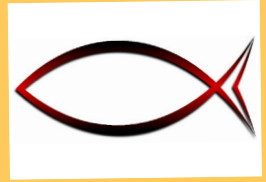




# The Line

Convocation of the West



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## All who Enter

Our life is worth but all who enter,  
 some leave more with us than others.  
 The prints by those who love the Lord,  
 are those that never leave us.

It takes strength to be a leader,  
 an example to us all,  
 humility and compassion and  
 God's light into the world.

So when we think of you,  
 and all that you have taught us,  
 the light you've left is bright enough  
 to lead the path before us.



## The Bishop's Corner

Misinformation, disinformation, and lack of information characterize much of our current society. Our media blends seamlessly from news source to propaganda, to profit-driven sensationalism. We are in trouble as a nation because a democracy in particular cannot operate successfully without reasonably accurate reporting of facts. As someone said, you are entitled to your own opinion, but not to your own facts. The latter are objective. While they can be viewed differently by different people, they are what they are.

You are perhaps thinking this is a prelude to comments on our current political situation. It would certainly be fitting, but my comments are going to be on the state of the Church. The crisis we face as Christians in 2016 is at least as serious as our present impending national debacle, even if it does not entertain us on the screen every evening. In the general "dumbing down" which has occurred, no concept has suffered more than that regarding the Church. Effective Christian formation on a large scale ceased several generations ago, and arguably was poorly done for several centuries before that.



## The Bishop's Corner (continued)

There has been a general decline in all forms of church participation, and concepts of what church and Christianity are among people in general fit in the misinformation, disinformation, and lack of information categories. The pattern follows that of Western Europe, with a time lag of a generation or two. Our leadership seems unable to respond creatively, and tries simply to repeat the same formulas which have failed in correcting the decline, both in Europe and here.

What can we do?

1) Admit the problem. It is not disloyalty to diagnose the malady instead of cheerleading as if nothing is wrong. It is much like a cancer. Denying or ignoring it will not make it go away, and may result in waiting until effective remedies are too late.

2) Go back to basics. Do that with the faithful who remain, of all ages (those in the pews are not necessarily better informed about church than those alienated from, or strangers to, church). Do that with anyone else who will pay attention. Start where they are, not from where your program is.

3) Make sure you know what you are talking about before you instruct others. Otherwise, you are part of the problem. Although the massive information overload of our world has many negatives, it does mean there is much valid and valuable source material available concerning catholic Christianity and the Tradition. If you don't know where to look, ask me.

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What are the basics?

1) The definition of Church is a gathering of those called by God to be the community/family who he loves. There is only one group whom he calls: sinners. I am confident you are eligible. This is not about diversity, rather it is a universal human condition, afflicting all. Therefore, he welcomes all, without exception. This means church people are no less sinful and no better (or worse) than others. Note the misinformation regarding this. The notion that people in church are good people and have only polite and inconsequential sins has done more than anything else to destroy church, and salvation, which is, pay attention, by God's grace alone (we repeat the slogan, but refute it by our prideful works righteousness). I rarely get the message of these basics walking into a church. You see how we have created and perpetuated the problem. The continual sending of the wrong message in our judgmental, legalistic rules about so many aspects of life blocks the operation of God's grace. But the latter is the purpose of the Church. You might reference how Jesus handles this, as recorded in the Gospels.

2) The Church is Sacrament, that is, the visible material means by which God conveys his grace and love to us. We enter its community through baptism, God's effective means of making us specifically his child, while we are helpless in our sin and cluelessness, to do anything but receive it. We celebrate through Eucharist, the family table around which we gather, offering our life to him and receiving his loving presence in return. The Church is not an institution. The institutional aspects are like the baptismal font and altar: important accessories to the Sacrament,



## The Bishop's Corner (continued)

but of no value by themselves. The continual defining of the Church by its institutional, not sacramental characteristics, is both heretical and destructive. The results speak for themselves.

3) The Church is the Body of Christ, that is, a community so integrated its functions as a body, where each part has a role to play, each part dies if it separates from the whole, each part's joy and pain is felt by the whole Body, each part accepts direction from the head. When we operate the Church instead as if it were some fraternal, civic or service club, it has the same effect as cancer in a body, parts working against the whole instead of in unity with it.

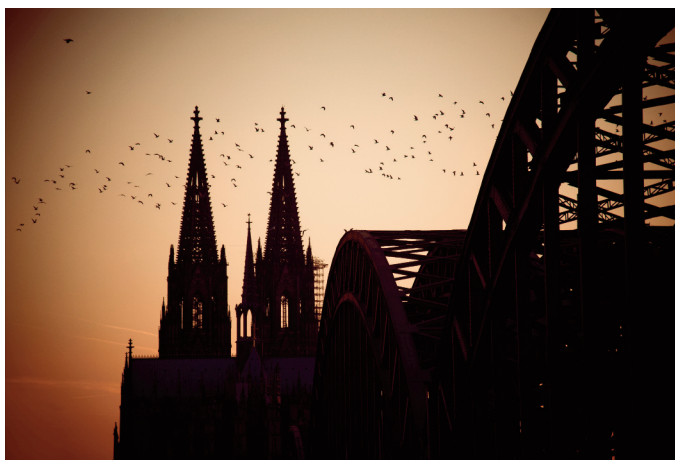
There are many things which follow from the three points above, but they are the basics. Ask yourself if your congregation, your convocation, your diocese and all the other components of our community are in harmony with these concepts. If not, ask what you are doing about it. None of us can change the whole world. All of us can change our corner of it. Your congregation is called to be Sacrament in your town.

This is my last column, and I leave you with a focus on these basics. God's love and grace is all it is about, and we need to do a much better job in letting it work. That is a confession of my failure, and a challenge to others to do better. It has been a joy to be part of this community, and to be your diocesan for almost five years. It has been at the same time frustrating that we have been contained in breaking through to all those around us in need of that grace and love.

On September 1, Canon Michael Penfield will become Vicar-General for the Convocation of the West, having been elected at our Synod in April. He can do little alone, but with God and the cooperative action of our community, he and you can do great things. I am delighted that he is taking the office and know his devotion, dedication and competence will be effective in leadership.

Retirement begins a new adventure for me. When I retired from the railroad in 1998, I had no idea that life would take the direction it did, so this time I will make no predictions ("If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans for the future," as the Lebanese saying so aptly puts it). But this I know: God's grace will be there for this old sinner. And God's grace will be there for you as well.

Your bishop,  
+Win





## Parish News

As all of you know, at the end of this month Bishop Win Mott will retire. He has been our Diocesan Bishop for many years and our Vicar-General this past year. And he has served well. He has done so much for us that we should take a moment and thank him.

One of the greatest honors I have ever had in my life was that both Bishop Mott and I were ordained priests at the same time at what would become my parish, St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills. Since that time, our friendship has grown deeper than I ever thought possible. It has been such a great honor to serve with him for all these years. But, I do not think many people realize how thankless a job being a Bishop can really be.

The trouble with being a Bishop is that you are charged, not only with spiritually feeding your flock, but also protecting it. In many ways +Win has done an admirable job in both respects. His greatest goal and greatest challenge has always been to help all of us to grow in our sacramental lives. He also has worked hard to grow the Diocese of the West, both numerically and spiritual. Furthermore, +Win was instrumental and worked hard in the formation of a new Diocese in the ACNA, the Diocese of the Southwest. This is no small task and took a lot of work to make sure it did succeed.

But +Win has also protected his flocks. He has run interference and taken the brunt of some very unpleasant actions by others, without our knowledge that such actions were transpiring. As a result, our Diocese/Convocation has enjoyed the type of spiritual protection that has helped us to foster a community of believers that has

grown spiritually.

Finally, with every Bishop, we hope that they are good servants of the Lord, and with +Win we did indeed have such a servant. So, besides thanking Bishop Mott for all his hard work, known and unknown, we should thank the good Lord for sending us such a servant and guardian as he.

Thank you +Win, and may the Lord grant you a long, fulfilling, and restful retirement with your lovely wife, Micki. Amen.

**The Very Rev. Canon Michael Penfield**

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Bishop Mott opened a door for me to escape from the ECUSA into the arms of the conservative and orthodox Reformed Episcopal Church. He encouraged me to found a mission church in Truth or Consequences, and he assigned Fr Henry Hoffman to be my mentor priest.

Bishop Mott ordained me as a deacon in December 2014. In the season when St. Augustine was searching for a new priest, Bishop Mott asked if I would do a deacon's mass every other week until they found a priest. In February 2015, at the clericus, I was honored to be ordained as a priest by Bishop Mott in the presence of other Diocese of the West clergy.

He has led the DOW with diligence and wisdom, and no doubt will continue as a great leader in the COW-MDAS. It has been my honor to have him as my bishop, and my pleasure to serve under his direction.

**Fr John H Price III, Holy Trinity Church, Silver City, NM**





## Parish News (continued)

Bishop Mott has a way of seeing humor in any situation, and this has certainly helped us through some trying times in our lives. His many visits were appreciated, and the parishioners always enjoyed his folksy, but serious sermons which were spiritually focused.

He had time to talk and listen, which is very unusual for a priest or deacon, let alone a Bishop. This we will miss. I, along with our parish, wish him a wonderful time in retirement, which is spiritual I know for him. He has some good books in him, and we await those!

**Blessings..... Fr David McMillan, St. Michael and All Angels in Kerrville, Texas**



**Dn Herman Roark, Bishop Mott and myself, obviously enjoying a good story from I presume, as usual, the Bishop.**

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Thoughts about my Bishop:

I have been so honored and blessed to know so many fine Bishops in my walk of faith, after the time when my church left me to hike alone as they slipped down the slope of social relevance. We have had such a blessing in the west to have had two very fine Bishops: +Richard and +Win. And we have all been so blessed to have such leadership.

I must admit that I have received far more than I have given. +Richard was always so helpful in leading me to see God's will. I miss him very much. My relationship has been different with +Win. He has been my pastoral leader for several years now. He was there to encourage me through some of the darkest times of my health struggles. Bishop Mott has also encouraged me to keep my faith in God and listen for His voice to guide me. For very long stretches of time, he has been the only voice I have heard from the Diocese of the West. And it has always seemed to come when I needed it most.

This servant of God, Bishop Win Mott, has taken the roles of defender and pastor seriously. From his own flock to the international work with the ACNA, he is focused and wise. When I have been discouraged by the work I see being done poorly or not at all, +Win has encouraged me to write or talk to those who are engaged in the work.

Thank you, my Bishop and friend, for your encouragement and wise guidance. Thank you for allowing me to at least do a little work for the Diocese of the West. Thank you for taking time to talk with me when I know there were much greater tasks that needed to get done. I miss those talks and hope they may resume.

My wife and I hope that you and yours will have more time to be together and continue to share your walks of faith. Ann sends her love. God bless you good and faithful servant of God, and may He grant you many more years.

In Christ's love..

**Fr Robert Herrell**





## Parish News (continued)

As a fairly recent transfer from the REC Diocese of Mid-America to what was the Diocese of the West and is now the Convocation of the West, I have been encouraged greatly by Bishop Win Mott's example and ministry. His pastoral care of his clergy, his availability both to listen and to give counsel, and his friendly approachability have been very helpful to me, a newcomer, as I have been learning to adapt from full-time ordained ministry to bi-vocational ministry. In my view, he takes an esteemed place among those bishops whom I have known to be spiritual fathers. May God bless him and his wife, Micki, with a peaceful, happy and healthy retirement!

Fr Christopher Parrish



Fr Christopher and Bridgitte Parrish with Bishop Mott, St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills, Los Altos Hills, California

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Bishop Mott is everything I would wish to see in a bishop - a true friend and a true pastor. I may have one advantage over other clergy that have served under him during his episcopacy, and that makes me somewhat prejudiced in my feelings for him. You see, Win Mott and I not only shared in a calling to serve Jesus Christ in

His Church, we also shared a common love for our occupations on the railroad. Yes, Win and I were both railroaders, as well as being ministers of the gospel.

I believe that shared experience gave us a special bond. I can think of no one else that I could sit down with and talk about the Hypostatic Union, hydrostatic lubricators, the Book of Common Prayer, and the book of operating rules....all in one conversation. I remember once placing a phone call to Bishop Win regarding a concern I was having about the church. Because of his great pastoral skills, my concern was dealt with in a matter of a couple of minutes, after which we spent the next thirty minutes discussing the economics of railroad dining car service. Yes, Bishop Win is as much a brother "rail," as he is a brother in Christ.

Of course Bishop Winn and I will continue to have conversations in the future about the state of the church, as well as the state of the railroad. But in losing his episcopal oversight, I believe that I have lost much that is irreplaceable. Thank you Bishop Mott for being a true bishop and friend to both Susan and myself.

Fr Robert Peterson

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My thoughts on our celebrated Bishop:  
I am not one for words, but I must speak in order to honor the man who has been our shepherd. Bishop Mott is a caring, pastoral bishop who is always available to answer a question or provide counsel. His quiet, peaceful and thoughtful wisdom provides insight with a view of what is just and right, making him easy to approach and to learn from. I appreciate the





### Parish News (continued)

trust he has shown in me, and it has been my privilege to be under the guidance of this great man of God. I wish for him and Micki a long and wonderful retirement, and concerning his leadership of this Diocese/Convocation, I say, *“well done thou good and faithful servant.”*

Fr Don Hughes, St John’s, Boerne, Texas



The last synod of the Diocese of the West and the first synod of the Convocation of the West of the Missionary Diocese of All Saints held in Boerne. Delegates gather around Bishop Mott.

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I transferred into the Diocese of the West from Mid-America in early 2015. What could have been a tough transition, turned out to be one of the best experiences of my life, in large part, due to Bp Mott. From the very beginning, he made me feel more than welcome in the DOW.

On one occasion, when he came to our parish for an episcopal visit, I remember him taking extra time getting to know my wife and daughters. He treated them with such tenderness and care. This had a profound impact on me and I was moved to tears.

Bishop Mott is the real deal. He is a shepherd

of shepherds. He loves and tends to those under his care. It made all the difference in the world to have such a godly pastor leading me as I was just starting out as a newly ordained priest in a new parish. He lives what he preaches and stands as one of the great servants in the historic episcopacy. I count it a blessing to have served under him, and to call him not only one of my father’s in the Lord, but my friend. I am eternally grateful to God for bringing me under his cure.

Fr Chris Linebarger, Christ the King Anglican Church

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As an outsider to the Reformed Episcopal Church, I was a little hesitant to attend my first Clericus and Synod. Coming from a Baptist background this was all foreign to me. However, the entire group of clergy, headed by Bishop Mott, took away any apprehension I may have had. My perceptions were ill founded, and this was not as foreign as I anticipated. Proof that our mutual love of Christ binds us together.

I’m not sure how I managed to become editor of the newsletter, but I do seem to remember a dinner with Bob and Bishop Mott a couple of years ago. It has been my pleasure to work with Bishop Mott in putting the letter together, and I will always be grateful for his confidence in my work. He truly is a joy to work with, and I will miss reading his wonderful and informative Bishop’s Corner. I hope to continue to receive articles from him. (hint-hint)

I wish Bishop Mott and Micki a wonderful, relaxing retirement, and many more years of good health. God bless you both!

Susan Peterson





## Parish News (continued)

### And some late breaking news:

Bishop Ilgenfritz just confirmed that he will perform the Vicar-General installation of Father Michael Penfield on Friday, November 11. It will be hosted by St Luke's Chapel in the Hills, Los Altos Hills, CA. The Convocation and it's friends, as well as Mike's friend's, are invited. More information will be given in the next issue of the newsletter.

## Prayer Requests

Pray for peace in our country.

Pray for the upcoming elections, that this country will unite, as we know God is in control.

Pray for those in other countries being persecuted for their religious beliefs.

Pray for those confined to hospitals and nursing homes and those caring for them.

Pray for the leaders of Christ's Church, and especially our own Bishop Mott

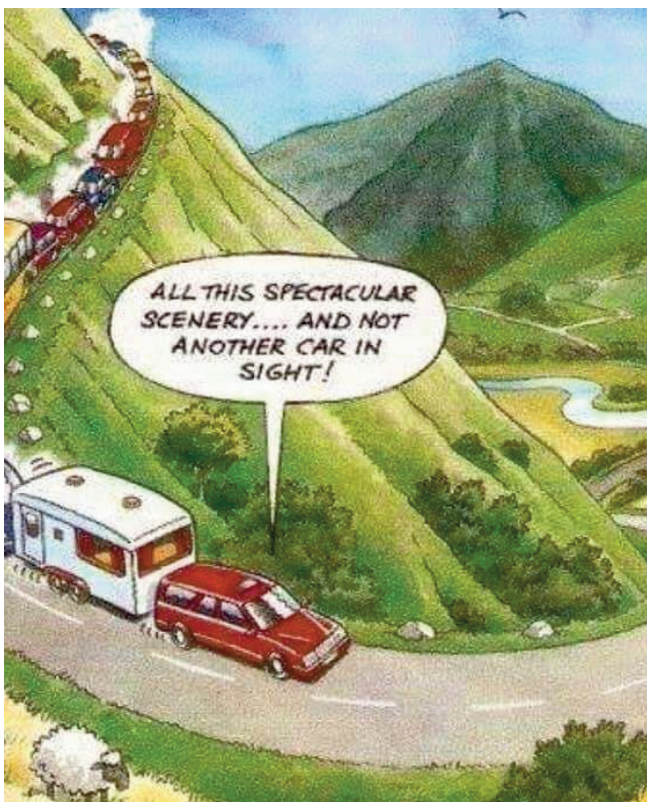
Pray for the victims of the wildfires, and those who put their lives in danger fighting the fires.

Please send in prayer requests from your parrish so we can pray for each other.



## Hint of Humor

A little Summer Humor:



And if the summer heat has gotten the best of you, just a little reminder:

