

January 17th, 2013

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

This week we continue our discussion of the 39 Articles of Religion. Last week we explored how it is that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was a once for all sacrifice that is not repeated and there is no necessity for it to be repeated. Today we explore the question of marriage for clergy and most specifically priests. The Roman Catholic Church required vows of life long celibacy and this was questioned by the Reformers and specifically the Anglican Reformers.

Article 32 - The Marriage of Priests - Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are not commanded by God's laws either to vow the estate of single life or to abstain from marriage. Therefore it is lawful also for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

The question of whether clergy should marry or take life vows of Chastity continues to this day and remains as distinguishing factor between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Jesus, of course, was single and chaste but the disciples he called were, for the most part married. St. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth that those who are called to marriage should marry and those called to singleness should remain single. (First Corinthians 7:25ff.) This instruction applied to clergy and laymen alike. In St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy he directly addresses clergy both Deacons and Bishops or Pastors whom he calls "overseers" when he says, ***"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,"*** (1 Timothy 3:1-2 ESV)

The issue of the church asking clergy to remain celibate for life began in the fourth century but wasn't full required (or enforced) across the church until the eleventh century. At the time of enforcement the elder children who stood to inherit the family lands turned the land over to the church. This was understandably a very popular idea with the Church and a very unpopular idea with the governing authorities i.e.. Kings. Theologically and pastorally the big idea was that a priest should marry the church and be the father of the

congregation. The question for the Anglican Church was not whether or not Christians should be chaste outside of marriage that is a given



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based on scripture. But, did scripture prohibit or even strongly encourage clergy to take life vows of chastity and the answer was and is clearly NO. Article 32 simply states that clergy be allowed to marry and the answer is YES that ALL CHRISTIANS should be allowed to marry but none must.

Since the formation of the Anglican Church clergy have been allowed to marry and the church has greatly benefited from the fruits of Article 32. However, with marriage in a fallen world clergy have also divorced and this has been a fruit of our fallen natures as humans and a painful occurrence in the church. In the Anglican Church in North America the church has taken a very high view of Covenant of Marriage and set a standard higher for clergy than for laymen believing that clergy should set the example. Since our formation in 2009 bishops who have been divorced are not admitted to serve in the College of Bishops. Clergy who are divorced and desire to remarry must receive approval from the Archbishop and clear biblical standards for the divorce must be evident as well as clear proof that the clergyman made every attempt at reconciliation and is taking responsibility for his minor children and ex-wife when appropriate.

The issue of marriage is a vital one to us as Christians in the modern age and I am thankful to the Anglican Reformers for recognizing the importance of marriage.

This week in our parishes the Gospel lesson is Jesus' attendance at the Wedding in Cana - somehow that seems very appropriate.

Godspeed,

Bishop Menees

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[January 2013 Edition of The San Joaquin Anglican](#)

Check this edition of the San Joaquin Anglican
for current news of the Diocese!

Diocesan Calendar

Check the Diocesan Calendar for information on upcoming events!

January 19th - Anglican 4th Day @10a.m. St. Paul's, Bakersfield
Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

January 20th - Bishop @St. Paul's in Visalia

January 26th - Standing Committee @10a.m.

January 27th - Bishop @ St. Paul's in Bakersfield

February 1st - 2nd - Little Brothers & Sisters of Sacrifice Winter
Retreat & Joint Vestry Retreat with the Bishop (Both @ ECCO)

February 8th-9th - Joint Vestry Retreat with the Bishop @ECCO

February 15th-18th - Anglican 4th Day Retreat @ECCO

April 29th - May 1st - Clergy Conference

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