

Diocese of San Joaquin

12 January 2012



For many of us just hearing the word "duty" chafes... it is an obligation beyond ourselves and for many of us that doesn't sit well. We want to do what we want- when we want- and the way we want. This seems especially true with the Boomer Generation - (Generally understood as those born between 1946 - 1963). The "sixties" were a time of rebellion and freedom and that meant from all outside obligations and "duties."

However, we, as followers of Jesus Christ, are not about rebellion and freedom for "self" but rebellion from the ways of the world and freedom in Jesus Christ!

To that end, as followers of Jesus Christ, our first obligation and duty is not to self but to Jesus. Of course, this isn't new nor was it new with Jesus. God Himself was quite clear with Moses and the people of Israel when he laid out the Ten Commandments - ***"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me"*** (Exodus 20: 2-3) ***"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."*** (Exodus 20: 8-10a).

With God's commandments in mind then the first duty of the laity in the Anglican Church makes perfect sense... ***"It shall be the duty of every member of the church: 1. To worship God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, every Lord's Day in a Church unless reasonably prevented;"*** (ACNA Constitutions & Canon Title 1 Section 2).

It should be noted that the duty is not to the Church but to God. We do not worship the Church but God and when we are in church worshipping Him, God is pleased.

Now knowing Human nature when we read this, first of the ten duties of the laity, many will seek to get around it saying... "Well is worship in a church really that important? God reveals Himself in nature why can't I worship Him at the beach surfing or in the mountains skiing?" My answer to that is the same that I gave to a former parishioner to posed just that question... Because our worship of God is dynamic - it involves our speaking, and singing, and listening

in silence. It involves our being challenged in the Word and in the Sermon and in receiving the sacrament. When was the last time you went surfing or skiing and were challenged to examine your life and repent of sin or challenged to reach out to the poor and needy, the sick and imprisoned? When was the last time you were surfing and sang a hymn of praise to God or offer your tithes to Him?

The second aspect of this duty that folks will ask is... what is meant by "reasonably prevented?" Well, let me say what is not "reasonably prevented" *"My aunt Carol is visiting and we're going out to breakfast" ... well for goodness sake take aunt Carol to church! Or "my 49er/Giants/Sharks are playing on TV" one word - TiVo.*

OK so what is "reasonably prevented?" Well illness; please don't come to church ill and infect others or get worse yourself! Employment in another reasonable prevent - where the employer requires your working on the Lord's Day... but then seek to worship at a mid-week service.

Ultimately, God only requires of us what will be good for us and let me promise you this; if you faithfully attend worship on the Lord's Day, in your parish, you will be blessed. Our worship does not only bless God but blesses us too and God wants to bless us.

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

January 21st - Diocesan Council

January 21st - Diocesan ACW

January 22nd - Bishop @ St. Paul's Bakersfield

January 29th - Bishop @ Trinity Lone Pine

February 5th - Bishop @ St. Paul's Visalia

February 12th - Bishop @ Jesus Our Saviour, Modesto

February 18th - Diocesan Council

February 26th - Bishop @ Jesus the Good Shepherd, Henderson

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

March 13th - Rural Deans

March 17th - Diocesan Council

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

March 25th - Bishop @ St. James, Sonora

March 29th - Mass of Chrism, 11am

April 1st - Palm Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 8th - Easter Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the

Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"

Diocese of San Joaquin www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net 559-244-4828