

Diocese of San Joaquin

5 January 2012

The weekly Bishop's Note is designed chiefly as a teaching tool in addition to a vehicle to disseminate information about the life and ministry of the diocese of San Joaquin to the people of the diocese. Over the next ten weeks I would like to speak to an important and often overlooked ministry in the church that of the Laity.



We know from the Scriptures and the Early Church that there are three primary orders in the church – Laity, Deacons, Priests and Bishops in that order of rank and importance. However, if I were to ask any of the laymen or for that matter many of the clergy, what the church teaches are the primary duties of the laity I suspect I would get a lot of blank stares. To that end over the next ten weeks I would like to look at the duties of the laity as laid out in the **Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America** – Title 1 Section Two: *Concerning the Duties of the Laity*

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;
2. To engage regularly in the reading and study of Holy Scripture and the Doctrine of the Church as found in Article I of the Constitution of this Church;
3. To observe their baptismal vows, to lead an upright and sober life, and not give scandal to the Church;
4. To present their children and those they have led to the Lord for baptism and confirmation;
5. To give regular financial support to the Church, with the biblical tithes as the minimum standard of giving;
6. To practice forgiveness daily according to our Lord's teaching;
7. To receive worthily the Sacrament of Holy Communion as often as reasonable;
8. To observe the feasts and fasts of the Church set forth in the Anglican formularies;
9. To continue his or her instruction in the Faith so as to remain an

effective minister for the Lord Jesus Christ;

10. To devote themselves to the ministry of Christ among those who do not know Him, utilizing the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives them, for the effective extension of Christ's Kingdom.

Bishop Eric

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

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

Diocese of San Joaquin

19 January 2012



Last week in the Bishop's Note we examined the first of the duties of the Laity is to worship God in church every Sunday because our corporate relationship with God is very important. So too is our personal relationship with God. That leads to the second of the Duties of the Laity: ***"To engage regularly in the reading and study of Holy Scripture and the Doctrine of the Church as found in Article I of the Constitution of this Church;"***

Why is it that daily bible study so important? Here are six reasons why

1. *Because we want to know God better.* If I want to draw closer to my wife, Florence, I need to spend time with her. Well the same is true for us and our relationship with God. From Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 God reveals Himself and His Will for His creation!

2. *Because we want to life life better.* Because the Bible speaks to every aspect of Life the Lord directs through his Word. The truth is, the more we read and study the Word of God the less "lost" we feel and the more grounded we are. As King David wrote : ***"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*** (Psalm 119:105 ESV) If you are tired of feeling lost and alone, spend 30 minutes a day with the Lord and I promise you will be blessed.

3. *Because we want to grow in closer in our relationship with God.* Jesus responded to temptation by telling the Devil that ***"Man can not live on bread alone but by every workd that comes from the mouth of God."*** (Matthew 4:4 ESV)

4. *To reveal false teachings.* The Bible tells us that in the last days (the time we now live in!) there will be lots of false teachings and false prophets. (Mt24:3-5; Mk 13:3-6; Mk13:21-22). That's why it's so important to know what the Bible says, so we can compoare all teachings with the Word of God. The fact is that every teaching that doesn't agree with what the Word of God says is a false teaching! Therefore, compare every teaching with what the Bible says. If you aren't aware of what the Bible says, you can

get cheated into almost anything.

5. *To know what you believe in.* The more of God's Word you know and act upon the stronger your faith will be (Rom 10:17).

6. *To always keep your Sword sharp!* The Bible is the sword that God has given us, so we can conquer all the temptations we meet (Eph. 6:17). A sword that isn't sharp does no good. Therefore, we need to keep it in good condition and sharpen it (improve our Bible knowledge) every day so it's always sharp and ready to be used!

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

26 January 2012



As we continue in our study of the Duties of the Laity, as proscribed in the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America, we come to the third of those duties, which is to be faithful to our baptismal vows. Specifically our duty is **"To observe their baptismal vows, to lead an upright and sober life, and not give scandal to the Church;"**

This weekend I was with the good people of St. Paul's, Bakersfield, and in observing the Confirmands as they renewed their vows I was struck with how very powerful those vows are.

Our baptisms are based in a profound belief in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - we state this belief in the Baptismal Covenant in which we publicly affirm our orthodox Christian faith.

The observation of our baptismal vows begins and ends with our orthodox faith handed down throughout the ages from Christian to Christian, Father to Son, Mother to Daughter since the time that Jesus passed it on directly to the Apostles. That faith is lived out in our baptismal vows:

Question: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and the Prayers?

Answer: I will, with God's help.

The teaching we follow is not new, it is not what we invent or the world invents but as found in the Bible revealing God's love for us in his son Jesus Christ. That teaching is not in a vacuum but in the Church where we gather with fellow believers to share in the sacraments instituted by Jesus and lived out through the centuries.

Question: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Answer: I will, with God's help.

Our baptismal vows recognize that we are fallen creatures in need of God's saving Grace and that, indeed we do sin. We are to examine our lives and repent when necessary. I strongly recommend the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The book of James encourages us to **"confess your sins to one another and pray for each other."** (James 5:16) In the church we share in God's Grace through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and are restored in our relationships with God and our brother.

Question: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Answer: I will with God's help.

As baptized Christians it is our honor and duty to share the Good News of Christ and that begins with our willingness to share with others about our personal relationship with Jesus. Of course, that relationship is also lived out corporately in the church but ultimately, we can and must share with others the light of Christ in a cold and dark world.

Question: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself.

Answer: I will, with God's help.

"Let us make man in our image after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26) All human beings are created in the image of God and are due respect and dignity. It is important to note that this respect and dignity begins from the moment of conception and lasts until the moment of natural death. In addition, scripture tells us in the prologue of the gospel of John, **"And to all who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God."** (John 1:12) All people are due respect and dignity but not all people are "Children of God." Our brother and sister Christians are due our love and honor.

Question: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? Answer: I will, with God's help.

To strive for justice and peace is the duty of every Christian because Jesus demonstrated the same in his life. It is important to understand that Justice & tolerance are not synonymous and peace is not simply the absence of violence. Justice flows from God who cries out through his prophet Micah **"O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"** (Micah 6:8)

Each and every one of these vows is supremely important but it is also imperative to note that the response to each question is, "I will, with God's help." Left to our own devices we will not be able to fulfill any aspect of our baptismal vows. However, if we invite God the Holy Spirit into our lives and allow Him to move and shape us then, in fact, we cannot help but live out these vows.

And so I would end this Bishop's Note with a special invitation to all baptized Christians to take a moment to ask God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit to move in and through you in the completion of his divine will in your life. You see, the second half of the third duty of the laity is to live a godly and sober life not causing scandal in the church. If, in fact, we are living out our baptismal vows, then we need not worry about living godly and sober lives or causing scandal to His Church!

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

- 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

Diocese of San Joaquin

2 February 2012



As we continue our examination of the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America we discover that the church actually has expectations of her members. I say this because in the old church the expectations of membership was limited to attending church and receiving Holy Communion at least once a year and being a "giver of record." With that one was considered a voting member of the parish or mission and a member in good standing of the church.

The Anglican Church of North America is not the old church. In this province the church has expectations of her members and the members have expectations of their church.

Today we continue with our examination of the Duties of the Laity with the Fourth Duty: ***"To present their children and those they have led to the Lord for baptism and confirmation;"***

One of my true joys as a Bishop of the Church is doing baptisms, confirmations and receptions. What fun to be with brothers and sisters in the Lord who publicly renounce Satan and all the forces of evil and affirm their belief in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior!

Of course, this fourth duty assumes two things:

1. **That parents will lead their children spiritually!** That may sound like a no brainer but in the world around us the assumption is that religious faith is a personal choice and children need to make up their own minds. That is truly nuts. But I've heard several times from very well meaning parents... "I don't want to force my child into faith I want him to make his own decisions." Really? Would you say, "I don't want to force my child into school I want him to make his own decisions." Parents have a sacred responsibility to raise their children in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. When we say to our children..."oh you need to make up your own mind." What we are really saying is... "Christianity doesn't really mean much to me."

2. **That our members will lead others to a saving relationship with Christ and into a relationship in His Church!** How amazing is that! When we take seriously this duty we naturally live out our baptismal vows that are part of the third duty. The second aspect of this assumption is to say that the Church is vitally important to our relationship with Jesus. That relationship with Jesus is intensely personal but it is also lived out in a corporate fashion... in fact one

could argue that a relationship with Jesus without His Church is an incomplete relationship. Just as a marriage bears fruit when the

Husband and wife spend time together so too does our relationship with Jesus as the church, the bride of Christ, bears fruit when she spends time with Jesus. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Bishop Eric

Please note that all clergy are especially invited to attend the funeral of Deacon Robert Hilliard to be held at St. Luke's in Merced on Saturday, February 4th at 10 AM. White stoles. There will also be a Burial Service for Dcn. Hilliard on Thursday, February 9th, at 10:00 AM at St. Nicholas, Atwater. An Internment Service with full military honors will follow at 1:30 PM at Santa Nela National Cemetery. All attendees must arrive by 1:00 PM. Clergy Cassock & Surplus.

Diocesan Calendar

- February 5th** - Bishop @ St. Paul's Visalia
- February 12th** - Bishop @ Jesus Our Saviour, Modesto
- February 18th** - Diocesan Council
- February 20th** - Diocesan Office Closed
- February 25th** - Diocesan Altar Guild Board @St. James Cathedral, 10 a.m.
- February 26th** - Bishop @Jesus the Good Shepherd, Henderson
- March 11th** - Bishop @ San Pedro y Pablo, Arvin
- March 13th** -Rural Deans
- March 17th** - Diocesan Council and Ordination of Jonathan Canary @St. Columba, Fresno, 2 p.m.
- 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

16 February 2012



Over the past month I've been writing to you about the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America. Today I would like to share with you the fifth of the duties and one of the most difficult for many of us.

#5. To give regular financial support to the Church, with the biblical tithe as the minimum standard of giving;

At first glance one might argue that this fifth duty isn't very "spiritual" especially in light of the previous four which dealt with worship, living out our baptismal vows and evangelism. I, on the other hand, would argue that, in fact, the fifth of the duties is very spiritual. You see we often try to separate our finances from our "spiritual lives" but you really can not do that. I once had a friend who said, "Show me a person's check book and day timer and I will tell you the state of their spiritual health." Well, that makes sense to me - how we spend the time and money that God has given us is a reflection of our spiritual lives.

For many of us the first part of the duty will not be difficult - we give regularly to the church and not an insignificant amount either. The average giving across-the-board in the USA a few years ago was \$1,000 a year for the active church goer. \$1,000 is a lot of money and is the biblical tithe . . . if our income is \$10,000 a year. The difficult part comes with the qualifier . . . "the biblical tithe as the minimum standard of giving." Now some will argue that when scripture speaks of the tithe in Leviticus and Deuteronomy it speaks to a different time and era not a universal standard. Well, what do you think? God says in Leviticus: "***A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.***" (Leviticus 27:30-32) I don't think God is speaking only of produce in terms of harvest but produce in the sense of the fruit of our labor. The interesting aspect to this scripture comes when you look at the last portion . . . "***belongs to the Lord.***" You see that is where the problem lies . . . we mix up who the "produce" belongs to. We have the notion that

everything we have is ours!

However, when we come to the table with the understanding that everything we have is a gift from the Lord then what we are doing in the tithe is not giving a gift to God, but rightly returning to him 10% of what He has already given us.

Another aspect to think of comes from the New Testament. Jesus acknowledges the tithe as he rebukes the Pharisees for giving the tithe but ignoring justice. (Luke 11:42) Jesus also praises the widow who gives beyond the tithe while in the Temple. (Luke 21:1-4) The spiritual discipline of the tithe requires us to rely upon God the way that this poor widow did. And here is the big picture . . . THE TITHE IS FOR OUR GOOD NOT GOD'S. God wants us to be generous and loving people and the way that we do that is by giving away, not taking in or holding onto. We give regularly to the church so that we may practice generosity as a response to God's generosity to us!

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

February 18th - Diocesan Council

February 20th - Diocesan Office Closed

February 25th - Diocesan Altar Guild Board @St. James Cathedral, 10 a.m.

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

March 10th - Standing Committee

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

March 13th -Rural Deans

March 17th - Diocesan Council and Ordination of Jonathan Canary @St. Columba, Fresno, 2 p.m.

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

April 28th - Daughters of the Holy Cross Spring Gathering

April 30th - May 2nd - Clergy Conference @ ECCO

August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"

Diocese of San Joaquin

23 February 2012



As we continue our study of the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America, we arrive at number six which is on Forgiveness... how appropriate for the first Thursday of Lent...

#6. To practice forgiveness daily according to our Lord's teaching;

Forgiveness is the uniquely Christian ethic! Now I know that is a bold statement but if you think about it you will agree. Jesus calls upon His disciples to forgive – not in order to earn better Karma or in order to gain influence – we are to forgive because Jesus has forgiven us and He calls us to forgive others. Indeed, Jesus unites our forgiving others with our own forgiveness. Listen to the words of the Lord's Prayer "***and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.***" (Matthew 6:12 ESV) Forgiveness requires compassion, empathy and an active participation in a relationship. It may be here most of all that we see the truth of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's statement, "Our community with one another [in Christ] consists solely in what Christ has done to both of us. Christian brotherhood is a spiritual and not a human reality. In this it differs from all other communities." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper, 1954), 23, 25–26.)

Dr. Timothy Keller once wrote a powerful article on Forgiveness where he argued that in its most basic and simple form, this teaching is that *Christians in community are to never give up on one another, never give up on a relationship, and never write off another believer.* We must never tire of forgiving (and repenting!) and seeking to repair our relationships. Matthew 5:23–26 tells us we should go to someone if we know they have something against us. Matthew 18:15–20 says we should approach someone if we have something against *them*. In short, if any relationship has cooled off or has weakened in any way, *it is always your move.* It doesn't matter "who started it:"God always holds you responsible to reach out to repair a tattered relationship. A Christian is responsible to begin the process of reconciliation, regardless of how the distance or the alienation began.

As we begin the season of Lent, I want to encourage all members of the Diocese of San Joaquin to examine their lives and their relationships and where the need be both to repent and actively to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. It is our duty as Christians to take an active role in reconciling ourselves to one another and to Jesus!

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

February 25th - Diocesan Altar Guild Board

@St. James Cathedral, 10 a.m.

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

March 3rd - Commission on Ministry

March 10th - Standing Committee

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

March 13th -Rural Deans

March 17th - Diocesan Council and Ordination of

Jonathan Canary @St. Columba, Fresno, 2 p.m.

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

March 25th - Bishop @ St. James, Sonora

March 29th - Mass of Chrism, 11am

March 31st - Confirmations @ Epiphany, Corcoran

April 1st - Palm Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 8th - Easter Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 28th - Daughters of the Holy Cross Spring Gathering

April 30th - May 2nd - Clergy Conference @ ECCO

August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"

November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral

1 March 2012



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

(Before I begin the Bishop's Note this week, I want to share with my brothers and sisters of the Diocese of San Joaquin a profound sadness that I feel today upon learning of the death of my brother bishop Robinson Calvacanti of the Diocese of Recife in Brazil. Bishop Calvacanti and his wife Miriam were murdered last Sunday, February 26th in their home, apparently by their troubled son. Please join me in prayer for the Calvacanti family, the Diocese of Recife and the Anglican Communion.)

As we continue our examination of the Duties of the Laity as found in the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of North America we come to number seven:

"To receive worthily the Sacrament of Holy Communion as often as reasonable;"

As Anglican Christians we recognize and value the Grace that we receive in the sacraments. The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Eucharist are of special importance as these are the sacraments that our Lord himself commanded us to partake of... ***"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*** (Matthew 26:26-29 ESV)

The first time I received Holy Communion I was thirteen and attending worship for the first time at the invitation of a friend...who didn't show up for the service. So there I was in a strange church and listening to what the priest was saying during the celebration of Holy Communion. Having no background in Christianity (though I was baptized as a newborn in a Roman Catholic hospital by a zealous nun) and zero biblical knowledge, I began to grow increasingly uneasy as the priest said that this was the "body and blood" of Jesus - a guy I knew had died two

thousand years earlier. As it came time for communion the usher insisted that I go forward, even to the point of grabbing my elbow and "ushering" me forward to the altar rail. When I received the host, I was relieved that it was not flesh, and, when I received the chalice, I was relieved that it was not blood. Upon receiving the sacrament, I was flooded with a sense of warmth and peace like I had never experienced before. A few seconds after receiving, the celebrant returned to me, knelt down, looked me in the eyes and simply said, "Welcome Home."

The Grace that we receive in the Sacrament of Holy Communion is the Grace that comes with coming home... When our first parents, Adam & Eve, sinned and were expelled from the Garden of Eden a separation occurred between God and man, a separation that could not be rejoined by working hard and trying to be good. The fact is that no one from the moment of the fall to the moment of Jesus' resurrection - NO ONE OF THEIR OWN POWER - could earn that homecoming, could earn that reconciliation. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, his receiving the wrath of God for all of sinful man, was the only act that could reconcile God to Man and Man to God.

To worthily receive the sacrament of Holy Communion we have to accept the invitation of Christ to come to his table out of humility, love, and an abiding understanding of Christ's presence in the Sacrament. In a mystical and powerful way, Jesus is present in the bread and wine, the body and blood, and therefore when we are in the presence of the sacrament we are in the presence of the resurrected Christ, and that is an awesome understanding.

It is for this reason that we often say the prayer of humble access before receiving the sacrament: ***"We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen"***

Bishop Eric

March 3rd - Commission on Ministry
March 10th - Standing Committee
March 11th - Bishop @ San Pedro y Pablo, Arvin
March 13th - Rural Deans
March 17th - Diocesan Council and Ordination of
Jonathan Kanary @ St. Columba, Fresno, 2 p.m.
March 18th - Bishop @ St. Clement's, Woodlake
March 25th - Bishop @ St. James, Sonora
March 29th - Mass of Chrism, 11am
March 31st - Confirmations @ Epiphany, Corcoran
April 1st - Palm Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral
April 6th - Diocesan Office Closed at noon &
Bishop at Good Friday Service @ St. James Cathedral 1-3:30 p.m.
April 8th - Easter Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral
April 15th - Bishop @ St. John's in Stockton
April 22nd - Bishop @ Resurrection in Tracy
April 28th - Daughters of the Holy Cross Spring Gathering
April 29th - Bishop @ St. Philip's in Coalinga
April 30th - May 2nd - Clergy Conference @ ECCO
August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the
Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"
November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral

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

8 March 2012



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

As we continue our examination of the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America we come to the eighth duty:

"To observe the feasts and fasts of the Church set forth in the Anglican formularies;"

As Anglican Christians, observing the feasts and fasts of the church is an essential part of our DNA. When I first came to the Diocese of San Joaquin, I was immediately impressed by our congregation in Henderson, Nevada & Fr. Giles who emailed to the congregation on the eve of every feast, great and small, a beautiful explanation of the following day's feast. I recognized this as a wonderful teaching opportunity and I applaud Fr. Giles for his making this available to the people of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

When thinking of the feasts of the church we must first and foremost think of our Sunday Celebration. In a very real way, every Sunday is Easter Sunday. Every Sunday we celebrate the risen Lord and share in his body and blood. In addition to our "regular" Sunday celebrations, the *Book of Common Prayer* lists approximately thirty other feasts and two fasts. These feasts are centered around Jesus' birth, life, resurrection, and ascension. In addition, the feasts celebrate the lives of those closest to Jesus: the twelve apostles, Jesus' earthly parents, John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene. Lastly, the feasts will celebrate the birth of the Church and the believers who have made up the Church.

So now the question is why...why observe these feasts and fasts? The answer is a simple one: to draw closer to Jesus. In observing the feasts, we gather together for worship and to thank God for a certain aspect of Jesus' life and the life of the Church as described in Scripture.

So, for example, we commemorate Jesus' birth, his presentation in the temple, his baptism and his

transfiguration. These feasts help us to draw closer to Jesus by examining the scriptures not only in the context of study but in the context of worship. The same is true as we examine the lives of those closest to Jesus: Joseph & Mary, John the Baptist, and Mary Magdalene to name a few.

What happens if you can't make it to a feast day or if the congregation is unable to observe a feast day on the particular day? Well, generally clergy are given the flexibility to "transfer" a feast day to the day that is most practical for the congregation. This is generally done for the primary feasts - Epiphany, All Saints & All Souls etc. and should only be transferred out of real necessity.

There are two primary fast days - Ash Wednesday in which we begin Lent and remember our sinful nature and as a result our mortality... and Good Friday in which we remember the death of our Lord and his descent among the dead. We are called to sacrifice on these days as a sign of penance and discipline.

Lastly, we observe these feasts and fasts as a form of obedience to our Lord and discipline in our lives. We gather because the Church has called us to worship, prayer and remembrance of our Lord and that is always a good thing!

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

March 10th - Standing Committee

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

March 13th - Rural Deans

March 17th - Diocesan Council and Ordination of Jonathan Kanary @ St. Columba, Fresno, 2 p.m.

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

March 25th - Bishop @ St. James, Sonora

March 29th - Mass of Chrism, 11 am

March 31st - Confirmations @ Epiphany, Corcoran

April 1st - Palm Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 6th - Diocesan Office Closed at noon &

Bishop at Good Friday Service @ St. James Cathedral 1-3:30 p.m.

April 8th - Easter Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 15th - Bishop @ St. John's in Stockton

April 22nd - Bishop @ Resurrection in Tracy

April 28th - Daughters of the Holy Cross Spring Gathering

April 29th - Bishop @ St. Philip's in Coalinga
April 30th - May 2nd - Clergy Conference @ ECCO
August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the
Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"
November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral

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

15 March 2012



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

As we continue our examination of the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America we come to ninth of the ten duties:

9. To continue his or her instruction in the Faith so as to remain an effective minister for the Lord Jesus Christ;

There was a time a few years back when I was working on my Doctorate in Ministry when my wife accused me of being a perpetual student. She was correct in that I was traveling out of state for classes, had my nose buried in a book for most of my free time and much of our spare change went for travel, tuition and books. Of course, when Florence called me a Perpetual Student she didn't mean it in the most flattering way. I, on the other hand, would and will proudly claim the title of a Perpetual Student! Simply put I enjoy learning and I especially enjoy learning and growing in the faith. This started for me when I first came to the Lord as a teenager. I didn't much want to study for my math test, but I really wanted to study the scriptures and learn everything I could about the faith.

My fear is that many of us, coming from former mainline denominations, never had emphasis placed on the study of scripture or doctrine. We left that for the priest to study and learn and we'd learn what we needed to learn from the sermon. Sadly, when we abdicate our responsibility to learn to another person we can never really grow sufficiently in our faith - no matter how stimulating the sermons are. The teaching in the liturgy, known as the sermon, was never intended to be the sole source of Christian learning. The sermon was always intended to be in addition to Sunday school or bible studies. So, when we allow the sermon to be the sole source of our Christian education we end up poorly educated. You may have heard me say, "Sermonettes make for Christianettes" which is a saying I heard years ago and resonated with me and comes all too close to the

truth.

St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, ***"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."*** (Romans 15:5 ESV) Why study the Scriptures? Because through them we gather the encouragement and hope we need to be sources of light and life by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Now the study of the faith is not for our own edification, but to prepare us ***"to remain an effective minister for the Lord Jesus Christ."*** The presumption is that all baptized Christians are called and anointed for ministry, and our education is meant to empower and embolden that ministry! Can you imagine a teacher who never studies, a firefighter who never trains, or a scientist who never researches? Why then would we imagine that you can be an active Christian and not be a student of the Word of God?

My prayer for the diocese is that each of us will develop a learning plan to study the scriptures and the doctrines of the church. Each of our congregations has bible studies and other classes. During Lent the majority of our congregations have Lenten Studies. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of those classes. If one doesn't meet at a time when you are available, meet with the clergy of the congregation and ask for resources. Be proactive in your faith and develop a plan to study the scriptures and the faith so that you may fulfill the saying of King Solomon: ***"Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance."*** (Proverbs 1:5 ESV)

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

March 17th - Diocesan Council and Ordination of Jonathan Kanary @St. Columba, Fresno, 2 p.m.

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

March 25th - Bishop @ St. James, Sonora

March 29th - Mass of Chrism, 11am

March 31st - Confirmations @ Epiphany, Corcoran

April 1st - Palm Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 6th - Diocesan Office Closed at noon &
Bishop at Good Friday Service @ St. James Cathedral 1-3:30 p.m.
April 8th - Easter Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral
April 10th - Rural Deans @10 a.m.
April 14th - Standing Committee @ Diocesan House 2:30 p.m.
April 15th - Bishop @ St. John's in Stockton
April 21st - Diocesan Council @10:00 a.m.
April 22nd - Bishop @ Resurrection in Tracy
April 28th - Daughters of the Holy Cross Spring Gathering
April 29th - Bishop @ St. Philip's in Coalinga
April 30th - May 2nd - Clergy Conference @ ECCO
June 2nd - Spring Day @ St. Mary's in Fresno
July 8-14th - Family Camp @ ECCO
July 15 - 21st - Camp H2O
July 22 - 26th -Camp San Joaquin Youth Camp
July 29th - August 2nd - Camp San Joaquin High School Camp
August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the
Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"
October 5-7th - Clergy Wives Retreat @ ECCO
October 27th - Honored Women's Luncheon
November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral

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

22 March 2012



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

As we conclude our examination of the Duties of the Laity as laid out in the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America, we come to tenth and final of the ten duties:

10. To devote themselves to the ministry of Christ among those who do not know Him, utilizing the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives them, for the effective extension of Christ's Kingdom.

The first duty of the laity is worship; indeed the first duty of ALL CHRISTIANS IS WORSHIP. The last duty of the laity is service: to, in, and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first believers, originally known as "People of the Way," received the name Christian not as a sign of respect and love. but as a sign of derision as if to say, "look at him he thinks he's a little Christ." St. Luke tells us in the book of acts...***"For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians."*** (Acts 11:26 ESV) For many. the term Christian is still used as a term of derision, a way of mocking someone. However, we can turn that around when we reach out in love as a "little Christ" to the lost, the lonely, the weak and the strong. When we reach out in service as Christians, we discover that God will shine through by convicting, encouraging and transforming both the individual and the situation in which he finds himself.

The term Christian comes from the Greek word *christos*—meaning "follower of Christ"—which comes from *christos*—meaning "anointed one." The followers of Christ patterned their lives after Jesus...loving as Jesus loved, serving as Jesus served, and sacrificing as Jesus sacrificed. They only way that they could do this, the only way that we can do this, is if we have the anointing of God the Holy Spirit!

At baptism we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, but we are also encouraged to very specifically invite God the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. This is the prayer of St. Paul:

Holy Spirit to indwell us and gift us for ministry. St. Paul speaks of these gifts in several of his epistles and lists nine of them in his first epistle to the church in Corinth. *"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."* (1 Corinthians 12:7-11 ESV)

These gifts are not given for the edification of the individual but for the glory of God in reaching those who do not know Jesus. The Spirit will give us wisdom or knowledge or healing or the working of miracles or prophecy etc. so that God will be glorified and His power made manifest, thus drawing others to Christ.

That being said, the Gifts of the Spirit only come to us when we are open to God and obedient to God.

If we can set our sights on fulfilling our duties as the laity of the church, we will discover that these are not burdens but blessings. We will equally discover that the blessing will not simply be for us as individuals, but for the entire Body of Christ which is the Church!

Bishop Eric

Diocesan Calendar

March 25th - Bishop @ St. James, Sonora

March 29th - Mass of Chrism, 11am

March 31st - Confirmations @ Epiphany, Corcoran

April 1st - Palm Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 6th - Diocesan Office Closed at noon &

Bishop at Good Friday Service @ St. James Cathedral 1-3:30 p.m.

April 8th - Easter Sunday - Bishop at the Cathedral

April 10th - Rural Deans @10 a.m.

April 14th - Standing Committee @ Diocesan House 2:30 p.m.

April 15th - Bishop @ St. John's in Stockton

April 21st - Diocesan Council @10:00 a.m.

April 22nd - Bishop @ Resurrection in Tracy

April 28th - Daughters of the Holy Cross Spring Gathering
April 29th - Bishop @ St. Philip's in Coalinga
April 30th - May 2nd - Clergy Conference @ ECCO
June 2nd - Spring Day @ St. Mary's in Fresno
July 8-14th - Family Camp @ ECCO
July 15 - 21st - Camp H2O
July 22 - 26th - Camp San Joaquin Youth Camp
July 29th - August 2nd - Camp San Joaquin High School Camp
August 9-10 - Provincial Hispanic Ministry Conference. at the
Cathedral, "Caminemos Juntos"
October 5-7th - Clergy Wives Retreat @ ECCO
October 27th - Honored Women's Luncheon
November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral

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