THE SAN JOAQUIN ANGLICAN



The Bishop's Corner God Turns Evil into Good

The Right Reverend Eric Vawter Menees

ne of the things we see again and again in Scripture is God bringing good out of evil. God does not condone evil, but he does allow free will. As Christians, one thing we can be sure of is that even in terrible times, God is working for good.

We see this throughout scripture. In Genesis and Exodus, Israel was enslaved in Egypt but God was faithful during this time and prepared them to become a nation and enter the Holy Land. In 1 Samuel, Israel rebelled against God and demanded a king like the other nations, but this demand lead to a kingly line that eventually brought us The Messiah. And the greatest example of all is Jesus Christ's death on the cross and His mighty Resurrection which opened up salvation for all!

We need to be especially mindful of this now. Last month, Governor Newsom reopened the State and almost all of the restrictions that were imposed have been relaxed. This has been accompanied by a significant drop in COVID-19 cases throughout California. Many in the world saw this as the end of a tough period, were confident in their own ability to persevere, and wanted to just get back to how things were before. However, this cannot be our reaction as Christians, because this mindset is solely focused on self.

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Bishop's Schedule And Diocesan Calendar

July 7 - Forward in Faith North America Assembly; Holy Comforter, Dallas

July 8-10 - Anglican Way Institute Conference; Holy Comforter, Dallas

July 13-23 - Bishop Eric on Vacation

July 13 - 10:00 am - Rural Deans Meeting

July 17 - 10:00 am - Standing Committee Meeting

July 20 - 12:00 pm - Northern Deanery Clericus

July 25-30 - Bishop at MPC Conference; Sumas, WA

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

July 31– August 5 - Bishop Eric on Vacation

August 5 - 6:30 pm - Preaching Class



As we gather together once again in our churches, our reaction to these now-different times needs to be two-fold. First, this is a time for serious thanksgiving. We're not out of the woods yet, but we've made it through a very difficult time. We didn't get through the pandemic on our own; we got through it by the grace of God. Rather than just patting ourselves on the back for the way we persevered, we need to acknowledge that we couldn't have gone through this without God working in us and in our lives. There were many people this last year who weren't as fortunate as we were. I encourage you to spend some time in thanksgiving, not just a prayer you say to yourself, but set aside extra time for worship to truly thank God. The 2019 *Book of Common Prayer* has a Litany of Thanksgiving on page 680 that would be perfect to use for this prayerful time.

The second thing we need to do during this time of opening up after COVID-19 is more difficult. We need to examine ourselves. What I mean is not just give thanks that it looks like we're past the most difficult time of the pandemic, but ask ourselves what good God has brought about in our lives. We won't be able to go back to business as usual after the pandemic, because if we do we're ignoring the ways God has acted and spoken to us during this time. This means prayerfully going through this year and contemplating what God has been doing in our life. For each of us I'm sure there have been habits or practices we shouldn't engage in that last year were curtailed. It could be that we've disconnected ourselves too much from our families and this year we were forced to develop closer relationships with them. Maybe we spent too much money on activities and lived outside our means, and this realization has embraced our need to be content with what we have. Whatever it is, good things have come as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. As mentioned, that's not to say this has been a good year or that God brought about the pandemic . . . just an acknowledgement that God does bring good out of evil.

God is turning evil into good in our churches as well. I've heard from many parishioners throughout the Diocese that this time apart has given them a wake-up call about how important and how much of a blessing it is when we come together as a Church! I've heard from other parishioners that having Zoom Bible studies and streamed services have allowed people who are either distant from the Church or who have been unable to come in person to participate once again. Many churches in our Diocese have been incredibly intentional about starting ministries where parishioners reach out regularly to the most vulnerable and isolated in their congregations and ministries.

These are wonderful things to hear. So we can't return to normal and ignore these evident blessings and can thankfully use them to help us be better outposts of the kingdom in the world. For many people that could mean volunteering more at Church out of a deeper understanding of its importance. For some churches that could mean continuing to stream services, excited about a new way for people in the community to connect. For others it could mean not closing ministries that were started during the pandemic, and instead shift their focus to helping people in times of need.

For those who love God

Romans 8:28, ESV

It's true that this past year of pandemic hit many people hard and there are many suffering and struggling in the world around us. We are called now by God to reach out to them as the body of Christ. Our renewed call is to reach them out in love and faithfully to share the good news of Jesus Christ as well as help them in their struggles.

What did God do at the ACTS Retreat?

he Anglican Catechist Training School (ACTS) is currently wrapping up its fourth year of training catechists for the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin. This year there are eight students enrolled in ACTS: Katie Tjerrild, Joel Velez, and Christina Pestana from St. James, Nancy Gomez from Our Lady of Guadalupe, Rachel Conrrique from St. John's in Petaluma, Chris Thomas from ADSJ's church plant in Reno, and Taban Duku and Margaret Douglass from Jesus the Good



Shepherd in Henderson, Nevada. There are two students currently enrolled in year two of ACTS and will be licensed as Lay Pastoral Catechists: Harlan Young (St. James) and Delmas Gault (St. John's).

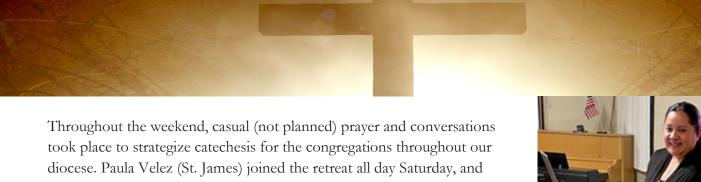
On Memorial Weekend, ACTS held its annual retreat at St. Anthony's Retreat Center in Three Rivers, and this event indeed represented a milestone for ACTS in many ways. Catechists from every class of the ACTS School were represented (Jeanine Werner, 2018, Mary Giles and Sandra Simon, 2019, Delmas Gault, 2020) along with several clergy who have enthusiastically supported ACTS since its beginning. Fr. David and Betty Miller from St. John's, Fr. Carlos and Carol Raines from St. James, and our Bishop Eric. Also, in attendance were Fr. Noah Lawson (St. Alban's Los Banos), Deacon Erin Giles (Jesus the Good Shepherd in Henderson) and our beloved Fr. Anthony, all three who serve on the ACTS Leadership Team. Also present were Avery Meyer from Holy Cross in Sanger, Barbara Lyles from OLG, and Mark and Wendy DeRaud from St. James. There were 26 people in all. Due to the pandemic, the ACTS class met solely via Zoom this year, so the retreat was the first opportunity for students and instructors to get to meet each other face-to-face.

Our guest speaker, Fr. Ryan Jones from Eucharist Church in San Francisco, shared his own vision and experience of building a church as a culture of catechesis for all its members including children, life-long church attenders, newcomers to Anglicanism, and newcomers to the faith. The goal of catechesis is Christoformity, the process of individual and collective formation into the image of Christ. All of life is to be lived in reference to Christ and his purposes. In addition to catechism classes and discipleship, Christoformity occurs over a lifetime as members participate in the worship, sacraments, mentorship, and spiritual disciplines together.



Each evening we would gather for worship and prayer, led by Carol Raines. We not only experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in our worship, but God's Spirit was also evident in the profound love and unity we enjoyed with one another and with our Roman Catholic hosts at St. Anthony's, who went out of their way to ensure we had all we needed for a beautiful Eucharist service Sunday morning.

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took place to strategize catechesis for the congregations throughout our diocese. Paula Velez (St. James) joined the retreat all day Saturday, and during the afternoon free time, she and a few other catechists discussed ways to meaningful and purposefully catechize our children with the goal of making them full, participating members of God's church who themselves will live for Christ's kingdom. Others prayed and discussed forming a diocesan catechist guild for which each congregation would have a chapter.





On Sunday morning, we had a beautiful Eucharist, celebrating Trinity Sunday. Anthony Velez preached a very short but powerfully anointed message that proclaimed the mystery of the Holy Trinity as something that cannot be explained intellectually but can be comprehended by love through intimacy with the Persons of the Trinity. The students participated by reading the lessons and acting as acolytes.

This year's retreat represents a turning point for ACTS. We experienced a sweet gentle visitation of the Holy Spirit that was expressed by profound love and unity. Spontaneous collaboration and visioning occurred all throughout the weekend as students (who didn't previously know each other well) met together to plan the next steps for catechesis in their local congregations and also in the diocese. The catechists in our diocese own

the vision of "effectively partnering with ordained clergy in order to bring God's people into Christian maturity and equipping them for fruitful ministry in extending God's Kingdom throughout the world."

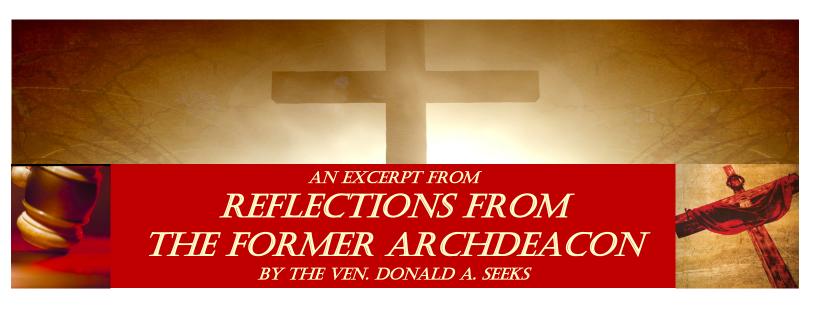
Another year of training and empowering laity for ministry within their local congregations and beyond will begin this August. For more information on ACTS and how one can get involved, go to the <u>ADSJ website</u> to



find application materials and a short video on ACTS.

By Beth Conkle





The Meaning of Heresy, Apostasy and Schism

n today's world terms schism is often tossed around carelessly, especially where love and charity are in short supply. Take the words, "heresy," "apostasy," and "schism," for example.

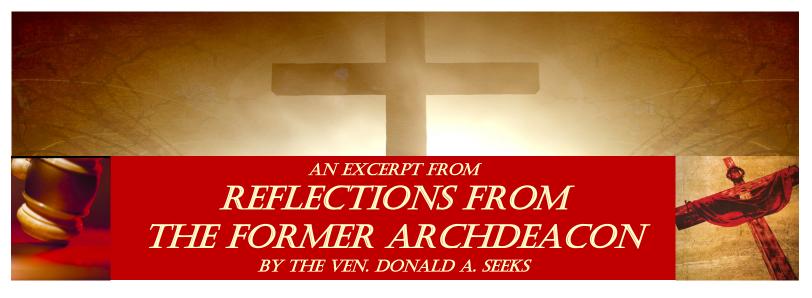
Heresy is defined as "the formal denial or doubt of any defined doctrine of the catholic faith." From the earliest days, the Church Catholic (universal) has claimed to have teaching authority and therefore the power to condemn heresy. This in response to Christ's own command: "If he refuses to listen to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (St. Matthew 18:17, NIV). One example is that The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven has been a universal teaching of the Church ever since its beginning. To refuse to accept this defined doctrine of the Church would be heretical.



Apostasy means "to separate, to defect, to pull away from." In the discipline of the Early Church, it was used to describe the abandonment of Christianity which, along with murder and fornication, were sins at first accounted unpardonable if committed by a baptized person, but the word generally is used if a person entirely abandons the Christian faith. The denial of Jesus Christ as God Incarnate, the denial of the existence of the Holy Spirit, the rejection of the Creeds would be examples of apostasy.

The third word, schism, literally means to tear or render asunder, to be divided into groups. From the Church's standpoint, it means formal and willful separation from the unity of the Catholic Church. It can be distinguished from heresy in that this separation involves a loss of charity rather than have a doctrinal basis, but the two often go together and the differences can be difficult to distinguish. Dr. Stephen Hutchens, Senior Editor of *Touchstone* Magazine and author, has written that "Schism is not worse than heresy, but is the automatic result of heresy. It is the heretics that create a schism, he says, "and not those who, following Apostolic instructions, avoid their

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fellowship" (see II Timothy 3:5, 4:3). Dr. Hutchens points out that we must symbolize the glory of God in our person and as individuals. Too many (Anglicans) have settled for a beautiful church building, great music, pious liturgies and good social programs without ever experiencing a personal conversion and acceptance of Jesus as Savior and Lord (see the Baptismal vows on pages 302 and 303 of the *Book of Common Prayer*). A number of years ago, Mr. George Barna did a study on personal commitment to Christ. He found that while 85 percent of all Pentecostals had a conversion experience, while only 25 percent of Episcopalians experienced conversion.

Great programs and great liturgies are ephemeral; however only conversion of the mind and heart toward Jesus has eternal value.

As a part of our conversion process we are commanded to know and understand the basic doctrine of the Church and to correct others in love when they stray from what the Church has always known and understood to be Apostolic Faith. Dr. Hutchens writes, "we should become as learned as we can be, but use our learning to please God and to do His work This means our learning must be enlarged and used constantly but worn lightly. We must know enough so that when someone claims a new revelation from the Spirit, we can test that proclamation against what already has been given knowing that God does not ever contradict Himself. His truth is perfect and absolute. Our loyalty to the Church Universal must also be absolute. If the (Anglican) Church or its leadership strays from God's truth, it is not disloyal to try to correct her and bring her back to orthodoxy. Nor is it a lack of charity to call heresy by name. In fact, charity demands that one must **contend** for the Faith. But one must understand what that Faith is.

Dr. Hutchens concludes: "The remedy for liberalism is not conservatism, but orthodoxy, which is a cure for both." May we strive to know the Faith, practice the Faith, rejoice in the Faith, share the Faith, and contend for the Faith when necessary. For this is the will of Almighty God.





Recognizable for its crack, the Liberty Bell remains significant today for its message of freedom and religious liberty.

The Liberty Bell

Going beyond iconic crack, this State House Bell was transformed into an extraordinary symbol. Abolitionists, women's suffrage advocates and Civil Rights leaders took inspiration from the inscription on this bell. The State House Bell, now known as the Liberty Bell, rang in the tower of the Pennsylvania State House. Today, we call that building Independence Hall.

Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly Isaac Norris first ordered a bell for the bell tower in 1751 from the Whitechapel Foundry in London. That bell cracked on the first test ring. Local metalworkers John Pass and

John Stow melted down that bell and cast a new one in Philadelphia. It's this bell that would ring to call lawmakers to their meetings and the townspeople together to hear the reading of the news. Benjamin Franklin wrote to Catherine Ray in 1755, "Adieu, the Bell rings, and I must go among the Grave ones and talk Politicks." However, it was not until the 1830s that the old State House Bell would begin to take on significance as a symbol of liberty.

THE CRACK

No one recorded when or why the Liberty Bell first cracked, but the most likely explanation is that a narrow split developed in the early 1840s after nearly 90 years of hard use. In 1846, when the city decided to repair the bell prior to George Washington's birthday holiday (February 23), metal workers widened the thin crack to prevent its farther spread and restore the tone of the bell using a technique called "stop drilling." The wide crack in the Liberty Bell is actually the repair job, but the repair was not successful. *The Public Ledger* newspaper reported that the repair failed when another fissure developed. This second crack, running from the abbreviation for "Philadelphia" up through the word "Liberty," silenced the bell forever. No one living today has heard the bell ring freely with its clapper, but computer modeling provides some clues into the sound of the Liberty Bell.

The Liberty Bell's inscription is from the Bible (King James version): "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants thereof." This verse refers to the "Jubilee," or the instructions to the Israelites to return property and free slaves every 50 years. Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly Isaac Norris chose this inscription for the State House Bell in 1751 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges which granted religious liberties and political self-government to the people of Pennsylvania. The inscription of liberty on the State House Bell, now known as the Liberty Bell, went unnoticed during the Revolutionary War. After the war, abolitionists seeking to end slavery in America were inspired by the bell's message.

NOTABLE: The bell weighed 2,080 lbs. at order. It is made of bronze. It is 70 percent copper, 25 percent tin and contains small amounts of lead, gold, arsenic, silver, and zinc. The bell's wooden yoke is American elm, but there is no proof that it is the original yoke for this bell.

Article submitted by Susan A. Schnetz

Source: https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/historyculture/stories-libertybell.htm

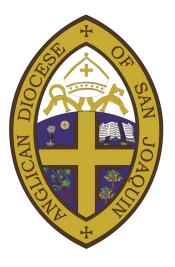




Bishop's Note series--

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Please send these to **melody@ctkridgecrest.org**.

Thank you!