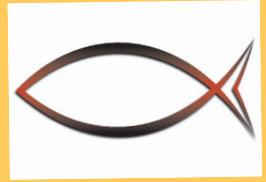




# The Line

Convocation of the West



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## Hello Brothers and Sisters

After the long winter most of us have experienced, we all have a lot to be thankful for as spring is upon us. The following poem reminds us as believers of just how beautiful His world is.

Heaven above is softer blue,  
 Earth around is sweeter green!  
 Something lives in every hue  
 Christless eyes have never seen.  
 Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,  
 Flow'rs with deeper beauties shine,  
 Since I know, as now I know,  
 I am His, and He is mine.

“I am His, and He is mine.”

~Wade Robinson



## The Vicar's Venue

On April 3, 2018, some of the clergy and laity came together at Holy Cross Retreat Center in Mesilla, New Mexico, for our annual Clericus. Bishop Win Mott was our guest speaker, and Bishop Bill Ilgenfritz attended and spoke on the state of the Diocese and Convocation. As usual, it was a Spirit-filled period of camaraderie, rest and renewal. But it was an eye-opening retreat as well. In this article, I will be providing a summary of what Bishop Win presented. In the second half, I will be providing a summary of what Bishop Bill informed us.

The topic of Bishop Win's presentation was “Spiritual Formation and Evangelism.” He started out by stating that spiritual formation involves four things: Unity, Harmony, Humility, and Tranquility. Because of time and questions, we never got to the last of these four.

The first of these, Unity, involves our perspective of the world around us. The Gnostics, Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas divided the world and people up. It was divided between that which was spiritual and that which was



## The Vicar's Venue (continued)

material. People were divided between the spirit or soul (good) and the body (bad). Society was and is divided between the sacred and the secular. But these divisions are a heresy. The body and soul are one. Nothing is secular. All is sacred.

In Psalm 24, verse one, we read: "The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is." Bishop Win asked, "If everything is God's, then how can anything not be sacred?" The whole earth is sacred, and we must recognize this unity.

Unity is represented in the Holy Trinity. The unity there is perfect, and the Body of Christ exists in this perfect unity. Therefore, we being part of the Body of Christ are part of the perfect unity of the Holy Trinity. So as Christians we are called upon to stop acting like there is a separate secular part of the world. We are also called upon to stop trying to have a separate parallel Christian society. There can be no separation. We are in Unity. The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, therefore, nothing can or should be separated out.

The other thing with which we Christians should rethink is how we view our churches. In the West the Church is usually viewed as a holy courtroom. Judicial language is used, and judgment and mercy become the terminology. In the East the Church is viewed as a holy hospital. The terminology changes from judgment to healing the sick and the weary. Bishop Mott proposed this as a much more effective model; one that recognizes the Unity of which we are a part, and one that is more effective for evangelism.

As for the concept of Harmony, Bishop Win

called to mind our stewardship of the earth. A steward runs something for someone else. We being stewards of the earth means we are to take care of it for God. And the best way to do so is to be in harmony with it.

Bishop Mott also said, as Unity rests with the first commandment in Jesus' Summary of the Law, Harmony rests with the second commandment. In other words, loving God with your whole heart, mind, soul and strength brings you into unity with the Divine Unity of the Blessed Trinity. Loving your neighbor as yourself brings you into harmony with God and with man.

At this point Bishop Win turned to the third element of spiritual formation, namely humility, and this in turn brought us to discuss more fully, Evangelism. He said that evangelism is the logical outcome of spiritual formation. He then said, quoting Bishop Anastasios, "Evangelism is the transformation of culture by the permeation of it by the Incarnate Christ." Again stressing that all is sacred, then nothing in society is outside of the sacred. He then addressed three obstacles to evangelism, all of which are counter to humility. The first is other Christians; the second is Evangelicals; and the third is Christian segregation.

The first obstacle to evangelism is other Christians. As part of our humility, we must constantly remember that we are in One Body—the Body of Christ. We all enter this body the same way, through baptism. If we are one body, then we need to stop thinking of each other as being outside that Body. Additionally, like a body, each of us may be called to different roles.



## The Vicar's Venue (continued)

Some may be priests, some accountants, and some trash collectors. But since all are sacred, and all are one body, then each role is just as sacred as the other. St. Paul used this analogy speaking of some being hands and other feet. But all are the Body of Christ. We must learn to be humble in our acceptance that all parts are holy; all parts are part of the same holy Body of Christ.

The second obstacle to evangelism is the Evangelicals. Bishop Mott brought to mind the historical events of Sweden. Up until the nineteenth century, everyone was a member of the Church of Sweden. Then in the mid-eighteen hundreds, in some parts of Sweden, they experienced Revival. With Revival came the loss of Sacramental Theology. But Revival created rigidity, legalism and judgmentalism. Humility was lost; the notion of us verses them was established. The result was the death of faith in those geographic areas that went through Revival. The faith is still strong only in those areas that never went through Revival. In turn Bishop Win credits these areas with the retention of Sacramental Theology. Therefore, he concluded that the loss of Sacramental Theology is death to the Church.

The third obstacle to evangelism is Christian segregation. When Christians try to set up their own parallel society with their own music, stores, coffee shops, and vacation areas, they lose their humility. They deny that the world is God's. They are violating the Unity inherent in the Body of Christ, and by extension, the Blessed Trinity. Our mission is an outgrowth of our spiritual formation, and that mission is to

permeate the culture. We cannot do this if we segregate ourselves out of our culture.

So the question naturally arises: How do we permeate the culture? One way is that we must speak their language. They must be able to understand our message and us, so we must learn how to speak to those outside the Body. And at this point, a very lively discussion ensued involving service language and music. But as this discussion concluded, Bishop Mott quoted Martin Luther as giving the best advice on evangelism. He said that evangelism is "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

At this point we ran out of time, and Bishop Bill Ilgenfritz began discussing the state of the Diocese and the Convocation. However, Bishop Mott continued his discussion for a few more weeks on his blog. The easiest way to access it is through the site "[thetrinitymission.org](http://thetrinitymission.org)" and then click on the button labeled "Win Mott."

As many of you know after reading Bishop Ilgenfritz's Synod Address letter, the good Bishop is concerned with what is happening in the ACNA. The failure to act during the Victoria meeting of the Bishops regarding women's ordination to the priesthood, and the ACNA requirements associated with the term "Sustainability," has caused consternation.

For those who may not know, a diocese is not considered sustainable unless it meets certain requirements. It must have a minimum of twelve (12) congregations with an average Sunday attendance of at least fifty (50) for each



## The Vicar's Venue (continued)

church, and a collective average Sunday attendance of at least one thousand (1,000) people. It was this sustainability requirement that the REC pointed to when they denied our request for a new Bishop Ordinary to replace Bishop Mott when he retired. And it may be this issue that may be a concern given that our bishops are reaching an age that they may want to retire.

Although Bishop Bill expressed his concern, he stressed that this was a time of prayer and discernment. No decision has been made. Many of us expressed our opinions, which Bishop Ilgenfritz graciously heard, but stressed again that no decision had been made regarding anything, and patience is necessary during this period of discernment.

Although the discussion about the Missionary Diocese of All Saints and the status of the Convocation of the West was sobering, the presentation on spiritual formation and evangelism was edifying, as well as uplifting. Our mission is and shall always be, to witness to the world through words and actions that Jesus is the truth, the way, and the light.

Amen.

**The Rev. Cannon Michael Penfield**  
**Vicar-General of the ACW**



## Parish News

### The Lord's Prayer

Recently, Father Don Hughes shared with his congregation in his parish Journal, a collection of 'sound bites' from J.I. Packer's book - **Praying the Lord's Prayer**. It is very insightful, and as Packer stated, "What it means to be a Christian is nowhere clearer than here."

**Let us pray.**

### **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.**

Implicit in the word Father is that all are adopted into God's family by grace. The Father's residence is heaven, where his saints and angels dwell, a sort of locality on a different plane than us, always near his children on earth. His Name is holy, all that makes God different from us in power and purity. His Name is hallowed when he is worshipped for ordering all things for his people's ultimate good and for the truth and trustworthiness of his written Word. His Name is hallowed when his name and word are exalted above all things.

### **Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

God's kingdom arrived with Jesus; his rule has the nature of pastoral care, not dictatorship. The kingdom of God is the realm of Grace where the damage of sin has been repaired. It exists wherever people enthrone Jesus as Lord. At the same time, it awaits Christ's return. So in the meantime, God's will is to be done on earth as it is done among the angels in heaven. "The glory and beauty of heaven is to be tuned into earthly reality." (Wright)

**Give us this day our daily bread.**





## Parish News (continued)

We are to live in constant dependence on God, day to day. Asking for the bread we need, for the supply of necessities we need. What comes to us is God's answer, be it much or little.

### **And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

The Father knows about our sins, as do we, of which we must repent and ask pardon for whatever has given offense. Likewise, he who lives by God's forgiveness forfeits his right to hold others' faults against them.

### **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

This is a prayer for protection, from danger and from our own weakness and vulnerability in times of testing and trial. For good and necessary reasons connected with our Christian growth, we shall not be spared all temptation. Whenever God tests us for our good, the 'tempter' is there to exploit the situation for our ruin. Do not doubt God's power to deliver you from the evil it brings.

### **For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.**

This is a doxology of praise to God for his glory. We have asked for provision, pardon, and protection with confidence knowing that it is not only within his capacity to give, but in accordance with his character. Here we acknowledge God's all-embracing mastery of the order of creation, his beneficence, and his purposes of mercy and loving-kindness "to us and to all men."

## Parish News (continued)

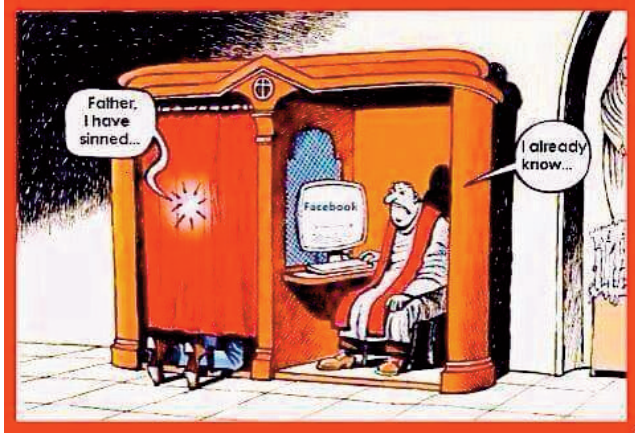
### **Amen.**

Our 'Amen' is the final profession of having meant what we have said and of identifying completely with the attitudes, hopes, and goals that the prayer expresses. It is our emphatic 'yes' to what has been prayed.

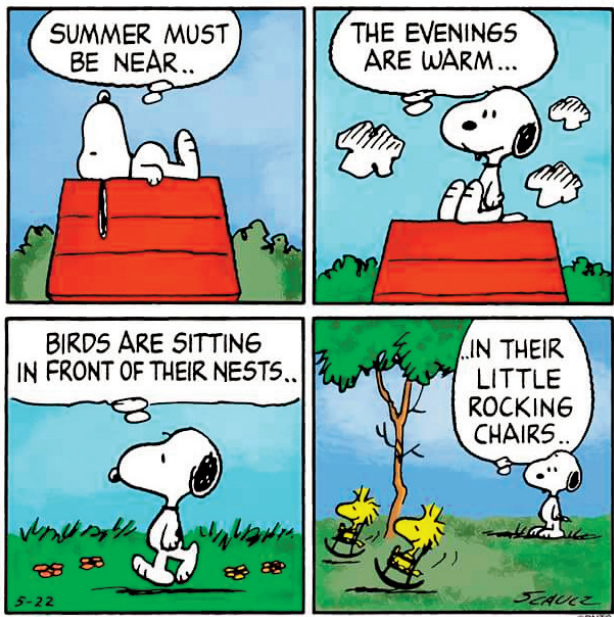
May we take care not to pray the Lord's Prayer absent of thought, but to pray it with attention and renewed awareness of its width, breadth, and depth. (Packer)



### Hint of Humor



### Parting Words



*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

**Romans 15:13**

