



# ***The Shepherd's Staff***

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

***August 2018***

***The Right Reverend Donald M. Ashman***

Welcome to the first edition of *The Shepherd's Staff*. The purpose of *The Shepherd's Staff* is to educate, communicate and bring together the parishes of the Diocese of the Western States, Province of Christ the King. But the editor needs your help. When your parish has celebrations (hopefully with photos) or other important events, please transmit the information to the editor at [bishopashman@gmail.com](mailto:bishopashman@gmail.com). We are a spread-out diocese and sometimes feel isolated and out of touch; so, I hope *The Shepherd's Staff* will, in some meaningful way, help to bring all our parishes closer together. Clergy and vestries, I hope you will spearhead this process of distribution and sending of information; for the sake of our flocks. +dma

## **The Bishop Morse Youth Camp**

Over thirty campers and chaperones met from July 1<sup>st</sup> to July 6<sup>th</sup> at Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center in Stanwood Washington, about an hour north of Seattle. We started each day with Holy Communion in a beautiful, rustic chapel overlooking Port Susan Bay. After breakfast, the campers had free time to prepare for the day (cleaning up, etc.) followed by instruction to learn more about living the Christian Faith in the Anglican tradition. Afternoons were given to outdoor recreation and fellowship. One highlight was a special-fireworks show on July Fourth. Before dinner, we gathered for Evening Prayer, followed by evening activities such as skits, games, campfires and of course S'mores. Our days ended with Wrap Up where campers talked about what they had learned.

Special thanks go to the sponsors, instructors and clergy who gave their talents to the camp: to Erin and Ernie Salazar (Camp Managers – Our Saviour, Los Angeles CA), our Suffragan Bishop Peter Hansen (St. Augustine, Chico CA), Father Daniel and Chelsea Canda (St. James, Fort Collins CO), Father Scott Mitchell (St. Luke's Redding CA), Father Michael Mautner (St. Peter's Oakland CA), Deacon Shannon Clark (Holy Comforter, Montevallo AL) and Ben Lawrence (St. Luke's, Redding CA). And special thanks to the Anglican Church Women and many parishes for their support

Plans are already underway for next year's camp. I encourage parishes and support groups like our Anglican Church Women to help finance ways to send campers to camp. The education of our children in the Faith once delivered to the saints is the responsibility of all of us.



## Saint Joseph's Summer Seminary Session

Over twenty full time postulants, clergy, visitors and faculty attended this year's two-week Summer Seminary Session. It was not only a forty percent increase over last year, but also two men offered themselves for postulancy during the session. It was simply a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In addition to Morning Prayer, a midday Eucharist and sung Evensong, classes were offered in the Church Kalendar (Bishop John Upham), Homiletics (Canon Ben Jones), the Prophets (Dr. Paul Russell) and Church History (Dr. Paul Evans.) In addition, much time was devoted to practical liturgics including an instructed mass on Saturday. Students also practiced for upcoming canonical exams, discussed moral and vocational issues any minister must face, after watching two thought provoking movies (*Monsignor Quixote* and *Between Two Worlds*).



However, as much fruit as ripened at this year's session, Saint Joseph's Seminary needs your prayers and support. I will have more to say in the months ahead, but my first plea is for parishes to help their seminarians with their financial burdens: pay their expenses for online classes and help them attend next year's summer session. We are desperate not just for deacons and priests, but for well-trained and disciplined ones. This fall (beginning after Labor Day), three classes will be offered. The provost (myself) will teach second year Latin and the Theology of the Seven Oecumenical Councils. And Bishop Upham will teach a class in spiritual formation. Please watch for details which will come out soon.

## The Bishop's Travels

This year, I visited several of our Western States' parishes. In February and March, I visited Saint Mark's Victoria and helped Canon Sinclair and the vestry begin their search for a new rector. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, I visited St. Luke's Redding, celebrated Mass and met with the Vestry. The next day, I attended Mass at St. Jude's in Grants Pass Oregon and had a wonderful lunch with the parish family at the Powder Horn.



The Parish of Saint Mark in Victoria BC



Father La Barbera and his parishioners at St. Jude's Grants Pass

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, I attended a delicious parish luncheon with Father John Pennington and his parish family of St. Paul's in Redmond Oregon, a small but mighty parish which has just found a permanent home in which to worship. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, I confirmed and celebrated the Mass at St. Mark's Portland Oregon followed at a festive luncheon in the parish hall. Then it was the race to the Bishop Morse Youth Camp which began that evening. [In the two pictures below left and center, are the campers at the St. Mark's luncheon ready for the drive to camp and the confirmand, also a camper, John Parrish]



On Tuesday, during camp, Bishop Hansen and I visited Saint Bartholomew's Woodinville Washington where we conferred with the Vestry and search committee as they begin their search for a new rector. On Sunday, July 8, I was in Victoria again to celebrate and confirm; and had a wonderful lunch with the parish family as they anticipate the arrival of their new Rector, Father Scott Herb [He is in the picture at the upper right]. And then on the drive home, St. Luke's Redding hosted a fabulous breakfast for me and my family! On the Sunday in the middle of Seminary Summer Session, I celebrated, confirmed and blessed the new garden at St. Peter's Oakland, while Bishop Upham of the Atlantic States preached.

## A Sermon for the Feast of the Transfiguration

*And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.* I have often thought about one word in this line: beloved. For in both the Greek New Testament and the Latin Vulgate, the same passage reads: *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son **whom I have chosen**: hear him.* The two expressions appear very different; one a term of affection; the other a commissioned agent. But maybe they are not so different. Beloved can mean one who is treasured or important so that someone whom God has chosen must logically be held in great affection. But **this** someone is even more important because he is God's Son. He is the fulfillment of all that came before; the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

We live in a world in which human beings are taught to worship themselves; and the truth is that it has never been any different. Why was God, if he was really God, so spiteful and cruel and mean in the Old Testament? The answer is simple. God gave men and women the power of choice to obey or disobey both natural law (which any rational person understands) and his revealed law. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they became our parents of selfishness and disobedience. Were they real people? It makes no difference because their story describes fallen human nature; the failure to choose good over evil. Nevertheless, God continued to reveal himself to his children and slowly - over the centuries - brought them to a point where they would be able to hear the truth. We know that God's mechanism was the Incarnation when God became flesh and lived among us. It is this Incarnate Saviour that God the Father from inside a cloud told Peter, James and John - and all of us - to pay attention to very carefully.

So, Jesus our Blessed Saviour, the only begotten Son of God, came to earth. He lived among our ancestors. He taught us his law of love and he actually allowed himself to be murdered by our ancestors to pay the price of the sins of all mankind. He rose from the dead to destroy death and give us life everlasting. In the Gospel, Moses and Elias talked to the transfigured (that means glorified) Jesus about these great acts of his priesthood. So that took care of the problem of sin - right? Yes, but there is a catch. And that catch is that men and women must believe that Jesus is their Lord and Saviour. This is the Faith once delivered to the saints. So, it is no accident that confirmands are asked if they will follow Jesus as their Lord and Saviour before the bishop confirms them.

But what does that mean? It means trying to choose the good and avoiding the snares of the devil. It means honestly telling God we are sorry for our sins. It means swallowing our pride and arrogance. It means loving our neighbor as we would want our neighbor to love us. And ever since Jesus ascended into Heaven and His Church was launched on that first Pentecost, it has never been any different. There has never been a golden Christian age. That is a lie propagated by the devil and his minions who do not want us to believe there is a merciful Saviour who loves us and brings us closer to him - even when we slip and fall into sin. The best practical advice I can give is to come to Church, **hear him**, take the General confession seriously and receive Christ's Body and Blood, the food of everlasting life.

I think I admire Winston Churchill's defiant statement: *Never give in - never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense* because, just as he saw how great the evil of Nazi Germany actually was, when many of his fellow countrymen wanted to compromise with Nazi evil, I think we must realize that the devil wants us every day to compromise with evil and choose the lesser good. Churchill finished that commencement speech to the 1941 class at his old school of Harrow with this less quoted conclusion - *Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.* The key word is apparently. The Nazis were apparently winning; so today it often seems that the devil is winning. But the devil is powerless before the Transfigured Christ; and we can claim His victory, if we never, never, never stop following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.