

## 2016 Synod Address

Your Grace, Dear Clergy and Laity,

The scenario which none of us could ever have imagined but nevertheless has evolved over the last ten months has been so astonishing that the hand of God must be at the root of the matter. There is no other explanation. Remember how Bishop Morse used to tell us that God writes straight with crooked lines. Well, God has certainly done that. We lost two archbishops in two months. God gave us our third archbishop; the bishops organized a working Council of Bishops; and now today we have elected the first of three new diocesan bishops. My brother, Bishop John Upham of the Atlantic States Diocese, has called this scenario the beginning of phase two of the work of the Anglican Province of Christ the King. For some of us, it would be so easy to look backward or to lament or resent or give up but we are called to look forward and do the work of apostles and evangelists. And I haven't been elected to put a bandage on our wounds and say, "There, there, daddy will kiss your wounds and make them better." Please don't misunderstand me. Like you, I was caught off guard. I still feel the pain many of you feel. I am not trying to play tough guy but I do want to remind us that our duty never changes.

Many of us in this room remember the theological and moral suicide of the Episcopal Church. (Remember Situation Ethics and the Zebra Book?) Many of us remember the heady, early days of our foundations; secessions and parishes being sued for their property, the Congress of Saint Louis, the Denver Consecrations, the founding of new parishes, the old Diocese of Christ the King and the magisterial image of Robert Sherwood Morse. Some of those earliest parishes are still with us: St. Mary's in San Diego, St. Augustine's in Chico; Saint Luke's in Redding. My home parish of Holy Apostles in Glendale lost their property and merged with Our Saviour. And yet as the years went by, we saw hard campaigning and felt the anguish of many casualties. We founded Saint Joseph of Arimathea Seminary and we kept growing. We have been battered and bruised so many times we have lost count and yet, by grace of God, we have weathered the storms and grown stronger. In a way, the scenario of the last ten months represents our coming of age. No, no my friends! We are not called to feel sorry for ourselves; we are called to gird ourselves and go out into the Vineyard.

When I consider our Western States Diocese, I thank God for all of you and all that you have accomplished in the last ten months. We could have had a meltdown; but we didn't. While I received an education under fire and managed to visit half of our parishes, this diocese remained steadfast. I stand astonished at your faithfulness and hard work. I want to boast about this diocese. Let me begin in Canada with the two priests and their deacon who serve Saint Mark's in Victoria. Well past retirement age and having taken lumps not of their making, Canon Stanley Sinclair and Father Peter Sandercock never whine or complain; they just fight on. When I offer encouragement, it is they and their courage which strengthens me. The Standing Committee on Wednesday interviewed Deacon Jonathan Carrothers in his studies for the priesthood.

Moving south, Father Robert Davis has worked brilliantly at St. Bartholomew's in Woodinville, Washington where his parish has covered their church in beautiful stone. I can't wait to see it when I visit there the weekend before the Youth Camp. On that same visit, I hope (God willing) to ordain Deacon Bart Dellinger to the Sacred Order of Priests. Deacon Dellinger is a gifted teacher (I know, I watched him teach Bible Study) and he will make a fine priest. It breaks my heart that Deacon Ed Miller suffers from ill health. Last November I visited Saint Mark's Portland and ordained Mr. Bruce Wilcox to the Sacred Order of Deacons. I hope to serve again with Father Lilegard, Father Herb and Deacon Wilcox when I visit for confirmations later this spring. There are two other Oregon parishes, St. Jude's in Grants Pass, shepherded by Fr. David La Barbera and St. Paul's in Redmond, shepherded by Father John Pennington. Somehow I must make time to visit these parishes and get to know their wonderful people.

In Northern California at Saint Luke's Redding, I heartily commend Father Jeffrey Smith, Father Scott Mitchell, Father David Webb and Deacon Paul Shepherd for all the building they and their congregation have accomplished. I am scheduled to visit on Whitsunday for confirmations; and I want to see their new Rose Window. Last December, I visited Saint Augustine's Chico and I was privileged to ordain Mr. David Jackson to the Sacred Order of Deacons. Deacon Jackson now joins Deacon Brian Faith under the guidance of Canon Peter Hansen in serving a loving congregation. In Napa, Father Charles Dillon shepherds Saint Stephens among miles of grape vines. Like Redding, I haven't visited there in many years but I am planning a visit at the end of the Seminary Session this summer. Saint Stephens is also sponsoring a diaconal candidate, Mr. Ron Smith

In the Bay area, I have visited Saint Peter's, shepherded by Father Michael Mautner and Father Paul Hauge; and we are scheduling the ordination of Mr. Franz Longworth (who passed his canonicals) for this summer. Last September, I visited Saint Thomas in San Francisco, shepherded by our chancellor Father Richard McNeely, assisted by Father Jim Prudhomme, where I confirmed; and the next month at Saint Joseph's Seminary where I was privileged to stand in for Archbishop Morrison and bless the plaque honoring Archbishop Morse; and early this year to attend the funeral of Nancy Morse. I want to especially commend the two fine priests who faithfully shepherd Saint Joseph's and Saint Mark's Marin County which now worships at Saint Joseph's, Father Larry Shaddix and Father David Napier. This coming Sunday, I will make my first visitation as diocesan to Saint Anne's in Palo Alto, shepherded by Father Matthew Weber.

I have yet to visit Saint Martin of Tours in Concord but I am scheduled to visit this July to ordain Deacon Tom Kelnhofner to the Sacred Order of Priests. Moving eastward from the Bay, last September I blessed the new Communion Rail for Saint Francis of Assisi in Livermore, the same parish which today achieved full parish status. Congratulations to Father Brown and his flock. (I'll return this September to institute Father Brown as Rector) To the northeast of the Bay, I need to make time to visit Holy Trinity in Carmichael, led by Father Tony Sands, who has graciously and lovingly helped to shepherd a sister parish. And I have promised Nona and Rod that I will celebrate the Eucharist at St. Paul's Chapel in Neumann.

In Southern California, I remain the Rector of Church of Our Saviour and the Holy Apostles in Los Angeles and Glendale, where I am assisted by Father Robert Greene and Father Boyd Britton. I would be remiss, if I did not thank my home parish for making my Episcopal efforts possible. Their love and support have been overwhelming. In Santa Barbara, it is I who assist Father Britton at Church of Our Saviour, a church I helped to found in 1987. Santa Barbara has caught fire and is paying down its debt and I look forward to its admission as a full parish. Saint Mary the Virgin in San Diego is like another home and it is shepherded by Father Ron White and Father Oliver Barrios. As a young deacon, I went there many times to celebrate a Deacon's Mass in the American Legion Hall under a picture of the U.S.S. San Diego. And I so miss the witness of Canon Val Dodd and Deacon Gary Pinhero.

I have not yet been able to make the journey to Saint Stephen the Martyr in Sioux City, Iowa and Saint John the Baptist in Omaha, Nebraska, shepherded by Father Robert Ponec and Deacon Ronald Reno. Finally, there is what I call the Front Range or Colorado Corridor. I have not yet visited All Saints' Wyoming, shepherded by Father Richard Andrews but I have visited Saint James in Fort Collins, Saint Aiden's in Colorado Springs and Saint Patrick's in Westcliffe. Father Dan Canda has done superb work at Fort Collins and I hope that even as soon as next year, Saint James might achieve full parish status. Father Howard Hillman has done yeoman's work in the Denver, Westcliffe and Colorado Springs areas. I want to thank Colonel Bill Canda for his spearheading Saint Patrick's in Westcliffe; and Deacon David Milam and Father Jim Prudhomme for making long treks from California at Christmas and Easter to celebrate the Eucharist for the good people of Westcliffe.

Bishops are supposed to have priorities. So let me share some of mine.

First, we must build on the accomplishments of our parishes and missions that I just described. The Diocese of the West is functioning smoothly by God's grace and we must all continue to give of our time, treasure and talent for the continued health of the diocese. As a bishop, I hear things; such as a certain assisting priest who does odd jobs, expensive odd jobs around his parish, and asks no remuneration. I have a parishioner in my parish who every Sunday walks around the perimeter of the church and picks up trash just because she wants to help. I know of clergy who pick up parishioners who can't drive and bring them to church. I love the spirit of our auctions; how we outbid each other to help the diocese. Our Anglican Church Women represent the quintessential spirit of such building for the future of our diocese.

Second, we must evangelize but for the right reasons. We must be open to new ideas and creative but we must sell the right product. Too many continuing Anglicans try to imitate the evangelical approach and in the process water down the catholic practice of religion. We are communicants; not congregants. We are not selling feel good religion; we are preaching the Gospel. We tell people what they need to hear; not what they want to hear. On the other hand, we must think outside the box and work together. What works for one parish should be shared. I'll never forget what my dad once told me. He said, "Son, when someone gives you advice, be quiet, listen; you might learn something."

Third, we must place more emphasis on the youth. We have renamed the youth camp the Robert Sherwood Morse Youth Camp. Why? Because Bishop Morse understood the importance of passing on the Faith to the next generation! When I visited Saint James in Fort Collins, I was delighted to meet a Christian woman, her husband and children. But it was not the first time I had met her. The first time was when I joined old Holy Apostles and she was in Junior High School. Mary Margaret and Erin became involved in the Bishop Morse Camp because they both attended the early camps at Saint Dorothy's Rest. Please, o please, find us kids for camp; give a scholarship; get your parish to help.

Fourth, we must support Saint Joseph's Seminary. As much as the youth, Saint Joseph's is crucial for our future. Helping the Seminary is not your job or my job; it's our job. We need to identify vocations. Parishes should, as much as they can, help postulants. I think it was Bishop Brulc who recently told me that, when he was studying at Saint Joseph's, his home parish sent regular care packages and Bishop Morse found the money to help him make his house payments. The Council of Bishops has taken on the responsibility for the Seminary and I commend Father Smith and Dr. Russell for their online courses.

Fifth, we must patient, kind and forgiving. If I leave any legacy from my Episcopate, I pray that Charity will be the most remembered. None of the first four priorities I have outlined can be achieved without the virtue of Charity. Saint John tells us that the very essence of God is love. I know we are human; I know we make mistakes; I know we say things we oughtn't to say; but I pray that other jurisdictions, other Christians and non-Christians alike will know us by our unflagging Charity.

I have many individuals to whom I owe so much for their help and prayers during the last ten months. First, I would like to thank Archbishop Morrison who in his quiet way has guided all three Suffragan Bishops towards the responsibilities they shall soon undertake. He has helped us structure a functioning Council of Bishops and built bridges of trust and confidence among its members. I owe much as well to my former fellow suffragans. Bishop Upham has been an invaluable confidant and collaborator in a multitude of concerns the bishops have faced. Bishop Brulc is quieter but when I talk to him, his powerful faith and commitment to our cause invigorates my spirit and deepens my enthusiasm.

Second, I am grateful to the rank and file clergy who have sacrificed these last ten months to keep their parishes spiritually healthy. Many if not most of these men hold down day jobs and still find time to conduct Sunday services, Bible and Confirmation classes and visiting the sick. I would ask that they now stand and may we show our appreciation. Now, would the clergy wives stand up and may we show our appreciation for the support they give their husbands. During my months as Suffragan, three clergy were of invaluable assistance to me. The chancellor, Father Richard McNeely, gave me legal advice and counsel almost weekly. The Chairman of the Standing Committee, Father Rusty Dillon, helped me in countless ways be the first line of administration for the Archbishop. And Canon Peter Hansen was a fountain of experience and wisdom from which I drew regularly.

Nona Gourley (and Rod) walked me through preparing for this first Synod. My gratitude knows no limit for the countless hours they have spent making this event truly memorable. The details are myriad. I don't know how Nona does it. I would also like to thank Gillian Golden (our new ACW president) and Claudia Baker (both from Saint Jude's in Grants Pass) for the day they spent stuffing and helping Nona and Rod get all in order on Wednesday. And of course, I must sing the praises of the Anglican Church Women and express my personal gratitude for the money they raise for the Seminary and the Bishop Morse Youth Camp.

Heartfelt thanks must also to Father Brown for replacing me as the chairman of the Men's Auction and his printing of the Daily Office books for our use at Synod; to Father Matt Weber and Father Mike Mautner for their workshop presentations; to Sharon Brown who organized the Clergy Wives Luncheon; to M.M. and Erin for taking much of the burden of the camp off my plate; and to the tellers of the Election Committee. I especially want to thank Monty Stanford for his work on Lay Readers' Medals and Altar Guild Pins. Finally and most importantly, I want to thank anyone I forgot and especially the quiet ones who work behind the scenes and whom I, in my imperfection, sometimes forget.