

## **Diocese of the Holy Cross**

### **SYNOD ADDRESS**

by the Rt. Rev. Paul C. Hewett, SSC

Friday, April 15, 2016

at the Cathedral Church of the Epiphany, Columbia, SC

May we take this time to thank the ladies at Epiphany, our ACW, for all their help in setting up this holy Synod, and to thank everyone who has taken the time to come. Today we welcome Carolyn Eigel from Holy Trinity Anglican Catholic Church in Greenville, South Carolina. She is here to commend Church School curricula she has been working on, displayed downstairs. It is also a pleasure to welcome St. Francis of Assisi, Spartanburg and their Rector, Fr. Nicholas Voyadgis, and the Nazareth House Apostolate in Taylorsville, Kentucky, with a warm welcome to Fr. Seraphim and Vicki, and to the new Rector of St. Mary the Virgin, Liverpool, New York. Fr. Richard Cumming. Bishop Timothy Farmer and Patsi send their warmest greetings and wish they could be with us. He is higher on the list for a kidney transplant, and we keep him in our prayers for recovery. On Sunday, May 8, we are planning an Evensong at Christ Church, Southern Pines, to install Father John Sharpe as a Canon of the Diocese. On Saturday, May 28, Deacon Geordy Geddings will be ordained to the Priesthood to serve at St. Bede's, Birmingham.

**Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord, Jesus Christ.**

Next year, in September of 2017, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1977 Affirmation of St. Louis. The Denver Consecrations came in January of 1978. We are approaching the 40th year of our sojourn from Egypt and our trials in the wilderness. We are in the Plains of Moab, ready to enter the Promised Land. What is the Promised Land for us? What are we to do when we arrive? Who are we to be?

Joshua takes the people in and defeats the Canaanite nations. God's people settle in under the judges, and then the kings, and we know the tragic faithlessness of the northern tribes, and their fate under the Assyrians. In 721 the Assyrians take Samaria, and deport the northern tribes to Ninevah and other cities of the Assyrian Empire, with many of them scattering to the northwest, and some to the east. Over the generations, some tribes migrate northwest, piggy-backing with the great Celtic migration from the Black Sea, and end up in "the Isles afar off," old Celtic Britain. (Isaiah 66: 19) The Babylonians sack Jerusalem in 587, and take the Jews of the southern kingdom into a nearly 70 year captivity in Babylon, because of their idolatry and faithlessness. Jeremiah, Baruch and King Zedekiah's daughters flee first to Egypt, then, as the oral traditions have it, to Spain and to Tara, in Ireland, taking with them the Stone of Scone, Jacob's pillar. In the 6th century, after Cyrus the Persian conquers Babylon, there is a miracle: in 538 B.C. Cyrus allows the captive Jews to return to their homeland.

In the 6th century B.C. there are four waves of return from captivity in Babylon, recorded in I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah. The first is the beginning of a new temple. Some work got started under Sheshbazzar, but the local opposition was fierce. The second wave saw the completion of the temple under Zerubbabel the Governor, and Joshua the

High Priest, with encouragement from the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Again, there is external opposition, interference and sabotage, and internal resistance and inertia, backsliding and static in the system. The third wave comes with Nehemiah, who rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem, with potentially violent outside interference. The fourth wave, with Ezra, involves bringing out the Law and codifying it. With the lifting up of the Law of God, the Word of God, the people now have their identity (who we are as God's Chosen People). They are taught to be exclusive in worship, marriage and daily life, because they have a special vocation to the world. In worshipping in the new temple, they are taught the importance of purity, singleness of heart, to prepare for the Messiah, and the age He will inaugurate. Zechariah prophesies the Prince of Peace, the Good Shepherd, and the Fountain filled with Blood.

With the lifting up of the Word of God, and of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist, we have our identity. We know who we are, as the Bride of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, as we prepare to enter our promised land. Our identity is Marian. Mary, the Mother of the Church, our Mother, is the Bride of the Holy Spirit, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and the new Ark of the New Covenant.

We have the sense of exclusiveness we need. That is, traditional, orthodox Anglicans are a unique element in the Body of Christ, with a unique patrimony and a special gift for the rest of the Body. In our wilderness trials we have learned more about purity in worship, worshipping in Spirit and in Truth, because we have so often had to go without buildings and conveniences. We have learned more about the worship of the new Jerusalem, as, in the Eucharist, we are lifted in the Spirit to the heavenlies, where we sup with our Lord in the glory of the new creation. We have let the Holy Spirit heal and unify our disrupted community, to make us supple in His hands, and more missional.

Identity, patrimony, and purity in common worship are three elements that are helping to unify our common life, so disrupted 40 years ago. Just as the Jewish community of old never went back to idolatry after the reforms of Ezra, so too we will never return to the idols we left behind 40 years ago.

At that time we began some serious reforms we had long been hoping for. (i) We made a correct assessment of what we were up against: a resurgence of gnosticism as a cancer in the Body, the denial of the Incarnation of the Son of God, that Jesus is God in the flesh. (ii) We commenced offensive operations. Hundreds of new parishes and missions and ministries were opened. (iii) We would teach and live the consensus of the undivided Church of the first millennium. (iv) We would restore a sacramental Episcopate, with the bishop as Father-in-God, as opposed to a juridical episcopate with the bishop as an administrator, or worse, a policeman, or tyrant. (v) We restored the Permanent Diaconate for men. (vi) We train more men for leadership as Lay Readers, and young men and boys as acolytes. (vii) We magnify women's ministries based on Scripture and Tradition: deaconesses, catechists, teachers, Church Army officers, nuns, altar guilds and, above all, wives and mothers. (viii) We are explicitly pro-life, working for the legal protection of all life from womb to tomb. (ix) parishes own their own property in fee simple. (x) We revised the marriage canons, to work toward Scriptural norms. (xi) There is a renewed emphasis on youth conferences and college campus ministry. (xii) We are federating and

unifying our various continuing church jurisdictions, and (xiii) We have restored ecumenical relations with other Catholic bodies.

In two weeks, some of us who visited the Patriarch of Constantinople in 2014 are going to have some more time with the protocol officer we were given for our trip to Istanbul and Athens, Bishop Kyrillos Katerelos. He will be in Atlanta, Georgia, and we will visit with him on April 30. We had a week together in Thessaloniki last September, with the Society for the Law of the Eastern Churches, of which he is the Moderator. Bishop Kyrillos is also Bishop of the Patriarchal Throne, and teaches Historical Theology at the University of Athens. We are helping the Greek Orthodox in Greece, and in the United States, get the Anglican realignment into sharper focus, so that they can see more clearly how to restore a relationship with traditional, orthodox Anglicans.

We continue to be on converging paths of fellowship and cooperation with the Nordic Catholic Church and the Polish National Catholic Church, which together comprise the Union of Scranton. Last August, with other Anglicans, I attended their Synod in Oslo. There is a convergence of genuine, traditional Old Catholic life taking place around the leadership of Bishop Roald Flemestad of Oslo, who spoke at our Synod last year. The Mission Province in Sweden is in good rapport with the Nordic Catholic Church, and with us. Last June I was able to have 10 days with Mission Province people in Sweden. One fascinating development among traditional, orthodox Swedish Lutherans is the rapid and profound upsurge of interest in Mary. One of my hosts has a son in his early twenties who gave a year to serve at the Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham. There are plane loads of Swedish young people, who join tens of thousands of other young people from around the world, to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham, and to bring the love of our Blessed Mother back to their homes.

For us the most exciting development beyond our diocesan boundaries is our rapprochement with three other continuing church bodies: the Anglican Church in America (ACA), the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) and the Anglican Province in America (APA). The four of us fit naturally together, with our common histories, and our bishops are now having monthly conference calls. We are producing a joint Directory. We have agreed that we are all in communion and full recognition of one another, with reciprocity of ministries and life together in Christ. We have decided that we will have one Synod next year for all of us, from 3 - 6 October, at St. Barnabas, Dunwoody, near Atlanta. Bishop Chad Jones, who is Rector there, sends his greetings to us today. Each of us will have his own business meeting and clericus, and other necessary meetings, and the worship, meals, workshops and fellowship will all be together. We will, at this Synod, proclaim our full communion with one another, and begin taking steps toward full organic unity. As we do this, there are many in the United Episcopal Church who will be observing closely, and taking part, along with many in the Episcopal Missionary Church, and the Reformed Episcopal Church. In other words, our entire Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas is about to go through a transformation that will, a step at a time, turn us all into one entity.

This is the equivalent to an entrance into our Promised Land, as the entire 39 year old continuing church movement begins finally to find its point of common convergence, and come through the

wilderness, purged and more completely consecrated to our Lord. As we give a unified witness to what we started 39 years ago, there are many in the Anglican Church in North America who will want to draw more closely to us.

There have been two movies entitled “Yours, Mine and Ours,” one produced in 1968 with Henry Fonda and Lucille Ball, and one in 2005, both based on the same true story: a Navy widower with 10 children falls in love with a Navy widow with 8. They marry, and have a 19th child, and commit themselves to the ethos of “ours.” Not mine, not yours, but ours. In our Federation, with the ACC factored in, we are doing that...committing ourselves to what is ours, together, by patrimony and by common life and witness.

God will use us in surprising ways. Even together, we will be like the race horse, Seabiscuit. In an improbable, if not impossible victory over the great horse, War Admiral, Seabiscuit prevails despite the odds. The owner says in the movie, which captures the American imagination and love of the underdog, that we have a winning horse here...”a horse that’s too small, with a rider that’s too big, a trainer who’s too old, and an owner who’s too dumb to know the difference.”

As the Lord knits us together as traditional, orthodox Anglicans, we can see new light shed on Haggai’s prophecy, in his 2nd chapter, “Who is left among you who saw this house in her first glory? How do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts; According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, And I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts...the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Haggai 2: 3-9)

As we recite, month by month, Psalm 127, we will let the Lord build the house and keep the city. The fruit of radical dependence on God has been more and more postulants and seminarians. We now have Dale Forrester, from St. John the Baptist, Marshall, Virginia, studying for the Permanent Diaconate, and Mark Lewis, from St. Bede’s, Birmingham, Alabama, also studying for the Permanent Diaconate, and Matthew Crutchfield, studying for the Priesthood at Trinity Seminary in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, along with Michael Sandifer, also at Trinity, Jared Sawtelle from Epiphany, at Columbia International University, and Gregory Gibson, at Transfiguration, Phoenixville, a graduate of Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, and, in the wings, Ben Howard at Transfiguration, a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. For these men, and our recent graduates, Fr. Gene Geromel has set up the kind of Post Ordination Training used in many dioceses in the Church of England, with regular Skype conferences with him, for mentoring and support.

We will soon hear a report on the St. Michael Conference for our youth, founded by Fr. Gene Geromel and his wife, Alicia, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, north of Detroit, to the superb work being done there, and in the C. S. Lewis Student Center, the crown jewel of our Diocese, a short

walk from the Clarion Hotel, should you want to make arrangements with Fr. Paul Sterne to walk over there and have a look.

In the past couple years, many of us, as clergy and laity, have gone through some very hard times. We have gone through trials involving health, marriage, finances, parish unity, vocation and missions. With the vocation God has given us, and with His claim upon our lives, the demons will always attack us with special ferocity. We recall our Lord's words at the Last Supper, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22: 31-32)

Our entire world is in travail and anguish, with new wars and dire threats of wars breaking out in so many places, along with an enormous surge in terrorist attacks, and the very real possibility that all of Europe and Great Britain will be violent, radical Islamist in the lifetime of many here. We are either living in the last days, or in the run-up to them. Of course, the last days began with Pentecost. Everything from then on is the end-time. But May 14, 1948 was an absolutely enormous new fulfillment of prophecy, the humanly impossible founding of the State of Israel, and the utterly humanly impossible wars that Israel won in 1948, 1967 and 1973. But what we see now is even more and more fulfillment of end-time prophecies. America's Rabbi, Daniel Lapin, notes what is dragging us down in the West, and he calls this a resurgence of the worship of Ba'al and Moloch. The propaganda war against believing Christians is heating up all the time. Many nations have now arraigned themselves in virulent and hateful opposition to Israel. The goal is the elimination and extermination of all believing Jews and Christians, which has already begun on a massive, unprecedented scale all through the Middle East and Africa, and soon, Southeast Asia, and North America.

On international flights there is a video screen on the back of every seat. One can set this to see the map of one's flight, a map which can be set for detail. One can be on an Air France flight, flying through the Mediterranean, and not find any label for Jerusalem, or Tel Aviv, or Israel. Damascus is there, and Beirut, and Ankara and Addis Abbaba, and Baghdad, and Alexandria, but not Jerusalem, or Israel. This is a sign pointing to what Muslims do as they set up the caliphate to rule the world, at first using intimidation and coercion. They will meet their first stiff resistance not with us, but as they run up against China, which has designs on South East Asia, and the entire Pacific Basin, which includes our West Coast.

We all pray for the peace of Jerusalem, the city whose very name means "Foundation of Peace," but we also pray and plan for what happens if civil order breaks down in our own city, state and country. For now, there are many things we need to do as traditional, orthodox Anglicans, to restore our old and biblical ways. We see what these things are in I Corinthians 11: 1 - 16, about biblical anthropology and head coverings for women, and in John 19: 27, "and from that hour that disciple (John) took her (Mary) unto his own home. We are, as we enter whatever the last days are, going to be more Marian, and take Mary into our own homes and hearts. Why? Because what Satan has in store for us is the parody of the Bride of Christ, the church of the anti-Christ, the whore of Babylon, the complete prostitution and betrayal of all that is feminine. Our weapon against this is the Blessed Mother, the new Eve, the woman clothed with the Sun, and

the slayer of heresy. The chains that bind Satan, the wicked serpent, the deceiver and venomous tyrant, under her feet, are the beads of the most holy Rosary.

So more of our parishes will set up cells in the Society of Mary, and we will once again promote the Catholic Societies (Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, Guild of All Souls, etc.), as ways of living the fulness of the whole faith for the whole world. We can leave the fevered world we live in for a few days, and be refreshed in places of solitude and peace, like the St. Simeon Skete, a place consecrated to our Lady.

One of the greatest men living in Italy in the late 19th century was the peasant, Don Bosco, St. John Bosco, the Apostle of Youth, founder of the Salesian Order, to work with poor boys. As he lay dying in Turin, near the holy Shroud, his face began to glow, and he said to a crowd that gathered around his death-bed, many of them still facing great trials and challenges, "Our Lady is here...right now, in this place, in our midst...walking amongst us...She is with you now, her protecting veil spread over us and around us."