
The Shepherd's Staff - Easter Edition

1 message

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Fri, Apr 7, 2023 at 3:20 PM

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The Shepherd's Staff



Newsletter of the Anglican Province of Christ the King Easter, 2023

*The Right Reverend D. M. Ashman
The Reverend Gordon Hines, Publisher*

A HOMILY FOR EASTER DAY

Easter Day has its roots in a people born into slavery; a people who had come to Egypt in peace. These Children of the Hebrews remembered their Father Abraham to whom Yahweh had promised to make his descendants as many as the sands of the sea; and his son Isaac and his son Jacob. They remembered that Jacob's son Joseph had been sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and how God used it to bring the Children of Israel from famine into Egypt. But Joseph died and a later Pharaoh (*who did not know Joseph*) came to fear the Hebrews. So in slavery, the Hebrews cried for deliverance and God



sent Moses who told them that he was sent to lead them out of bondage into a Promised Land flowing with milk and honey.

They didn't believe Moses, but yet it came to pass; Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart and plagues ravaged Egypt ending in one last plague, the coming of the Angel of Death who carried away every first born in Egypt. But the Hebrews were told to take an unblemished lamb, kill it and sprinkle its blood on the doorposts of their houses; and then to eat it quickly with their loins girt and sandals on their feet. And as they ate the lamb and bitter herbs, their firstborn were spared. They were given their freedom and told to remember that night by eating a Passover Supper every year. They went out into the desert and received God's commandments and the First Covenant. But they doubted Yahweh and worshipped a golden calf; so that generation was punished and died in the wilderness before Joshua led their children into the Promised Land.

So the Hebrews had come into their promised land and gained a kingdom but the basic problem still remained. They could not; they would not keep the law. The prophets were sent to tell them they would be punished if they continued to disobey God. God did not want their sacrifices for sin – the blood of bulls and goats; rather He wanted humble and contrite hearts. Nevertheless, they worshipped false gods, even sacrificing their children to pagan idols and forgetting the covenant. So they were punished. In 720 BC, the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians and in 586 the Kingdom of Judah was destroyed by the Babylonians. And as they had in Egypt, the Jews cried for deliverance from their various oppressors: the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. They cried for a Messiah, a Saviour.

And God answered their prayers. Around 3 BC, God became a human in the womb of a virgin named Mary. He was not born a great general or aristocrat but into poverty. He would free His people but He would not do it by killing Romans; He would save His people by saving them from themselves. Around the age of thirty, He burst onto the public stage as a remarkable rabbi who healed the sick, raised the dead and taught a law of compassion and love instead of the letter of the law. He angered many who expected Him to kill Romans. He confounded many when He said they had to eat his flesh and drink His blood if they wanted eternal life. But His greatest assertion was that He said that He was God; and for that the elite wanted Him killed. They got the Romans and a cowardly Pontius Pilate to do their dirty work. He became the new Passover Lamb and died a horrible death, nailed to a cross, having first been scourged and beaten, spit upon and jeered by

the hateful mob whom he forgave. But then – three days later - He rose from the dead. He opened the Gates of Everlasting Life and ushered in His Kingdom of which there will be no end.

These are the objective facts; how we got from slavery to freedom; from death to life. That would be enough for an Easter Sermon but there is something more and that is not what the Saviour did for us but what must we do for HIM. We have free will. We can believe or not believe; we can ignore or we can stand amazed. But what choice will we make? Will the rising of Jesus' cold lifeless body and the opening of the Gates of Heaven make an impact on the way we live? Will we look back on how God touched humanity and embrace the love Jesus came to teach? Will we love our neighbors as ourselves? Just as the Children of the Hebrews thought God could be bribed with a burnt ram, many Christians think God can be bribed with a pledge card or empty words; but what Jesus really wants is for our hearts to become like his. Indeed, we will never be able to keep the commandments any more than the Children of the Hebrews could but we can – with His grace and by Faith – struggle to live the Beatitudes, come to the Supper of His Body and Blood, and try to live up to his value system. We say, CHRIST IS RISEN; CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED! But what shall we give? Will we invite the risen Christ to live in our hearts and souls and rise to immortality with Him?

Saint Joseph's Seminary



The Classes below are running along beautifully:

Saint Joseph's Anglican Theological College has resumed classes as of January ninth. We are pleased to welcome to our faculty Father Benjamin Lawrence of Saint Luke's Redding. Our Schedule is as follows:

Mondays at 11:00 a.m., **Historical Homiletics** (Bishop Ashman – ending May 8))

Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., **World History and Religion** (Bishop Ashman – ending May 16)

Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m., **Survey of the Old Testament** (Bishop Ashman – ending May 9)

Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m., ***Dogmatic Theology II*** (Bishop Hansen)

Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m., ***Confirmation Class for all ages***

(Father Lawrence – ended on March 23)

Fridays at 10:00 a.m., Third Semester ***Ecclesiastical Latin*** (Bishop Ashman – ending on May 19)

Fridays at 1:00 p.m., Second Semester ***Biblical Greek*** (Bishop Ashman – ending May 19)

Summer Session

Summer Session is in the planning stages. There will be both in person and zoom classes. Thank you to all who returned the surveys requested. More info will be forthcoming in May but we can note that there have been only two notifications of in person requests: one student, one local priest. Zoom instruction is much anticipated by many clergy and seminarians.

Fall Session

Fall Session is also in the planning stages. Thank you to all who returned the surveys requested. The most requested course was Survey of the New Testament which will be offered. Latin and Greek will also be continued. There has been interest in first year Latin beginning again.

Seminary Open House on April 25

Everyone who can make it is invited to the Saint Joseph of Arimathea Theological College Open House on Saint Mark's Day, April 25th. The Very Reverend David Napier will celebrate the Eucharist at noon and a hosted light lunch will follow immediately after in the Parish House. The Seminary facilities will be open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and will include informal tours, a display of rare books, videos (especially the consecrations and reminiscences of Bishop Morse in 2012), a slide show of Bishop Morse's ministry, and some wonderful old scrapbooks. At 4:15 p.m., the open house will conclude with Solemn Evensong led by the Very Reverend Matthew Weber.

There is no charge for the open house or the lunch but please let us know if you plan to attend (818-749-8139). There will be a memorial booklet put together by Mrs. Christine Sunderland as a gift. Thank you Chris! And thanks to everyone who is making this special event possible.



Anglican Province of Christ the King

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