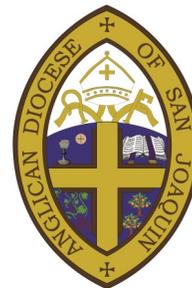


THE SAN JOAQUIN ANGLICAN



The Bishop's Corner - Patience

The Right Reverend Eric Vawter Menees

With everything going on this year, one of the blessings we've had in our lives has been our technology. As much as we may grumble about it and get

frustrated at it, we've been able to accomplish much more because of it. We can communicate with our friends and family through video chat like Facebook Live or Zoom, we can notify people quickly of schedule changes or news with text messaging and emails; we can even order food and supplies with Amazon or Instacart.

Technology isn't necessarily all good though. There are other ways it's impacted us that go unseen and one of those ways is instilling in us an expectation of instantcy. News that used to take days or even weeks to spread now spreads within minutes. Purchasing things that weren't available at your local store required putting in a special order and then waiting days or even weeks for that order to come. Now we buy something on Amazon and it comes to our door in two days, even overnight!

What we need is a Christian understanding of patience. Patience is defined as the ability to accept or tolerate delays, trouble, or suffering without turning to anger. When you begin looking for mention of the quality of patience in scripture, it turns up quite often. Patience is found as a topic in the book of Psalms multiple times. For example, we hear, "Be still before the Lord and

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BISHOP'S SCHEDULE AND DIOCESAN CALENDAR

August 17 - 12:00 pm - Central
Deanery Clericus

August 17 - 12:00 pm - Northern
Deanery Clericus

August 19 - 7:00 pm - Installation
of Fr. Townsend Waddill

August 21 - 10:00 am - Ordination
of Luke Childs to the Diaconate

August 21 - 11:30 am - Ordination
Reception - Saint Columba, Fresno

August 21 - 12:00 pm - Clergy &
Spouse Luncheon - Saint Columba,
Fresno

August 22 - Bishop at Our Lady of
Guadalupe and St. James, Fresno

August 25 - 5:00 pm - East-West
Deanery Clericus on Zoom

August 26 - 6:30 pm - Preaching
Class

August 29 - Bishop Eric at St.
Mark's, Loomis

September 2 - 6:30 pm—Preaching
Class



wait patiently for him,” (Ps. 37:7) and “I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry” (Ps. 40:1). Even when patience isn’t mentioned by name its presence and absence is all over the place. When Moses is on top of Mt. Sinai with God, the Israelites can’t wait for his return and in their impatience, they turn to idolatry.

Once the Israelites enter the land of Israel, impatience is still a problem. There’s a multitude of examples of impatience in the Old Testament, like Saul refusing to wait for Samuel and sacrificing himself (1 Samuel 13). Fortunately, there’s also a multitude of examples of patience, like David refusing to kill Saul when it would have meant an end to their struggle, but also would have been against the will of God (1 Samuel 24). Patience is seen in the New Testament as well, like the example of the disciples delaying their witness of Christ to the world and waiting for the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2).



Christianity has traditionally taught that patience isn’t just an ability to tolerate delays as you probably heard growing up, rather patience is a virtue. What we mean by a virtue is that patience is a sort of moral habit. Like the other habits in our life, the more we engage in it the easier it becomes. We may not think of it that way, but all the little moments that call for patience in our lives are forming us to be more patient when it comes to the bigger things. Unfortunately, the converse of this is true as well. The less we practice patience, the more we show impatience in our lives, the easier impatience becomes and the more we turn to that.

Since COVID it’s easy to see how patience and impatience have shaped many of our lives. We have had to be patient while we were sheltering in place, when we couldn’t worship together in person or worship indoors. We can’t do what we want to do, and rather than that leading us to anger or annoyance, we need to practice patience. Ultimately though patience isn’t something we can just do by ourselves, we need God’s help to obtain it. For all those times when you don’t want to be patient or when you start feeling anger while waiting, here’s a good prayer you can use.

Teach me, my Lord, to be sweet and gentle in all the events of life; in disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the insincerity of those I trusted, in the unfaithfulness of those on whom I relied. Let me put myself aside to think of the happiness of others, to hide my pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them. Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes across my path. Let me so use it that it mellows me, not harden or cause bitterness in me. Teach me to be patient, not irritable, that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, not narrow, haughty or overbearing. May no one be less good for having come within my influence; no one less pure, less true, less kind, less noble for having been a fellow-traveler in our journey toward eternal life. As I go my rounds from one distraction to another, let me whisper from time to time a word of love to You. May my life be lived in the supernatural, full of power for good and strong in its purpose of sanctity. Amen.

A Prayer for Patience, John Henry Newman



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

What does the term “Father” mean when applied to God?

The Church of England has always been blessed with many great thinkers, both lay and clergy. Recently I was reading the reflections of several of them to discover what they might shed on “inclusive” language and the desire for some in our Church. Some would abandon the Biblical term “Father” as it is used by Jesus and His habit using the term “Father,” and then try to understand the reason why it is a problem.

In his book entitled *The Tyranny of Time, A Defense of Dogmatism*, noted Anglican lay theologian Harry Blamires (1916-2017) wrote, “We suffer from a grossly exaggerated notion of the significance of sheer contemporaneity...and from a correspondingly inflated estimate of the isolation of the present from the past. There is no justification in Christianity or reason, for the highly pressured notion of our need, at all costs, to be like everyone else who is living on this earth at the same time as ourselves. We don’t have to agree with everyone just because they are here when we are, and reject the teachings and reflections of those who have gone before simply because they are no longer here.”

This “idolatry of the temporal process,” he calls it, “results in ‘pseudo-theology’ by those who are uneasy with former revelation and tradition. . . . A key error threading its way through recent pseudo-theology is that ‘time will tell.’ It will not! Eternity will tell.” He says, “Anything less will result in the eventual denial of God, deification of the secular, a fundamental rejection of Scripture, tradition, and historical reason for contemporary thinking and experience.”

Since God has chosen to reveal both Himself and His Truth throughout human history, it is not surprising that those who would focus upon “what is happening now” will have little familiarity with the catholic faith and little or no understanding of orthodox teaching about God. Such ignorance results in an ever-diminishing comprehension of God’s nature and of His creation.

Blamires clarifies this: “It has been said that the less we include in our definition of God, the easier it is to believe that God exists; but on the other hand, the God Whose existence is easily shown is a God Who will not be of much help in our daily life and work. If we should include in our definition or concept of God that of His own self-revelation as a Trinity of Persons in a Unity of Being, we will have much more trouble in proving His existence. It is much harder to win others to acceptance of such a mind-stretching doctrine. Many people have

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informed me that they believe in God, but when I ask them to explain what He is like, the definitions are childish and/or simplistic, because He has been created in their own image, and not the other way around.”

True Christians do not have the luxury, if you can call it that, of fashioning their own concept of God. We understand that He has revealed Himself as the Creator and Sustainer of the world, Who has further and uniquely revealed Himself in human history by becoming incarnate in human flesh at a particular moment in time. He was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, and the third day He rose from the dead.

Again Blamires reveals the difference between our “now” experience and those who lived in past times: “And try as one may, it is impossible to accept this self-revelation of God without also accepting that God has chosen certain male symbols and male language to express the kind of God He is. To abandon these terms or make substitutes for them is to discard that revelation altogether. When God chooses to reveal Himself as Father (and not Mother) and as Son (not daughter), we believe we must try to understand this self-revelation as best we can. Our task is not to disregard it or change it to whatever we may choose. Instead, we need to ask, What does the term ‘Father’ mean when it is applied to God? What has He informed us through the Scriptures about its meaning? We know there is no exact parallel with this role in human culture, but obviously there are some important connections. How then, can we incorporate the Fatherhood of God in such a way that it will have meaning in our daily lives?”



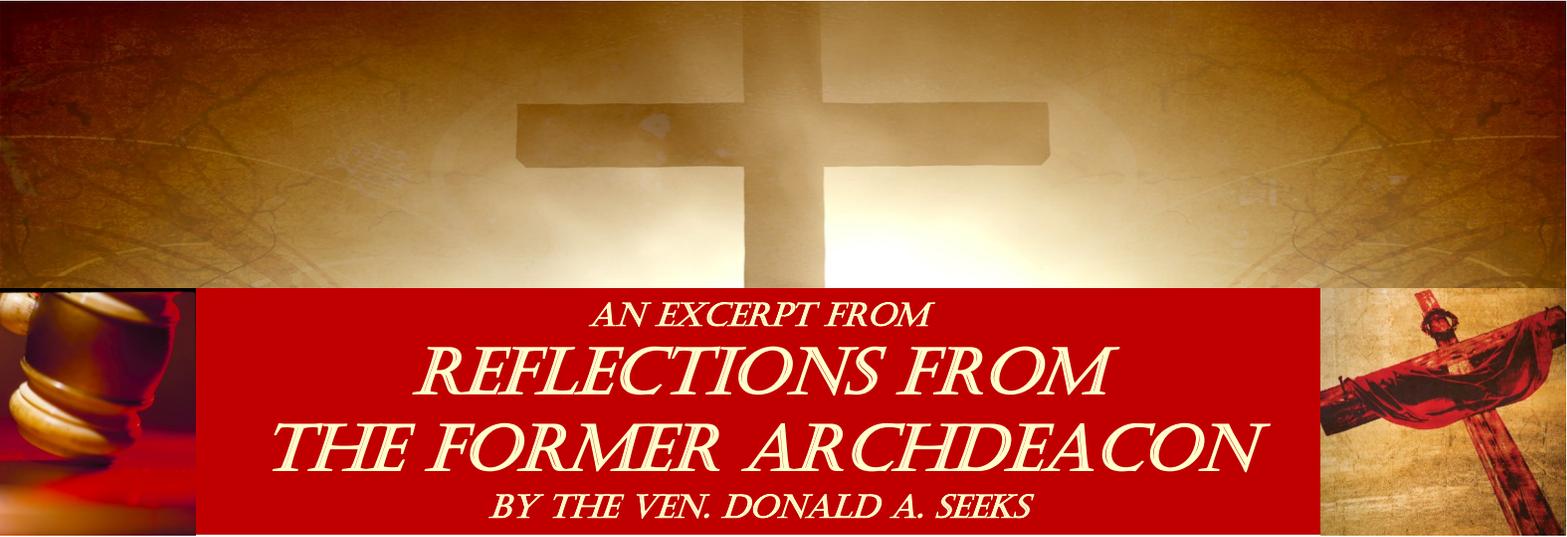
“Thou shalt
not make
unto thee any
graven image...”

Exodus 20:4

One of the most important teachings in the Old Testament is the prohibition of the making of images. The pagans expressed in their images what they perceived to be the qualities of their gods. Modern pagans do the same. But by the same token, Christians cannot limit their description of God as Father to what they personally understand about fatherhood. To do so would make an image.

We must look to Jesus for help in this regard. The word ‘Father’ is recorded as spoken by Jesus 170 times in the Gospels. In fact, this is the only term Jesus used to describe God with the one exception of His cry of dereliction from the Cross. Indeed, Jesus declared the no one could know the Father except by the Son and therefore only Jesus has the ability to make the Father known to others. Remember that not only did Jesus use the term for Himself but when the disciples asked Him for instruction about prayer, Jesus told them to begin by praying, “Our Father...” The plural pronoun indicates the term is as relevant for you and me as it is for our Lord Jesus.

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

In 1989 three English scholars produced a book entitled, *Let God Be God*. In it they wrote, “The word ‘Father’ on the lips of Jesus is to be understood primarily in terms of the context of teaching by Jesus Himself... Certainly this context includes the witness of the Old Testament of God as Father and gains meaning from the reality of human fatherhood in human society; in this case, Jewish society. However, we do not begin with Jewish patriarchy and then read into God the features of the human system (whether they be good or bad by contemporary judgment) in order to ascertain what the being of God the Father is all about. Rather we begin from the words of Jesus and seek to understand them in the context which He supplies by word and by deed.”

When we address God as “Our Father...” no sexuality is implied. At times God is described in the Scriptures as having the best female qualities, but nevertheless is called Father and not Mother. To use ‘Mother’ is to introduce sexuality where none is intended and thereby distort the revelation given by Jesus. God is not the equivalent to any human father – He is the Source of all fatherhood. He has named Himself as such, and therefore we are not free to alter it.

Finally, to paraphrase another English Anglican, Dr. Eric Mascall: there can be no greater error than to suppose we can liberate man by eliminating God (or by trying to refashion Him into a more desirable image). “It is not because they have too exalted an idea of God that Christians have so many crimes and failures to answer for,” says Dr. Mascall, “it is because their idea of God has been too limited and too low.”

I conclude with an American woman with whom I had the great pleasure to meet and to study under, the late Agnes Sanford. She had been given at least two powerful spiritual gifts – one of great faith and the other of healing. Sanford emphasized: “The more we believe that God is a Father, the more He comes to us in light and peace and healing. So, let us try to revive our belief that God is a Father – a good Father Who loves us, and the cruelties of life are not His will... Therefore, let us remind ourselves a hundred times a day that He **is** our Father, and let us thank Him and praise Him for His love until the feeling of it revives in us. (And if) God is a Father and (if) He loves His people, (then) let us try to convey His love and His power to them, just as our Lord did.”

OUR FATHER,
WHO ART IN
heaven.

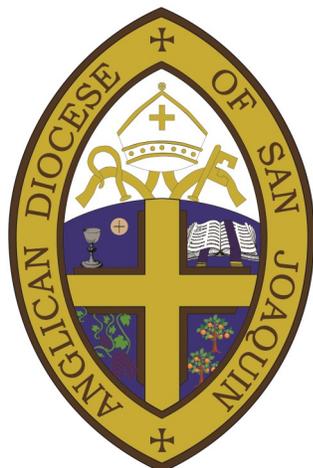


ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

Bishop's Note series--

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Please send these to melody@ctkridgecrest.org.

Thank you!