



The Shepherd's Staff

*Newsletter of the
Diocese of the Western States*

September 2019

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Saint Joseph of Arimathea Fall Classes Set to Begin

Saint Joseph of Arimathea Theological College will be offering the following classes:

Biblical Greek I (Bishop Ashman). There is no prerequisite, but some foreign language experience is strongly recommended, especially Latin or Hebrew. The class will begin on Thursday, September 12th, at 4:00 p.m., Pacific Time.

Diaconal Formation (Bishop Upham). This is a required course for all Diaconal Candidates and strongly suggested for ALL deacons. Both Bishops Upham and Ashman are requiring their deacons to take this class, if at all possible. The class will begin on Monday, September 9th, 7:00 p.m., Eastern Time.

Ecclesiastical Latin III (Bishop Ashman). This is a continuation of Ecclesiastical Latin I-II. The class will begin on Monday, September 9th, at 9:00 a.m., Pacific Time.

Ecclesiastical Latin V (Bishop Ashman). This is a class in reading the Vulgate and parts of the Book of Common Prayer which (believe it or not) has been used in English universities and seminaries. The class will begin on Monday, September 9th, at 11:00 a.m., Pacific Time.

Old Testament I, The Torah (Father Michael Mautner). This course is required of Permanent Deacons, Regular Deacons and Priests. It is a great refresher course for any clergyman. The class will begin on Wednesday, September 11th, at 4:00 p.m., Pacific Time.

Last year, the instructors continued to perfect the Zoom Platform. It costs the student nothing; all the student must do is make sure the instructor has their email address and the student will receive an email invitation to join each class. All the equipment that is needed is a laptop computer with a camera. This system was also successfully used this summer for students and clergy who could not attend the morning lectures at St. Joseph's.

The cost is \$250 for credit and \$50.00 for audit. Make your payment out to Saint Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological College, and mail it to Canon Ben E. Jones, Registrar at Saint George's Anglican Pro-Cathedral, 1210 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607. Contact Bishop Ashman for scholarship information.

Parishes are strongly urged to help their postulants with the costs of Seminary courses.

The Ordination of Glenn Karcher

The Reverend Mr. Glenn Karcher, a long-time parishioner, first of All Saints Church in Burlingame and more recently at Saint Ann's Chapel in Palo Alto, was ordained to the diaconate on Sunday, August 18th by Suffragan Bishop Peter F. Hansen of the Diocese of the Western States and Rector of Saint Augustine of Canterbury Church in Chico CA. Deacon Karcher was presented by the Vicar of Saint Ann's, Father Matthew Weber, who also served as litanist and acolyte. Father David Napier, formerly of Saint Mark's Church in Larkspur and currently assisting at Saint Joseph of Arimathea in Berkeley, preached the sermon. Deacon Franz Longworth and Mr. Fred Crenshaw rounded out the altar party. Exquisite service music was provided, as always, by Saint Ann's marvelous choir, directed by Helen Holder and accompanied by Faith Lanam, organist. A sumptuous reception, prepared by the parishioners, followed.

Not content to rest on his laurels, the new deacon sprang into action that afternoon and called upon a sick parishioner. And on Tuesday, he assisted Father Napier at the noon mass at Saint Joseph of Arimathea Chapel in Berkeley. All glory and thanks to God for this beautiful event in the development of Saint Ann's parish life.



Clockwise: taking of vows, at the ordination Mass at Saint Ann's, assisting at Saint Joseph's Chapel

Visitation to Saint Mary the Virgin, San Diego



On the same day as the Reverend Mr. Karcher's ordination, Bishop Ashman visited Saint Mary the Virgin Parish in San Diego. Saint Mary's was one of our Diocese's first parishes (1978) and Bishop Ashman remembers being sent to Saint Mary's as a Deacon in the early 1980s. The parishioners above are shown with their Vicar, Father Oliver Barrios; and in the front is a wonderful lady, Mrs. Diane Pinhero, who, with her late husband, Deacon Gary Pinhero, helped found Saint Mary's.

Surprise

And as if all that wasn't enough, Church of our Saviour in Los Angeles received a wonderful surprise on August 18th. The organist was on vacation. The rector was visiting San Diego and Father Greene was taking the 10:00 a.m. Mass. All of a sudden, an old friend, the organist from Church of the Holy Cross in Oklahoma City, Mr. Mark Caldwell came to visit his friends in Los Angeles. And just like that low mass became a sung mass. The Lord sure does move in wonderful ways!



Church of Our Saviour Annual Picnic [Won't you send some of your parish photos]



Future Diocesan Synods

Please keep in mind that we have made a change in Diocesan Synod location sites due to excessively high rates at the Lafayette Park Hotel and requests that we return to the “old days” where individual parishes hosted the Diocesan Synod. In those old days, the host parish had to come up with many extra dollars, but now our parish contributions to Diocesan Synod will take that burden away. Three parishes have stepped up and volunteered. Next year’s Diocesan Synod will be hosted by Saint Augustine of Canterbury in Chico CA, May 6th to May 9th. Bishop Hansen reports that personal costs will go down, the atmosphere near the Church is relaxing with great dining and once we park, everything is in walking distance, including a Farmers’ Market on Thursday night. The 2021 Diocesan Synod will be hosted by Saint Luke’s in Redding CA. The 2023 Diocesan Synod will be hosted by Church of Our Saviour and the Holy Apostles, marking their 100th anniversary. Who will step up for 2022?

2020 Ordo Kalendars

The Provincial ACW President, Nona Gourley, reports that now is the time to order your 2020 Ordo Kalendars. This full color calendar has been edited by the Right Reverend John E. Upham, Diocesan Ordinary of the Atlantic States, for use with the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and the American and Anglican Missals. There will be a place on the front of the calendar where a parish, if desired, may place its name and address after receiving the calendars. Pocket Calendars are also available. It is hoped that the Ordo Kalendars will be delivered before the end of October. Please contact Nona for more information at 2038 Carlsbad Caverns Court, Newman CA 95360-9635.

ACW NOTES

On Monday, August 12, I had the good fortune to be able to travel to Mount Shasta, CA to meet with a group of ACW members from St. Luke’s, Redding. What a dynamic and talented group! They are full of plans for their annual Christmas Bazaar, and will be incorporating many different items from their members. We all enjoyed a delicious lunch at The Black Bear Diner, and conversation flowed from the upcoming 2020 synod in Chico CA and the pilgrimage to Ireland in September to the trials and tribulations of raising an Australian Shepherd puppy! Altogether a wonderful time of fellowship. I would encourage other ACW groups to get together and get to know one another, exchange ideas, and increase the scope of ACW within our diocese. Don’t forget to send pictures and descriptions to Bishop Ashman for inclusion in The Shepherd’s Staff!

On a different note, please remember to order your Ordo Kalendars from Nona Gourley. These are excellent value at only \$4.00 each and are a ‘must-have’ for every church officer, as well as being an important fund-raiser for Provincial ACW! Thank you, Gillian Golden.

Colorado Activities on the Front Range

Using the Zoom platform, an informal Front Range Deanery met on August 12th. Led by Father Daniel Canda (St. James’, Golden), Deacon Michael Ruffino (St. Chad’s, Colorado Springs), Father David La Barbera (Saint Jude’s, Grants Pass), who recently filled in at St. Patrick’s Westcliffe and Bishop Ashman (mostly listening) discussed efforts to maintain and strengthen our parishes along the Front Range. The clergy candidly shared their visions, parochial challenges and activities. Their biggest need is clergy – a shameless plug for our Seminary! Father Canda shared how Saint James needs to find a permanent location. Father La Barbera reported how much he loved his recent trip to Westcliffe and how warm and accommodating the parishioners of St. Patrick’s were. Deacon Ruffino reported on his mission in Colorado Springs, his travels to Westcliffe to celebrate the Deacon’s Liturgy and his founding a preaching station in Pueblo.

If Evil is the Proof...

At baptism, we renounced the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world with all its covetous desires, and the sinful desires of the flesh. I suppose these are getting back at us now, denouncing Christ with all his horrid little Christians.

Romans accused us of drowning children and eating people. They were referring to baptism and communion and wouldn't listen to reason. Today's accusations against the church are that it's filled with superstitions that lead us to prejudicial hatred of others. They don't need facts to be angry themselves. But the argument that demands an answer has long been sung by both honest and dishonest detractors of God. They say that evil is itself the proof that a loving God cannot exist. And if evil is the proof, then we need a way to respond without adding to that evil. We are reminded daily of man's inhumanity in senseless violence, riots, human trafficking, child abuse, world hunger, disease, mass murders, racial prejudice, and oppression. And then there's nature. Wildfires devour California homes, tornadoes flatten Oklahoma towns, hurricanes flood the Gulf coast, the earth splits, emitting molten lava on inhabited dwellings.

The argument from evil, from undeserved pain, is that such suffering is inconsistent with the supposed existence of a loving God. If there is a God, He should be all powerful and all good. If those evils exist, God cannot exist or He would have stopped these occurrences and saved people from such pain. Therefore, there is no God. That's the argument. Many arrive at a conditional atheism from personal circumstances. Loved ones died of cancer. Or at the hands of drunks on the road. Their losses testify against a kindly God.

One argument cites God making the world as it is, with free will, and that freedom allows us to love Him. It also allows evil. A world too tightly controlled is not even a world we'd even be conscious of, were we mere machines acting out love by design. Would that eliminate natural disasters? But if we attack the problem so directly, we may also lose the patient. They're hurting and we're trying to defend God. God does not need defending. And we are often only defending ourselves by arguing that evil needs to exist.

A better argument is to ask why the circumstantial atheist is hurting. What's the matter? They may have something on their mind. It might be their power bill. It may be a recent death, or legal problems. You represent Christ. Would He rail against their disbelief at their moment of pain, or go to their pain and do what He might to relieve it? This points out another apologetic argument we might never have thought of. They argue that evil is proof against God. If evil is, then God is not. Evil can only exist in a world where we know what should be, and things should be good, and are not. Therefore there is no God. We acknowledge that the world, except for glaring evil exceptions, has given us comfort. People do good out of a desire for good.

The exception is called evil. We see evil because it stands out. If the world really was only a dystopia, then you might argue God out of existence. But such a world, if real, wouldn't argue against God's existence. He wouldn't enter their minds. C. S. Lewis wrote, "My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? If the whole show was bad and senseless from A to Z, so to speak, why did I, who was supposed to be part of the show, find myself in such a violent reaction against it? . . . If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning." There's the problem, and the answer. If this world really was evil, how would we know it? Why complain when you're having your kicks and getting away with murder?

Another argument against God cites biblical passages where God gives Israel orders to wipe out a tribe, leaving nothing, not even cattle. We are embarrassed by such brutality. We can't conceive of God doing it. Neither can atheists. They use such brutality as a blunt instrument against our faith. For our own minds' sake, think again of a world fully involved with evil. Satanic ritual cults with human sacrifice and children spawned into unthinkable lives, chained underground, life being only what the powerful chose for the weak. That was the land of Canaan. God could never occur to such a culture with goodness. They'd never want Him. And death was not damnation, only an end of a cycle of evil, and perhaps a chance for some to meet Him. If someone argues that a loving God must stop evil, bring them to Judges or Samuel and tell them, "Oh, He has."

Christ now brings a better answer. The outraged atheists' lives are lived in relation to God, either in resistance to His commands, or in grudging obedience. They neither have their cake, nor can they eat it. Don't hate them. They have no peace. To the heartbroken, be kind. Solve their problem, if it's within your power. Some folks are an inch away from believing in God, if only someone would spend a moment with them and mourn their losses with them and empathize with their pain. To the defiant, be hopeful. They cite evil as their proof against the Gospel, but they believe in good and are hurt that God has not yet eliminated evil. We may join them in that desire too.

If evil were actually the proof that God doesn't exist, we would be so evil that it wouldn't matter to us. But there is so much more that is good in the world and good is the argument for God. If evil is their proof, goodness is ours. And our good God wins by being stronger than evil. Evil by itself doesn't exist at all, for a thing first must be, and be itself good. Only then can it be misused. We've renounced the devil, the world and our sinful desires in the flesh. But for those who are still held by them, we offer ourselves, our hearts, our minds and our Christ. We can't guess the incredible power we possess for good.

+Peter F. Hansen (Trinity VII)

Friendly Tips and Reminders

- I was talking to a priest of the Diocese and he told me that his parish recently had a wonderful parish picnic, but he was sorry that no one had remembered to take pictures. I told him that my parish recently had a workday and I forgot to take pictures. Moral of the story: please try to take pictures of your parish activities and send them to me. It means a lot to others in our Diocese.
- When you travel, seek out one of our parishes and visit them. It will make them happy and you will be satisfied that you have done your duty.
- Don't judge a church according to the size of its membership, judge a church by the power of God in the church!
- Clergy: please pray aloud for Archbishop Morrison and our Suffragan Bishop Hansen by name during every Eucharist. Laity: pray for the clergy; they need all the help they can get.
- Support your Anglican Church Women! Even if you have no active chapter, send your dues to Gillian and Nona.
- Teach the children. Prepare things or lessons you can do, if children visit. Teach your children what is happening during the Eucharist. Teach them to pray by praying with them.
- Volunteer! Remember the story of THAT'S NOT MY JOB. *There is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.*
- Say grace before meals with your family; so much the better in a restaurant.

A Sermon for the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels

When I am asked what Christians believe I say that Christians are commanded to love God and then prove that love by loving their neighbor as themselves. If they want clarification, I tell them about Saint John, the beloved disciple, who was closest to our Blessed Lord. John with Peter and James witnessed the raising of Jarius' daughter, the Transfiguration and Jesus' suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane. John and Peter were sent to make preparations for the Last Supper but only John had a place of honor standing at the foot of the cross with the faithful women. And from the cross, it was John that Jesus told to care for his mother. We know that John played a prominent role in the early days of the Church, but scripture tells very little except that Saint Paul calls Peter, James and John the pillars of the Church at the Council of Jerusalem in 51 A. D. which released Christians from Jewish ceremonial law.

There were many legends about John such as his being unharmed by scalding oil. But my favorite is told by Saint Jerome when Saint John was a very old man in exile on the island of Patmos. He was the only surviving Apostle; all the rest had been martyred. Jerome recounted that John was so frail and weak that he had to be carried to the Sunday Liturgy. Many younger bishops and elders presided at the services, but no one dared to preach in the presence of the one who had been with the Lord. John was unable to speak for any length of time, but he said to the congregation every Sunday, Little children, love ye one another. As time went by, his disciples and the congregation grew tired of these words and asked him why he kept repeating them. John's answer was simple and profound: It is the commandment of the Lord, and if only this be done, it is enough.

Today's Gospel is used because it references God's holy angels. That is true but there is more - and it has to do with love. Children, unless taught otherwise, often speak with great innocence. Last night I read a number of young children's responses to the question what is love. Of course, the funny and silly ones were there but some were strikingly profound. I had three favorites. "Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken." "When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails. So, my grandfather does it for her, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." "If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend whom you hate,"

*Angels are created by God and, unlike us, are not subject to time and space. They were created to serve God and their name, *ἄγγελος* in Greek, means messenger. Only two are mentioned in canonical scripture: the archangels Michael [Who is like God] and Gabriel [God is my strength], although in the Apocrypha, Uriel [God is my light] and Raphael [God heals] are also mentioned. The best known story is that of the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she would be the Mother of God. Angels are found in the Old Testament as well. Michael was considered by many Jews to be the guardian angel over Israel and this belief is reflected in the lesson for the Epistle from the Book of Revelation that he would lead an angelic army to crush the forces of the fallen angels. But, most of all, angels are protectors of human souls (our Guardian Angels); and dispensers of God's grace.*

The Gospel today is both high drama and deeply touching. Jesus takes a child aside and tells his disciples that the greatest person in the Kingdom of Heaven is the person who turns away from the values of this world and becomes as innocent as a little child. Jesus makes it crystal clear that humility is the key. This is the link to angels because the angels were created closer to God than man and hence the terrible tragedy of Satan's cry of disbelief, I will not obey. And it is when people turn their hearts away from God that they condemn themselves. That is why humility and innocence are so important in the Christian's life. It is why Saint John in his frail, weak voice loudly proclaimed God's Kingdom in heaven and earth when he said that if all we ever did was love our neighbors as ourselves that would be enough.