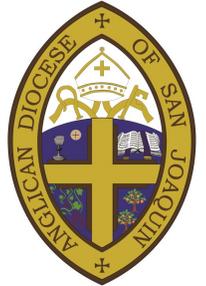


THE SAN JOAQUIN ANGLICAN



The Bishop's Corner - The Other Mary

The Right Reverend Eric Vawter Menees

There are many figures throughout the history of the church whose stories have been warped from the way they really lived, but few more so than Mary Magdalene. One of the first places she is mentioned is recorded in Luke 8 saying she was a follower of Jesus and that Jesus had sent seven demons out of her. Some gnostic Christians took her prominence here as first in a list of female followers to elevate Mary to a central figure in their writings, saying she passed on some sort of secret knowledge from Jesus. In the 6th century, Saint Gregory the Great wrote a series of sermons conflating Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed sinful woman in Luke 7 and identified Mary as a repentant prostitute or promiscuous woman. These stories have no basis in Scripture, and they obscure what we really do know about Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene is one of the most faithful followers of Jesus. Indeed, she is mentioned as one of the few to stand at the foot of the Cross, and she is one of the women who went to Jesus' tomb and first learned of the Resurrection. It is this fact that we should pay close attention to this Eastertide. Mary was initially distraught that Jesus' body had been removed, but in each Gospel, Mary is told that Jesus is not there – **because He has been raised from the dead!**

(Continued on page 2)

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE AND DIOCESAN CALENDAR

April 1 - Maundy Thursday

April 2 - Good Friday, Diocesan Office Closed

April 4 - Easter Sunday

April 10 - Installation of Fr. Fabien Pering and Regional Chrism Mass in Ridgecrest

April 13 - 10:00 am - Rural Deans Meeting

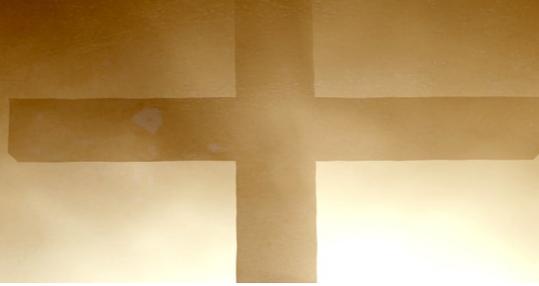
April 14 - 10:30 am - Diocesan Clergy Zoom Meeting

April 17 - 10:00 am - Standing Committee Meeting

April 20 - 12:00 pm - Northern Deanery and Central Deanery Clericuses

April 21 - 1:30 pm - Southern Deanery Clericus

April 28 - 5:00 pm - East-West Deanery Clericus on Zoom



Mary's first reaction in each Gospel account is the same and she runs to tell the disciples. Mary's reaction isn't governed by fear; Mary doesn't hide or try to process what she has just witnessed – she just rushes to tell the apostles. She's had an experience of the risen Jesus Christ and that experience impels her to share it! For this reason, in the Orthodox church, Mary Magdalene is often referred to as “the Apostle to the Apostles.” It's not that Mary took on that role of an apostle in the sense of leading a church, but she was the one “sent” to share the truth of the Resurrection with them before they spread it throughout the world.

Especially at this Eastertide we need to profit from Mary's example and imitate it in our own lives. As Christians our faith needs to be grounded not in our love of music, or fond memories of being with our family in church, but in the truth of the Resurrection. This truth is so necessary to our faith that Paul said, “if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14). If the Resurrection is not something that is essential in your life, then I would encourage you to pray and ask God to make that truth known to you in a deeper way. We may not have the first-hand experience of the empty tomb like Mary, but we can see the reverberations of the Resurrection throughout our lives and ministries in manifold ways.

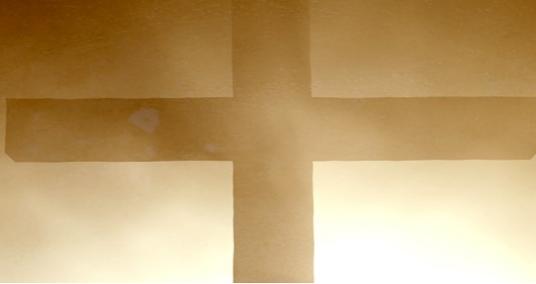
Once we have experienced the impact of Jesus' Resurrection we need to, like Mary, run to share it. This experience of the risen Christ for Mary was so shocking, amazing, and wonderful that she had to involve other people in order to process it with her. It needs to be the same with us. We need to share our faith and these truths with others in our lives. Not in a rote way, like going door-to-door, but sharing the excitement of our faith with our loved ones. Mary was not concerned about what the apostles would think of her or what she would say to inform them. She just knew she needed to tell them! It needs to be the same with us.

Sharing the truth of the Resurrection is like passing on a fire. Mary ran to share the news of the Resurrection out of excitement. As a result of what she did, the story of Mary, as recorded in the Gospels, has been passed down to others to the point that it has reached every part of the globe. Centuries of believers have died not scared of the unknown that lies before them and have trusted in the promises of God knowing that He has gone before us. Today, like Mary, when we share the Resurrection with others, we should not look at it as trying to win over one other person; rather we should just pass on this glorious truth to others.

Many of us give up certain things for Lent. That is good, but this year let us choose to share the Easter message with others. Invite someone over for Easter dinner and talk about the Gospel or share the account of the Resurrection with a co-worker who is anxious with all the struggles in the world. Pass on the Gospel message with the zeal that has brought it to you. Just as Mary shared the amazing news of Jesus Christ's Resurrection, let us not keep this wonderful life-saving Truth to ourselves.



Saint Mary Magdalene (c. 1524) by artist Andrea Solari, showing her as a Myrrhbearer



St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

The Paschal Sermon

*The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom
is read during Matins of Pascha.*



If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; He gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

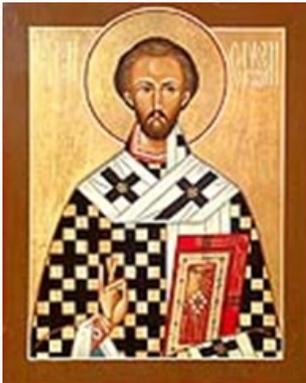
And He shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one He gives, and upon the other He bestows gifts. And He both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

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About St. John Chrysostom



St. John Chrysostom (*“The Golden Tongue”*) was born at Antioch in about the year 347 into the family of a military-commander and spent his early years studying under the finest philosophers and rhetoricians. He was ordained a deacon in the year 381 by the bishop of Antioch Saint Meletios. In 386 St. John was ordained a priest by the bishop of Antioch, Flavian.

Over time, his fame as a holy preacher grew, and in the year 397 with the demise of Archbishop Nektarios of Constantinople (the successor to Sainted Gregory the Theologian) St. John Chrysostom was summoned from Antioch to be the new Archbishop of Constantinople.

He was exiled in 404 and after a long illness due to the exile, he was transferred to Pitius in Abkhazia where he received the Holy Eucharist and said, “Glory to God for everything!” and fell asleep in the Lord on 14 September 407.

Community Outreach: St. Clement’s Preschool and Day Care Woodlake, CA

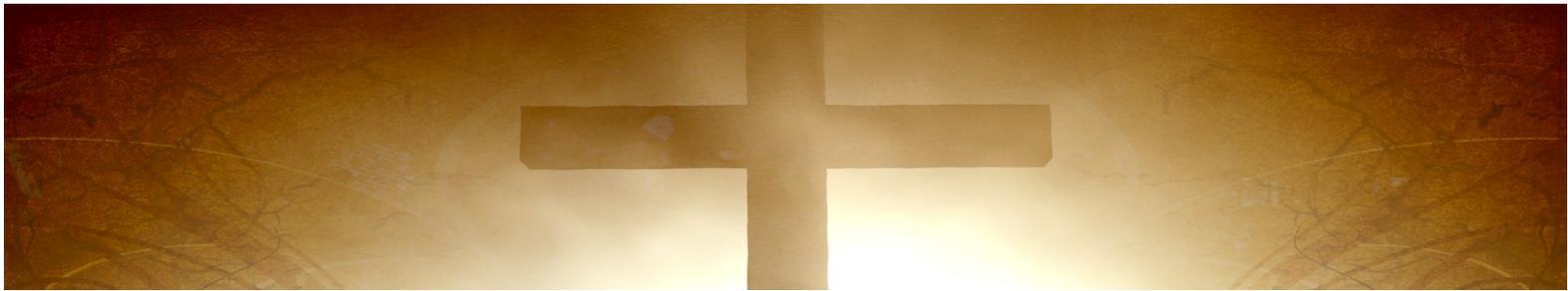


We wanted to highlight some of the churches in our diocese who have had successful ministries to their community, so here’s an article from Ruth and George about the day care that’s been organized by St. Clement’s in Woodlake for over 40 years.

Written by: Ruth Maskal Powers, Day Care Director;
George Kulick, Day Care Board Chairperson

Since 1980, St. Clement of Alexandra Anglican Church has operated a successful day care and preschool in Woodlake, California. In some cases, our newest little attendees represent the third generation of a family to attend St. Clement’s Day Care. Our purpose is to continue a tradition of Christian education by sharing God’s love and encouraging children and families as they travel their life paths of belief, faith, meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.

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St. Clements offers a year-round, developmentally appropriate preschool for ages 2-6 that is designed to explore diverse areas of interest and provide kindergarten readiness as well as an after-school program for grades K-3 that includes homework assistance. The programs are open to any child who meets the pre-admission requirements, regardless of race, ethnicity, social status, or religious affiliation. Our very competitive \$30 daily tuition fee includes breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack that are very popular with working parents and not always offered at other day care facilities.

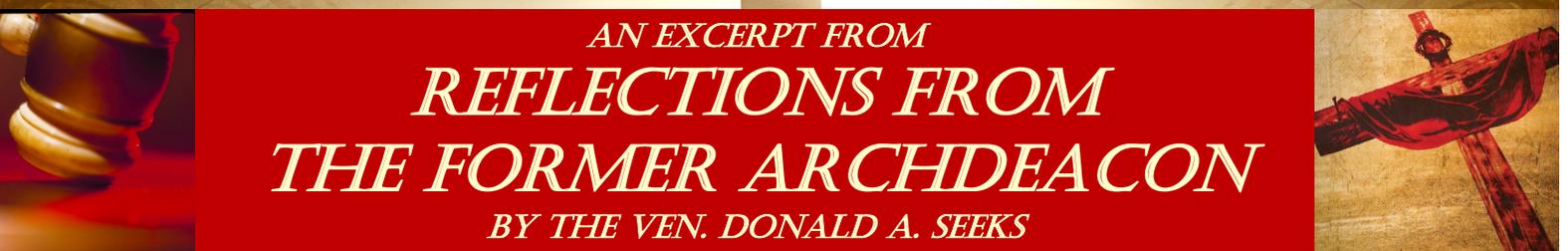
The day care began in the church's original Sunday school rooms. After several years of operation, the church embarked on a construction project to build a dedicated day care space. The space is fenced in and has a play area that meets our capacity for up to 40 children.

The day care was forced to cease operation from March to June of 2020 during the pandemic. The day care board of directors prayerfully decided to continue with staff salaries during this shutdown period in order to maintain the staff of 5 they believed was essential for the long-term operation of the day care. This decision was a true blessing as the staff was able to take the time to reorganize and generally refresh the day care interior with new carpets and painted cabinets – something difficult to do with full daily attendance.

The pandemic has affected attendance. We currently have about 26 children, but our enrollment is once again increasing. Staff has worked to reimagine the food services and opted to purchase food locally and in season. They have made sure to adhere to all COVID-related rules established by the State, including maintaining appropriately sized cohorts of children with separate staff oversight. With the support of many prayers and God's help, we will continue to climb out of this COVID hole.

St. Clement's Preschool and Day Care remains an active part of Woodlake and the surrounding communities. We look forward to the next generation of children to walk through our doors as they begin their individual journeys in learning, living and loving.





AN EXCERPT FROM
REFLECTIONS FROM
THE FORMER ARCHDEACON
BY THE VEN. DONALD A. SEEKS

Unity in Christ

Now that we are into the football season it is relatively easy to see that the teams with a winning record are those which have displayed a very high level of unity. Each player has a different assignment and their sense of unity and purpose leads them to be successful as a team. The same is true of a symphony orchestra. We find a great variety in the instruments, but since they seek a common purpose, they provide a unity that results in thrilling music.

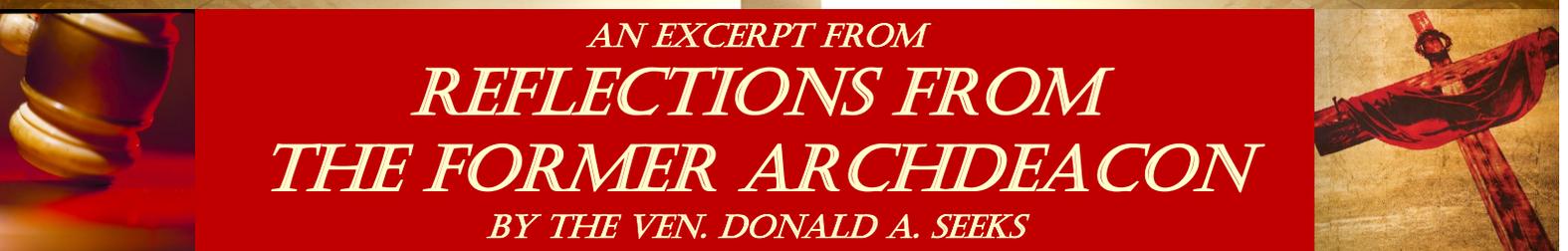
This unity should be practiced within the Body of Christ. There are at least two dozen spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament (and at least four in the Old). Everyone who has acknowledged Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord has been given one or more of these precious gifts. I believe God distributes these gifts to individual believers within each congregation to ensure that all the gifts are present that fulfill His purpose. This means that just like the various players on a team or in an orchestra, there will be great diversity among the congregation's members, and when they play together great things will happen.

This diversity should be a source of joy and thanksgiving. Unfortunately, too many congregations prefer conformity to diversity, feeling more comfortable if most other members "are just like we are." Other congregations lean heavily upon the gifts of a leader or leaders and never take the time to help their members develop the gifts that God has given them. Doesn't it seem counterproductive to have a football team composed entirely of defensive linemen or quarterbacks, or a symphony orchestra that depends upon the music talents of the conductor? Not only is this not what the Lord intends when He gifts his believers, this practice does not conform to the will and purposes of God as explained in Scripture.



Even a casual reading of the 12th Chapter of 1 Corinthians should convince the serious Christian that when each of us accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Holy Spirit came into our lives, He brought with Him special gifts designed to enrich our lives and make us effective disciples and practitioners of God's work. There is no gift that the Church needs which God has not already distributed among its members. The Church's task is to encourage its members in the discovery and implementation of those gifts.

(Continued on page 7)



AN EXCERPT FROM
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Our sinful self-centeredness and preoccupation with the material things of this earth can cause or distract us from failing to recognize that gifted-ness or to be sensitive to the fact that unless we search constantly for the diversity given within each congregation, we will fall far short of fulfilling God's will and purpose as individuals and as a church family.

For too long those within our (Anglican) Church have treated the gifts of clergy as being more important than those of the laity, especially the women of our congregations. The problem may be that many of our good laity have mistakenly sought holy orders because it seemed to be the only way their gifts could be fully expressed. What most often needed is an educated laity to support the clergy, not another member of the clergy. Secondly, there has been a tendency to stress special gifts to the exclusion of others, even to covet those gifts as though they were the most important. The spiritual gifts of helps, faith and of giving are every bit as important and vital to the Body of Christ as are the gifts of administration, teaching, tongues or healing.



Everyone who calls Jesus Lord is promised special blessings from God in terms of spiritual gifts. Therefore, no member is unimportant. Diversity should be appreciated rather than frowned upon. In the charter of a church in the East, this truth is affirmed by these words: "On the ship of the Church there are no passengers; all are members of the crew." However, it is only when each crew member carries out his or her calling faithfully that the ship can operate at maximum efficiency.

All the gifts of the Holy Spirit are meant to equip us for ministry according to St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. You will recall our Prayer Book specifically reminds us that we all are ministers – laity and clergy. Our ministry is to be a replication of Christ's own as we are transformed by Grace. We become like Him, as servants of the Father.

The Church will never grow by only cultivating an interior life and fellowship within our own church family. Rather, God calls upon each of us to discover our unique gift or gifts and put them to use for the benefit of the Church and those who are seeking Jesus. The road to fulfillment, spiritual maturity, and effectiveness as a Christian can come only when we willingly use our gifts for the benefit of others and apply them with joy and anticipation. Indeed, when we seek greater unity, our local team/the orchestra/or the ship's crew we call the congregation, will flourish in response to God's Great Commission.

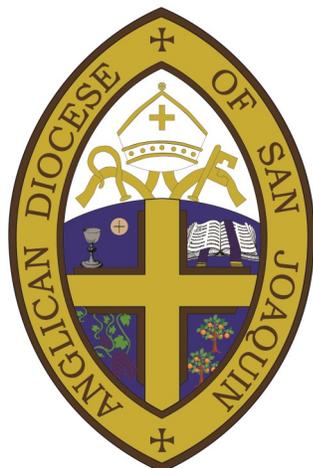


ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

Bishop's Note series--

The **Bishop's Note** is a pastoral message published weekly by Bishop Eric Menees.

To subscribe, send an email message with your email to receptionist@dioceseofsanjoaquin.net.



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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 melody@ctkridgecrest.org.

Thank you!