



Diocese of the Holy Trinity and Great Plains

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ADVENT SEASON

The season of Advent (the word means ‘Coming’) was first inaugurated in the Gallican churches of France and Spain; exactly when is not known, but it was probably the fourth century – before Christmas Day had spread to these regions. It was a penitential season of fasting preparatory to the baptisms administered at Epiphany and comparable to the Lenten fast and discipline before Easter. In the sixth century it was commonly called St. Martin’s Lent, being counted from the feast of St. Martin (the patron saint of Gaul) on November 11th. By this time, however, many of the Gallican churches had adopted Christmas, and the Advent fast was generally counted as a forty-day period (Saturdays excepted) between St. Martin’s Day and Christmas; relics of the earlier custom, however, still survived in some places: the forty-day fast was reckoned by distributing the fast days among the eight weeks between St. Martin’s Day and Epiphany.

Not until the eighth century was the Advent season commonly considered the beginning of the Christian Year.

In its developed form the Advent Season took on a secondary theme; that of preparation for the Second Coming of our Lord at the end of time. The double emphasis, therefore, on both the first and the second advents of Christ gives to the season its unique mixture of devotional color: joy in the redemption that has come to us in the Incarnation, and awe before the Judgment that yet awaits us. Yet to the spiritually discerning believer both of these tremendous and signal events of past and future are experienced as eternally present realities.

(Source: The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary – Massey Shepherd)

Merry Christmas!

From the Clergy...

by Father Cochran

(The following is an edited version of a letter written by Father Cochran to visitors of St. James' parish. Its original form is a welcome with questions and answers about the beliefs and practices of that church. Since the information pertains to all of us, it has been edited to address our collective community. This is only a portion of that letter. Please look for more in the next few issues of the newsletter.)

Are we an Episcopal church?

The answer to this question is both yes and no. As most of us know, the word "Episcopal" is merely the adjectival form of the word "bishop." This term was originally used to describe a church's hierarchical structure, but the common use of this word today is usually employed to describe the Episcopal Church USA. We are an "Episcopal" church in that we adhere to the ancient and Apostolic form of Church government and policy. Also, we are an "Episcopal" Church in that we use the traditional Book of Common Prayer (the American 1928 edition), which is one of the single greatest literary contributions of the Anglican Church. We share a very similar heritage with the Episcopal Church USA; however, many innovations over the past few decades have made it a necessary matter of conscience for us to disassociate with that body. Though many of our friends, neighbors, and family members belong to this Church we are not members of the Episcopal Church USA.

Are we Catholic or Protestant?

These are two words within the English lexicon that are sorely misunderstood by most people. This is due largely to (believe it or not) World War II. It was at that time when the military began to issue what has come to be known as "Dog Tags." These are the aluminum identification tags worn around the necks of all uniformed men and women of the American armed forces. On these "dog tags" is an individual's name, branch of service, blood type, etc. Also included is the optional "religious preference." During World War II there were but two options: Catholic or Protestant. The theory at this time was that if you were not Roman Catholic then you had to be Protestant.

The word "Catholic" has its origins in the Greek language, but was adopted early on by the Church in the Latin speaking west. This word simply means "throughout the whole," i.e., universal. The East used the word "Orthodox" to describe themselves, and this simply means, "right thinking," i.e., traditional. Up until 1054 AD the Catholic West and the Orthodox East were united as One Church (with the exception of a few temporary separations). Naturally, the Catholics and the Orthodox claimed to possess the truth over their disagreement that led to the split. The Catholics maintained the Papacy, and the Orthodox settled matters of faith in councils attended by the Church's bishops, just as the Church had done prior to the schism.

The meaning of the word "Protestant" has its origins in the two Latin words *pro* and *test*. *Pro* means "for" and *test* means "word" with an emphasis on truth; thus, the word "Protestant" is someone who is "for the true word."

So, back to the original question, are we a Catholic or Protestant Church? It is Catholic in the ancient and undivided understanding of the word. It is true that the Roman Catholic Church has a different understanding of the word "Catholic" today, but it is our firm belief that our use of the word "Catholic" is more accurate and more closely emulates

those Christians who were first known as Catholics. We are Protestant in that we, like all Christian peoples, seek the true Word of God. Thus, we must say that we practice the Catholic Faith in its Anglican expression. (To be continued in the next issue.)

Parish News from around the Diocese...

St. Joseph of Glastonbury, Wichita

September was a busy month for St. Joseph's. The congregation was forced, by circumstance, to move to another location. The first mass in the new place was held on Sept. 4. The altar guild has had its hands full trying to work out the particulars. (below)



The Bishop and Madelyn usually visit on or near the Feast of St. Joseph which was celebrated this year on the 17th of September. Dixie and Maurice Caster graciously hosted a barbeque dinner with all the trimmings at their newest facilities on the property of Caster Excavating. No one went away hungry. (above, right) P.S. Thank you, Dixie and Maurice from all of us!



(Even Scout, the Caster's dog said his prayers before retiring for the night.)

While the Bishop was in Wichita, the newest member of St. Joseph was confirmed. Her name is Lucinda Loris, and the congregation is so grateful to have her.

Church of the Holy Family, Casper

Paul Kinner, son of Bishop and Priscilla Kinner, was recently named Natrona County School District's 2006 Teacher of the Year. Paul has been teaching for 19 years after leaving a banking job to pursue a career that would be more meaningful to him. Paul is now an instructional coach in that district. His wife, Lorinda, is also a teacher. Congratulations!

Ft. Scott, KS

Edna Maree Goodson, age 79, died Wednesday, October 19, 2005, at St. John's Regional Health Center in Joplin, MO. She was one of the original members of St. Francis Anglican Church in Ft. Scott and later a member of St.

James, Kansas City, MO. She is survived by her mother, age 98, one daughter, one son, three grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

The Rt. Rev. James R. McNeley officiated at the Burial Office on Saturday, October 22, and at the graveside service on Monday, October 24, at Ft. Scott National Cemetery.

St. Gabriel's, Greeley, CO

Father Kern and the parishioners at St. Gabriel's have really been busy the past few months. They held a yard sale in early October. Also they are continuing the Food Shelf ministry which was started by the daughters of Joseph Trowel, Senior Warden, many years ago.

Bishop and Madelyn McNeley paid a visit there, and the Bishop baptized Dylan Roseman during the service. One week later Dylan's father, Kevin, was confirmed along with Bill McNamara, Erik Whisler, and 12-year-old Erica Barraza.

St. Gabriel's has applied for historic designation for their 100-year-old building. The lot is small and additions are out of the question so the designation will not preclude the building on.

St. John's, Lander, WY

Father Warner wrote to say that the "Wild West" is pretty quiet at the moment. However, the small group in Lander contributed to the Disaster Relief Fund at the Salvation Army. He asks that we all continue to keep victims and workers in our prayers.

St. Andrew's, Helena, Montana

The members of St. Andrew's Fellowship met at the home of Gail Murrin in Marysville for Mass and a potluck supper on Wednesday evening, October 19th.



(above) Gail Murrin has a personal ministry with her dog Sammie. Sammie is a 125# St. Bernard and he enjoys his "work". They are part of the Volunteers Pet Partners Therapy Visiting Program at the VA Hospital at Fort Harrison near Helena. Gail and Sammie go every Friday to visit our hospitalized veterans and veterans in the outpatient waiting areas. The purpose is to promote relationships and interactions with the pet. Their interactions have the potential to be physically, psychologically, and emotionally beneficial for the patient population and are aimed at improving the quality of life for the patients. Registered teams have a VA Montana ID tag and TDogger heart-shaped ID tags so you know they are official. Gail and Sammie went through several months of training at the hospital and nursing homes in the Helena area in order to be a registered team.

Bishop Kinner and Priscilla journey to Helena several times a year to serve the small mission. Casper to Helena is 1100 miles round trip for the Bishop. Marysville is a historic 19th Century mining town tucked into the mountains twenty-five miles from

Helena. Bishop Kinner continues in the tradition of the circuit riders of long ago to bring the sacraments to his flock.

St. James, Kansas City

We hosted the College of Bishops meeting here on October 4th and 5th. All the Bishops were present except Bp. Greeson (his health prevented his attendance). Bishop Michael Wright from Bath, England, attended as well. The Bishops decided that we are in communion with the HCC-WR headed by Bishop Wright. The HCC-WR (Holy Catholic Church-Western Rite) has parishes in England, South Africa, and Columbia (South America). The next College of Bishops meeting will be in the spring of 2006 and hosted, once again, by St. James.

There will be a provincial gathering in October of 2006 here at St. James as well (the Bishop has information concerning this matter). (Pictured below are the Bishops in attendance at the College of Bishops.)



Book in Review

By Armen Gazaway

The Purpose Driven Church

Rick Warren

Zondervan, 1995

Three things I know: 1) Our churches need to grow; 2) we are to "...go and make disciples of all nations..." (Mat 28:19); and yet, 3) we can not force people to come to our churches, join them, and remain committed members. There seems no way to reconcile these facts.

The Purpose Driven Church goes a long way toward presenting an honest understanding of the problem. Mr. Warren states up front that "A lot of books and conferences on church growth fall into the 'How to Build a Wave' category. They try to manufacture the wave of God's Spirit, using gimmicks, programs, or marketing techniques to create growth. *But growth cannot be produced by man!* Only God makes the church grow..." (p.14) This message got my attention, because I agree with it!

I read on. I am a really rule-bound, plan-making, process-loving person so I was naturally drawn to Warren's "What you can learn" summary of the book: "... *First, you can learn principals... Second, you can learn a process... Finally, you can learn some methods.*" (p. 68) I felt this was just my cup of tea. It is. I was excited by what follows in the book; it seems true that "Unless the driving force behind a church is biblical, the health and growth of the church will never be what God intended. Strong churches are not built on programs, personalities, or gimmicks. They are built on the eternal purposes of God." (p. 83)

Warren outlines the phases of becoming a purpose-driven church as defining your purposes, communicating the purposes, organizing your church's structure around the purposes, and applying the purposes to all your church's members, functions, committees, and activities. He gives some very specific, concrete tools for implementing each phase, from creating a purpose statement, through defining your target population, to developing your strategy and implementing it!

I was inspired and motivated by The Purpose Driven Church, and would love to be a part of the process it describes – just name the time, place, and committee!

Comments

from Deacon Jim Dean

As soon as I finished [reading the book] I realized once wasn't enough...It's easy to get discouraged these days with all that goes on, so it was refreshing to see that it was #1 on the NY Times Best Seller List. Maybe things are better than they seem at times. If I had to sum up the book with one verse of Holy Scripture, I would offer Jer. 1:5 – "Before you were conceived in the womb, I knew you."

from Vickie Scrapper

I liked the reference made in the book to Eccl. 11:4 – "If you wait for perfect conditions you will never get anything done." I think that we tend to fall into this mindset and become too complacent.

One other statement Warren made was that "stable pastors build trust." I think we've got that part down

pretty well. We have the best, most dedicated clergy I've ever seen or known! So if that is a large part of the battle to grow, we have a great start.

Children's Corner

A retelling by Vickie Scrapper

Let me tell you a short story written by O. Henry. This story is called "The Gift of the Magi."

Many years ago a young couple lived in a small apartment. Times were hard. He worked many hours to support his wife, Della, but he did not make much money. Even though they were not well-off, they were happy and loved each other very much.

The couple, poor as they were, possessed two things that were the pride and joy of each of them. He had a wonderful gold watch that had been handed down from his father and grandfather. Della had very long, very beautiful hair. It was said that queens would have been jealous of Della's hair.

On Christmas Eve, Della looked in her change jar for money to buy her husband a gift. She found \$1.87, certainly not enough to buy a fine gift for a fine man. After worrying about the situation for quite a while, she had an idea.

She put on her coat and went down the street to a hair salon. There she sold her long, beautiful hair for \$20.00 and went off to the jeweler's to buy a chain for Jim's gold watch.

Della took the chain home where she fretted most of the afternoon about

Jim's possible reactions to her now very, short hair. He was a little late coming home but when he arrived, he was quite surprised to see his wife without her long tresses.

She quickly distracted him by offering the unwrapped chain to him in her open hand. He was speechless. She was so excited to give him the chain that she offered to put it on the watch for him.

His response to her was to pull out a small box tied with a ribbon. Della opened the gift to find three of the most magnificent tortoise shell combs for her hair. Della began to cry. She had admired those very combs for such a long time! Now she had them, but no more hair to put them in.

Jim and Della hugged each other. They both knew that each of them had sold their prized possessions in order to buy the other a wonderful gift.

* * * * *

Now you may be wondering why I am telling you this fictitious tale. Well, Advent is upon us, and it is time to reflect on the idea of giving gifts. God gave all of us the ultimate gifts: first the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ, and second, the death and resurrection of Christ. This was all so that we can have salvation.

It is this time of year that we should think about what gifts we can give. Sure it's nice to give store-bought gifts at Christmastime, but not if we have to sell our prized possessions to do so, like Della and Jim did. That's probably not what God expects of us. We perhaps should think about what gifts we can give to God and to the world. There are many gifts inside of us that can be given for free. Perhaps your gift will be beautiful music or art. Perhaps you can read a story to a

younger child, or give a hug to someone who needs it. Whatever your gift is give it in the name of the Lord. What will your gift be?

In the next issue:

Fr. Cochran's letter will continue.

An article, "I Am a Franciscan," by Sister Clare, Kansas City.

Next deadline: Feb. 1, 2006.

Other Anglican Items of Interest...

(The following is the first paragraph of a letter sent out by Bishop Wright after the College of Bishops meeting in Kansas City.)

"Greetings in the name of Christ:

As you will know, I was most graciously invited to attend the Meeting of the College of Bishops of our Sister Church the HCC (AR) held in Kansas City this week. This was a time of great blessing for all of us as participants. The unnecessary division of the past has been truly healed and we are doctrinally and sacramentally one. I can say this with confidence because the agenda we discussed revealed a common mind on all essential doctrinal points, while our worship was fully [with] the liturgical tradition which we together uphold. Not only was I able to receive communion at their altars but I was invited to celebrate the mass for them – which I did with great joy. Administratively we continue to be distinct, but I repeat, doctrinally and sacramentally we are one. This, which we ourselves recognized when we held our Synod at Bucaramanga, has

now been fully confirmed. Thanks be to God.
+Michael”

With blessings in our Lord, Bishop Kinner:

“If your brother (sister) sins against you go to him and show him his fault. But do it privately, just between yourselves. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back. There is only one horrible thing that prevents you from doing this! Pride! Ego! Get rid of all this My-Me attitude! Get into the “well being of others” attitude! Change things!

As this newsletter is being prepared, Bishop Kinner, with help from Daniel and Crystal Galles, will be delivering food to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. These donations are sent to help Church of the Sun Star. (below)



This is the newest church under Bishop Kinner’s jurisdiction. It is located in Kyle, South Dakota. Father Francis Apple ministers to a large congregation of traditional people who live in the area of Wounded Knee using the Traditional Book of Common Prayer in the Lakota language.

Bishop Kinner, Justin Kinner, and Brad Bearsheart stripped old roofing and re-shingled the building there while enduring 100 degree days followed by lightning and rain. Previously, Brad and Gabrielle Bearsheart, assisted by carpenters from a church in Colorado, rebuilt and restored the interior of the building, including the pews.



Church of the Morning Star, WY



Novalee Guina was recently baptized at the Church of the Morning Star. She is pictured here with her mother, Renee Sage Guina. Her father, Shadow Keeper Guina, also attended the ceremony. (above)

In the next issue:

A reprinted article about Church of the Morning Star.