

15 March 2012



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

As we continue our examination of the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America we come to ninth of the ten duties:

9. To continue his or her instruction in the Faith so as to remain an effective minister for the Lord Jesus Christ;

There was a time a few years back when I was working on my Doctorate in Ministry when my wife accused me of being a perpetual student. She was correct in that I was traveling out of state for classes, had my nose buried in a book for most of my free time and much of our spare change went for travel, tuition and books. Of course, when Florence called me a Perpetual Student she didn't mean it in the most flattering way. I, on the other hand, would and will proudly claim the title of a Perpetual Student! Simply put I enjoy learning and I especially enjoy learning and growing in the faith. This started for me when I first came to the Lord as a teenager. I didn't much want to study for my math test, but I really wanted to study the scriptures and learn everything I could about the faith.

My fear is that many of us, coming from former mainline denominations, never had emphasis placed on the study of scripture or doctrine. We left that for the priest to study and learn and we'd learn what we needed to learn from the sermon. Sadly, when we abdicate our responsibility to learn to another person we can never really grow sufficiently in our faith - no matter how stimulating the sermons are. The teaching in the liturgy, known as the sermon, was never intended to be the sole source of Christian learning. The sermon was always intended to be in addition to Sunday school or bible studies. So, when we allow the sermon to be the sole source of our Christian education we end up poorly educated. You may have heard me say, "Sermonettes make for Christianettes" which is a saying I heard years ago and resonated with me and comes all too close to the

truth.

St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* (Romans 15:5 ESV) Why study the Scriptures? Because through them we gather the encouragement and hope we need to be sources of light and life by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Now the study of the faith is not for our own edification, but to prepare us *"to remain an effective minister for the Lord Jesus Christ."* The presumption is that all baptized Christians are called and anointed for ministry, and our education is meant to empower and embolden that ministry! Can you imagine a teacher who never studies, a firefighter who never trains, or a scientist who never researches? Why then would we imagine that you can be an active Christian and not be a student of the Word of God?

My prayer for the diocese is that each of us will develop a learning plan to study the scriptures and the doctrines of the church. Each of our congregations has bible studies and other classes. During Lent the majority of our congregations have Lenten Studies. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of those classes. If one doesn't meet at a time when you are available, meet with the clergy of the congregation and ask for resources. Be proactive in your faith and develop a plan to study the scriptures and the faith so that you may fulfill the saying of King Solomon: *"Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance."* (Proverbs 1:5 ESV)

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

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, 11am

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 10th - Rural Deans @10 a.m.
April 14th - Standing Committee @ Diocesan House 2:30 p.m.
April 15th - Bishop @ St. John's in Stockton
April 21st - Diocesan Council @10:00 a.m.
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
June 2nd - Spring Day @ St. Mary's in Fresno
July 8-14th - Family Camp @ ECCO
July 15 - 21st - Camp H2O
July 22 - 26th -Camp San Joaquin Youth Camp
July 29th - August 2nd - Camp San Joaquin High School Camp
August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the
Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"
October 5-7th - Clergy Wives Retreat @ ECCO
October 27th - Honored Women's Luncheon
November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral

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