

8 March 2012



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

As we continue our examination of the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America we come to the eighth duty:

"To observe the feasts and fasts of the Church set forth in the Anglican formularies;"

As Anglican Christians, observing the feasts and fasts of the church is an essential part of our DNA. When I first came to the Diocese of San Joaquin, I was immediately impressed by our congregation in Henderson, Nevada & Fr. Giles who emailed to the congregation on the eve of every feast, great and small, a beautiful explanation of the following day's feast. I recognized this as a wonderful teaching opportunity and I applaud Fr. Giles for his making this available to the people of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

When thinking of the feasts of the church we must first and foremost think of our Sunday Celebration. In a very real way, every Sunday is Easter Sunday. Every Sunday we celebrate the risen Lord and share in his body and blood. In addition to our "regular" Sunday celebrations, the *Book of Common Prayer* lists approximately thirty other feasts and two fasts. These feasts are centered around Jesus' birth, life, resurrection, and ascension. In addition, the feasts celebrate the lives of those closest to Jesus: the twelve apostles, Jesus' earthly parents, John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene. Lastly, the feasts will celebrate the birth of the Church and the believers who have made up the Church.

So now the question is why...why observe these feasts and fasts? The answer is a simple one: to draw closer to Jesus. In observing the feasts, we gather together for worship and to thank God for a certain aspect of Jesus' life and the life of the Church as described in Scripture.

So, for example, we commemorate Jesus' birth, his presentation in the temple, his baptism and his

transfiguration. These feasts help us to draw closer to Jesus by examining the scriptures not only in the context of study but in the context of worship. The same is true as we examine the lives of those closest to Jesus: Joseph & Mary, John the Baptist, and Mary Magdalene to name a few.

What happens if you can't make it to a feast day or if the congregation is unable to observe a feast day on the particular day? Well, generally clergy are given the flexibility to "transfer" a feast day to the day that is most practical for the congregation. This is generally done for the primary feasts - Epiphany, All Saints & All Souls etc. and should only be transferred out of real necessity.

There are two primary fast days - Ash Wednesday in which we begin Lent and remember our sinful nature and as a result our mortality... and Good Friday in which we remember the death of our Lord and his descent among the dead. We are called to sacrifice on these days as a sign of penance and discipline.

Lastly, we observe these feasts and fasts as a form of obedience to our Lord and discipline in our lives. We gather because the Church has called us to worship, prayer and remembrance of our Lord and that is always a good thing!

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

March 10th - Standing Committee

March 11th - Bishop @ San Pedro y Pablo, Arvin

March 13th - Rural Deans

March 17th - Diocesan Council and Ordination of Jonathan Kanary @ St. Columba, Fresno, 2 p.m.

March 18th - Bishop @ St. Clement's, Woodlake

March 25th - Bishop @ St. James, Sonora

March 29th - Mass of Chrism, 11 am

March 31st - Confirmations @ Epiphany, Corcoran

April 1st - Palm Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 6th - Diocesan Office Closed at noon &

Bishop at Good Friday Service @ St. James Cathedral 1-3:30 p.m.

April 8th - Easter Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 15th - Bishop @ St. John's in Stockton

April 22nd - Bishop @ Resurrection in Tracy

April 28th - Daughters of the Holy Cross Spring Gathering

April 29th - Bishop @ St. Philip's in Coalinga
April 30th - May 2nd - Clergy Conference @ ECCO
August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the
Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"
November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral

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