

THE SAN JOAQUIN ANGLICAN

The Bishop's Corner

The Right Reverend Eric Vawter Menees

This last week I had the good fortune of being invited by Fr. Don Seeks to preach at the retirement community he and Carol live in known as Palm Village in Reedley. I was asked to speak about the Resurrection of Jesus. - my favorite subject!

I think it ironic that perhaps next to Christmas, Easter is the best known holiday in the United States, and yet one might argue that as many people believe that Easter is more about the bunny than about Jesus. Sadly, even some in the church have stooped to teach that Easter is about a "Resurrection Event" rather than the literal physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God. So, last Wednesday at Palm Village, I took the time to argue that we can have faith in the Resurrection of Jesus because Scripture, Reason and Tradition lead us to that fact.

Scripture: ***"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you."*** (John 20:19 ESV) Scripture speaks boldly and honestly about the Resurrection of Jesus nineteen hundred and seventy three years ago but can be known today in the "Peace of Christ that passes all understanding." (Philippians 4:7) That Peace of which Jesus spoke to the disciples is the same peace we can know here and now in the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of relationships. The peace of Christ is so much more than the absence of strife—it is the fullness of reconciliation. Remember when you were a child and you did something wrong? You'd come to the dinner table and the tension was so thick you could cut it with a knife. You'd sit there in silence, waiting, watching for the ax to fall. But there were also those times when you had the humility to admit your error, apologize for your transgression.

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BISHOP'S SCHEDULE AND DIOCESAN CALENDAR

- 4/30 to 5/2 Clergy Conference, ECCO
- 5/4 Diocesan Altar Guild Conference 6pm
- 5/6 St. Mark's, Shafter
- 5/8 Rural Deans, 10am
- 5/12 Standing Committee, 10am
- 5/19 Diocesan Council, 10am
- 5/20 Ascension, Copperopolis
- 5/27 St. Michael's, Sonora



CHAPTER ONE

The Early Years

The year 1910 marks the beginning of what was then called the Missionary District of San Joaquin, embracing fourteen counties that collectively make up the central third of the State of California. The first bishop was Louis C. Sanford (1911-1942). His successor was Sumner F. D. Walters (1933-1968). The third bishop, Victor Rivera, was consecrated September 19, 1968, and at the time of this writing [ed. note: 1988] is still incumbent. He has, however, announced his intention to retire upon reaching the mandatory canonical age for retirement in 1988. [ed. note: The fourth bishop, John-David Schofield, was consecrated October 9, 1988; and the fifth bishop, Eric Vawter Menees, was consecrated September 25, 2011]

In his book, PROVINCE OF THE PACIFIC, Bishop Sanford states that Bishop Nichols of California, foreseeing the creation of a fourth unit of the Church out of the State of California, took the initial step of forming the unofficial "Church Association of the San Joaquin." Formal action was taken on September 10, 1894, when the San Joaquin Convention was organized in Fresno. Even then he is said to have envisioned its establishment as a Missionary District, which did, in fact, take place in 1911. At the same time Louis Childs Sanford was elected first Bishop of the newly formed Missionary District of San Joaquin.

When it was officially designated a Missionary District, San Joaquin listed 5 parishes, 10 missions, and 14 clergy. There is no record of the number of baptized members, but communicants were listed as being 1,687. Fifty years later at a Special Convocation held at the Church of Our Saviour, Hanford, a petition was officially approved and addressed to the Sixtieth General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church asking for the "ratification of the formation of a new diocese out of the whole Missionary District of San Joaquin . . ." The petition was received favorably by the 1961 General Convention meeting in Detroit, Michigan, thereby establishing the Diocese of San Joaquin.

When San Joaquin was made a diocese, the record shows that there were 19 parishes, 23 missions, and 56 clergy. Also listed were 15,872 baptized members and 9,461 communicants.

Any attempt to relate the history of the Episcopal Church in the San Joaquin valley would be remiss if the labors of the Rev. D. O. Kelley were not noted. Douglas Ottinger Kelley, Apostle of San Joaquin, was born on Kelley's Island in Lake Erie, Ohio, 1844. He died in 1918. While in his freshman year at Hobart College, Geneva, New York, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the Civil War until his capture and imprisonment in Richmond, Virginia. After the war and his release, he read law and was admitted to the Bar. In 1868 he accompanied the famed missionary educator James Lloyd Breck to California and established himself as a lawyer in San Francisco.

He organized the Church Union of San Francisco, and was instrumental in the establishment of the Episcopal Old Ladies' Home (a designation that would surely provoke adverse comment today!) and St. Luke's Hospital. He served as editor of the Pacific Churchman for many years.

In 1872 he was ordained Deacon at St. Peter's, San Francisco, and subsequently was priested by Bishop Kip. His marriage to Amelia Fletcher occurred in 1874, and there were eight sons and one daughter born to the couple. Two of his sons also entered the priesthood of this Church. His many years of service in San Joaquin began in 1879. As the subsequent fruit of his labors the following parishes and missions owe their existence:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| St. Paul's, Bakersfield | St. John's, Tulare |
| St. James', Fresno | Church of Our Saviour, Hanford |
| St. John's, Lodi | (he was responsible for the first |
| Trinity, Madera | services, or first regular services, |
| St. Luke's, Merced | in Coalinga, Fowler, Laton, Lemoore, |
| St. Paul's, Modesto | Sanger, Selma, and Visalia) |
| Good Shepherd, Reedley | |

For the first time since the inaugural Provincial Assembly in Bedford/Plano, Texas in June of 2009, the Anglican Church in North America is excited to announce the next gathering of the whole church. Assembly 2012 will take place Thursday, June 7 through Saturday, June 9 in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. Preparations are already underway. You and all the faithful from the Anglican Church in North America are invited to attend!

"My hope is that Assembly 2012 would be a celebration of God's favor. Many things have happened in these years that show God has blessed and prospered what we've done in ways we never imagined. We've been doing what we see the Father doing and we want to celebrate that," said Archbishop Duncan, referencing John 5:19.

Assembly 2012 will be held at Ridgecrest Conference Center, nestled in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, just outside of Asheville, N.C. Offering more than just meeting space, Ridgecrest will also provide both lodging and meals to attendees, ensuring one convenient location for meeting participants.

"Provincial Assembly is very much about building up the mission of the church and encouraging the next generation of leaders in our midst," proclaimed Archbishop Duncan. A quarter of the participants this year will be young leaders and delegates of our dioceses, between the ages of 16 and 25.

"We are in the transformation business and this Assembly is about equipping captivated disciples to transform communities. Central to that, planting new congregations is principally important if we're going to reach North America," Archbishop Duncan continued.

Assembly 2012 will begin following meetings of the Archbishop's Cabinet, Executive Committee, the College of Bishops, Provincial Council, and the Anglican Relief and Development Fund earlier in the week.

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Easter Homily

Preached by the Most Reverend Robert Duncan at the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh Vigil, in St. Peter's Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, on Easter Eve, 7th April, A.D.2012.



They were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” [Mark 16:3]

In the Name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, One God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Blessed and Praised forever: Amen.

In all four gospels it is women who come first to the tomb. Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell us the purpose: to anoint Jesus' body. Burial on Friday had been hurried. At least the soldiers had not broken his legs to speed death. He was already dead. The Sabbath was at hand. In the moment, Joseph of Arimathea was moved to give his own freshly hewn tomb, which was, St. John tells us, very near to the Place of the Skull. Nicodemus, John tells us, had given spices, but Jesus' own inner circle had not been able to care for his body in the customary way. There had been so much hurry. They had loved him so much. Nevertheless, they could still do what was right, what at the very least they owed him, when the Sabbath ended.

They surely recognized their problem. They surely knew that the immense wheel-like stone had been rolled over the entrance to the tomb. St. Mark tells us that they had actually seen this happen. Maybe they had also heard about Pilate's order that the tomb be sealed and a guard set to keep things that way. It is St. Matthew that records for us this detail.

So the women meet very early on Sunday, sometime after sundown on Saturday. They must do what it is right to do and what could not be done on Friday. They can now prepare the spices and the ointments. It is still dark. They will arrive near first light.

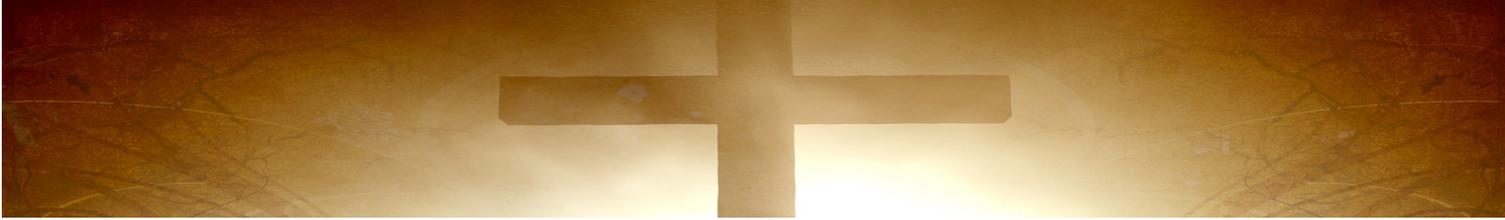
Everything is, of course, very confused and confusing. Their grief is overwhelming. Have they forgotten about the stone? Do they not think about the stone until they are actually on their way? Do each think about it earlier, but not discuss it? We cannot know. All we can know is that on their way to the tomb they are saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?”

Followers of Jesus often face what seem to them insurmountable problems...challenges for which there seem to be no apparent solutions. They will nevertheless do what is right, what they can do, even if there is a part of the puzzle they do not have or cannot conceive. Trust in their God drives them on. With God, there has always been a way through in the past, so why not trust Him now?

A terribly injured child? An impossible situation at work? A marriage in tatters? Some debilitating illness or handicap? An unjust accusation? An adolescent in rebellion? A friendship betrayed? Wars and rumors of wars? Domestic or civil violence? Whatever the present impossibility... We Christians will trust him with this too.

We can wonder what the women spoke of as they went in the darkness toward the tomb of Jesus. Was there more than “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” Might they have remembered the Passover story of long ago, the very feast being celebrated in these same days? All the first-born of Israel had been spared. Might they next have recalled the victory at the Red Sea, when all God's people were saved and all of Pharaoh's army drowned? Might they have remembered Jericho, where the walls miraculously tumbled down? Could they have encouraged one another with the stories of Ruth or Esther, or Daniel or the Three Young Men? Might they have spoken of Judas Maccabeus or the miracle of Chanukah? Could they have rehearsed some of the miracles they had seen at the hands of their crucified rabbi? The healings, the feedings, the castings out, the raisings from the dead? Might they have even dared to wonder about his teaching concerning what would follow his own death? We cannot say what broke the silence of their preparation of the spices and ointments, or the silence of their walk to the tomb. We are sure of their grief – for that is why they were meeting – and we are sure of the one question: “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?”

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Easter Homily (Continued from page 3)

In all of our speculation about the run-up to the arrival of the women at the tomb, it is very hard to imagine that the women could have imagined in advance what actually confronted them on arrival. God is so much bigger than our thoughts or imaginings. Even the rehearsal of earlier mighty deeds does not prepare us for the immensity of what he can do in the present moment, in the face of our seemingly insurmountable challenges. Yes, he often appoints brothers and sisters, or sometimes even strangers, to help us – to help us in quite ordinary, quite natural ways. But sometimes there is the supernatural, and the great stories seem to be filled with this. Indeed, at their arrival, they would soon have the greatest story of all time to tell. God would act. God powerfully, God unmistakably. God alone. Without man's help.

God addresses our human challenges both naturally and supernaturally. He is God, after all. Our chief attitude needs to be to trust him, no matter what we face. His operation, whether natural or supernatural, is his choice, his provision by whatever means. He is Creator, sustainer and end of everything, so why do we doubt?

But tonight's work – this dawn of the day work – is God's alone. "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" God will. God does. There is earthquake. There is an angel, dazzling light. The guards fall away. The stone is rolled back.

But there is more, much more. The tomb is empty. "He has been raised, as he said." They are invited to see the place where the body had lain. They are given a message. (Forget the spices and the ointments.) "Go tell his disciples." It hadn't been about the stone after all...or about a dead body. The crucifixion wasn't the last word. Not at all. They had mis-read what God was up to. Yes they were being faithful, but their plan – their challenge – was much too small. Fear – a different kind of fear – and great joy are now theirs. They hadn't run from their problem, from their grief, but had headed straight into it. Now everything was changed. So now they run with a different purpose. They are bearers of the greatest good news of all time. And suddenly he himself meets them: "Greetings!" They fall and worship, and so do we. And his last words to them are "Go and tell." We, too, now fall and worship. Our next step is to go and tell.

There is now, with Jesus, no challenge we cannot face, not even death. For now the last challenge has been swallowed up in victory, and – for those who put their faith in him – no stones that cannot be rolled away. There is nothing now that can separate us from the Father's love or Jesus' resurrection or the Spirit's power. Rejoice this Easter Day! Rejoice like never before! Rejoice for the stone on the tomb proved no problem to our God.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. The Lord is Risen indeed. Alleluia

ACNA Provincial Gathering (continued from page 2)

Attendees can expect powerful worship that embraces the fullness of Anglican worship and identity and the beauty of our liturgy. In addition to dedicated times for fellowship, the event will feature the following speakers as well as other special guests for Bible teachings, plenary sessions and workshops

Dr. Ed Stetzer, President of LifeWay Research and sought after authority on missional church planting • **The Baroness Caroline Cox**, Honorary Chair of the Anglican Relief and Development Fund, member of the British House of Lords, and tireless campaigner for human rights around the world • **The Rt. Rev. Rennis Ponniah**, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Singapore, one of the most well-known Bible teachers in the Anglican world • **The Rt. Rev. Dr. Todd Hunter**, Founding pastor of Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Costa Mesa, CA and the founding director of Churches for the Sake of Others, the West Coast church planting initiative for The Anglican Mission in the Americas • **The Most Rev. Robert Duncan**, Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in North America

The host dioceses are the Anglican Diocese of the South and the Diocese of the Carolinas (in formation). In addition to the talent and hospitality they will provide to all North American Anglicans, we look forward to welcoming at least a half-dozen Anglican Primates, and many other clergy and lay leaders from around the world.

As the planning and design team, led by The Rev. Steve Wood, vicar general of the Diocese of the Carolinas (in formation) and rector of St. Andrew's Church in Mt. Pleasant, S.C., prepares for the event, our prayer is that Assembly 2012 will equip each of us to *Captivate Disciples, Multiply Congregations and Transform Communities*.

Please pray about joining the Assembly 2012 in Ridgecrest. We pray that all attendees will be wonderfully blessed by this gathering of God's people experiencing awesome worship, amazing speakers, extraordinary fellowship and take-away learning.

Draft Schedule available at: http://www.anglican church.net/media/Assembly_Schedule_3.7_.12_.pdf

Draft Registration form available at: <http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1034739>

The Bishop's Corner

(Cont. from Front Page)

Those were the times when the fog lifted, forgiveness was granted and peace was restored. We can know the peace of Christ because of the atonement of Christ. Jesus received the wrath of God on the cross for you and for me and thus, following His resurrection, we can and do know peace in the most wonderful and powerful ways.

Reason: The argument that skeptics use is that there was a "Resurrection Event," meaning that in the months and years following the death of Jesus stories got out about how he had risen. People believed the stories; one thing lead to another until the "stories" became fact. Really? Does that make sense? We know two important facts: first, that Jesus appeared twelve times to between one and five hundred people. If you were writing stories that could easily be proven wrong, would you promote as the truth? Second, the power of Jesus' resurrection is the power to transform. Look at Peter. Peter, while a bit of a loudmouth prior to the arrest and mock trial of Jesus, denied knowing Jesus to a young woman three times. Then on that first day of the week Peter was hidden away, frightened. Just fifty days later he was preaching the resurrection of Jesus and the peace that comes with the forgiveness of sins. On that day three thousand people came to believe in, and give their lives to Jesus. It is absolutely reasonable to believe in the resurrection of Jesus based on our experience of the Risen Lord, the historical record of the formation of the church and the transformation of individuals like Peter and Paul whose lives underwent a total transformation that, ultimately, led to their executions.

Tradition: not only does scripture teach us of Jesus' resurrection, it is truly reasonable to believe based on historical fact. In addition, we have over nineteen hundred years of the church's teachings and literally billions of lives changed and transformed, not only by the teaching of the resurrection but by the literal presence of the resurrected Christ every time we kneel at the altar and place our hands out to receive the "Body of Christ, the Bread of Heaven."

Praise God we believe in the literal physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that we know that it is real because we know the peace that passes all understanding. And to that I say,...AMEN.

SHARING EXPERIENCES WITH THE LAWS OF LAOS



Fr. Martin has lived in America since 1980 and has fully experienced the joys of freedom of religion. Now that he is ministering back in Laos (since 2004), he is in the unique position of helping his native land move forward toward more freedom.

The law of the land of Laos supports freedom of religion.

People are free to choose if they want to be Buddhist or Christian or any other religion.

However, the law of the land limits free speech. Christians cannot speak about their faith in public places such as markets, restaurants, or schools. The Bible cannot be read out loud in public. If people are interested in discussing the Christian faith, they must go inside churches and private homes to speak freely about the faith.

The law also limits the building of new churches and the size of groups that can meet together.

The Communist leaders of Laos are always on the alert for insurrections and uprisings. Take this verse from the Scriptures: "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19. When Christians read these words they are inspired to share the gospel with those who have not heard. When Laos government officials read these words they fear that Christians will gather together and try to overthrow the government. The leader for Campus Crusade in Laos was arrested and thrown into jail in the summer of 2011 for teaching these very words from Matthew. Fr. Martin calmed the fears of the government officials which led to the leader being released.

Because Fr. Martin himself has been arrested 4 times since 1994, and because he has studied the Laos laws very carefully on matters of religious freedom, he spends time instructing his students on how to be a Christian in Laos and comply with the law. There are three state-approved denominations in Laos: Catholic, Evangelical, and Seventh Day Adventist. Fr. Martin has received government permission to hold Anglican services in his home, but he is not allowed to gather more than 50 people together at a time, or to build a new church building.

Laos Christians need to know what they can and cannot do when reaching out to others with the life-saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Fr. Martin shares his experiences with small groups of 6 or 7 students at a time. In his 18 years of ministry in Laos only three of these disciples have been arrested, and only for brief times.

Please keep Fr. Martin and Rose in your prayers. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom to illuminate their path as they strive to share the good news of Jesus Christ while simultaneously working within the law of the land.

For more information on prayer updates and donations for this ministry contact Carol Raines for Friends of Lao Mission Project at 559-353-2371.



St. John's Porterville

St. John's Parish in Porterville hosted their fourth annual St. Patrick's Day Drive-thru Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner on Friday, March 16. The dinner included a traditional boiled dinner of corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, roll and butter.

Over 120 meals were served and the popularity of this event has increased over the years. As St. John's is located on a busy street in the central part of Porterville, there are many guests who notice our signs on the way home from work. The kitchen of St. John's has easy access to a wide alleyway in the rear of the church making it ideal for a drive-thru dinner of this nature.



In addition to the dinner, guests were offered a prayer card featuring a Prayer for Grace at mealtimes from the Book of Common Prayer, and a listing of St. John's Services printed on the reverse. Many members of the church spent two days preparing and peeling the potatoes and carrots and cooking the food on the day of the event. The majority of the food cost was donated by parishioners, and the event benefited the general fund of the Parish.



Yosemite Deanery Spring Assembly
"Congregational Growth and Development"

Saturday, May 12
10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
St. Francis, Turlock
"Brown Bag Lunch"

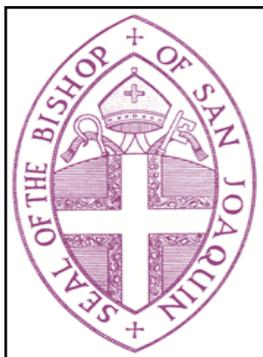
All clergy, Vestry Members, Bishop Wardens, and other lay leaders are cordially invited to attend this Assembly and learn how we can develop Five-Year Plans for church growth and development and how we can be more intentional in our evangelism efforts to reach our communities for Christ.

For more information, please contact The Very Rev. Ron Parry at revronmerced@sbcglobal.net or 209 383-1888.

Spring Day Anglican Women

"Bridging the Gap"
June 2, 2012
9:00am to 4:00pm

For more information visit
<http://www.stpaulsbakersfield.org/#/news-events>



The San Joaquin Anglican is published monthly by The Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin, California.

Submissions will be accepted for consideration anytime; Contributions must be received by the 20th of the month for possible inclusion in the newsletter in the following month.

Please send these to

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Thank you!