



The Shepherd's Staff

*Newsletter of the
Diocese of the Western States*

April 2020

The Right Reverend Donald M. Ashman

bishopashman@gmail.com – provostsjact@gmail.com

In my lifetime, the world has changed; and changed dramatically. But one thing has not changed – at least for me – and that is **Christ is risen**. I was fortunate to be raised in the Church and even more fortunate – despite my shortcomings – to believe (Deo gratias) that **Christ is risen indeed**. And I don't think I am alone because Easter is still a pivotal point in our culture; even when it is socially incorrect to admit it. And even when so many of our fellow Christians do not understand that **Christ is risen**, they still – by the grace of God – have a sense that Easter is a special time. And I submit it has never been different.

Many years ago, in what seems like another time, a new curate in a large, mid-city parish was told by his rector to preach on Easter morning. The young curate said that he had come from a small parish in the country and that he was afraid of the cold and sophisticated parishioners of that large parish. The rector told him that he must remember that everyone is afraid to die and that, even though city folks have a hard coat of varnish, they are just as scared and afraid to die. "They want you to tell them," said the rector, "that, when Jesus rose from the dead, he gave the same gift to us. They want you to affirm that, when they believe in God and try to be good Christians, then the Resurrection becomes reality and we are no longer afraid. They want to hear **Christ is risen!**"

There is a story told by a theologian, Father Dr. John Bruno Parsch who, as a young man, served with the Imperial German Army in World War I. He fought with Hindenburg against the Russians on the Eastern Front in Poland. He later recounted his first Easter as a soldier. Oh, he attended Easter services and that was all fine and good, but what moved him most was on Orthodox Easter, a few weeks later, when the Russians suddenly ceased fighting. Everything stopped and then, no one knew quite how, an informal truce was declared; and the Russian soldiers came into the German lines, bringing presents, as they embraced their "enemies" declaring that **Christ is risen!** A day later the war was raging again, but Parsch never forgot those Russian soldiers whose God could make them forget the horrors of war, embrace their enemy and seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

Archbishop Morse, slightly younger than Dr. Parsch but of his theological generation, used to say that death is the final doorway through which we like Christ must all pass. Yet it is our belief (our steadfast conviction) in the Resurrection that assures us that death is not the end but the beginning of new life. And we catch a glimpse of that beginning in every Mass when God is revealed to us in the Body and Blood of his Son Jesus Christ. That is why Easter is so important because it reminds us that eternal life begins now when we are touched by Christ in the Holy Communion, when we know him in the Breaking of Bread. So, it is my prayer every Easter - especially when we come to the Communion Rail - to always remember that **Christ is risen; Christ is risen indeed!**

The Anglican Province of Christ the King

St. George's Anglican Pro-Cathedral

1210 Dixie Trail
Raleigh, NC 27614
(919) 786-0640

APCKArchbishopJEU@hotmail.com

2 April, AD 2020
Feria in Lent

To all the Faithful of the Anglican Province of Christ the King:



As mentioned in my earlier Pastoral Letter, the Council of Bishops of the APCK met on Tuesday, March 31st to re-evaluate the situation in which we all find ourselves regarding Covid-19. It was unanimously decided for the continued safety of all concerned, we are extending the closure of our Parishes and Missions until at least April 30th. If this pandemic shows signs of waning to the point it is no longer a threat before then, the Bishops will meet and reconsider their actions and possibly shorten this period. As it stands now, however, no areas of our country have experienced the peak of this scourge and the death toll is rising every day.

Consequently, it has also been decided that two of the three Annual Diocesan Synods are going to have to be postponed until later in the year. The Synod of the Diocese of the Atlantic States will convene in Bolingbrook, Illinois from September 8th – 11th and the Synod of the Diocese of the Western States will convene in Chico, California from September 22nd – 25th. The Diocese of the Southwestern States will remain scheduled to convene in Las Vegas, Nevada, from June 10th – 13th, for the time being; though this date is subject to change also because of the virus. The Summer Seminary Session will go on as planned from July 20th – July 31st, though it will be completely in an on-line format taught from several locations. More information regarding the Summer Seminary Session will be forthcoming.

If there is a “silver lining” in any of this, it is to be found in the way many of our Clergymen have responded to the need of providing services to the faithful in this time of uncertainty. In each of our Dioceses there is at least one service, offered regularly, that is now being broadcast via social media platforms, such as Zoom, Facebook, and/or You Tube, which the faithful can view either live or recorded. Some are offering the Daily Offices and some are offering the Mass with Spiritual Communion. Above all, this is a time to turn to God! It is not a time for church politics, posturing, or posing. We are not and never will be in the business of “Sheep-Stealing”. These services are being offered across the Province to help bolster all people’s faith of any traditional, Anglican, Jurisdiction and give them hope! Therefore, I commend these several offerings to each of you and encourage you to call your Bishop if you do not already know who is offering virtual services in your Diocese. This is one very important way we can all stay in touch and connected with one another.

In the midst of this plague, all of us, among other things, are concerned about our church, business, and personal finances because of the complex and interwoven nature of our economy. However, even during these unparalleled times, full of innumerable unknowns, your Parish still needs your support and financial commitment. Please try your utmost to keep your church pledges current. Several parishes have set up Pay-Pal accounts and you can always mail your pledge to the church. All of our church Treasurers will appreciate it because the bills keep coming to the Church, even if none of us can be there, at present.

Finally, it always amazes me when I see how God works in our midst, especially during crises. God takes something as seemingly small and insignificant as one person's prayer and by His power transforms it into the greatest force ever seen. Prayer is one of the greatest gifts we receive from God. Please continue to use that gift as you pray for your family, friends, and neighbors; and please also pray for your Clergymen, Bishops, the Province, your Diocese, and your Parish. Our Church buildings may be empty right now, but our Churches are not. You are the Church and you have been deployed!

For the Love of God and the Sake of the Gospel, I remain,
Yours in our Blessed Lord,

+(The Most Rev.) John E. Upham, Jr.,
For the Council of Bishops of the APCK

What we can and ought to Do

1. Do not lose Faith. Do not despair. Do not think in terms of *these days*. If we do, then the devil has won. So, laugh at the devil; he can't stand it! C. S. Lewis once noted: *Some people feel guilty about their anxieties and regard them as a defect of faith, but they are afflictions, not sins. Like all afflictions, they are, if we can so take them, our share in the passion of Christ.*
2. If your church has Zoom or Facebook outreach (the Daily Offices or the Mass online), ask your priest how you can participate. I record mine and then email the session to those of the parish family who can't watch on Zoom, Facebook or Smart Phone. I got the idea (God works that way) that we should continue Wednesday night Evening Prayer on Zoom even after we are no longer under shelter-in-place restrictions. Since my three parishes have a one-hundred-and-twenty-mile radius, I am receiving much affirmative feedback. See how God works!
3. Clergy: be creative as much as you are able in reaching out to your flock. Send weekly sermons to the flock. Use the telephone. Write. Use the internet. But be careful to follow C.D.C. guidelines and, if your state or jurisdiction is under quarantine (shelter-in-place), stay home except for necessity. You are of no use to the Lord or your parishioners, if you get sick foolishly or carelessly. I know some of us don't like that, but we are men under discipline.
4. Laity: reach out to the Church and your parish family. Read the Daily Offices and the Bible, if you can't use Zoom or Facebook outreach. There is a wonderful website www.commonprayer.org which does all the "looking up work for you." Many a morning in my school teaching days, I used this website in my car waiting for the train or on the train. Try it.
5. As I said two weeks ago in my special edition of *The Shepherd's Staff*, pray for the virtue of Charity. This is no time for second guessing, griping or engaging in fault finding. And look for ways to be helpful for those neighbors, friends and fellow parishioners, who might need a little extra help.
6. Treasurers and Vicars/Rectors, try to get those annual reports in by April 17th. Bishop Hansen and the Board or Directors need your reports.
7. Parishes and parishioners, as much as you are able, try to keep up your assessments to the Diocese and pledges to your parish. It is greatly appreciated. Diocesan and parish bills will not go away.
8. Fill your Lenten Mite Boxes at home (or use your own box) to collect a Lenten Offering for the A.C.W.
9. Pray for each other, especially for our Archbishop and Suffragan Bishop along with the priests and deacons of our Diocese. They are under great stress *these days* and they need your prayers and support. Don't wait for your priest to contact you; contact him. Pray for those who despair and struggle with the gift of Faith. And never forget that with the Grace of God we will crush Satan, that old liar, and stand triumphant with Our Saviour. We will not talk about *these days* but about the **Day which the Lord hath made**; and we will rejoice and be glad in it.

**Here is our Revised Agenda for our September Synod
Diocese of the Western States (APCK)
Twenty Ninth Synod and ACW Conference**

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

St. Augustine's Church – SILENT RETREAT

9:00 a.m. – Morning Prayer and the Litany

10:00 a.m. – Morning Meditation

11:00 a.m. – The Penitential Office and Bidding Prayer

12:00 p.m. – Low Mass

1:00 p.m. – Afternoon Meditation

2:00 p.m. – Readings from the Gospel of St. Luke

3:00 p.m. – Afternoon Meditation II

4:00 p.m. – Evening Prayer

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Hospitality Room – St. Augustine's Library

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Pick up folders

St. Augustine's Church

8:00 a.m. – Mass

10:00 a.m. – Standing Committee (St. Augustine's Vestry)

NOON BREAK – Lunch provided for Standing Committee and the Board of Directors (St. Augustine's Vestry)

1:15 p.m. – Board of Directors (St. Augustine's Vestry)

3:00 p.m. – Bishop's Reception (Canon Reed Hall) (Hosted by the ACW) Refreshments

5:00 p.m. – Bishop's Auction

Join in and bid during Bishop's Auction for the benefit of the Clergy: Mingle, Mix, Bid; and have fun.

NO HOST DINNER

Diamond Steakhouse or many restaurants in walking distance, map provided by St. Augustine's.

Thursday, September 24, 2020

Hospitality Room – St. Augustine's Library

7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Pick up folders

8:00 a.m. – Morning Prayer and Mass (St. Augustine's Church)

10:00 a.m. – Workshop – (Canon Reed Hall)

Hotel Diamond Basement

11:30 a.m. – No Host ACW and Clergy Lunch

Limited Seating, reservation required

1:00 p.m. – Anglican Church Women Conference

St. Augustine's Church

1:15 p.m. – Clericus

3:30 p.m. – Evening Prayer

Evening

Laity – Dinner on your own

4:30 p.m. – Clergy dinner at Sierra Nevada Brewery Taproom

Must leave promptly

Friday, September 25, 2020

Hospitality Room – St. Augustine’s Library

8:00 a.m. – (Late Arrivals) pick up folders

St. Augustine’s Church

9:00 a.m. – Pontifical Mass

Lunch on your own (except)

Clergy Wives with Bishops’ Luncheon

11:15 a.m. – 5th Street Steakhouse

St. Augustine’s Church

1:30 p.m. – Synod Delegate Registration

2:00 p.m. – Synod Business Meeting followed by Evening Prayer

Chico Event Center

6:00 p.m. – Social Hour (No Host Bar Available)

7:00 p.m. – Synod Banquet

ACW Fund-raiser drawing following

Saturday, September 26, 2020

8:00 a.m. – Mass

Breakfast/Brunch on your own, more time to socialize – Mom’s Restaurant or wherever

ACW Notes April 2020

By now most of you know that the Synod has been postponed until September 23, and thanks to incredible organization by Nona Gourley and Bishop Hansen, all hotel bookings made for the May days will automatically be transferred to September! You don’t have to do anything unless you are unable to attend and need to cancel. The good news for ACW-DWS is that now we have another four months to get items ready for the Drawings! Very many thanks to those who have already sent pictures and descriptions. You are amazing!

Although we are currently unable to hold church services in our parishes, by the wonders of Facebook and Zoom, we can see celebrations of Morning and Evening Prayer almost daily, and Mass on Sunday! A huge thank you to Bishop Ashman, Canon Dillon, Fr. Mautner (and other clergy) for these services. It does so much to brighten and add some normality to our lives right now. You can email Bishop Ashman at bishopashman@gmail.com, Canon Dillon at frcharlesdillon@gmail.com and message Fr. Mautner at Michael Mautner for more details. Let’s all join in the worship.

Don’t forget that we still need to make donations in our Lenten Mite Boxes! I know times are hard, but every cent counts, and you can take the boxes back to church once we can get together again. If you don’t have a box at home, use an envelope or a canning jar. Be creative!

There is a lot to be thankful for in all this chaos. I am lucky enough to live on 20 acres in the Southern Oregon mountains, adjoining thousands of acres of BLM land, so social distancing is not exactly a problem! However, I find more time to appreciate the incredible beauty of God’s creation, study the cloud formations, watch the wildflowers come into bloom, and see the animals and birds welcome the coming of spring. Look around you and be thankful. I know that I don’t thank God enough for everything he has created, and for all the wonderful things he does for us. Perhaps it takes a pandemic to make us realize how very fortunate we are. God bless you all and keep you safe.

Gillian Golden

A Sermon for Passion Sunday

An old school Bible commentator once observed that the ancient Jews had a dual vision way of considering the work of the Spirit of God (The Spirit of Elohim); that is, God the Holy Ghost – even though they did not know him by that name. In Genesis the Spirit of God hovered over lifelessness and made creation possible; in later times, the Spirit of God was thought of as a communication medium between God and men. In Jesus' time, the Jews believed that the Spirit of God had two great functions. The first was that the Spirit revealed God's truth to men which empowered men and women to recognize and understand truth when they saw it. Therefore, unless the Spirit of God was in a man's heart, he could not recognize God's truth even when it stared him in the face. And it also meant that if a man's heart was blind to the Spirit of God, then, even when the truth was fully displayed, that man was totally unable to see the truth, much less grasp it or make it his own.

So, when Jesus said to the crowd: And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God, he was saying to them that they had not heard Jesus because they had followed religion in their own way because they had pushed God out of their hearts; and because of that, they were unable to see God or understand the things of God. This stung; and so, the Jews resorted to name calling: Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? But Jesus did not miss a beat and said that he did not have a devil and that he did not seek his own glory; but, if anyone followed his words which he brought from his Father, they would never die. The Jews - in rising fury - said that he was mad; Abraham and their fathers were dead; how could Jesus say that, if men followed his words, they would not die.

And so, Jesus told them that they just plain didn't get it. Jesus said that he was teaching them about spiritual things but, in their spiritual blindness, they didn't understand. They could not see the Spirit. He told them that, if they really knew God, they would understand that in God death loses its finality because God is beyond death. Jesus had given them the dots to connect but they could not and would not connect them; their hearts were blinded by hate. And then came the climax. Jesus told them that Abraham rejoiced to see his day. The Jews shot back: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM. They understood those two words: I am.

FLASHBACK. Moses was tending sheep for his father in law Jethro and saw the burning bush. Moses when to see and God told Moses that Moses was to go back to Egypt and free his people. Moses said: Who am I that I may go to Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt; and he said to him: I will be with you...Moses said to God: Behold, I will go to the children of Israel and I will say to them: The God of your fathers has sent me to you: If they should say to me what is his name, what will I say to them; God said to Moses I am who I am. The Jews went ballistic because they realized that Jesus said that he was God; He was I AM. They tried to stone Jesus but in their spiritual blindness, they did not realize that God was easily able to escape their violence.

How could people see religion with such myopic eyesight? But has it ever been any different? Of course not but Jesus was born on Christmas morning and died on Good Friday and rose on Easter – on his timetable - by the way – to sacrifice himself for our salvation that he might teach us how to open our hearts and our minds. Jesus came to teach us humility and love. God gave us free will so we could obey or disobey; but also so that we would come to him freely and try to love as he loves. Humility, the bowing of our hearts before God, is the key! What did C. S. Lewis say: There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, Thy will be done, and those to whom God says, All right, then, have it your way.