

Address to the Synod of the Diocese of the Holy Cross
April 27, 2018
at the Cathedral Church of the Epiphany in Columbia, South Carolina

Welcome to this Synod of the Diocese of the Holy Cross, gathered again in Eastertide, in the season of Paschal gladness, when we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Peter 1: 8), because of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In Him we are risen, and partakers of heavenly gladness, alive with the joy and fragrance of the Holy Spirit that attracts all those in this anguished world who will turn to the risen Lord and be forgiven and healed and renewed in Him.

Welcome to those of you who are here for the first time, and welcome to all who have come from far and near to help extend the Kingdom of God.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our host parish, the Cathedral Church of the Epiphany, to the clergy and laity here who have worked diligently these past weeks to prepare this holy Synod for us all. A special thanks goes to Bishop Chad Jones from Dunwoody, Georgia, for his presence with us and for his superb sermon this morning, and to Archdeacon Jay Boccabello, for the Banquet Address he will give this evening. And thanks to all of you, who have spent time and treasure to assemble for our fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

Today we ask that one of the lights of our Synods, our dear sister in Christ, Susan Fulljames, is helping to lighten our path from a new vantage point in the fellowship of saints, in God's heavenly Kingdom. We are grateful for her many contributions to her Parish and to our Diocese, given over many years of faithful service.

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

Every folk has its mode of dancing — folk dancing. Every summer at our St. Michael's Conference in Michigan we have an evening of square dancing. The square dance turns out to be fun for everyone, partly because it is so communal, so interactive, so likely to lead to new friendships. The square dance is a delightful balance of form and substance. The form is what the caller has us do. The substance is the energy and personality we put into it. Form and substance could also be called the structural and the mystical, or structure and charism, or Amt und Geist, office and spirit. These are not polar opposites. They are not in tension; they are not antinomies; they are not dialectical. Rather, they are, to use the Latin word, consubstantial. They share one substance, "being of one substance." To use the Greek word, they are *perichoretic*. *Peri* as in periscope or perimeter — going around, and *choresis*, as in the word "chorus," or choir, going, or singing, or dancing around and in and through and over and under and above. When something like a square dance brings delight, it is because in the dance it holds together, without confusion, in consubstantiality and perichoresis, various personalities and modes of being. This is a sacramental reflection of how the two natures in Christ, divine and human, are related perichoretically. The two natures *co-inhere* each other. The square dance can be a reflection of how the three Persons of the most holy Trinity relate to each other, consubstantially and perichoretically. The three Persons *co-inhere* each other. When something on this earth brings genuine delight, or summons us into genuine communion with God, and with

one-another-in-God, it becomes sacramental...it becomes a manifestation of the innermost life of the Trinity. It reveals an aspect of Jesus, the world's redeemer, perfect man and perfect God. In our Eucharistic Liturgy we twice use a Johannine praise for perichoresis: "He in us, and we in Him."

Great fathers of the Church, like Maximus the Confessor (580-662) taught that reality is the way God is in His innermost life, the three Persons being consubstantial and perichoretic. Reality is the way of the incarnate Word: Jesus is two natures in one Person, without division or confusion. There is no other reality. When Western philosophy got separated from the Eastern fathers like Maximus, we in the West began to see things like structure and charism as polar opposites. We are capable of seeing them as two sides of the same coin, but because we, quite rightly, love to analyze things, we separate them out. And so we also separate out universal and local, clerical and lay, objective and subjective, inductive and deductive, freedom and necessity, nature, grace and glory, rich and poor, black and white, male and female. These modes of being have been seen as dichotomies, as tensions, as antinomies, in a dialectic. The dialectical, a theme picked up by Hegel from older strands of Western philosophy, brings us to Marx, and to determinism, the so-called struggle and conflict between classes, or the races, or the sexes, seen as polar opposites. To resolve the conflict we bring in the totalitarian state and the destructive ideology we see today.

Christ — as proclaimed in the Scriptures and the theology of so many fathers, and in the theology of Maximus, heals that horrific wound of seeing philosophical categories, or classes, or races, or sexes, as of necessity being in tension, or even conflict. Even the charisms of the different nations and ethnic groups and races are consubstantial and perichoretic.

Today let us examine form and substance, which we can also call structure and charism or office and Spirit. Both are halves are needed, as with a clamshell mobile phone. We have to spend time on our structures, clearing a pathway toward convergence with other traditional orthodox Anglicans, and, beyond, with groups like the Union of Scranton. And then within this structure, the new wineskin for the new wine, we let the Holy Spirit fashion the new life that reveals the new head of the new human race, in the new creation. This is the substance that fills the structure, and as the old saying goes, "form without substance is the shell of the serpent's egg."

We all know the need for skeletal structure, for backbone, to give us a future. None of our groups in the G-4 and beyond has long-term viability. The Polish National Catholic Church does not have long term viability. The world is in flames and we do not have a lot of time to forge a common life and witness. If we do not hang together, we shall surely hang separately, as our patriot forefathers said of the 13 colonies in the late 18th century. So we have a relationship with Forward in Faith, and have gone on to lift the lid on what a membership in the Union of Scranton would be like.

The Union of Scranton is comprised of the Polish National Catholic Church, the PNCC, based in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the Nordic Catholic Church, the NCC, based in Oslo, Norway. The NCC has now spread to England and many parts of Europe. Each member has complete self-governance, but each holds itself accountable to the other in matters of faith and morals. Until 1977 we were in communion with the PNCC, which has two special charisms: orders

recognized by Rome, and theology recognized by Orthodoxy. Last March, Archdeacon Boccabello and I, and other Anglicans, attended a Convocation in Dublin, Ireland, to get some more fire going, to reach out, and look ahead, for a converging path, that would include our Diocese, and others in the G-4, and others who would like to be part of this convergence.

Meanwhile, the PNCC has well-established contacts with the Greek Orthodox, just as we do, and we aim to connect all this. Last September Bishop Kevin Donlon, Father Geoffrey Neal, Bishop Roald Fleместad, Bishop Kyrillos and I attended a week-long meeting of the Society for the Law of the Eastern Churches in Debrecen, Hungary. We now have a rough-draft sketch of how we can proceed on converging paths, not to join one another, but to enjoy the communion, the reciprocity, the *perichoresis*, that brings new vision and riches and strength to us all.

Next week Bishop Chad and I, and other bishops in the G-4, are meeting for two days in Amherst, New Hampshire, to plan our next joint synods, for January of 2020. We want to give our church a name, and work on the kind of polity we will have, and on our canons, and to look beyond, to relationships with others of like mind. The Lord is preparing His Church and gathering His faithful ones, and it is all happening rather smartly — that is to say, at a fairly brisk pace, no doubt because of the world's crying need for healing in Christ.

As we proclaim the healing of the rift between office and charism, form and substance, we have had a look at the structural, the formal. Now let us have a look at one aspect of the substance, the charisms and energies poured out in the Holy Spirit. This has to do with family spirituality — how we pray and learn the faith and relate to one another in Christ in our homes...letting Christ be the center of our homes and families.

Years ago I visited one of our homes, to bless it and have a meal with the family. The father had everyone gather around the coffee table and he led us in the Family Prayer that is found on p. 589 of the Prayer Book. It was quite moving. Afterwards I blessed their home, and we had a wonderful conversation about what is happening in the Church, and also about the practice of our faith in the home. Fr. Gene Geromel wrote an excellent, very helpful book about this called *Family Spirituality*, with the sub-title, “New Hope and Strength to Withstand the Forces of Today's Society.” There is much useful teaching on prayer, barriers to prayer, and how the gifts of the Church can help us.

Today more than ever there are large numbers of Evangelicals and Pentecostals on the “Canterbury Trail.” They are seeking us out as Anglicans. Most of them home school their children, and have a real prayer life in the home, for worship, discipleship and what St. Paul calls “equipping the saints.” They want to combine all this more completely with the sacraments of the Church and with the *Book of Common Prayer* as a regula for all of life. This is the best way for children to be raised in the Faith, because they will get nothing in the public schools, and not nearly enough from an hour of Sunday School.

One good jumping off point for all of us is Psalm 119, the “Rosary of the Psalter,” verses 97-104.

97 Lord, what love have I unto thy law! * all the day long is my study in it.

- 98 Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies; * for they are ever with me.
- 99 I have more understanding than my teachers; * for thy testimonies are my study.
- 100 I am wiser than the aged; * because I keep thy commandments.
- 101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, * that I may keep thy word.
- 102 I have not shrunk from thy judgments; * for thou teachest me.
- 103 O how sweet are thy words unto my throat; * yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth!
- 104 Through thy commandments I get understanding; * therefore I hate all evil ways.

Our homes are where we want to create a climate in which it is normal to talk about prayer, to stop to pray, to discuss a meditation one had. In cultures still penetrated by God's grace it is normal for people to stop any priest they see and ask him for prayer, or for a blessing. This can also be true in our homes, to have both set and spontaneous times for prayer, perhaps to say the Rosary, or to review a Bible verse, a reading from the life of a saint, or a litany or novena, something from the *St. Augustine's Prayer Book*, or Morning or Evening Prayer, or a portion of those offices. There is an old saying about the relationship between the daily offices and the Eucharist. "Every jewel has a setting. The Eucharist is the jewel, and the daily office is the setting."

Prayer can be set up according to the family's schedule and preferences. We have alluded to house blessings and Morning and Evening Prayer, even if these are very shortened. There is grace at meals, psalm sings and hymns in both church and home and car. Prayers can be both from a book, and spontaneous.

There are many activities which can be combined with prayer: preparing on Saturday for the Sunday Eucharist by getting clothes and shoes ready; girls can make a veil to wear in church, or have a mantilla or hat, and then in Advent, lighting the Advent wreath, and having an Advent calendar, making Christmas last 12 days, using Mite boxes during Lent, and beginning to learn about fasting. For Maundy Thursday we have a family liturgy from our own St. Simeon Skete entitled "Christ in the Passover." We can learn about family spirituality from the Orthodox Jews.

We can, by the front door of the house, put a bowl of Holy Water, and make sure a crucifix or cross or icon is in every room, with a Bible on a coffee table or mantelpiece, maps of the Holy Land, the crusades, the great shrines in the UK and Europe and here in our country. We can post Scripture verses and hymns on the refrigerator door and on window sills and mirrors. We can set apart bookshelves for theology, the life of prayer, the lives of saints, books on scripture and church history. We can memorize the Catechism and Bible verses, and use holy cards for book markers, and abstain from something on Fridays, and watch Christian movies like the new one, "Paul, Apostle of Christ," or another great one from Ignatius Press, "St. John Bosco, Apostle of Youth."

As for teaching, there can be set times for this at home, and digital teaching for the car, identifying useful websites, praying for or attending the St. Michael's Conference, the Anglican Legacy Camp, and having teaching at home from various curricula. Some have used a "skeletal method," of learning things in one sentence, the Gospel in one sentence, and the aim of the

Christian life in one sentence. We aim for “the law of the Spirit written on the tablets of our hearts” (2 Cor 3: 3)

St. Gregory of Sinai lived on Mt. Athos in the mid-14th century. He said that prayer, as we begin it, “Rises like a fire of joy from the heart; in the end it is like light made fragrant by divine energy.” (*Philokalia IV*, p. 259) That does not have to sound far-fetched, because what we are called to be, in Christ, we already are. Become what you are. The thing you have to become you already are. We are the Body of Christ because we eat the Body of Christ, in the mystery which Father Schmemmann called “the gift of the goal, where all is fulfilled, all is granted.” Every time we pray, together or by ourselves, we are digging in the soil of our hearts, to release the springs of living water which well up in praise of Him who is our life, Jesus, risen and live forevermore. He is the eternal Gospel.

We have structure and organization and institution precisely so as to live and propagate this most glorious Gospel of the love of God. The structural is the matrix that holds the charisms and in doing so, is being transformed by them, constantly invigorated by them, by the energies constantly streaming from God’s exuberant love, in us and through us. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (2 Cor. 4:7)

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3: 20-21)