



The Shepherd's Staff

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

***April - May 2022
Pre Synod Special Edition***

Laugh at the Devil

To paraphrase Winston Churchill: Never have so many fallen prey to so few and unimportant temptations. Thus, the greatest need of the destructive post covid age in which we live is to find within our souls and with God's grace to place **all our trust and hope** in our RISEN SAVIOUR! Yet we let the Devil's work (fear of death, gossip, selfishness, envy, lack of forgiveness) make us forget and marginalize the Victory won on Easter Morning. We are tempted to despair (Satan's sharpest dagger!) and so easily we forget that Christ died and rose from the dead so that we might reign with him in heaven. Yet we still fear death! We still let the Devil manipulate. But consider:

CHRIST is risen from the dead : and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death: by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 1 Cor. xv. 20. So the point is that, as God raised Jesus back to life on Easter Day, so in like manner he will raise us back to life who have trusted in Christ.

And so I am begging you, my brothers and sisters, to stop living in fear and trust in God Try to mend broken relationships (whose fault is irrelevant), read your bible, pick and use your Prayer Book; pray and meditate on God's wondrous works, and go to church. I have been astonished and reprimanded in my Historical Homiletics Class as one Church Father's sermon after another (St. Gregory the Great or St. Jerome) exhorts his hearers to do penance for their sins and most especially to give alms and to forgive injuries and to adopt bodily mortification and to obey Christ by imitating him especially in meditation of his commands and parables.

The key to being able to laugh at the Devil is humility; after all that fallen angel is the king of pride (*Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven, Paradise Lost 1. 263*). On Maundy Thursday during the Maundy or Washing of Feet, the priest (or bishop) washes the feet of those in rank beneath him, clerical and lay, to show the virtue of humility. We have no choir but we used these verses as a meditation (minus the musical): *The Lord Jesus after he had supped with his disciples washed their feet, and said unto them: Know ye what I your Lord and Master have done unto you? I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you. Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him: if I wash not thy feet, thou hast no part in me. What I do thou knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter. If I your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: How much more ought ye to wash one another's feet? Let these three abide in you, faith, hope and charity: but the greatest of these is charity.*

Finally, humility (true humility) gives us a sense of gratitude for all that we have and all that Christ has wrought for us. When we put our trust in God Who raised his own Son from the dead, we find that our problems caused by that old Serpent and our own human frailty and pride shrink into insignificance. ***We can laugh at the Devil!*** We can love our neighbors as ourselves and we can exult in those powerful words: *For as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Diocese of the Western States - Thirty First Annual Synod

Bishop Mitchell and Saint Luke's Redding are hard at work planning the Western States Synod being held from May 10th to May 14th. Diocesan Synod is like the parish annual meeting: officers are elected, meetings are held (most importantly the Standing Committee, Board of Directors, Anglican Church Women) including a General Business Meeting and Banquet. There will be a mini retreat, recitation of the Divine Offices and a Pontifical Mass.

Tuesday, May 10th – 5:00 p.m.

Hosted Barbeque at the Home of Bob and Molly Skinner – All Early Arrival Guests are Welcome

Guests may bring a bottle of "Bubbly" – Please RSVP, Bishop Mitchell, or Nona – Let them know if you need a ride

Note that Shuttle Transportation will be provided between Saint Luke's and the Red Lion

St. Luke's

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

8:00 a.m., Low Mass: *Fr. Mautner*

9:00 a.m., Standing Committee

Noon: Hosted Lunch

1:15 p.m., Board of Directors

Thursday, May 12, 2022

9:00 a.m., Morning Prayer and Mass

Father Karcher and Father Longworth

10:15 a.m., Workshop: *Fr. Isaacs*

1:15 p.m. Clericus

4:00 p.m., Evening Prayer: *Fr. Canda, Dn. Ruffino*

Clergy-Wives Dinner

Friday, May 13, 2022

2:00 p.m. Practice for Pontifical Mass

3:00 p.m., Pontifical Mass

Saturday, May 14, 2022

9:00 a.m. Low Mass: *Bp. Mitchell, Dn. Lawrence*

Red Lion

7:00 a.m., Hospitality **Sacramento Room** (Pick up folders)

Retreat (Siskiyou Room)

10:00 a.m., Morning Prayer: *Deacon Lawrence*

10:45 a.m., The Litany/Penitential Office: *Dn. Shepard*

11:30 a.m., Readings from C. S. Lewis: *Fr. Karcher*

Noon: lunch at Saint Luke's

1:00 p.m. Readings from Holy Scripture: *Dn. Powell*

1:45: p.m. The Meditation: *Bishop Mitchell*

2:15: p.m. Evening Prayer: *Father LaBarbera*

Reception (Cascade – Siskiyou Rooms)

3:00 p.m. ACW Reception

5:00 p.m. Bishop's Auction

7:00 a.m., Hospitality **Sacramento Room** (Pick up folders)

11:30 a.m. No Host ACW and Clergy Luncheon

1:00 p.m., ACW Conference

No Host Dinner on own

7:00 a.m., Hospitality **Sacramento Room** (Pick up folders)

9:00 a.m., Morning Prayer (**Cascade-Siskiyou Rooms**)

Fr. Britton and Dn. Powell

9:30 a.m. Delegate Registration (**Cascade-Siskiyou Rooms**)

10:00: a.m., Business Meeting (**Cascade-Siskiyou Rooms**)

12:00 p.m., No Host Lunch

6:00 p.m., Reception (No Host Bar)

7:00 p.m., Synod Banquet (**Sierra Trinity Room**)

Provincial A C W Fundraiser

Benefiting St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary Session, July 18 – 29, 2022

A beautiful Dalmatic has been donated by Father Philip Ternahan from the Church of Our Saviour in Santa Barbara, California! Plus, the Provincial ACW is adding a Gift Certificate donation for the Registration fee to attend the "Seminary Session" in July for two weeks at St. Joseph's Seminary.

All money donated or received from the tickets sold will go to the Seminary.

This is the perfect way to support the Seminary and help our future priests who are planning or would like to plan to attend the July "Seminary Session" for two weeks. If you or anyone in your parish is the "Lucky Winner" but are unable to attend it's the perfect opportunity to help someone in your parish or in your Diocese with the ability to attend by giving this special gift to him. The "Gift of Love" is the best gift of all.



OPPORTUNITY TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE TO PURCHASE.

Provincial ACW Fundraiser - Benefits St. Joseph's Seminary

Contact: Nona Gourley, (209) 862-2582 * Email: lovemyminnie2@gmail.com

\$ _____

Amount Enclosed (Make checks payable to the Provincial ACW)

Ticket Donations

1 ticket, \$5, 3 tickets, \$10, 7 tickets \$20, 18 tickets \$50, 40 tickets \$100

Church _____

Name of Recipient _____

Address _____

Phone _____

This fundraiser is so easy; print this page and indicate the number of tickets you wish to buy. Duplicate tickets are printed on the next page of the newsletter if needed – or contact Nona for tickets. If you wish to make a donation, then you can send it as well; and then mail your tickets with money and/donation to:

Nona Gourley, President
2038 Carlsbad Caverns Ct.
Newman, CA 95360

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Bishop's Travels

On Saturday April 2nd, Bishop Ashman confirmed David (Skip) and Julie Sopscak, celebrated the Eucharist and presided over the Annual Meeting at Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church in Omaha Nebraska. That afternoon he caught a flight to Seattle and celebrated the Eucharist and attended the April Vestry Meeting at Saint Bartholomew's Anglican Church in Woodinville Washington on Sunday April 3rd.



The celebratory dinner at Lo Sole Mio Restaurant in Omaha. Confirmands Skip and Julie are in the front.

Saint Joseph's Seminary

The Spring Semester is winding down. Bishop Ashman's Historical Homiletics class will finish its fifteenth and final lesson on May 2nd; his two sections of World History will finish on June 7th. Bishop Schultz's Prayer Book Class is set to conclude on May 24th. The Biblical Greek and Ecclesiastical Latin classes will conclude around June 10th.

The Summer Session at the Seminary is set for the last two weeks of July. Summer Session will include both in-person instruction and zoom instruction. We hope to offer a class in the Revelation of St. John*, Vocational Discernment*, Liturgics, and a short course in : Sung Evening Prayer. [Classes with an asterisk * will be able to be taken for credit or audit via the zoom platform. The day will begin with Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m. in the Chapel followed by the first class from 10:00 to noon. Mass will follow in the Chapel. After a two hour break, the afternoon class will be held from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., after which Sung Evensong will be celebrated in the Chapel. More details will follow but note that students are able to take at least two classes* via zoom.

ACW Western States

Just a reminder that you now have less than a week to register for the 31st Synod and ACW Conference in Redding, CA if you want to take advantage of the early registration rates, or book accommodation at the Red Lion Hotel at the special Diocese of Western States rate. If you are booking rooms at the hotel, please ONLY call (530) 221-8700 to obtain the special rates, and mention Diocese of Western States. You will not be able to get these rates if you book on-line. Please also remember that now we are in the Easter season, Lenten Mite boxes should be returned to the church, and the amounts tallied and a check, payable to Provincial ACW with a notation "Lenten Boxes", sent to Gillian Golden, Provincial Lenten Chairman, PO Box 558, Selma, OR 97538-0558. Thank you all for your participation in this fundraiser for student support, St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary. Your parish will be remembered at the altar of St. Joseph of Arimathea Chapel at the Seminary. Gillian Golden, President

A Sermon for Easter Day

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Colossians iii. 1-4)

Amid all the drama, liturgy and music of Easter Day, these four short verses from St. Paul's letter to the Colossians are often overlooked and misunderstood. But in them St. Paul is making a profound point; and that is that in Baptism a Christian dies and rises to life again. That means that every time a child or adult is immersed in water (or has water poured on them) it is like being buried in death, but then as the new Christian emerges from the water it is symbolic of being resurrected to eternal life. And for St. Paul that means that the newly initiated Christian must rise as a new person; a person who is no longer be concerned with the trivial and empty things of this world, but concerned with those things of the Kingdom of Heaven.

That means that a Christian has a set of values and moral imperatives that transcend the values and imperatives of this world. It is all the more a sharp and vivid comparison since we live in an age when the work and values of the Church are being trivialized and marginalized by the secular society around us. And it is a visualization not unlike the first century A. D., when the idea of one God – jealous and demanding – was seen as a sore on the body politic. Paul's point then and now is that Christians who are risen with Christ (as one Biblical commentator put it) set giving above getting, serving above ruling and forgiving above avenging. In other words, the Christian adopts God's values and moral imperatives, not those popular with mammon and secular society.

Biblical scholars tell us that there may well be a word play in this passage which a Greek reader of this letter would recognize at once. It was common for false teachers to call their so-called books wisdom (apokruptoi) or books whose knowledge was hidden from all except from those who were initiated. It is not unlike many modern Gnostics (like "Episco-pagan" bishops) who say that they alone have the true understanding of what the Bible really says. Now the word which Paul uses to say that our lives are hidden with Christ in God is part of the verb apokruptein (meaning to hide) from which the adjective apokruptoi (hidden) comes. Thus, it is as if Paul was saying, "For non-Christians the treasures of wisdom are hidden in their secret books; but for us who are risen in Baptism, Christ is the treasury of wisdom and we are hidden in him."

Moreover we can take this idea a step further. If our lives are hidden with Christ in God, then the world will not be able to recognize us, but (according to St. Paul) when Christ returns in glory, Christians will share in the glory and it will be plain for everyone to see. In a sense Paul is saying that someday the verdicts of eternity will reverse the verdicts of time and the judgments of God will overturn the judgments of men; or as one Russian mystic (so often quoted by Archbishop Morse) put it, "The judgments of time are always moral;" or as C. S. Lewis in *The Four Loves* said it this way, "All that is not eternal is eternally out of date."

My dear friends consider the devotion of St. Paul when he calls Christ his life. It is a devotion to which every baptized Christian is called. To St. Paul Jesus is more than the most important thing in life: he is very life itself. It is my prayer that each of us in this church this Easter morning will, as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection and gift of eternal life, take to heart St. Paul's call not to mind the things of this world, but to mind the things of God; to remember that time is eclipsed by eternity and that after this short life, we will see God and appear in glory with him.

The Last Word

In ancient Greece the city states had the custom of chaining a goat, a scapegoat, once a year outside the city walls, to be destroyed by wolves in the night. The goat replaced the sins and offences of the townspeople. The first act of Christ in His resurrection appearance on Easter night was to grant to the Apostles the authority to forgive sins, an authority that continued in His Church. In the confessional, through absolution of our sins, we realize that we are infinitely loved by God. Christians believe in the forgiveness of sins. It is carved into our Creeds. It is through the Sacrament of absolution and the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice that the tragedy of fallen man and the transcendent infinite love of God are reconciled.

+Robert Sherwood Morse