



The Shepherd's Staff

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

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New Year / Same Year

C. S. Lewis once wrote in the Screwtape Letters (XXV) that we men and women live in time and so experience reality in succession. That means we need to change but we are loathe to change; we want to find a secure level of income, our place in society, happiness and stability that will never change. But God, knowing that we need to change, makes change pleasurable like eating but God also knows that change cannot be an end in itself or we would all eat till we burst. So God balances in us the love of change by a similar love of permanence. Lewis points out that God achieves this union of permanence and change through rhythm. Lewis uses the examples of the seasons of the year: each season different but every year the same. Thus each season is always felt as new but a testimony to an immemorial theme. Now God, in the same principle of rhythm, has given us a Church year; as Lewis notes, "*they change from a fast to a feast, but it is the same feast as before.*" Our Church Year which begins on Advent Sunday has the same union of permanence and change.

In Advent we wait in violet penitence for the coming of the Saviour who will save us from ourselves. Then we rejoice in white Christmastide as we greet the Saviour. On Twelfth Night, the wise men will come to worship the newborn king and we transition to Epiphanytide green when we dwell on the beginnings of Jesus' ministry. Then we shift gears in Gesimatide back to violet and prepare for the Great Lent which leads us to the crux of Jesus' priesthood: his death for us on Good Friday and his Resurrection on Easter Day. Then after five Sundays and His Ascension, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Ghost on Whitsunday and the Feast of the Holy Trinity on the Trinity Sunday. This has been the first part of the church year and it concentrates on Jesus life, ministry and priesthood. The second half begins with Trinitytide and is one Sunday essay after another about the mysteries and values of the Kingdom of God.

The Church Year is a perfect example of God's union of change and permanence. We experience the same feasts and fasts but each time, each year, as though they are fresh and new. We wait for the Christ Child. We walk with the shepherds and Magi. We hear "*behold the Lamb of God*" when John sees Jesus. We witness Jesus' miracles of compassion: Lazarus, the Ten Lepers, the Widow of Nain, and Nobleman of Capernaum. We marvel as Jesus confounds his enemies in words and miracles. We march into Jerusalem; we are there when he cleanses the temple; when he is betrayed; when he confounds Pilate and when he dies for our sins and pardons his murderers. We are there with the holy women and the apostles on Easter morning; we watch him rise out of time and space to his Father and celebrate the birthday of the Church. And then all those parables: the Prodigal Son, the Mote and the Beam, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Good Samaritan, and the Tribute Money – all to help us make better choices.

Brethren, this is the time for New Year's resolutions. It is my prayer that we all take advantage of God's gift of the Church Year and come to church every Sunday and Holy Day.

Confirmations at Church of Our Saviour, Los Angeles



On January 2nd, the Second Sunday after Christmas Bishop Ashman confirmed (left to right) Mary Eve McGrath, Gloria Christi McGrath, and Gabriel Thomas McGrath. Father Daniel McGrath celebrated the Eucharist and his wife Josephine made the organ sing. After the service, all present enjoyed a festive coffee hour and congratulated the new confirmands.

Provincial Anglican Church Women

We hear every month from Gillian Golden and the Diocesan Anglican Church Women. But the Provincial Anglican Church Woman also play a vital role as told in the following letter:

Dear Archbishop Upham,

I am mailing the 2021 Provincial ACW's tithe to the Province in the amount of \$559.81. The source of the tithe is from the Ordo Kalendars and Provincial ACW Dues. The Bishop's photos at this point has not made a profit. Each Diocesan ACW is encouraged to tithe to Diocese in which they reside, and each Parish/Mission ACW is encouraged to tithe to their Parish/Mission.

The 2021 Lenten donations from the parishes in the APCK was \$3,135.03, and a check in this amount was mailed to St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary which will help provide Seminary Student Support. We are committed to continue to support the Anglican Province of Christ the King and St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary in every way that we can.

With every good wish that the new year will be prosperous for you, and the Anglican Province of Christ the King.

Faithfully,

Nona Gourley, Provincial ACW President

Saint Joseph of Arimathea Seminary (Stats)

Spring Semester instruction began for the Seminary Zoom Classes on January 10th. Our stats are as follows:

Mondays	Historical Homiletics (Bp. Ashman)	5 credit	3 audit	8 total
Tuesdays (2 sections)	World History/Religion (Bp. Ashman)	8 credit	5 audit	13 total
Tuesdays	Prayer Book II (Bp. Schultz)	10 credit	3 audit	13 total
Fridays	Ecclesiastical Latin II (Bp. Ashman)	1 credit	3 audit	4 total
Fridays	Biblical Greek VI (Bp. Ashman)	3 credit	1 audit	<u>4 total</u>
				42 total

Diocese of the Western States (APCK)
Thirty-first Synod and ACW Conference Schedule (Tentative)

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

St. Luke's Church

9:00 a.m. - Low Mass; 10:00 a.m. - Standing Committee; 2:00 p.m. - Board of Directors

Red Lion Hotel

Hospitality (Sacramento Room) - 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.,

Mini Retreat - Siskiyou Room

10:00 a.m. - Morning Prayer and the Litany 10:45 a.m. - First Meditation; 11:30 a.m. - Second Meditation
Lunch Break; 1:00 p.m. - Third Meditation; 1:45 p.m. - Readings from Scripture 2:15 p.m. - Evening Prayer

ACW Reception - Siskiyou Room

1:00 P.M. -ACW Reception, Refreshments: Hors d' oeuvres, wine, lemonade, coffee

5:00 p.m. - Bishop's Auction - Join in and bid during the "Bishops' Auction" for the benefit of the Clergy;
Mingle, Chat, Mix, Bid and have lots of fun. (And yes, our Auctioneer Fr. Mike Mautner will be our M/C)

DINNER- No Host; Clergy and Laity on your own.

Thursday, May 12, 2022

St. Luke's Church

9:00 a.m. - Morning Prayer & Mass

10:00 a.m. – Workshop - Conducted by Fr. Craig Isaacs (Saint David's San Rafael), on "Evil and Exorcism"

1:15 p.m. Clericus

4:00 p.m. - Evening Prayer

Clergy and Wives Dinner at St. Luke's Parish Hall

Red Lion Hotel

7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Hospitality (Sacramento Room)

11:30 a.m. - ACW/Clergy Lunch (Sierra Room) - Limited Seating, reservations required

1:00 p.m. - ACW Conference (Sierra Room)

Laity Dinner "No Host" - Red Lion or Restaurant of your choice

Friday, May 13, 2022

St. Luke's Church

Pontifical Mass: 2:00 p.m. - Clergy Practice; 3:00 p.m. - Pontifical Mass

Red Lion Hotel

7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Hospitality (Sacramento Room)

9:00 a.m. - Morning Prayer (Sierra Trinity Room)

9:30 a.m. - Delegate Registration (pick up folders)

10:00 a.m. - Synod Business Meeting (Sierra Trinity)

Lunch on your own

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

7:00 p.m. - Synod Banquet (Sierra Trinity)

ACW Fund-raiser and drawing following

Saturday, May 14, 2022

St. Luke's Church

9:00 a.m. - Low Mass

BREAKFAST/BRUNCH ON YOUR OWN MORE TIME TO SOCIALIZE TILL NEXT YEAR!

A Sermon for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Judgment

SERMONS that are always cited with horror are aflame with fire and brimstone. Pulpits sweaty with judgment and damnation leave victims in the pews certain they are going to hell. God dangles souls over an abyss of molten lava by a thread, ala Jonathan Edwards. Don't complain. You have only to thank Him if He, by caprice, or election, should save you. Christ describes a field of wheat where some evil person spread seeds of tares. Tares, or darnel, are poisonous, and make people sick. Wheat and tares look almost alike while growing. Only when ripe can they be distinguished. Farmhands spot tares and tell the landholder. He says, let them all grow together, first pull the tares, burn them, and finally gather wheat.

Christ's interpretation: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one... as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age... There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun..." Mat 13:27-43

A neat dividing line sketched down the center of humanity. You might think we're good or evil at birth, our destiny. You can't use one scripture to stand against all other scriptures. Christ is making one point, not all points. No one picture of the judgment gives all of how God determines our eternity. But we'd best know what's on the final exam before we take it. Ten virgins wait for the bridegroom's procession, only some possessing enough oil. Servants hold their master's treasure, some doubling the amount, by investment. The Judge separates sheep from goats by how charitably they dealt with others. Whoever believes in Christ and endures will be saved. St. Paul says: confess with your mouth and believe in your heart, then salvation is yours. Works of charity, preparedness, simple faith, or a totally holy nature? Which? Will He glance at us and say, "Depart from me: I never knew you!"

How did the good thief win the day as he died? The answer is, there are two judgments, two dynamics here. Don't get them confused. The great Judgment separates citizens of heaven from souls bound for the second death. A lake of fire describes eternal damnation. Jesus described Himself as "The way, the truth and the life," and "the resurrection and the life" so that whoever believes in Him shall never die. I think that's a sufficient answer. Know Who He is, and trust Him. Take that through heaven's gates and be safe.

But there seems to be another judgment. It appears there are varied levels of reward. Christ advises us to set treasures in heaven. Good works are rewarded. The closer we walk with Jesus here, the better when we arrive inside the pearly gates. That's the second judgment: He assigns places closer or further, in varying amounts of glory. None is without glory, but each in his or her order. Each star varies in brightness. True saints aren't concerned with future rewards. They can't imagine doing anything but what blesses His heart. The world is not worthy of them.

Today getting into heaven and not cast into hell is the only question. For Protestants is the Reformation question: "How do I get myself saved?" Rome asks how a sinner gets clean for the perfect world, posing Purgatory to curb sinfulness. Centuries of hard labor, tortured until sin is scourged out of you.

Believing souls will stand for a judgment nevertheless, judgment that judges the saints. Every idle word will have its moment. We will know every failure. I have imagined a video of my life shown to me, not of my obvious sins, but of what might have been had I chosen better paths, not seeking pleasure or avoiding pain. I would view people who could have been blessed, served, or saved, had I been a better man. It would turn me inside out with sorrow, my sins of omission the Lord has forgiven at great cost.

It's the common error: just getting into heaven is enough. What is the least I need to do in order to qualify? Jesus did the heavy lifting; His sacrifice is sufficient. Christians hate to hear about judgment. It's harsh. So final. C.S. Lewis sets forth wisdom in *The Great Divorce*, "All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it" Chap. 9, par. 41 "A damned soul is nearly nothing. It is shrunk, shut up in itself."

We who will receive it, then, should make the most of it, bless our Lord's heart in what we do for Him, do unto the least of His brethren, keep our lights burning, rescue one precious soul. Fire and brimstone await only those who reject the king, pirates sailing ghost ships toward eternal flame willfully. We might fear and loath that fate, but more profitably we ought to seek the face of God and do His bidding while we have the time on earth to fulfill His purposes.

+PFH

Friendly Reminder Time

- Please try to get your Parochial Reports into the Diocesan Office and to Bishop Hansen well before the cutoff date of April 24th. Parish assessments and the Diocesan Budget are contingent on your parish reports. Thank you, ahead of time. Your promptness really helps!
- Please send in your ACW Diocesan and Provincial Dues. Remember that every parish has an ACW chapter whether or not it is an active chapter. Your support makes a great difference.
- When you travel, try to visit our sister parishes in our Diocese and Province; you will be the better for it and they will be encouraged and strengthened. Check out our Provincial Website for more information (but always call ahead), <https://www.anglicanpck.org/>
- Try to participate in the Diocesan **Saint Jude's Intercessory Prayer Group**. Not sure how to participate? Contact Bishop Ashman or (even better) Deb Ponec at ponec@msn.com
- Keep your clergy in your prayers and let them know that they are appreciated. Parish clergy, do you mention the Archbishop and our Coadjutor and Suffragan by name at every Eucharist?
- Pray for our postulants seeking Holy Orders. We have five in the Western States at various stages of preparation: Mr. Mark Talley in Chico, Mr. Jerry Jewett in Los Angeles, Mr. Rick Gregory in Woodinville, Mr. Ron Smith in San Rafael, and Deacon Ben Lawrence in Redding.

A Sermon for Quinquagesima Sunday

If you watch the TV news, one quickly discovers the ongoing tragedy of man. It is as St. Paul describes in today's Epistle. We look through a glass darkly, but we lift up our hearts, for the good news, the Gospel, is that Christ will win at the end of time. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and although we in time are members of His kingdom, we must wait for its fulfillment in eternity. Yet we can experience and practice its life as citizens of the Heavenly City, by abiding in faith, hope, and charity, especially charity.

God said to Moses, "*I AM THAT I AM.*" We can never define God because He is infinite, unlimited. St. Clement of Alexandria, an early Church Father, put it well: "*God whose circumference is nowhere but whose center is everywhere.*" St. John writes in his first Epistle that God is love. Because love is infinite, Christ reveals in the action of the Mass the nature of God through the giving of Himself. The gift we receive in Holy Communion is the incarnate life of God in Christ in union with Him, so that He dwells in us and we in Him.

The Christian definition of love is sacrifice, the abandonment of self through the complete giving of oneself in love for God and others. Christ reveals this as the essence of God in His incarnate life. We are made in the image of God; we are made to be like Christ. In the sacrifice of the Mass, we offer ourselves, in union with the sacrifice of Christ, to God and for others.

The most difficult obstacle faced by the Spanish in the conversion of Mexico was the Aztec belief that God would not sacrifice Himself for us, but that He would demand us to sacrifice ourselves for Him. In most of the world's religions, man gives, and God receives. But in Christianity, God is love. St. John writes, "*Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*"

My hope is that love will mark the conclusion of my life and yours. St. Augustine and Leo Tolstoy both write that where there is love, there also is God, and God is infinite.

+Robert Sherwood Morse, 2007