

April 11th, 2013

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Alleluia, Christ is Risen! The Lord is risen, indeed! Alleluia! After a long winter and Season of Lent, those were the wonderful words that opened not only our Easter Sunday services but all the services during the Season of Easter.

During the Season of Lent the Bishop's Notes focused on sin and, most specifically, the Seven Deadly Sins. During the Season of Easter, I would like to focus on Virtue with an examination of the Seven Godly Virtues.

St. Paul wrote to the Church in Philippi: *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."* (Philippians 4:8 ESV)

According to the Catholic Catechism a virtue is: *"an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions."* (Article 7: 1803) It is that habit and disposition to do good which contradicts the temptation to sin. The root to overcoming sin is not to get oneself into heaven it is to live out what it means to be a child of God. It was St. Gregory of Nyssa in his work on the Beatitudes who wrote, *"The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God"* (De beatitudinibus, 1: PG 44, 1200D.)

The Seven Godly Virtues are... in no particular order...Humility, Charity, Kindness, Diligence, Chastity, Patience & Temperance.

I wrote that the root of the Deadly Sins is Pride...equally the root of the Godly Virtues is Humility. A quick google search will bring lots of definitions but all have a similar feel - the ability to not think of oneself first but to think of others before self. This does not mean that a humble person has what is popularly known as "low self-esteem" just the opposite the person who is humble has a true self-esteem knowing that they are nothing without God but with God they are a regenerated, redeemed and reborn child of God.

The virtue of humility opens the doors for the other virtues because it recognizes it's complete and utter dependance on God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the opposite of the sin of Pride which declares



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I am sufficient unto myself...

This Easter Season I pray you the gift and virtue of Humility!

Happy Easter!

**Bishop Menees**

April 18th, 2013

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Last week I began a new series in the Bishop's Note on the Seven Godly Virtues with the foundation of all the virtues - HUMILITY. Humility is rooted in the quality of thinking of others before yourself. A terrific book to read regarding humility is Tim Keller's "The Freedom of Self Forgetfulness."

This morning I would like to look into the virtue of Patience. Now the virtue of patience is what we all want for others to extend toward us but one that we feel we shouldn't have to extend to others.

Of course if we want to look for the prime example of the virtue of patience we need look no farther than our Lord. Jesus was able to look upon the fallen creation with compassion and grace - declaring even from the cross: "Forgive them Father for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Jesus demonstrated the patience exhibited by His Father. Moses tells us about the patience of God in the Book of Numbers: "The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression," (Numbers 14:18a) This scripture is so powerful because it demonstrates the three characteristics of patience.

1. Being slow to anger means that we think less about ourselves and more about others. Generally our anger comes from feeling wronged (or too often in my case annoyed). That comes because I am thinking of myself, my wants, my needs, my comfort.
2. Abounding in steadfast love means that we live out what it means to think of others first before ourselves! That steadfast love does not waver, question itself or doubt. This is the love my wife demonstrates towards me - loving me even with all of my faults and blemishes - it is a love that I can cling to.
3. Forgiving iniquity and transgression. That means that we go beyond patience to actively forgive being wronged which means that we release the other person and we release ourselves from the bondage of unforgiveness.

Now those of you familiar with scripture will say... "Hey, Bishop Menees forgot to include the second half of that quote from Numbers." I say... not true...be patient! (See how I worked that in there.) Some argue that being patient means that we allow others to walk all over us. Patience does have it's limits when it comes to justice. Moses concludes this quote from Numbers writing: "but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and the iniquity of the fathers on the children." (Numbers 14:18b)



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children, to the third and the fourth generation." (Numbers 14:18b)  
Patience in the face of abuse or harm is not patience but avoidance which is no virtue. In this life we turn to the legal system however frail it is but in the life to come we look ultimate for justice which can only come from the Lord the Judge of Heaven and Earth!

Now the fruit of the virtue of patience is Peace - as in the Peace that passes all understanding. (Philippians 4:7) This patience and peace comes from trusting fully in the Lord which is the fruit and gift of the Holy Spirit!

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

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**[Diocesan Calendar](#)**

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**April 20th** - Anglican 4th Day @St. Michael's in Ridgecrest  
Diocesan Council @10 a.m.

**April 21st** - Bishop @ St. James in Sonora &  
Church of the Ascension in Copperopolis

**April 26th - 27th** - Diocesan Altar Guild Conference  
@ St. Luke's in Merced

**April 28th** - Bishop @St. John's in Petaluma

**April 29th - May 1st** - Clergy Retreat

**May 3-May 6th** - Well Youth Retreat @ St. Mark's in Shafter

**August 2-4th** - Anglican Church Women's Annual Retreat  
at Camp San Joaquin

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April 25th, 2013

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

This morning I would like to continue our examination of the Seven Godly Virtues. We've examined Humility and Patience and today I would like to lift up the virtue of Kindness.

King David wrote in Psalm 21 *"Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor."* (Psalm 21:21) God makes a promise through David that has been fulfilled over and over again!

Kindness, like Love, is one of those things that is difficult to adequately define, but you sure know it when you receive it. **Miriam-Webster** defines Kindness simply as the *"quality or state of being kind."*

When I think of receiving kindness many experiences come to mind but most powerfully it was in August of 1983. I was working on a moving truck and at a truck stop in Lake Manawa, Iowa, when I learned that my father had died suddenly and unexpectedly from a heart attack. I asked my driver to take me back the 40 miles or so to Omaha, Nebraska so that I could catch a flight back to California, and he refused saying that he was heading east not west and would drop me off in Des Moines and I could catch a cab to the airport.

In a moment of grief, anger and immaturity, I said a few choice words to the driver stomped out to the truck, grabbed my duffel bag and started walking towards the westbound highway. I got about a quarter of a mile when a car pulled over with a little old man driving and his wife by his side. They asked where I was going and offered to give me a ride to the airport in Omaha because, "We're going right by there anyway." I threw my stuff in the trunk and off we went. We traveled in silence for about ten minutes before the wife shared that they had overheard me in the truck stop and were very sorry for my loss. I thanked them and they said that it was no problem they were heading to Omaha anyway and promised to pray for me and my family. The airport in Omaha is small and just off the freeway with one road coming in and going out. In a short time I was dropped off and watch that lovely couple drive off getting on the freeway heading...EAST. I said a silent prayer of thanks for their kindness and walked into the airport with a heavy heart but also knowing that I had been blessed by those two lovely people.

The virtue of Kindness counters the vice of Envy. Rather than desiring what another has the virtue of kindness seeks to give of



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oneself fully in compassion and empathy.

While the Latin term for Kindness is "Benevolentia" or Benevolence, it almost gives the impression that kindness comes because we have more than enough within us and we just want give more. St. Paul tells us that Kindness is not a natural product but a super natural spiritual abundance given by God the Holy Spirit: *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"* (Galatians 5:22)

We discover that the closer we come to the Lord and the more we invite the Holy Spirit into our lives the less we think of ourselves and more we think of others. My prayer for you and me is that the virtue of Kindness will be a natural outpouring of our relationship with God the Holy Spirit!

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

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@ St. Luke's in Merced

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**April 29th - May 1st - Clergy Retreat**

**May 3-May 6th - Well Youth Retreat @ St. Mark's in Shafter**

**May 5th - Bishop @ St. Mark's in Shafter**

**May 6th - Lao Mission Project @ 6:30 p.m.**

**May 8th - Rural Deans @ 10:00 a.m.**

**May 12th - Bishop @ Disciples Anglican in Anaheim**

**May 18th - Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.**

**May 19th - The Feast of Pentecost**

Bishop @ St. Francis in Turlock

**May 25th- Bishop @ St. Peter's in Kernville**

**May 26th - Bishop @ St. Michael's in Ridgecrest**

**August 2-4th - Anglican Church Women's Annual Retreat**

at Camp San Joaquin



May 9, 2013

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ*

This morning we continue our examination of the Seven Godly Virtues with a look at the virtue of Diligence. Diligence is that virtue that counters the vice of Sloth.

It has often been argued that Love is the most important gift that a parent can bestow upon a child - and I would not argue with that in the least. However, I would argue that a close second to the gift of love is the gift of internal discipline - or diligence. A child who learns the virtue of Diligence is one who will have a lifetime of dedicating themselves to hard work and not immediate gratification.

In my ministry over the years God has blessed me by allowing me to work off and on in prison ministry. In that ministry twice a year I would visit inmates either short term or long term at Terminal Island Federal Penitentiary, San Diego Federal Jail, Fred C. Nelles California Youth Authority or RJ Donovan State Prison. These are strikingly different facilities and the inmates were all very different serving sentences or awaiting trial for everything from multiple murders to drug smuggling to white collar crimes. However, one thing was consistent with everyone of the prisoners I met with... pursuit of immediate gratification which is the root to the vice of sloth.

To cultivate the virtue of Diligence requires demonstrating and instilling godly convictions in our children that their character counts - they are too be the same when people are watching and when they are alone. This is the same advice and example that St. Paul set for his apprentice Timothy when he wrote: ***"Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."*** (1 Timothy 4:15-16)

To cultivate the virtue of diligence in our spiritual lives requires developing a routine of daily prayer and scripture reading - as individuals and as a family. If we want our children to be diligent in prayer parents need to demonstrate that same steadfastness for the importance of prayer and scripture reading understanding that the reward may not be immediate but in time the prayers and scriptures seep into our minds and hearts and souls and shape our very beings. We want to follow the example of St. Paul when he visited Berea and taught the scriptures in the synagogue: ***"Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."*** (Acts 17:11)

To cultivate the virtue of diligence requires demonstrating a strong



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work ethic that desires to complete a job not simply for the pay but for the pride of doing a job well done. Of course there is a reward for the diligent as Proverbs tells us: ***"The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied."*** (Proverbs 13:4)

My prayer for you and my prayer for me is that we will seek by God's grace to develop the virtue of Diligence!

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

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**August 2-4th** - Anglican Church Women's Annual Retreat  
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May 18, 2013

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ*

This morning we continue our examination of the Seven Godly Virtues with a look at the most blessed of virtues - Charity. Of course, the virtue of Charity is not the often thought of virtue of generosity - "I am charitable so I give to the Diocese of San Joaquin." Generosity does not equal Charity, those the virtue of Charity is generous.

Charity is the virtue that opposes the vice of Greed because rather than seeking anything for itself, Charity seeks to pour out itself for another.

Simply stated the virtue of Charity is the virtue of Love. This is not the love that is spoken of in Hallmark greeting cards, the romantic or emotional love. This is not the love of physical passion of which so much of our society seems to be obsessed. This is the love that St. Paul wrote about in First Corinthians chapter 13. This Love does not come from emotion or strength or discipline (though all three of those are aspects). This love is the gift of the Holy Spirit - given freely to those who open their hearts and minds and simply ask.

This week we celebrate the feast of Pentecost and as we do we remember the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. The gift of Love (*agape*) comes directly from the Holy Spirit - let us pray that God the Holy Spirit will fill us with this most sacred and holy gift...and perhaps more importantly put that gift into action. As St. Paul wrote:

*"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.*

*For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I*



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*spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

*So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13 ESV)*

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

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**May 18th** - Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

**May 19th** - The Feast of Pentecost

Bishop @ St. Francis in Turlock

**May 20th** - Youth Team Meeting @Diocesan House 10 a.m.

**May 25th**- Bishop @ St. Peter's in Kernville

Bishop to speak at the ACW Meeting at St. Paul's in Visalia

**May 26th** - Bishop @ St. Michael's in Ridgecrest

**June 1st** - Missions' Board Meeting @ Diocesan House 10 a.m.

**June 2nd** - Bishop @ St. David's in San Rafael

**June 7th - 9th** - COM/Examining Chaplains Retreat

@ Diocesan House

**June 9th** - Bishop @ St. Columba's in Fresno

**June 15th** - Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

**June 16th** - Bishop @ St. Alban's in Los Banos

**June 18th - June 21st** - Provincial Council and

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**June 23rd** - Bishop @ St. Andrew's in Lancaster

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May 30, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

This morning we continue our examination of the Seven Godly Virtues with a look at the most blessed of virtues - Temperance. I'm not sure about you, but when I think of the term Temperance, I think of the Temperance Movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These movements are primarily associated with refrain from drinking alcohol. The virtue of Temperance is indeed about self-control, but so much more than self-control with regards to alcohol.

Dictionary.com defines Temperance as: "1. moderation or self-restraint in action, statement, etc.; self-control. 2. habitual moderation in the indulgence of a natural appetite or passion, especially in the use of alcoholic liquors."

The virtue of Temperance is a vital foundation for all other virtues. When a person is unable to refrain from immediate self-gratification or proper conduct, then they fall to sin over and over again.

One problem with our lack of virtue of temperance is that we rely upon our own strength. We tell ourselves - I won't drink, I won't look at pornography, I won't etc. etc. When we rely upon our own strength, we find ourselves missing the mark. When we rely upon God, we hit the mark.

St. Peter said it clearly in his second epistle when he wrote: ***"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,"*** (2 Peter 1:3 ESV) God's divine power allows us that self-restraint and moderation that is the virtue of Temperance. ***"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love."*** (2 Peter 1:5-8 ESV)

St. Francis prayed for the virtue of Temperance in the famous prayer attributed to him: ***"Lord, make Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy."***

***O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in***



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*pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen"*

The virtue of Temperance seeks first for the benefit of the other prior to one's own benefit. I pray the Lord will grant to us the virtue of Temperance and that we may practice that virtue daily in our lives.

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

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**Diocesan Calendar**

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**June 1st** - Missions' Board Meeting @ Diocesan House 10 a.m.  
Eucharist for the Daughters of the Holy Cross 9 a.m. @St. James

**June 2nd** - Bishop @ St. David's in San Rafael

**June 7th - 9th** - COM/Examining Chaplains Retreat  
@ Diocesan House

**June 9th** - Bishop @ St. Columba's in Fresno

**June 15th** - Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

**June 16th** - Bishop @ St. Alban's in Los Banos

**June 18th - June 21st** - Provincial Council and  
College of Bishops @ Nashotah House

**June 23rd** - Bishop @ St. Andrew's in Lancaster

**June 30th** - Bishop @ St. Clement's in Woodlake

**July 7th** - Bishop @ St. Jude's in Tehachapi

**July 7th-July 13th** - Gerard Family Camp

**July 14th** - Bishop @ Jesus Our Saviour in Modesto

**July 14th - July 19th** - Senior High Camp at Camp San Joaquin

**July 17th - July 19th** - Forward in Faith NA Assembly

**July 20th** - Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

**July 21st** - Bishop @ Good Shepherd in Reedley

**July 22nd - 28th** - Bishop on Vacation

**July 27th** - Diocesan Standing Committee @ 10 a.m.

**July 28th - August 1st** - Splash Junior High Camp  
@ Camp San Joaquin

**August 2nd - 3rd** Caminemos Juntos Conference in Texas

**August 2-4th** - Anglican Church Women's Annual Retreat  
at Camp San Joaquin



June 6, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

This morning we conclude our series on the Seven Godly Virtues with our examination of the final Godly Virtue, the one the world mocks the most.

Chastity is defined in the Catholic Dictionary as follows: "***Chastity is the virtue which excludes or moderates the indulgence of the sexual appetite. It is a form of the virtue of temperance, which controls according to right reason the desire for and use of those things which afford the greatest sensual pleasures.***"

Our culture is obsessed with immediate gratification, and sexual gratification is at the top of the list. My thirteen year old son is taught in Jr. High more about sexual activity and contraception than abstinence. (Thankfully, in the home he's taught about the manly virtue of chastity) Unfortunately, everywhere that he goes on the internet, in the mall, or at the movies, he is bombarded with sexually stimulating images and peer pressure from, what we've discovered, are very forward girls.

While the pressures to be unchaste come from without, the sin of sexual immorality comes from within. Jesus tells us: "***For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.***" Matthew 15:19) This means that we need to concentrate on the teachings of Jesus, the apostles and the church.

To counter this pressure and these images we rely upon teaching the biblical virtue of Chastity. In the home and throughout the Diocese of San Joaquin, we need to teach the biblical virtue of Chastity which, in very simple terms, means celibacy in single-hood and chastity in marriage.

Of course, chastity is more than simple celibacy but yes it means celibacy - no sexual activity outside of traditional marriage, which is defined as a life long relationship between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24) joined together with the sacrament of marriage.

Chastity is also the reasonable decision to keep oneself pure - avoiding pornography or placing oneself in a compromising situation with another person. These are the things that not only harm the soul, but they harm the most important relationships with family and friends. Secrets are kept - trust is violated - addictions are formed - all the result of a lack of chastity.



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In addition to the spiritual benefits, there are health and social benefits as well. Celibacy outside of marriage and chastity in marriage means an end to sexually transmitted disease. AIDS is a scourge upon earth that could be eliminated in just a few years if people would practice the virtue of chastity. Most profoundly beyond the personal health benefits the untold number of children murdered through abortion because of unwanted pregnancy that could have been averted - not to mention the numbers of children abused and neglected who grow up to repeat the cycle.

As Christians we have the answer to so many of the social ills that plague us - the Good News of Jesus Christ! Giving ourselves over to Jesus and allowing God the Holy Spirit to transform us means that we practice the virtue of Chastity and we teach it to our children and our children's children!

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

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~~July 20th - August 1st - Spirituality at Camp~~  
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