jam from the last Synod – it is great!, editor)

Peace and blessings to you all, Gillian Golden, ACW President

### The Last Word

Many are confused about what happens in the Mass. The question often asked is, "Do Anglicans believe in the doctrine of Transubstantiation?" I reply that I don't understand what Transubstantiation really means. It is a problem of semantics, based on Aristotelian forms of thought, "substance" and "accidents." The substance of a table is tableness, and the accidents are its appearance, such as hardwood polish. In the Mass the Roman Catholic Church teaches that at the Consecration the substance of the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but the accidents, the forms of bread and wine, remain the same.

The point is that there is a change. Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Christians do not hold to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, because it doesn't fully explain it. We do hold with all Apostolic Christians that there is an objective change in the consecrated elements of bread and wine. Christ does actually become sacramentally, objectively, present within these forms. How this happens we cannot by any philosophical method explain. Through the Invocation of the Holy Spirit by a properly ordained priest, the bread and wine are changed. The Risen Christ becomes sacramentally present, so that "he may dwell in us, and we in him." The sanctuary bells are rung at the time of Consecration only to awaken our wandering attention to the reality of this mystery, the eternal transfixed in time. The most important element in the Mass is the Presence, Christ sacramentally, existentially, actually present in our midst! We are given the grace of His Presence in our lives.

Our time and culture have been invaded with foreign religious thought, an eclectic mixture of Oriental and Gnostic forms often called "New Age" that promotes everything from massage to meditation, self-realization to crystal readings, tarot cards to horoscopes and spirit channelings. All are focused on the self, turning within, self-empowerment, self-knowledge, self-centeredness (the Christian definition of sin). The Mass is the opposite. The Mass externalizes one's self, prompting us to give outwardly, to love God, to love one's neighbor as one's self. The Church commands that we gather together in God and with each other to offer the sacrifice of the Mass every Sunday, the day of Christ's resurrection. Love demands constant discipline, constant exposure. We cannot be irregular or indifferent in our loves, even our love for God.

In this age of rebellion, the Berkeley bumper sticker is the perfect example: "Question Authority." In this era of cultural confusion and moral chaos, the authority of God Incarnate in history, Christ Himself, commands that if we would know Him (He who is our purpose and our end in life) to "do this in remembrance [recalling] of me." We are not to remember Him in the past, but call Him into the present, that "he may dwell in us, and we in him."

In the *Ballad of Count Arnaldos*, the writer recalls riding on the shore with a falcon on his wrist. He heard a mariner on a ship singing a magic song that made the wind drop, the sea become calm, the fish rise to the surface, and the birds perch on the mast. He begged the mariner to teach him the song, but the man replied, "I will only tell that song to him who sails with me." When we come to Mass we begin our journey. We start to sail with Him.

+ Robert S. Morse