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God's Eternal Blessings

God's eternal blessings
 Flows down from above
 To equip us in His mission
 To spread His wondrous love

So He can always use us
 And stretch us in our faith,
 So we may be a blessing
 To others by His grace

For everything we need,
 God will graciously provide
 Through His eternal blessings
 That's abundant in our lives.

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Welcome Rev. Canon Michael Penfield

As most of you already know, Michael Penfield has so graciously agreed to be the Vicar-General for the Convocation of the West. We heartily welcome and thank him for agreeing to be our shepherd in this time of change.

I have called upon Bishop Mott, a very good friend of Father Penfield's, to give us a little more information about our new leader. Most of you know him very well already, but it's always nice to know even more.

Mike grew up in Maryland, of English and Sicilian parentage, in the Roman Catholic faith. He has two sisters and one brother. He has achieved both an undergraduate college degree and a law degree. After practicing law for a number of years, he decided that it was not a fulfilling profession for him, and became a grade school teacher instead. He is currently employed as a teacher in the San Jose school system, where he is currently living.

Sometime in the 1990's, Mike found St. Luke's Chapel in Los Altos Hills, and the Anglican Way. He became an active member of the parish, and



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was ordained a deacon near the turn of the century. Founded in 1963, St. Luke's is one of the oldest Anglican parishes in the country, and by far the oldest in our former Diocese. By 2001, the current rector retired and Mike was ordained priest at St. Luke's on May 18, 2001, by the Rt. Rev. John Lindenauer. Bishop Mott was ordained right beside him that day. They were part of the newly formed Christian Episcopal Church, one of a myriad of small "continuing" churches.

In 2003, Father Penfield, Bishop Mott and their parishes, along with three other parishes, joined with the Diocese of the West of the Anglican Province of America under Bishop Boyce, doubling the size of the Diocese. In 2008/2009 we all came together into the ACNA and REC, when the former was founded.

Mike served as rector at St. Luke's until around 2013. In the Diocese, he served at various times as an examining Chaplain, on the Standing Committee, Chancellor, and as Dean for California and Nevada, and was honored with the title of Canon.

For Bishop Mott and many of you, Mike has been a close friend for a lot of years. His wisdom, legal knowledge, theological scholarship and pastoral leadership have been a gift to the Diocese through all those years, and now the Convocation as well.



Starting September 1, I officially became Vicar-General of the Anglican Convocation of the West for the Missionary Diocese of All Saints. We became a Convocation, not by choice, but because our numerical value was below that which others think a Diocese should have. In order to regain our status as a Diocese, we must grow.

Given this fact, why I was chosen Vicar-General is not clear to me. I have no special knowledge as to how to grow a Diocese. I have no special talent. My time as a parish priest did not result in large numbers, let alone evolution into a mega-church. I do not have any secret knowledge or magic formula that will transform our Convocation of nine into a Diocese of 12 with average Sunday attendance of 50 or more. But, I do love the Lord. And I know what that love has done to transform my previously sinful, pathetic existence into one filled with meaning, depth, blessings, and love. And that knowledge has made me thirsty to share it with others.

We must grow, but not because we want to become a Diocese again. We must grow because we need to share with the world what we do know – that life on earth has no value and no beauty outside the love of God, and that eternal life enveloped in this Love comes through our faith in Jesus Christ. Will we eventually become a diocese again? Only heaven knows. But what we MUST do – as every church should do – is embrace the Great Commission:

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.





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And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." [St. Matthew 28:16-20]

There are three ways we can grow. The first is to grow each of our parishes. Outreach and seeker-friendly models may help, but they are not the answer. Robert Cardinal Sarah, a Roman Catholic Cardinal who was born and raised in Guinea (then, French Guinea) said, when discussing reformation of the Church, "The Church is reformed when the baptized march more resolutely toward holiness, allowing themselves to be recreated in the likeness of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Only the contagion of sanctity can transform the Church from within."

If we want to grow, we must first commit to reforming our churches so as to become contagions of sanctity – what I call becoming Beacons of Light. We do this by sanctifying ourselves, namely, what the Eastern Orthodox call Theosis – becoming more Christ-like. And this can only be achieved through living a sacramental life.

Every time in my infinite "wisdom," I proposed something that I thought would help my parish church to grow in numbers, it failed. Following books, manuals, and "experts" on growing churches, fell woefully flat. But, if I felt called to do something to help my parishioners to grow

spiritually, it eventually helped our numbers. My conclusion is that growth comes through the will of God, and not by the efforts of men.

However, I would also make a few "human" suggestions. We must make our churches sanctuaries for sinners. People should feel comfortable to come to our churches regardless of their spiritual status or where on their pilgrimage they may be at that specific moment. Also, we must make our churches places where we worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. This includes trying to maintain a holy peace within our churches and within our services, so that the Holy Spirit has a chance to speak to us. This means that those of us who are the shepherds of the flocks – priests, deacons, vestrymen, lay readers, altar guild members – need to keep the peace. Sometimes this means swallowing our pride for the good of the church.

As many of you know, I am Anglo-Catholic. The parish that I served was not. They were very low-church evangelicals. There were times that I wanted to do something in the service, but could not because it would be a stumbling block to those in the pews. This sometimes meant changing in midstream. I would encourage any rector whose churchmanship is different than that of their congregation's to take this to heart. If it is not essential to the faith, then you may not want to do it. It serves no purpose to drive the parishioners away because we want a High Church or we want a low, Evangelical church. Lead by serving. And remember what Saint Paul tells us:

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made





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myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. ... I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." [1 Corinthians 9:19, 22b]

The only way to grow our churches is to trust in the Lord. But having a church where all sinners are welcomed, where God is worshipped in the beauty of holiness, where the rector is committed to lead through serving, and where people are committed to the Great Commission, will go a long way to growing each individual church.

The second way we can grow into a Diocese again is to encourage those churches that need a spiritual home to join our convocation. If there is a church in your area that is not happy with the diocese or convocation in which they are members, and you feel our convocation is a good fit, please speak with them. When you think the time is right, I will be happy to speak with them as well. I do not want to "steal" parishioners or churches that are happy or content where they are now, but I do believe we need to make sure that all churches are located within a correct spiritual home.

Finally, the third way we can grow into a Diocese is to encourage and support groups that want to form new churches. They may start out as satellites, if you will, of one of our churches. These groups may begin as home-churches or in retirement communities, and will need the support of deacons and priests to bring them the Holy Sacrament, but eventually, as God blesses them, they will become independent churches serving their communities.

This three-prong mission of growing our parishes, bringing in new parishes into our convocation, and creating satellite churches sounds good, but it is worthless without the blessing of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We cannot do anything that is not His will. Therefore, we are to pray, we are to hope, and we are to take courage. For as Saint Paul tells us, if God is with us, who can be against us. Amen.

The Rev. Canon Michael Penfield
Vicar-General of the ACW



Parish News

Why is Trinitytide Green?

Several years ago, when we were collecting funds for the acquisition of rose appointments for the altar and vestments to match, we talked about the liturgical colors, and in particular, why do we use green for the Trinity season?

The general instruction from the Roman Missal from which Anglican liturgical traditions derive (though the Eastern Churches also make use of very similar - though somewhat expanded -





Parish News (continued)

liturgical colors): The purpose of a variety in the color of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated, and to a sense of Christian life's passage through the course of the liturgical year.

To “give effective expression even outwardly” implies an objective component to the symbol of color. Colors ought to imply, symbolize, or move us even outside of the bounds of liturgical law.

The starkest color symbolism is between white and black. Not only is white a symbol of being and black of non-being, white is in fact a presence and black is an absence. In cultures around the world, these two colors are intimately associated with life and death, good and evil, and ultimate final things. These colors are likewise used in the liturgy: black for death, and white for ultimate triumph.

In digital cameras there are twice as many green sensors as there are sensors for red and blue. This is because there is so much green in our lives. Green surrounds us in the leaves and needles of trees, grass, the stems and stalks of flowers, and much more. It is a symbol of life, hope and growth.

In the liturgy, we use green for the season of Trinity and when no other color is specifically called for. It symbolizes our growth in Christ and in our knowledge and love of God. The focus of our readings in Trinitytide is the teachings of Christ, so as we learn from Christ

Himself through Scripture, the liturgical color reminds us that we too are living things growing in hope and knowledge.

The Reverend Mr. Peter A. Vogel



Thirst for the Water of Life

This is “A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.” This is a special psalm. It is an ointment that is poured out upon all kinds of sores. It is a bandage for bruises. It is a balm to put upon wounds to help them heal. It has been a marvelous psalm for the church. It speaks of the thirst for the Water of Life. Chrysostom said that it was ordained and agreed upon by the primitive fathers that no day should pass without the public singing of this psalm and in the primitive church this psalm was sung every morning or every time there was a public gathering. They always began the morning service with it. This psalm is the expression of wonderful thoughts. - **J Vernon McGee**

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.





Parish News (continued)

Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.

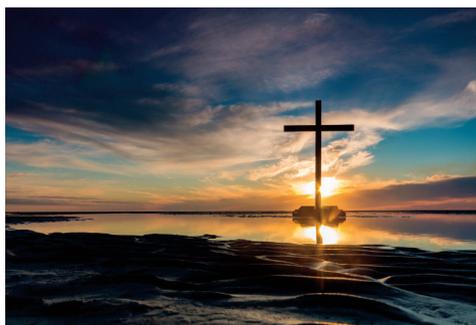
Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.

But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. Psalm 63



Prayer Requests

The Persecuted Church by Olga Friesen

We welcome good news! A church in the UK with a growing congregation of Muslim refugees seeking conversion to Christianity is a “microcosm of what is happening across churches in Europe.”

Muslim refugees across Western Europe are

“converting in ever greater numbers and for a complex array of reasons,” - because of persecution back home, they hope it might help asylum claims, but also because many just seek community and spiritual relief after fleeing conflict. Some go to church for food and shelter after being turned away by mosques.

Rev. Sally Smith of St. Marks’s Anglican church in Stoke, a city in the UK’s Midlands, says that it is possible that people can swap one set of religious beliefs for another in a situation where people of faith come into a secular society (in the UK for instance) and faith really matters to them and...they are not too bothered how that faith is expressed!

Mohammad Eghtedarian, who became a Christian after fleeing Iran, and is now ordained as a minister in the Church of England said he doesn’t judge a Muslim’s motives for converting to Christianity and attending church. “The only thing I can do,” he says, “is see if people are still there a year later - and often they are.”

Here’s where we can do something about that. We can pray that not only will Muslim refugees in Europe be drawn to Christ, but also that they will be sincere in their conversion and want to grow in their faith and commitment to Jesus.

Pray for peace and unity in our country.

Pray for those being persecuted for their religious beliefs.

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

Pray for the Bishops and leaders of Christ’s Church.





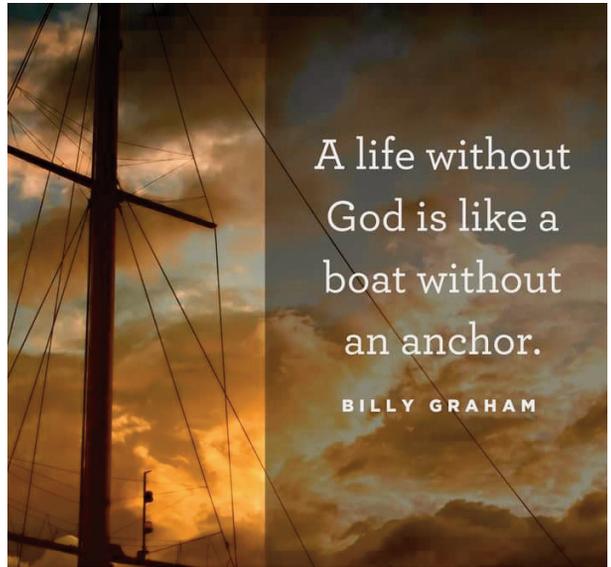
Hint of Humor

On a Serious Note

Autumn



“Turn your leaf blower down, dear.”



“I WARNED HARRY THAT HE'D HAVE A BAD HAIR DAY IF HE GOT NEAR THAT LEAF BLOWER.”

A Jewish rabbi and a Catholic priest were good friends. At a picnic one day, the priest was eating a ham sandwich. “You know,” he said to his friend, “this ham sandwich is delicious. I know you’re not supposed to eat ham, but I don’t understand why such a good thing would be forbidden. When will you break down and try it?” To which the rabbi replied, “At your wedding.”

