



The Line

Convocation of the West



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Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We will soon reflect upon the coming of the Spirit as we celebrate Pentecost. With the Holy Spirit, we can shine God's light into the world.

Come Holy Spirit to this place
 Come fill this place with fire
 To cleanse us, shake us,
 Fill with awe, Your presence
 Your desire.

You have been sent to teach all things
 To comfort and to show
 It's not by power or by might
 But by the Spirit now.

When Jesus was upon the earth
 He said the Comforter would come
 To only those who would believe
 And be witness of His Son.

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The Bishop's Corner

Pentecost 2016

There have been three major festivals in Christendom since very early times; Christmas, Easter and, uh, the other one. Everyone knows about Christmas. It may be well on its way to re-paganization. It may confuse people - the celebration of Santa Claus' birth in Bethlehem and his parents' subsequent flight to the North Pole in a reindeer sled is doubted by many German exegetical scholars today. But the celebration itself is secure. Many do not realize that it is celebrated far more in Christian churches today than in former times. Only well into the twentieth century did most Protestant churches start observing Christmas Eve or Day with a church service, adding to what had been strictly a calendar of Sabbaths with no "papist" holidays included. The "put Christ back into Christmas" campaigns are somewhat ironic for those who know history (blissfully, most are ignorant of it), since it was the churches in America that took Christmas off the calendar in the first place - except for those in the catholic traditions, a distinct minority until a century ago. Nevertheless, it is now firmly back in church, and just as firmly in the public mind.





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Easter is also well known. Many would miss the traditional TV airing of "The Ten Commandments," although what that has to do with egg-laying rabbits escapes me. It might be a great movie for Ash Wednesday, since a review of the commandments, as interpreted by Jesus rather than Charlton Heston, clearly is good preparation for understanding the depth of my sin and need for salvation. Alas, the movie, unlike the book, doesn't help much for self-examination. But by Easter, the Church Year has moved on from problem to solution and left Moses in the dust to which he returned. Despite confusion here as well, the average person still knows Easter has something to do with church and would be inclined to show up in one on this day, even if no other.

Which brings us to the "C and E" folks. If you are not aware of the term, I understand. Being brought up in a railroad context rather than a church one, I thought it referred to train orders for the conductor and engineer. But it describes those who show up twice a year, a now declining populace as even the vestiges of guilt for lack of church attendance fade. Yet this is all about two festivals. No one mentions "C, E, and P" folks, and no one sees a need to "put the Holy Spirit back in Pentecost." Pentecost, in the New Testament and in church history, as well as our liturgy, is as big a deal as the other two. But in churches, Mother's Day will greatly eclipse Pentecost, and woe to the parish pastor who bucks that trend.

What went wrong? The fault is not with the day. The first Pentecost was about as exciting a Sunday as it gets, short of that Lord's Day on

Patmos with the vision recorded in Revelation. Replicate it and your church will fill up when word gets around. Or could it be that the problem is the old adage that "form follows function," and the Holy Spirit is not allowed in to do his thing, so the form becomes literally, "pro-forma," and the acts on Sunday morning have no substance or power behind them. When the Spirit is given permission to function (God, in his love, doesn't force himself in uninvited), great things happen. A Savior is born because Mary said "yes" and the Spirit acted to radically change the world for the better, and started in motion the soteriological explosion which saves us. Jesus said "yes" and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove to anoint and ordain him to be the Savior. The disciples said "yes" and the Holy Spirit came on them in a burst of flame and faith so powerful three thousand were converted that day, and the Church was born, the form of the Body of Christ, still going strong today when all other organizations, empires and fashions have come and gone. We say "yes" and call him to come among us in epiclesis every Sunday, and the powerful Body and Blood of Christ fills us with God's presence to wipe away our failures and tears, and absorb into us to dwell with us another week.

But in all these instances, it is possible to say "no" to the Holy Spirit. Even many who name themselves Christians certainly don't want him messing with something like the Eucharist. Some have been taught, following general western theology since medieval times, that all you need is to say the Words of Institution and you can have Christ present without the intrusive Spirit disturbing your life. Others prefer to walk with



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Jesus when they feel a need, but prefer to have both Jesus and the Spirit wait outside the church when they have Communion.

Is it possible that major portions of the Church don't actually believe in the divine presence of the Holy Spirit? The addition of the "filioque" to the Creed would imply that. After all, the Spirit came from the Father to conceive the Savior on earth and later to anoint him. It may seem a small point, but it is a symptom of a crucial missing expression of God to demote the Spirit to be the least important of the Trinity, as if he were simply a messenger boy from the other two, like Michael or Gabriel. The Church for many centuries, especially in her western part, has paid scant attention to the Holy Spirit, with sad consequences. When is the last time you prayed, or heard a prayer, to the Holy Spirit? Even the Pentecostals, who you would think would be on top of this, don't often celebrate Pentecost or pray to the Spirit. Even worse, some Christians, even some Anglicans, have decided the Spirit is some kind of "inner light" who talks to them from under their pillows to guide them, as if Scripture, Tradition and the wisdom of the ages can be replaced by spooky thoughts in a sleepy human brain, an organ well known for unreliable conclusions in all directions. Time for amendment of life, folks. Pentecost is a big deal because the Holy Spirit is an even bigger deal. There are three in a trinity, and in this Trinity they are an inseparable unity. You can't have one, or two, without the other. We need to greatly magnify the celebration of Pentecost because we need to say "yes" to the Spirit, and it is a good place to start. How can your church thrive when you ignore God the

Spirit in your liturgy, prayers, community, life, and tepid epiclesis? Come, Holy Spirit.

Your bishop,
+Win



The End is the Beginning

This is the first newsletter of the new Convocation of the West. As many know, even if under reported in ACNA circles, April 5-7 in Boerne, Texas saw the Diocese of the West put to rest in its legal shell and the birth of the Convocation. Although the transition was imposed upon us from outside our own community, a trust in the leadership of the Holy Spirit (see the article above) is in order and will produce a fruitful outcome. The welcome given us by the Missionary Diocese of All Saints has been gracious, warm and emphatic. We are in a new home, but we are in the same family as always. With God as our Father, we are brothers and sisters with all those in the enormous family of God, "for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented...to suffer death upon the cross." (Collect for Good Friday)

The fact is, it is unlikely that you have noticed any difference. We are the same community



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doing the same things. We are not about structures, but about the Gospel and the celebration of the Lord among us. It has been an effort to do the jurisdictional legwork and to set up the Convocation. But that is not the important thing. Word and Sacrament were, are, and continue to be, our joy and our mission. The structure is here to help that happen, not to get in the way. If everyone understands that, the Convocation will be a positive experience for all, and well pleasing to God.

The Cast

Our Bishop is William Ilgenfritz. Many have met him at our previous Synod in Reno. The Suffragan is Richard Lipka. You will find both of them gracious, caring and serious about the Gospel and the mission of our Church.

I have been elected as your Vicar-General, until retirement on August 31. Elected to replace me has been Canon Michael Penfield, who is well known among us.

Others are:

Standing Committee Priests: Fathers Don Hughes and Allan Graves

Standing Committee Deacon: Jonah Kelman

Committee Laity: Jerry Bennett and Dean Waldron

Secretary: Deacon Herman Roark

Treasurer: Deacon Peter Vogel

Examining Chaplains: Fathers Don Hughes (Chair), Koos van Leeuwen and Chris Linebarger, and Deacon Carl Loeb.

The Line Editor: Susan Peterson

Parish Treasurers, Please Note:

Beginning in May, all parish tithes should be made out to: The Missionary Diocese of All Saints. Send the check to: 40 Delsandro Drive, Donora, PA 15033.

Parishes:

The final disposition of parishes is as follows: 9 stayed with the Convocation, 2 each joined the Diocese of the Southwest and the Diocese of Mid-America, 1 each joined the Diocese of San Joaquin and the Diocese of Cascadia, 1 dissolved. The nine which are now the Convocation are: St. John's, Boerne and St. Michael's, Kerrville, Texas; St. Augustine, Deming, New Mexico; St. Andrew's, Phoenix, Arizona; Christ the King, Arroyo Grande, St. Luke's, Los Altos Hills, and St. Anselm's, Pacific Grove, California; St. Barnabas, Shoreline and Trinity, Mt. Vernon, Washington. Also included are Andrewes Hall, our theological college in Phoenix, Principe de Paz mission in New Braunfels, Texas, and Nevada Ranch Ministry, Reno, Nevada.

Remember to check out our website (anglicanow.org) and the Diocesan website (themdas.org).

As always, if you have concerns, questions or anything else, contact me at bpwinmott@gmail.com or by phone at [250-364-8011](tel:250-364-8011) (Northwest office) or [575-531-3999](tel:575-531-3999) (Southwest office). Cherie Salmon continues as the Convocation Assistant and can be reached at [575-388-7518](tel:575-388-7518).

To use a well-won but very true statement from our part of the world: Si, se puede.





Parish News

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit: Goodness

The fruit of goodness reflects an essential virtue of God's nature. Origen (185-254 AD), an ante-Nicene Church Father, refutes the argument that the goodness and justice of God are mutually exclusive. He declares, "the God of the law and the Gospels is one and the same, a just and good God...He confers benefits justly, and punishes with kindness; since neither goodness without justice, nor justice without goodness, can display the real dignity of the divine nature." (Cap. 5.3, De Principiis)

Goodness originates from God, so much so, that when a young man questions Jesus, saying, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus replies, "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (St. Matthew 19:16-17) But this goodness that God alone has, He imparts to man through His indwelling Holy Spirit if we just trust God to do this, and follow the direction given us by the Spirit as He leads us into the fullness of obedience to God the Father.

The goodness of God must be expressed in our lives by our showing love and doing good to all, even to our enemies (St. Matthew 5:44-46), thus showing that we are children of our Father "who causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain to the just and to the unjust."

In the Lords view, a tree is either good or bad - if good, it bears good fruit; if bad, it bears bad fruit. (St Luke 6:43) This is a metaphor for a

human being: if he is good, he brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart; if he is evil, he produces evil out of the evil treasure of his heart. (St. Luke (6:45) This is a yardstick against which to measure all our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Samuel, in replying to the people of Israel after the thunder and rain that signaled the Lord's displeasure with Israel's request for a king, told them, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things He hath done for you." (I Samuel 12:23-24) The beginning of goodness is reverence for the Lord and obedience to Him from the heart.

One of the secrets of those who represent the good soil in which the seed of God's word is sown is to have an "honest and good heart" and, having heard the word, to keep it and produce fruit with patience. (St. Luke 8:15)

Goodness can be described as "uprightness of heart and life," integrity which is revealed in intentions, attitudes, words, and actions. God grows this goodness in our lives by the action of His Spirit day by day. St. Paul in Philippians 4:8, encourages Christians to foster goodness by meditating on it: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."





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By reflecting on all that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, reputable, virtuous, and praiseworthy, we foster such goodness and virtue in our mental habits, and our words and actions are more likely to conform to God's goodness. In fact, we must meditate on such goodness and virtue simply because it takes great effort on our part to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in conforming ourselves to the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through such meditation, including the reading and study of God's word, the grace of God floods our being to confront sin within ourselves. Because God is good, His Law is good too, as Holy Scripture testifies in a number of places. In Psalm 119:68, we read of God: "Thou are good and gracious; O teach me Thy statutes." We also learn to be good by imitating God, who is good, and this is done by keeping His commandments. The prophet Micah expressed this powerfully and succinctly in these words, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8) Just actions, a delight to show mercy, and living humbly in relationship with God comprise goodness. The goodness of God which people long for in their lives, if they want to please God, is not simply moral excellence or just behavior in itself, but it embraces mercy, kindness, gentleness, and humility in relating to God and people around us. Therefore, the idea of the virtues which comprise the fruit of the Holy Spirit as joining hand in hand is essential for a right understanding, even of goodness.

Since the goodness of God leads to repentance (Romans 2:4), how eagerly must we be doing

good, and reflecting God's goodness in our own lives, so that our repentance may be genuine in God's sight, and our eternal reward be "glory, honor, and peace." (Romans 2:10) When writing of how the Gentile, like a wild olive branch, were grafted into the stock of Israel, the natural olive tree, St. Paul calls on his readers to note the severity and goodness of God: "Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Romans 11:22) From this verse it is clear that "goodness" is used in the sense of "kindness." Christians have an obligation to "continue in God's goodness" by living in obedience to Him, fulfilling His will, and trusting in Him for His gifts of grace and righteousness given through Christ.

The more we consider God's goodness in all its aspects, and the more we reflect that virtue in our lives, the more daunting a task it appears to be, since goodness is not just kindness, but doing what is good, right, and just, and standing up for what is right, good, and just. It may involve correcting those committed to our care whom we love, when they are misbehaving, in order to teach them to conduct themselves properly. The cost of our firmness in standing up for goodness and love exemplified and taught by the Lord Jesus Christ may well be that others misunderstand us or even oppose us and ridicule us.

With what picture of God's goodness, then, are we left in the end? It is the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ's goodness. This is a goodness





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shown in the absolute integrity of His life in all its aspects - sincerity and uprightness, devout character, overflowing with the love of God and man. His goodness is not self-righteous or contemptuous of others, not even of the woman caught in adultery (St. John 8:2-11), yet He stands for God's truth and goodness, not being afraid to reprove even religious leaders for their hypocrisy and unkindness to others. (St. Matthew 12:1-37) God's goodness is linked hand in hand with all the other virtues of the Holy Spirit which are exemplified in the life, passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we celebrate our Lord's resurrection and look forward to Pentecost, let us examine how we can let God's goodness take root and grow in our lives!

The Reverend Christopher Parrish, St Luke's Chapel in the Hills



Prayer Requests

Just an Observation:

With everything that is happening in today's world, we can feel as though there is no hope for the future. I witnessed the opposite very recently as I attended a ceremony marking the end of basic training for 750 young Americans.

These men and women chose to be there, and realized that they could eventually be in harms way. They chose to serve and possibly fight for the country they love. And even more uplifting, was the attendance and participation in a church service held on base. Again this was a choice they made, as they could have stayed back in their barracks and had a little free time.

This scene happens week after week as one group moves on and is replaced by another. It really is an eye opening experience and makes you feel very proud of the young men and women serving in our military. Remember to keep them in our prayers.

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.

Pray for our Christian Brothers and Sisters 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

