



The Shepherd's Staff

*Newsletter of the
Diocese of the Western States*

August 2019

The Right Reverend Donald M. Ashman
bishopashman@gmail.com
provostjact@gmail.com

Anglican Churchwomen Notes

For many years, Provincial ACW has raised money with Lenten Mite Boxes, and this year has been a no exception. So far, we have raised over \$3000 for St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary Student Support, and money is still coming in! Thank you so much to all the parishes that have taken part. It is amazing how much we can raise if everyone contributes a little! If your church has not yet sent your contribution in, it is not too late! Make the check out to Provincial ACW, with a notation 'Lenten Boxes' and send it to Gillian Golden, Provincial ACW Lenten Chairman, P.O. Box 558, Selma, OR 97538-0558. You will receive a Certificate of Participation, and your church will be remembered at the altar at St. Joseph Seminary Chapel. Don't forget that the recipient of money from this fund may well be someone from your parish.

Thank you, Gillian!

Saint Joseph of Arimathea Fall Classes

Vice Provost, the Right Reverend John Upham, will soon be sending out information (day of the week, times, regular tuition and auditing fees) for our Zoom Seminary classes which are scheduled to begin in early September. As of now, classes will be offered:

Biblical Greek I (Bishop Ashman)

***Diaconal Formation (Bishop Upham)**

***required of all Diaconal Candidates and strongly suggested for ALL deacons**

Ecclesiastical Latin III (Bishop Ashman)

Ecclesiastical Latin V (Bishop Ashman)

****Old Testament I (The Torah) Father Michael Mautner**

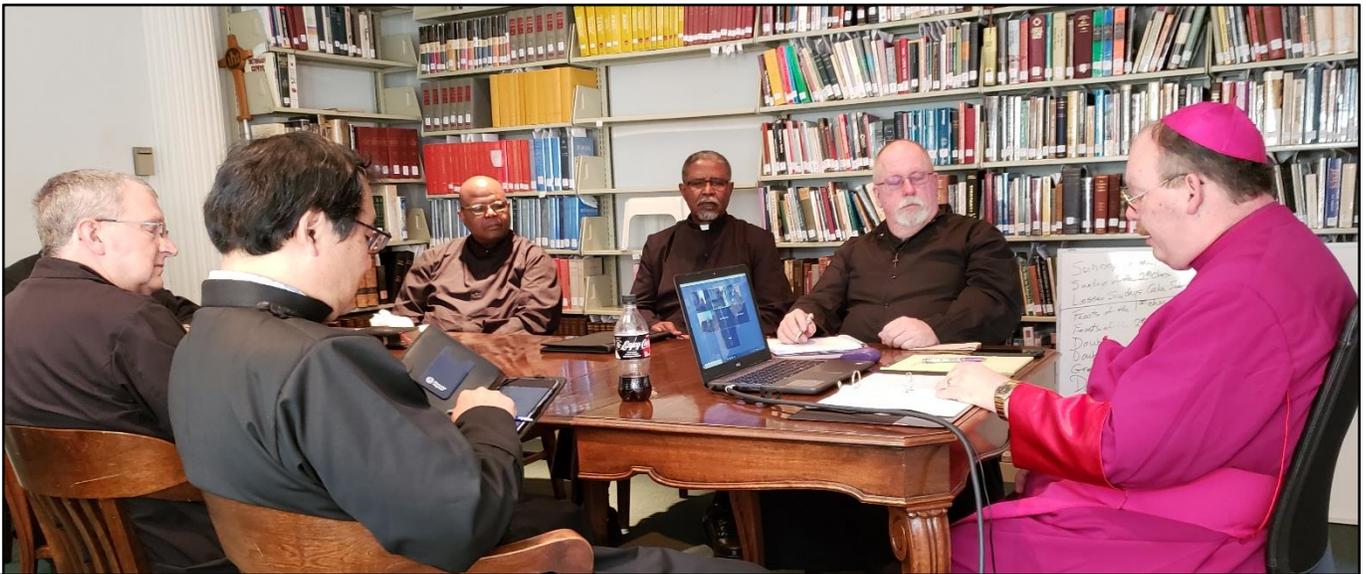
****required of Permanent Deacons, Regular Deacons and Priests (a great refresher course)**

Last year, the instructors continued to perfect the Zoom Platform. It costs the student nothing; all the student must do is make sure the instructor has their email address and the student will receive an email invitation to join each class. All the equipment that is needed is a laptop computer with a camera. This system was also successfully used this summer for students and clergy who could not attend the morning lectures at St. Joseph's.

Saint Joseph of Arimathea Summer Session

The last two weeks of July saw another full and productive Summer Session. Mornings began with corporate Morning Prayer, led by the students whose skills grew exponentially during the two weeks. Bishop John Upham taught the first week's morning class which was a SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION and Fr. Paul Russell taught the second week's morning class on THE HISTORY OF ANGLICANISM IN THE UNITED STATES FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY. Both classes were recorded on the Zoom Platform and so the six regular live-in students were joined by six to ten at-distance students who were able to hear and interact with the lectures – and at least two to three clergy with day jobs could listen in the evening. The gratitude of these latter two groups was warm and palpable.

The Eucharist was celebrated every day at noon by Fathers Ben Jones, Michael Mautner, David Napier and Tom Kelnhofer along with Bishops Upham and Ashman. In the afternoons, Father Weber and Bishop Ashman lectured and led practicums in various Anglican liturgical forms. Father Weber also led all the summer community in Sung Evensong every day – and taught everyone invaluable lessons and tips on chanting the psalms.



Note the Zoom Recording
on the Monitor





Bishop Morse Youth Camp

From June thirtieth to July fifth, thirty campers and chaperones traveled to Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center in Stanwood Washington for our annual youth camp. Campers came from California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. Every day began with the Eucharist in a beautiful chapel



over-looking Port Susan Bay followed by breakfast, free time to tidy up and then the morning class from 9:30 to noon. Bishop Peter Hansen (St. Augustine's, Chico CA) led a discussion the first morning on just who we are as Anglicans and the Anglican Province of Christ the King in particular.

Canon Scott Mitchell (St. Luke's, Redding) showed a powerful video, *God is not Dead*. The class was divided into two groups; high-schoolers and intermediate school age. The focus of the class was to examine personal decision making and action in light of two standards; that of the world in our present culture or according to God's design and standards. It was about subjective and objective truth. What is right and what is wrong; and why? The groups would consider each perspective and would make a defense for their decision.

The scenario given to the older group was as follows, "Your 17-year-old best friend in high school comes to you from the school counselor's office very upset. She tells you she is pregnant. She was told by the counselor that she can receive a ride to an abortion clinic on a school day. Her parents need not be told and she we would be transported back to school before the end of the day. She comes from a very traditional family and fears their response. What will you say to her and why?"

The younger group was given a scenario about moving into new neighborhood and school and trying to fit in and make friends. You have been befriended by a group that is popular, successful, and highly regarded by their peers. You are honored and proud to be included but must "go along to get along". They are involved in a few dubious undertakings that include theft. If you don't go with the flow, you will be outcast and again without friends and subject to ridicule by the group. What will you do, and why?



On Wednesday, Father Michael Mautner (St. Peter's, Oakland) led a discussion of the Old Testament Book of Jonah.

On Thursday, July 4th, the campers squared off with the clergy and asked any questions they wanted to ask.

All of these activities challenged the campers who will (sooner than even they

know) will be adults in our modern world.

After lunch, the afternoons were given to sports and other activities, of which the two most popular were the high ropes (up in the trees) and the canoes. And, of course swimming and Capture the Flag. Much thanks must be given to Father Dan Canda (St. James', Golden CO) for working with the kids.



The campers also performed “Anglican Charades” and skits (yes, the clergy had to perform as well) The evenings saw Evening Prayer before dinner and more activities including a campfire with S’mores (left below) and an excursion to a nearby lake for fireworks on July 4th.

A great thank you is owed to (now) Deacon Ben Lawrence who led “Wrap Up” when everyone had to share their best moment of the day and their worst. Thank you, Deacon Ben.



Some Candids





The Ordination of Deacon Benjamin Lawrence

July 7, Saint Luke's, Redding



Episcopal Visitation, Blessing New Carpet and Confirmations

July 20, St. Peter's Oakland



A Sermon for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Indeed, the thief on the cross did not receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a reward for his virtues but as a grace and a mercy from God.

- Saint John Cassian

Many people have asked me over the years what happens to us when we die? Is God a just judge? I have many answers, but my favorite is the example of the Good Thief. In Saint Luke's Gospel, one of the criminals crucified with our Blessed Lord (thinking only of himself) mocked Jesus and (like the crowd) taunted Jesus saying that, if he really was the Son of God, then he should save himself and the two of us thieves. But the other criminal rebuked the first and said that, if he had any idea of who God is, then he would know that they were justly condemned to death for their crimes, but that Jesus had done nothing. And then he said to Jesus, **Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom**. And Jesus replied: **Today thou shalt be with me in paradise**.

Is God a just judge? Can we hope for eternal bliss with confidence? The answer to both is a resounding yes! That is why I tell the story of the Good Thief. Yet, I am always amazed at how quickly we humans so easily assume that God is vengeful, grim or brutal in his treatment of his children. Archbishop Morrison in an Easter Letter told of an old legend about Judas that, after his death, Judas remained in a deep pit wailing and moaning. He was unable to climb out for what seemed like an eternity and then he saw a bright light. Suddenly, he was able to climb to the light; he saw a group of men sitting around a table and heard Jesus say to him: **We have been waiting for you, Judas. We could not begin until you came**. Here is the hope of all of us who, in our daily sins, have fallen from grace! And, as the Archbishop asked, if that makes us uncomfortable, then we have not yet grasped the unlimited redemptive power of Christ's death and resurrection – AND our mission to spread the Good News of our Blessed Saviour.

Now, if our Blessed Lord can save anyone, what role does our free will play? This has always bothered the Church and led to a heresy called Pelagianism. Pelagius, a British Monk (d. 418), denied the Doctrine of Original Sin (the sin of Adam and Eve) and taught that every human was born without sin so that human willpower could choose good or evil without God's grace. In other words, men and women could save themselves. He was opposed by Saint Augustine, who taught that Original Sin not only hurt Adam and Eve but also brought about the loss of free will in their descendants. As a result, humans are totally depraved and cannot do good or respond to God's will without God's grace. Not everyone was as harsh as Augustine (and he himself said **hate the sin and love the sinner**); so, after much debate, the Church (with the help of St. John Cassian and others) taught that the beginning of faith (or accepting God's grace) involves an act of free will but that the first step for the beginning of faith comes from God. Thus, it is God the Holy Ghost who is responsible for our using our free will for holiness or (perhaps, better said) striving to do what God wants us to do. Saint Thomas Aquinas put it very well when he said: **the love of God is the cause of the goodness of all things**. [Now the "love of God" cuts two ways: either our love for God or God's love for us; but it makes no difference because God's love is truly the source of all good and all grace.]

Now all that said, let us look at the Gospel which should be called the Gospel of the Forgiving Father. The Father is symbolic of God who loved us enough to send his Son to be our Saviour. The Prodigal Son represents the soft-hearted sinner, who gets himself into so much trouble that he repents and is willing to be the lowest servant of his father. But his father loves him so much that he restores his sonship. The Older Brother represents the hard-hearted sinner, who is consumed with resentment and anger. We are not told if he repented. And what about Judas? After all, two Gospels (Luke and John) point out that the devil entered into Judas to betray Jesus; so, isn't it possible that God forgave him? And I wonder how many in the crowd who shouted **crucify him** later repented, were converted and saved? So, isn't the question today whether we truly believe that God forgives our sins, if we say – even out of desperation like the Prodigal Son and the Good Thief – that we are sorry and want to be with Christ in Paradise.