



# The Line

Convocation of the West



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## I See His Blood Upon the Rose

I see his blood upon the rose  
 And in the stars the glory of his eyes,  
 His body gleams amid eternal snows,  
 His tears fall from the skies.

I see his face in every flower;  
 The thunder and the singing of the birds  
 Are but his voice – and carven by his power  
 Rocks are his written words.

All pathways by his feet are worn,  
 His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,  
 His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,  
 His cross is every tree.

by Joseph Mary Plunkett



## The Vicar's Venue

This past February, our nation experienced another great tragedy. One of our children, albeit disturbed, went into one of our schools with the goal of killing our other children. It is something we have experienced several times since the Columbine shootings. However, this time we have students and parents sincerely voicing their protest. They want something done now. The problem is, as I see it, they want a simple solution to a massive problem.

As an educator I often face the same dynamic. The administration will set goals. They want us to implement a solution to a perceived problem. They will set up arbitrary goals based on a calendar or their desire to impress, and not necessarily on the nature of children or how they learn. In other situations, my fellow teachers will state that our students are not performing up to their level on standardized testing. These teachers ask that, since our children are smart, why do they do so poorly? Not a bad question, however, the answer may not entail a simple solution or a simple tweak of the curriculum.



## The Vicar's Venue (continued)

Now you may have a false image of your Vicar-General that is better than what I truly am, but I am actually a bit of an instigator. At one of these meetings I posed this question, “How do we know that what we are doing is NOT the best we can do? How do we know that the new program we want to implement is not worse than what we are already doing?” The answer I got is, “But we got to do SOMETHING. We got to try SOMETHING.”

“We got to do something”; this is the phrase you hear now in reference to the Parkland shootings. I heard it coming from parents, children, politicians, press and pundits, and I hear it in education. And this phrase above all others has me worried. “SOMETHING must be done.” The trouble is that “something” chosen out of desperation, panic or fear may be the wrong thing.

In Seventh Grade, my teacher had us read an old Rudyard Kipling poem. I do not remember the whole poem, but I do remember this part:

*“If you can keep your wits about you while all others are losing theirs, and blaming you.  
The world will be yours and everything in it.  
What's more, you'll be a man, my son.”*

I do not know if the world will be “ours,” but I have often remembered this poem when I see people demanding “something.” Irrational panic is never good. Thoughtful deliberation is always better. The trouble is that it has not happened yet. I think in most of the school shootings up to this point, many hoped it would just stop – like the bomb threats to schools in the early

1970s. But it hasn't. And now, people don't want thought; they want action. They want “something.”

But Parkland was not something new; it did not just happen. It was years in the making. It took us decades and even centuries to build to this crescendo. It had its intellectual start with Nietzsche, and its scientific start with eugenics. It had its political roots in Communism and fascism, but it had its fulfillment in Nazism. It is the belief that “I am superior to another,” and that the “other,” the “undesirable,” is expendable.

Of course, it really isn't anything new. It has existed since before the fall of Man. It started with Lucifer. However, what is new, what has happened since the 1940s is that the last vestiges of our bourgeois society, which helped to keep these impulses in check, have finally been removed from the American society.

In 1965, a report came out that was written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who was the under-Secretary of Labor. It was called, “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action.” The report concluded that the economic conditions of black families did not determine social conditions but the exact opposite. The report said that the culture fostered by slavery and by Jim Crow laws and perpetuated in the ghetto, created a disproportionate number of single-women heading households. Additionally, these single-woman-headed households would frustrate any policy to end poverty in the black community. This report became notorious and was denounced as racist.

At the time of this report, no one wanted to



## The Vicar's Venue (continued)

acknowledge the truth in the bourgeois belief that a two-parent family was important. They wanted to create the “Great Society.” They wanted to believe the prevailing sociological theory – predicated on Marxist and socialist doctrine – that all social ills stem from economic ills. Mr. Moynihan opened the proverbial can of worms because he really wanted to eradicate poverty and knew the only way to do so was to cause a social and not an economic change.

In the February 17, 2018 Wall Street Journal, Peggy Noonan in her editorial thought the solution to the Parkland situation was a compromise: a ban on assault weapons for a ban on late term (last trimester) abortion. Both bills have failed in Congress, but a compromise may allow the passage of both. She said that this would help turn our culture of death towards a culture of life. This editorial really made me think.

There have been numerous suggestions in the newspapers that seem quite reasonable – closing loopholes in the reporting laws, actually having government agencies reporting what they were supposed to report, follow-up investigations of potential shooters, etc. But none of these address the real issue. None of these address our society, which has moved from a society that cherished and protected innocent life to one that protects death. The real issue, the real solution must be a change in our society.

Abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment are laws that protect death over life. Video games, movies, television and songs all have a category within themselves that celebrate death,

and/or murder. (A new comedy on TV will have women as bank robbers – funny.) Meanwhile, the two-parent family is shrinking in numbers. And those families with two parents often are no longer raising their own children. Day care, nannies, pre-schools, and babysitters are raising these children instead. The crime that is being committed is not just this boy's murder of innocent children; it is also what we have allowed society to tell us is right when we know it is not.

As Christians, we need to acknowledge two things: first, Christianity is counter-culture, and second, Christianity is a culture of life, not death. The first part is easy. And anyone who has been around for any length of time realizes that in the culture war, we are on the losing side. But the second may not be so apparent. After all, Christ died on a Cross for us, why would we be a culture of life?

God created all things, and it was good. The Fall may have marred it, but the beauty of life still shines out – a beauty ordained by God. For this reason, we Christians must celebrate life; we must support and nurture life. And we must perpetuate a culture of life.

As Christians we celebrate life in many ways. We enjoy what it means to be alive, and we demonstrate to the world this joy. But there is more. We must also celebrate lives – all lives.

During the Roman Empire, it was quite common for a parent or parents to leave unwanted or “undesirable” newborn babies by the river to die. Early Christians would come and rescue



## The Vicar's Venue (continued)

those children, adopt them, and raise them as their own. When it comes to our “undesirables,” we may not have this luxury. These children now are no longer born. But we can still celebrate those that are with us. They should not be viewed as “unfortunate,” but rather a gift – like everyone is a gift - EVERYONE.

I am not sure we will ever be able to change laws, government or even society. And creating a culture of life in our Christian communities may not stop the next shooter. But maybe if all Christians fostered a culture of life where they live and with whom they live, we may be able to show others God's love. We may be able to show what it means to celebrate life, not death. We may also be able to demonstrate what it means to have a culture of life. And finally, we may be able to show that doing “something” is not as important as doing the right thing.

Amen.

**The Rev. Cannon Michael Penfield**  
 Vicar-General of the ACW



## Parish News

### Clericus 2018

The Anglican Convocation of the West will be holding their annual Clericus in Mesilla, New Mexico, **April 3rd through the 5th**. Registration forms can be obtained from the Convocation's web site. Our guest speaker will be the Right Reverend Winfield Mott. The good Bishop will be speaking on spiritual formation.

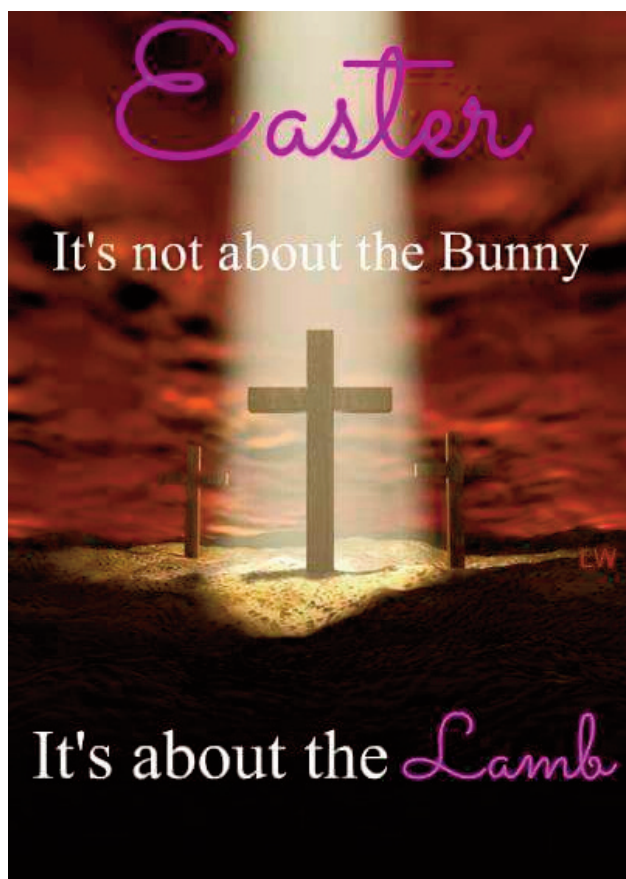
Fees can be paid either in advance or at the time of registration.

**Please make checks payable to “The Diocese of the West”** as our “dba” has not yet been established.

This promises to be an excellent Clericus. We hope to see you all there.



## Parish News (continued)



### The Reverend Billy Graham

On February 21, our country lost one of the finest men it has ever known, the Reverend Billy Graham, also known as America's Pastor. His life was dedicated to our Lord and Saviour, and quite possibly he led more people to Christ than anyone.

He was an advisor to many past presidents and has touched many in both our country and abroad.

The following is an Easter Message given by Billy Graham.

The vast majority of the people around the world are looking to politics, science and education for the solution to life's problems, and not to Jesus Christ. Why is this? What is happening?

I believe part of our dilemma is that we have preached a weak, watered-down Christ. We have preached a watered-down Gospel. We have caused young people to doubt the authority of the Scriptures. We have given people a god of our own imagination. Christ has been robbed of His deity. The supernatural has been eliminated from our faith. We try to rationalize away the full deity of Christ, which includes His resurrection from the dead.

It was the resurrection of Christ that caused the disciples to go out as burning young revolutionaries to change the world of their day. They preached that Christ was alive. This should be our message, not only at Easter but every day of the year. The risen Christ wants to come into our hearts today. But beware—He is a disturber! He did not come to bring peace; He came to bring a sword (Matthew 10:34). He came to divide even families. People reject that kind of Christ because it costs too much to follow Him in this materialistic, secular, pleasure-mad age.

We Christians must share the guilt. We have limited Christ to the sanctuary, to the temple, to the religious area of our lives. We worship Him behind thick church walls. We tuck Him away in



## Reverend Billy Graham (continued)

quiet little recesses. From Sunday to Sunday, He is rarely mentioned. We spend little time reading His Word or praying. We Christians act and live as though Christ were dead.

This kind of Christ will never make an impact on the world. This is not the Christ of the Bible. He is too weak and small; he is irrelevant. The weak, emaciated, impotent Christ of the church of today bears little resemblance to the Christ that Isaiah the prophet talked about. He bears little resemblance to the Christ who is found in the early church, who dared to challenge the world and turn it upside down.

When Christ was on earth, He would go to the temple, but He did not stay there. He went into the streets where the sick, the needy and the dying were. His love and compassion broke the bounds of class, race and creed: “The common people heard him gladly” (Mark 12:37).

I was invited to have coffee one morning with Konrad Adenauer before he retired as the chancellor of Germany. When I walked in, I expected to meet a tall, stiff, formal man who might even be embarrassed if I brought up the subject of religion. After the greeting, the chancellor suddenly turned to me and said, “Mr. Graham, what is the most important thing in the world?”

Before I could answer, he answered his own question. He said, “The resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ is alive, then there is hope for the world. If Jesus Christ is in the grave, then I don’t see the slightest glimmer of hope on the horizon.”

Then he amazed me by saying that he believed that the resurrection of Christ was one of the best-attested facts of history. He said, “When I leave office I intend to spend the rest of my life gathering scientific proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Yes, Jesus Christ is alive. This risen Christ, taken by faith in all of His power and glory, is great enough and big enough to cope with every problem the human race faces at this hour.

First, a risen Christ is big enough to cope with the tyranny of man over man. Not only can He save the individual, but His power also has worldwide implications. Isaiah 9:6 says, “The government will be upon His shoulder.” He has not abdicated His sovereignty in the affairs of men. He is still the Lord of history.

When He was crucified, the Bible says, “an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin and Hebrew: ‘THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS’ (Luke 23:38). He was then, and still is, King; only we have changed. One of our failures is not seeing Christ as King of the physical and material as well as the spiritual, of the mind as well as the soul, of the government as well as the heart.

In this country we are engaged in a debate on the separation of church and state. But there is a sense in which Christ cannot be separated from anything that pertains to life, for He “is all and in all” (Colossians 3:11). He said, “Ye call me Teacher and Lord, and ... so I am” (John 13:13). He is the Master of every phase of our lives.



## The Reverend Billy Graham (continued)

He is Master of our business on Monday and Tuesday as well as our religious life on Sunday. Secularism is growing because we have tried to get Him to abdicate from the realms of economics, politics and science. We think that the world's problems could be solved by diplomacy, by scientific advancement, by economic progress. We have lost the New Testament concept that envisioned a cosmic Christ who was woven into the warp and woof of the universe and who could not be taken out without destroying the fabric of the whole world.

Nazism blossomed in Germany only after the church had failed to fill the vacuum following World War I. When the church failed to present and declare a dynamic, living Christ, Germany was robbed of a Savior and gave birth to a dictator. When people reject Christ's rightful place as Lord in any nation, tyranny takes over.

In the United States our Declaration of Independence speaks of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," but it is the pursuit of happiness that is guaranteed and not happiness itself. Chasing happiness may be fun for a while, but the entertainment of it soon wears thin.

There is a better way. Paul says, "The kingdom of Heaven is not a matter of whether you get what you like to eat and drink, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17, Phillips). Christian joy is dependent on a personal relationship with God, not on externals.

In the upper room Jesus told His disciples, "These things I have spoken to you ... that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). He further told

them that His joy is one that cannot be taken away (John 16:22). No pagan philosophy, no atheistic ideology, no deep sorrow can dislodge the joy that Christ gives.

Second, the resurrected Christ is also big enough to cope with the gigantic social problems of these times. The race problem is not limited to any one city, nor to any one part of the United States. The race problem is a worldwide problem. Wherever two races or two nationalities or even two religious groups live together, there is friction and misunderstanding.

It is into this kind of situation that Christ can come with the healing "balm of Gilead." We must recognize the relationship between Christianity and healthy social conditions. One of the greatest and most far-reaching social revolutions of history was directly related to and grew out of the great evangelical revivals of the 18th century under John Wesley and George Whitefield.

I believe that a great spiritual revival today would have social consequences throughout the world. Christ has an answer to the social problems. He can meet them in His resurrection power and glory.

But let us not forget that man does not in himself have the capacity to love his neighbor. He does not have the capacity to live according to Christian ethics until he has come to Jesus Christ. When you repent of your sins and receive Christ as Savior, He enlarges your capacity and gives you new ability to love your neighbor. When you come to know Him,



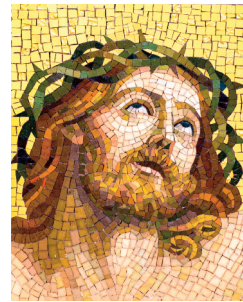
## The Reverend Billy Graham (continued)

He gives you new powers, new directions, new strengths, new visions, new dimensions of living.

Jesus once said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18).

This is good news for the poor. This is good news for the suffering. This is good news for the blind. Christ can indeed cope with the social and political problems of the world.

The world today offers many saviors, but none of them saves to the uttermost. The world today offers many panaceas, but they cannot reach to the depths of our depravity. The world today offers many shortcuts to salvation, but to be truly saved we must be reconciled to God.



## The Resurrection

We hold so close to our hearts  
The cross where Jesus died,  
But so much more than the blood-stained cross  
Is that Jesus came back to life

The Stone's been rolled away;  
The tomb lay open and bare -  
They looked for Him, and then the angel said  
That He is no longer here

Oh what joy they must have felt  
To see Him just once more,  
To eat with Him, to drink with Him,  
To receive Him back as Lord

So much did He accomplish  
Through His death upon the cross  
And in His rising from the dead,  
He reconciled us back to God

Nothing else could bridge the gap  
That sin had wrenched apart -  
Now we can freely go to God  
And receive Christ in our hearts.

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### Hint of Humor



### Parting Words

As we live our lives we must always be aware of how we are touching others. We may never understand the impact of our actions, as small as some may be. However, in the end they may shake up our world, as the image below reveals.

**EDWARD KIMBALL?**  
I've never heard of him.  
ASCPastors.com

 Kimball	 Moody	 Chapman	 Sunday
 Ham	 Graham		

Edward Kimball led D.L. Moody to the Lord.  
Under Moody's ministry Wilbur Chapman was saved.  
Billy Sunday was converted by Chapman's preaching.  
Through Sunday's preaching Mordecai Ham was saved.  
BILLY GRAHAM came to Christ at a Ham crusade.

I wish you all a very Blessed Easter. I pray you will feel His peace as you celebrate the Resurrection.

