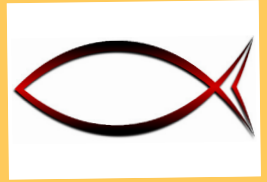




The Line

Convocation of the West



October/November 2016 Vo. III. Number 7

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Hello Brothers and Sisters

As we are all trying to cope with this unusual political election and the division in our country, we need to take a moment and consider the division in the Church as well.

Walk in Peace and Unity

Christian, walk with others peaceably,
 And glorify God above;
 Endeavor to keep the unity.....
 In the bond of peace and love.

Labor for things of eternity,
 Love every family member;
 As you think of how God set you free....
 Sweet fruit your life will render.

Of all places there should be no fights,
 It is in God's family;
 Our peace He purchased - Christ paid the price..
 On the Cross of Calvary.

Let us love and live in harmony,
 And follow our Shepherd's lead;
 As we Walk in Peace and Unity....
 We scatter much precious seed.

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The Vicar's Venue

Today, as I sit here praying about what I need to write for our newsletter, my heart is heavy with the thoughts of our great nation. It seems to me that we have moved from the "greatest generation" (who fought World War II, combatted Communism, and brought statesmanship to a whole new level) to one of the lowest ebbs in our history. I do not know what God's intention is for our nation, but I believe most of us can see the writing on the wall with this upcoming election. We are at the proverbial fork in the road. One road leads us upward; the other downward – and it is not clear which road is which.

As common citizens, most of us have very little power. We get to vote, but that is a small voice in a large chorus. And the sheer number of other voices voting their consciences will drown most of us out. However, there is one power that we do have as Christians. It is the "power" of humility.

Power is not something that one associates readily with humility, and rightly so. Humility eschews worldly power. It looks to the faults of



The Vicar's Venue (continued)

oneself and not to the faults of others. In other words, when looking at other people, it sees its own faults and learns to be merciful. But in humility, there is a holy power.

Humility's power is in an understanding that forms a love in our hearts for those around us. And, in and through this love comes our liberation. It is precisely this liberation from hate and anger, from frustration and judgment, that gives us a "power" that the world doesn't and cannot understand.

Our nation is at a crossroad, not because of Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Trump, not because of ISIS or Russia, but because of us. As our friend Pogo once said, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Although Pogo wrote this on Earth Day 1971 to speak about pollution, it is even more appropriate for our time, and for our country today. We are quick to look at others as the source of our woes precisely because self-examination is so difficult, but it is time to look inward.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'Spare the people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, "Where is their God?" [Joel 2:15-17]

All of us are sinners. All of us have failed. We have failed in our individual responsibilities and as a nation. We have become full of hate and

anger, pride and hubris. We have become impatient and pre-occupied with ourselves, and we need to stop it. We have lost our way, and we need to find our path again. And this must start with each of us. It must start with our convocation.

I am going to call on every church in our convocation to call for two days of prayer and fasting. The first will be on Monday, November 7 – the day before our national elections. On this day, I would ask all to pray for our nation and that the Lord's will be done in this election.

The second day will be November 23 – the day before Thanksgiving. Again, we need to pray that the Lord will be merciful to our nation, show us our errors, lead us where we need to be, and soften our hearts to what we are to do in order to truly be His people once again. Then I would ask every church that has the means to do so, to have a Thanksgiving Communion service.

At St. Luke's, the Chapel has had a Thanksgiving service each year since its inception; this is because St. Luke's first service was on Thanksgiving Day. But it has become much more important than just an anniversary service. It is a powerful reminder of what Thanksgiving really is about. Precisely because of the previous two days of fasting and prayer, a Thanksgiving service will be an appropriate culmination and celebration of God's great mercy and blessing.

Today, I am calling on all of our people and all our churches in our convocation to embrace these two days of fasting and prayer, and to embrace a day of celebration and of Eucharist on





The Vicar's Venue (continued)

Thanksgiving Day. I ask this prayerfully, because I believe this is what we need to do to in order to start the process of being right with God. I do it because I can see no hope for us as a nation outside the love of God. And I do it as a means for all us Christians, no matter whom we are or for whom we vote, to gain the strength we will need to weather the upcoming storm that I see our nation facing soon.

May God's blessing and God's peace be with us all. Amen.

The Rev. Canon Michael Penfield

Vicar-General of the ACW



Parish News

Devoting Ourselves to The Prayers

Acts 2:42

The first time I stayed at a monastery, it wasn't exactly for the most devout of reasons – I was touring as a songwriter in the UK and needed cheap lodging. But little did I know that my week at the abbey in the English countryside, just south of Bath, would set me on a journey of discovering ancient Christian devotional practices and working to make them available to

thousands of modern everyday folks working real life jobs and living real life lives.

Those of you who have stayed at a monastery probably recall your first experience of their prayer times (aka the “offices”) quite clearly. The first office I attended was Compline. It had been a dreary, rainy English autumn day, and I had arrived just a little before supper. I ate with the monks. One of them read aloud from a book, certain to be older than the USA, while the rest of us had our meal in silence.

As dinner ended, the dishes were cleared and we all rolled up our cloth napkins and slid them into our napkin ring. I, and the other guest, each had a little card with our name written on it. We slid that into the napkin ring as well, and then stood up behind our chairs to chant the final mealtime grace.

On leaving the refectory, the other guest asked if I was going to Compline. I shrugged. It wasn't so much a shrug that says, “who knows,” as it was a shrug that says, “I've got no idea when, where, or how.” He whispered for me to follow him.

We walked along the corridor outside the refectory, to a rather austere door into a dark tunnel, lined with long, black robes of the most monkish sort. At the other end of the “tunnel,” were some steps that led to a side entrance to the abbey chapel. It was dark. It smelled like candles were burning. But deeper down, there was the lingering scent of an earthy incense from other nights. Many, many other nights.





Parish News (continued)

The place was empty, except for the occasional shuffling feet of a black hooded figure, blinking the candles as he passed between us and them, and then stopping at the center to bow and proceed up into the choir area.

I had been a Presbyterian just before dinner started. But now we sat down in that dark chapel. Aisle seats on the front row. Things were changing.



Prayers - What does it mean that the early church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

Some English versions translate this last phrase as "and prayers," but the article should be there. It should be as it is above "and the prayers." One thing is sure though, it's not simply being devoted to prayer, that is to say, just being a person or a people who are devoted to praying. When St. Paul tells us to pray without ceasing, he's talking about our personal prayers. But this is talking about something different. This is talking about something we do together. This is talking about an activity that the Body of Christ does that effects changes in the world.



The silence in the chapel was broken when a lone voice chanted something haunting into the air. Then an entire squadron of voices chased up after it. It was all in Latin, but I couldn't even tell that for several seconds because sound was

bouncing off all the walls from every direction. When I did realize it was Latin, the Presbyterian still left in me thought, "come on guys, not everybody here knows Latin." Then something quite life-changing occurred to me.

This wasn't being done for me.

I know that shouldn't be such a transformative thought. But I think that for a lot of us it might be. I think a lot of us come to God with our agendas, with the latest news of our lives, some desire concerning our own aims and ambitions for His Kingdom, (which are usually quite different from actual concerns for His Kingdom). For many of us, our prayer life basically consists of telling God things that He already knows.

But perhaps prayer is something more, and perhaps, it is a little less about me.

It is certainly making requests of our Father, and sharing with Him our desires and dreams. But it is also an experience of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is coming into a fuller communion with Him, a greater awareness of His presence. And... it is participating in His work.

As the monks continued chanting the psalm, and their voices echoed from every corner of that chapel, I realized that the word of God was quite literally moving into the dark places of that building. The candlelight was transformed, the shadows, the stones of the building itself – the physical elements of the abbey were being filled, being inspired with the glory of God, sent forth from the tongues of His people. This was Aslan





Parish News (continued)

singing the world into existence.

This is how our prayer affects the world. We speak truth, we speak life, light; as the Body of Christ, we speak God's words into the dark places around us. We speak *creative* words into a decaying world. When the Church devotes herself to "the prayers," it is the beginning of mission.

Has it ever occurred to you that when you read a Psalm out loud, you are participating in God's word going forth from His mouth, and that word will not return to Him empty? There is power in your speaking the word of God aloud.

I think that it is important for us to understand that "the prayers" are part of God's grace to us, AND part of the work He is doing in the world around us. It is an action that transforms our lives as teachers, doctors, electricians, moms, and dads – it fills this life with the Life of Christ. It transforms us to be able to go out into the workplace to be salt and light in the world. Being devoted to "the prayers" is part of what makes all of our work to be sacred work. It is a sort of "christening" of all creation.

But what exactly are "the prayers?"

First of all, I probably should point out that there is no pure form of "the prayers" that we should try to recover. That point could easily get lost if you pay too much attention to the various English prayerbook revisions over the last 500 years. Those revisions, (when made with righteous motives) are to protect the theology of our prayer life, and to ensure that we pass on to

the next generation, a faith that is consistent with the faith delivered to us from the previous generation.

What we do know, is that as far back as we can tell, God's people have prayed formally at two or three times of the day (see Psalms 55 & 141, Daniel 6). The Acts of the Apostles is full of references that the early church had at least 3 times of formal prayer – Morning, Noon, and Evening (see Acts 2, 3, & 10).

So when we talk about "the prayers," we're simply talking about particular, formalized ways of speaking and hearing God's word, offering Him praise and thanksgiving, laying our requests before Him, and interceding on behalf of the world.

Is using a particular form necessary?

Well, it's not magic. So in that sense, no, it's not necessary. However, if we want "the prayers" to be something that we do as the Church together, whether we are alone or gathered, then yes, perhaps a form is helpful. And maybe even more importantly, if we want "the prayers" to be a central part of our family life, and the formation of our children into the likeness of their Savior, then probably a form is needed to help maintain "orthodoxy" – that is, being aligned with the theology of Christians throughout the ages, since the time of the Apostles.

As Anglicans, we have what we call the "Daily





Parish News (continued)

Office,” which consists of at least Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer – some add in Mid-Day Prayer and Compline as well. There was a time when nearly every Anglican lived within earshot of the church-bell. During this now-gone era, it was both desirable and possible for the parish to gather together twice a day to offer prayer for the community and for the world. But of course, we don’t live in that world now.

So how do we devote ourselves to “the prayers” in the 21st century?

I think there is an achievable vision for the Church to be a people devoted to “the prayers” in our modern society. It looks something like this: the parish gathers together at some frequency to offer “the prayers” together (e.g. Tuesday & Thursday Morning Prayer, Wednesday Evening Prayer). Meanwhile, “the prayers” are being offered daily (twice daily ideally) by individuals, families, small groups, friend groups, bible studies, etc., throughout the rest of the week.

By having a common form, what I do alone in the mornings and with my family at the dinner table, becomes connected to what I do with my community group on Tuesdays, and with the whole Parish on Wednesdays. I’m no longer one guy offering a prayer (though I should be that as well), but now I am one guy offering “the prayers” at this time, in this place, while the rest of the church is offering “the prayers” in other places all across the city.

For the mission minded church, some sort of corporate Daily Office is absolutely essential.

Because it is not only a work we do through, with, and in our Lord, but it is a work that we incorporate others into as well. For a society that is starved for churches offering people something more than a conversion experience, as Anglicans, we offer an inclusion into the 2000 year old intercessory work of the Body of Christ.

The daily resources at thetrinitymission.org, I think are invaluable to helping us re-claim this duty and devotion to “the prayers.” For those who have found the Book of Common prayer to be nearly indecipherable, The Trinity Mission offers books that lay out “the prayers” for each office, each day of the week. It couldn’t be simpler. For those who need to baby-step their schedule into offering “the prayers” (i.e. pray on the commute or while washing the dishes), there is a podcast of Morning, Mid-Day, and Evening Prayer (8-15 minutes long).

These podcasts also allow the newlywed couple working a first job in a new town far from friends and family, the single mom scrapping for fifteen minutes of quiet before dawn, the octogenarian bed-bound in the nursing home, or anyone else who wants to have the opportunity to pray the ancient prayers of our faith with another human voice.

Since that first trip to the monastery, I have made several more to other monasteries as well. At each one, I find basically the same thing going on: a group of people devoted to Jesus Christ and to the Scriptures that testify to Him. Through the offices, the monks are inundated with the very words of God daily – with His





Parish News (continued)

truth, with His love for His creation, and with His praises. It is a powerful thing to think of the spiritual battle being fought from these little bastions of prayer. But for me, it is a more encouraging thing to think of this battle being joined by every parish and Christian household throughout the world, as they too devote themselves to “the prayers.”

Michael Jarrett, Trinity Mission, Harlingen, Texas



Parish News (continued)

The OT Prophets

The first in a series of short articles intended to stimulate your interest in studying the writings of the prophets.

The word prophet comes to us from Hebrew as translated to Greek, meaning essentially, *authorized spokesman*. A true prophet is one who speaks to man for God; someone chosen by God to serve as preacher, foreteller, and watchmen for the people. Enoch, Elijah, Elisha, the patriarchs, and Moses were the earliest prophets.

Their messages come from outside time as we understand it. The purpose of prophecy is not simply to illuminate what is to come, but to bring glory to God when the foretold is accomplished.

When one chooses to write about the prophets it is necessary to begin with the question: Which Prophets? The Jewish Talmud lists seven female (from Sarah to Esther), and 48 male (Abraham to Malachi) as true spokesman for God.

For this series, we will limit ourselves to the four major and twelve Minor Prophets recorded in the canonized Prophetic Books of the Old Testament. The Major Prophets are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah (to include Lamentations) and Daniel. They are considered “major” in the sense that their messages are revealed in a lengthier book, covering a wider variety of subjects.

These sixteen prophets played pivotal roles in the years following Solomon’s death, the ascension of King Rehoboam and King Jeroboam, the fall of the divided kingdom, the assimilation by Assyria of the tribes of the northern kingdom, and the exile to Babylon of the tribes in the southern kingdom. They all also anticipated the coming of Christ, and the Salvation He offers to all who trust in Him (Luke 24:27)

Accurate foretelling is an essential element of prophecy; validation is found in its fulfillment. A true prophet pronounces in God’s name and by His authority (Exodus 4:10-12, 7:1-2); he or she is a herald through which God communicates with His people (Jeremiah 1:9; Isaiah 51:16); and the pronouncements are of the Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The principal task of the Hebrew prophets was to call attention to ethical and religious abuses, while proclaiming moral and religious truths





Parish News (continued)

associated with the character of God. Their words are recorded in separate books in most Bibles. They spoke to the people from the eighth to the fifth century BC, and are generally divided into four groups:

Northern kingdom (Israel): Hosea, Amos, Joel, and Jonah.

Southern kingdom (Judah): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.

Babylonian captivity: Ezekiel and Daniel.

Restoration: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Malachi is the last of the recorded Hebrew prophets.

After Malachi, God fell silent until John the baptizer spoke of the coming of the Lord. John marked a transition from Scripture focused on the Law, to the preaching of the Kingdom of God (Luke 16:16).

While prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah are well known, many Christians are unfamiliar with the shorter prophetic books of the Old Testament. Zephaniah and Malachi are examples of those less frequently read, yet powerful voices of prophecy.

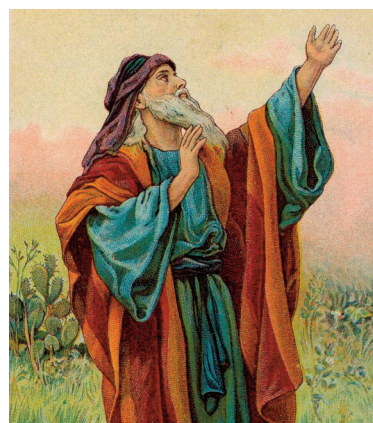
Prophets of this period (whose writings are always relevant) warned what would happen if the people didn't change their ways and adhere to the commandments of the Lord. They were largely ignored, with predictable results recorded in Scripture.

As prophesied, the nation fell into civil war soon after Solomon's death (ca. 930 BC). The people divided into northern and southern kingdoms,

the house of **Israel** in the north and the house of **Judah** in the south, according to the will of God (1 Kings 11:31). He punished His people for their transgressions, but did not abandon them, sending Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi as His agents of hope.

“Be strong, all you people of the land, said the Lord, and work, for I am with you, said the Lord of hosts: According to the Word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remains among you: Fear not.” (Haggai 2:4-5)

David Cole, St John's Anglican Church



Prayer Requests

Pray for the victims of the earthquake in Italy and the families of those whose lives were taken.

Pray for Haiti as they are dealing with the aftermath of yet another disaster. Pray they will be able to get Cholera under control.

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.





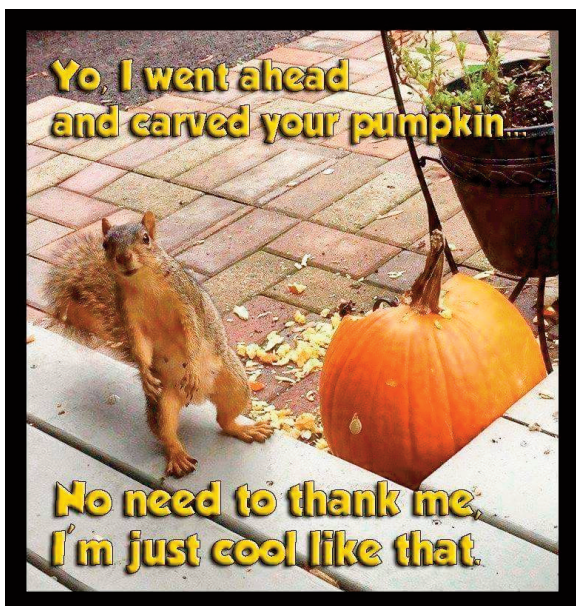
Installation and Retirement Dinner

On Friday, November 11, 2016, the Rev. Canon Michael A. Penfield will be installed as Vicar-General of the Anglican Convocation of the West, a convocation in the Missionary Diocese of All Saints. He will serve under the Rt. Rev. William Ilgenfritz. The Installation and Communion Service will be at 5:00 pm. The Convocation is honored to have Michael as our Vicar-General.

Immediately after the Installation will be the retirement dinner honoring the Rt. Rev. Winfield Mott. Bishop Mott has served the people and the churches in the Diocese of the West (and then in the Convocation of the West) for many years. He has been a faithful servant, and it is a great privilege to honor him at this dinner. It will be an Italian dinner with some vegetarian dishes for those of you who do not eat meat.

Please join us for this very important day.

Hint of Humor



Parting Words

As Americans, no matter what goes on in our lives, we all have so much to be thankful for. May you and your family have a very **Blessed Thanksgiving Day.**

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations. Psalm 100 (KJV)

