



The Line

Diocese of the West



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Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ

I want to wish you all a very Blessed Easter. I pray you will all feel His peace as we celebrate the Resurrection.



Easter Love

On Easter we celebrate love,
 love coming down from heaven,
 love blanketing the earth
 in a transforming embrace;
 unique and infinite love,
 giving more than we can imagine
 for us, to cleanse our sin,
 a perfect sacrifice, Lamb of God,
 the walking, talking Word.
 He is teacher, role model, friend,
 this God in human form,
 dying, then rising from the dead,
 proving all who believe
 will also rise
 to have eternal life, with Him,
 Lord of all.
 Oh, Happy, Happy Easter!

By Joanna Fuchs

The Bishop's Corner

Christ is risen! The words ring out in a thousand human languages across the planet and beyond in the triumphant shouts and songs of myriads of angels, archangels, and the creatures of heaven and earth. "O Death, where is thy sting? O Hell, where is thy victory? Christ is risen and you are overthrown. Christ is risen and the demons have fallen. Christ is risen and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen and life reigns. Christ is risen and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages," as the powerful sermon of St. John Chrysostom concludes.

There are good reasons for all the universal rejoicing:

1. Resurrection is the most important thing that happens in your life or mine, a conquest on our behalf of the one enemy we are forever helpless to defeat on our own. Christ has risen as the pivotal center of all history. He has done so to restore our life in God, as it was originally intended at creation.





The Bishop's Corner (continued)

2. Resurrection is real. It is fashionable in some theological circles to dismiss it as just another myth, to give it a “spiritual” spin, a thought that we will live on somehow in memory or in the great cosmic one. If that were the case, what a colossal vain waste of time, as St. Paul notes. But at that moment in history, sometime before dawn on the first day of the week, Jesus who was dead was restored to life and blasted out of the tomb. It was not an allegory in “religious” story. Rather, it is a real morning in real time in a place we still know, witnessed by a large number of quite real people.

3. Jesus was a wise man who said many profound things, and did some amazing miracles. But other exceptional people have also existed who met that description. The difference is in his divinity, and it is what he accomplished in his crucifixion and resurrection, his acts, which make him unique. He alone can make us right; “let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shone forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior’s death has set us free.”

4. Resurrection happens to you in your baptism. It is at that point that you die to the distortions of demonic dominion and are raised to new life. The gift is already yours and mine in our baptism, whether we received it as an infant or as an adult. We do not need to wait until physical death, but can already find union in the Body of Christ, both with God and with each other, even if imperfectly. When you actually realize that, you will understand why all the rejoicing. “All of you, enjoy the feast of faith. All of you, receive the riches of loving-kindness.” Note the present tense. “This is the Day the Lord has made; let

us rejoice in it.” We live a resurrected life today. We cannot live it in the future until it comes on its own time, and will then be present tense. It will usher us into a fullness which we do not currently have. But it cannot give us more of the gift of resurrection. That, we already have received in its fullness.

5. All this can seem other-worldly, far from the problems of life, of my own failures, of money difficulties, of myself and the people around me who are in various situations of need, collapse, sin, serious illness, bad attitude, separation, anger, unfaithfulness, disloyalty...the list is long. But the only lasting solution is the gift that has been bestowed. You are resurrected in Him, incorporated in his resurrected Body. We struggle to resolve many problems, from global climate change to our own family and personal failures. We can, together or by ourselves, sometimes patch together solutions that will get us through. But the gift of resurrection alone can transform. It alone is greater than our problems, our pain, our selfishness, our lack of vision, our violence, our death. It alone remains for us when all else ceases. “Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed.”

It is worth remembering that each Sunday is the continuing anniversary of the resurrection. Thus, Easter comes every week, my baptism gives me life every day, the Body incorporates me every Eucharist, the Lord comforts me every moment. Easter is the pinnacle from which it all flows. So, “if anyone be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of the Lord.”

Quotes are from the famous Easter sermon of St. John Chrysostom.



The Bishop's Corner (continued)

Synod

The last annual Synod of the Diocese of the West, and the first of the Convocation of the West will be April 5-7, starting Tuesday at 5pm, and ending Thursday mid-morning. It will be hosted by St. John's Church in Boerne, Texas. Each congregation is entitled to two delegates, plus all clergy, and visitors are welcome. Registration information can be found in the last newsletter if you or your parish didn't receive an email with it. The newsletter can be accessed on our website, "anglicanow.org" and clicking on "newsletter."

Part of the Synod will be the election of a Vicar-General, Secretary, Treasurer, Standing Committee, Examining Chaplains, and perhaps other offices. Please be thinking of people called to serve in these positions. If they are individuals who will not be at Synod, ask their permission to nominate them beforehand.

See you there.



Transition

As our transitional period nears completion, it is time to say:

A. As of this writing, there are still four parishes and a dozen or so clergy which have yet to officially sign on or transfer out. There are still several weeks or more to go, so that is pretty good (the other way around to say it, is that a dozen parishes and a dozen and a half clergy have already decided, well before the deadline). But if you are still unannounced as to your intentions, you are urged to come to a stated conclusion soon.

B. Thanks to all who have worked this through, on the Standing Committee, in our parishes, at Clericus and Synod. These kinds of exercises are always in danger of being used by those who, for whatever reason, thrive on disharmony and dispute. Yet this has been done overwhelmingly by people wishing each other well. Where different courses were chosen, it has been done in peace and the details have been worked out in a practical and loving way. It is not a test for a community to live in harmony when things are going smoothly, but rather the test is to do so when challenges arise. The people of the Diocese have passed the test. Well done!

C. We have come to a parting of the ways for some, jurisdictionally. But please know that you are welcome whenever at Convocation events. Jurisdictional separation should not be a very big deal. We are all still in the ACNA, and more importantly, in the Body of Christ. I hope those leaving will consider being part of our community in some way.

D. Our future as a Convocation community beckons. The Convocation model in many ways will give us freedom to be a purposeful community in a way being a Diocese could not. It is an exciting prospect. As well, our entrance into the Missionary Diocese of All Saints completes a process which began when we left the Anglican Province of America in 2008 to seek inclusion in the Anglican world, and enhance our Anglo-Catholic heritage. It will strengthen both us and MDAS. Great things should be expected of the Convocation.

E. Finally, a personal note: it has been difficult



The Bishop's Corner (continued)

Transition (continued)

as a bishop to be expected to lead a diocese into disbanding. ACNA and REC should learn from our experience how to find a better way to restructure jurisdictions. No thanks are due to them. But thanks are due to so many in the Diocese for the positive way we have found to come through this, to continue as a viable community, and to not let all this impede our missionary impetus as we follow our Lord. I greatly appreciate working together with you. May the Convocation be blest with many years of this spirit, and the Spirit.

Your bishop,
+Win



Parish News

For some this Lenten season, it is the Psalms that are taking us to Holy Week. Bishop N.T. Wright is clearly making his case: it is to our detriment that: “The Psalms which make up the great hymnbook at the heart of the Bible, have been the daily lifeblood of Christians, and of course the Jewish people, from the earliest times; are, in many Christian circles today, either not used or reduced to a few verses in the liturgy.” Accepting his premise that “reading, studying, and praying the Psalms is God’s means for teaching us what it means to be human; that

is, how to express our emotions and yearnings, how to reconcile our anger and our compassion, how to see our story in light of God’s sweeping narrative of salvation,” we are coming to understand his sense of urgency as we work through his text: **The Case for the Psalms and Why They Are Essential.**

As Anglicans we certainly do not ignore the Psalms. They are present in every liturgy, but I have a hunch we little realize the scope of their influence and the theology within. From my own study, the 23rd Psalm will never look the same, for now I see beyond a ‘safe place’ to resurrection, baptism, and Eucharist.

Sandwiched between “Blessed are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked...but delight in the law of the Lord (Ps 1)” and “Praise the Lord...let everything that breathes praise the Lord, (Ps. 150)” is ‘life’ in all its varieties and contradictions. Take for example Psalms 22, 23, and 24, where there is death, resurrection, new life, jubilation, and when taken together, form a trilogy of Christ the Shepherd.

Each psalm carries the superscription ‘A Psalm of David,’ which can mean a psalm written by David, or a psalm written about or for David. Either way, David was the man after God’s heart, whether in the depths of despair or in exuberant celebration. It is David’s experiences with God that give shape to these psalms. In 22, the Good Shepherd dies for the sheep. In 23, the Great Shepherd lives for the sheep and cares for them. In 24, the Chief Shepherd ascends and returns for the sheep. Contained within these three are great suffering, tender





Parish News (continued)

mercies and victory. According to N.T., the “sorrows of Psalm 22 give way to the calm vision of Psalm 23, and so to the shout of praise of Psalm 24.”

These Psalms were part of the ancient liturgies. Psalm 22 was solemnly chanted at the paschal service in the person of the Savior about the manner of His death. Psalm 23 transitioned to the joys of a resurrected life guided safely by the Lord. And Psalm 24 was appointed for Sundays, and especially Ascension Day. Christ enters heaven as Lord of powers and because of this the way for us is now open, the way out of death and the way into heaven.

Holy Week is here upon us. In whatever way you have chosen to prepare for Easter, include some time to read, contemplate or even investigate these three psalms. I propose that by doing so, come Easter morning, our worship will bless and be blessed, and our joy will be full.

Lift up your ‘hearts’
that the King of glory may
come in...
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of ‘multitudes,’ He is
the King of glory.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Father Don Hughes, St. John’s Anglican Church, Boerne, TX



The Resurrection

We hold so close to our hearts
The cross where Jesus died
But so much more than the blood-stained cross
Is that Jesus came back to life

The stone's been rolled away
The tomb lay open and bare
They looked for Him, and then the angel said
That He is no longer here

Oh what joy they must have felt
To see Him just once more
To eat with Him, to drink with Him
To receive Him back as Lord

So much did He accomplish
Through His death upon the cross
And in His rising from the dead
He reconciled us back to God

Nothing else could bridge the gap
That sin had wrenched apart
Now we can freely go to God
And receive Christ in our hearts

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Prayer Requests

Pray for the victims of the attacks that took place in Belgium. Pray for healing, and for the families of those who lost their lives.

Pray for our country, that God will provide us with a strong leader. One who will do His will.

Pray for attendance in our churches to increase, and for many to recognize the need for Christ in their lives.

Continue to:

Pray for our Christian Brothers and Sisters in the Middle East and North Africa who are being persecuted for their religious beliefs.

Pray for those confined to hospitals and nursing homes. And to those who provide care for them.

Pray for the leaders of Christ's Church, and especially our own Bishop Mott.

Please remember to submit prayer requests from your Parishes. We need to pray for each other. There is such power in prayer!

Hint of Humor

