



The Shepherd's Staff Newsletter

The Right Reverend D. M. Ashman

March 2025
Baptism in Redding

On the Feast of the Purification, Casey Zinn Crain was baptized by his Grandfather, the Reverend Benjamin Lawrence, Curate of Saint Luke's Anglican Church in Redding.



August Lawrence and Ella Lawrence (Godparents), Grace, Casey and Christian Crain. Father Ben Lawrence and Bob.

2025 DWS Hotel and Synod Information

The 2025 Synod for the Diocese of the Western States will be hosted by several parishes in the Diocese on May 6-10, 2025, in Walnut Creek, California. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Walnut Creek, 1345 Treat Blvd. Walnut Creek, CA 94597. Each person will be responsible for securing his/her own reservations. The hotel rates are \$189.00 + tax + \$30.00 per day Valet Parking - the hotel is not affiliated with neighboring garages and cannot validate parking.

To receive group rates state you are with the Diocese of the Western States. Email your RESERVATIONS to reem.najdawi@hilton.com or phone 1 (925) 934-2500 ext. 2143. To assure a place to stay, please make your reservation as soon as possible! The reservations for your rooms will be honored as received, and must be with the hotel by April 1, 2025, If the block of rooms is filled prior to or after that date, the hotel does not guarantee that the group rate will be honored or that rooms will be available.

REGISTRATION FEES PRIOR TO April 1, 2025

\$195.00 Clergy and Laity; \$150.00 Registration for Seminarians & wife who are NOT Lay Delegates Students, age 18 and under who are NOT Lay Delegates; \$35.00 ACW and Clergy Lunch "No Host"

Registration fees AFTER April 1, 2025

\$300.00 Clergy, Laity, Seminarians, Students, Observers, Guests \$35.00 ACW/Clergy; Lunch "No Host"

Synod Schedule - Latest off the press

Tuesday, May 6th at St. Joseph's Seminary: Noon Low Mass followed by hosted lunch (reservations required)

Meditations and Scripture readings in the afternoon followed by 4:30 p.m. Solemn Evensong

Dean Napier, Father Karcher, Canon Weber and Bishop Ashman

Wednesday, May 7th at the Embassy Suites

8:00 a.m., Low Mass - *Bishop Hansen and Deacon Schultheis*

9:30 a.m., Standing Committee Interviews

10:00 a.m., Bishop's Roundtable (*all laity and clergy are invited*)

1:15 p.m., Board of Directors

3:00 p.m. Reception - Embassy Suites followed by Refreshments and Bishop's Auction at 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 8th, at the Embassy Suites

8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer and Mass – *Father Shaddix and Father Hines*

10:00 a.m., Workshop – *Father Canda and Father Brown*

11:30 a.m. ACW-Clergy Luncheon (*Reservations required*)

1:00 p.m. ACW Meeting

1:15 p.m. Clericus

3:00 p.m. Evening Prayer - *Father Newcomb and Father Harrah*

4:00 p.m. Clergy Dinner -

No host dinner for laity – there will be an organized group so no one is left out (See Nona)

Friday, May 9th, at the Embassy Suites and Saint Martin of Tours Church

9:00 a.m. - Morning Prayer - *Deacon Shepard and Deacon Faith*

10:00 a.m. – Synod Business Meeting

3:00 p.m. Pontifical Mass – St. Martin's *Clergy, see leaflet – Clergy Practice at 2:00 p.m.*

6:00 p.m. Social Hour – Embassy Suites

7:00 p.m. Banquet – Embassy Suites

Saturday, May 10th at the Embassy Suites

8:00 a.m. Mass – *Father Canda and Father Brown*

No Host Breakfast and more time to socialize till next year

See's Candy Store - Again

Beloved Friends of St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological Seminary

We've opened up the See's Candy Store again!

Our goal is to help the Front House continue in its refurbishment and every room needs some attention...And I'm sure everyone of us has had to have some work done on a domicile somewhere!

Here is the direct link to the store:

https://www.yumraising.com/secure/stjoa_st_joseph_of_arimathea_foundation48/CarKar6360/candy

Again, like last year, the idea is to: Purchase chocolate (preferably in cooler months) stuff it in your face, or give it to friends. Gift Cards can be redeemed online or at See's Candy Shops for special mixes of favourite flavors. You purchase it online, and you get it sent to you...No selling, no collecting monies, no delivering, (unless you have a penchant for that sort of thing).

Let's make this year even better than the last!

Thank You. Your obedient servant,

Carol Karcher, Chairwoman, See's Candy Fundraising for the project!

A Sermon for The Third Sunday after Epiphany

Graham Staines was a missionary who travelled from Australia to India in 1965. He and his wife became involved in Leprosy Mission work of treating lepers in a region called Baripada, Odisha in India. They also became involved in ministry to the poor and helpless, lifting up Jesus among the tribal people of that area.

Graham and his two sons had gone to one of the villages for an evangelism campaign, and were sleeping in the station wagon out-side the local Church building when they were attacked by a mob of more than one hundred people. Their vehicle was set on fire, and were burnt alive. Gladys Staines, his wife, and her daughter, Esther, were determined to continue the work. Gladys sang the song "*Because He Lives*" at the funeral of her husband and two sons. She announced her forgiveness of those who had murdered her family. Because of her action, despite being faced with persecution, many started coming to Jesus from families that had rejected the Gospel for years.

Today's Epistle is a powerful passage that challenges us to live out our faith in a world filled with conflict, pride, and evil. Apostle Paul provides practical instructions for Christians on how to embody the love and character of Christ in their interactions with others. In this sermon, I'm going to look at three themes from this scripture: (a) living in harmony, (b) responding to enemies with grace, and (c) overcoming evil with good. In the previous verse, Paul enjoins us to live in harmony with one another. *Do not be proud, but associate with the lowly* (v. 16). Living in harmony does not mean equality, it does not mean we share the same values, it means embracing differences while maintain a Christ-like attitude of love and humility. Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12-21) demonstrated teamwork and mutual respect. Despite challenges, such as Sarah's barrenness, they remained united and fulfilled God's promises together. Joseph and Mary also exhibited mutual trust and obedience to God's will. Joseph supported Mary through the miraculous and challenging circumstances of Jesus' birth.

Pride destroys relationships, but humility fosters unity. Jesus shows us a great example of humility by associating with sinners like Matthew (*Matt. 9:9-13*) and Zacchaeus (*Luke 19:1-10*) the tax collectors, and prostitutes like the woman who was caught in adultery (*John 8:4*). Some of the marginalized people during the time of Jesus were the Samaritans who were despised by the Jews. But Jesus praised the faith of the only Samaritan leper that came back to thank Jesus for his healing (*Luke 17:11-19*) and used a Samaritan as the hero of His parable demonstrating neighborly love (*Luke 10:25-37*).

There were lowly people also at the time of Jesus. They were people like the children and the shepherds. Though these were considered of little importance, Jesus welcomed them, blessed them, and taught that the kingdom of heaven belongs to them (*Matt. 19:13-14*). We should note here also that the shepherds were the first to receive the news of Jesus' birth (*Luke 2:8-20*). Regarding responding to enemies with grace, Paul tells us to repay no one evil for evil, but give thoughts to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, as far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all (*Romans 12:17-20*).

Paul urges us to leave justice to God. Retaliation perpetuates cycles of conflict, but forgiveness breaks the chain. While peace requires mutual effort, our responsibility is to do everything within our power to promote it. This may mean apologizing, letting go of grudges, or showing kindness even when it's undeserved. This is what Gladys Staines did. Everyone thought she would move back to Australia. No. She said God had called them to India to serve the needy and would not leave. And when her daughter, Esther, who was thirteen years old at the time was asked how she felt about the murder of her dad, she said, "*I praise the Lord that He found my father worthy to die for Him.*"

That's the kind of biblical standard Paul is talking about. I know that Gladys and her daughter's responses are not easy, unless God gives one unusual grace, but we need to understand how God wants us to respond when we are wronged. The Christian response to being wronged is to do right toward your enemy, leaving all vengeance to God.

Evil is a reality we face every day. Whether it's personal offenses, societal injustice, or global tragedies, our response is often one of anger or retaliation. But as followers of Christ, we are called to a higher standard: to overcome evil with good. One of the themes of Sermon on the Mount is "*Love Your Enemies.*" Jesus says: "*You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*" (*Matt. 5:43-44*).

Peter, like most us, was not sure as to how to interpret loving and forgiving his enemies, once asked Jesus, "*Lord how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?*" Jesus said to him, "*I say not to you, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.*" (*Matt. 18:21-22*).

Many of us have done the mathematics to be 490 times. President Jimmy Carter notes in one of his books that the command is not for you to count patiently if your wife burns toast 490 mornings and then on the 491st time you can finally condemn her. The point of Jesus' teaching is to make forgiveness a permanent attitude, a way of life. Overcoming evil with good is not a sign of weakness but of strength and trust in God. It requires humility, patience, and love – qualities that reflect the heart of Christ.

We are called to reflect Christ in our words and actions, even in difficult circumstances. Remember that God can use your response or reaction to bring about transformation in others like He used Gladys and her daughter to change the hearts of many Indian people.

Bishop Masterman concludes that: "*There is no better way to conquer feelings of antagonism towards anyone than to try to do him a service; there is no better way of learning to love our enemies than to pray for them* (instead of having an enemy list, have a prayer list). *In the long run good is stronger than evil, love than hatred. It is the Cross that conquers in the end.*" Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Father Samuel Talabi (right) is the Curate at All Saints' Church in Bolingbrook, Illinois.



Without Love

Imagine a world without love. That may be hard, but we've seen bad movies or stark worlds in anime, rock videos of a simply predatory world, depressing spy stories, books of avant-garde poetry. It's trendy to be loveless: modern, efficient, utilitarian, socialistic, serving the collective, the Borg of Star Trek, the human hive, a mechanized society of automatons. Al Uber alles. Science fiction, Western or Film Noir, it's all nihilistic and existential. A world without love: everyone in black turtlenecks, shaved heads, unisex, sterile, perfect: and dead.

Two songs keep playing in my head. Peter and Gordon's song by Lennon and McCartney: "Please lock me away And don't allow the day Here inside where I hide With my loneliness I don't care what they say I won't stay In a world without love..." The Doobie Brothers had another hit, "Well the pistons keep on churnin' And the wheels go round and round And the steel rails are cold and hard For the miles that they go down Without love, Where would you be right now? Without love, Where would you be now?"

Without love, where would we be now? T. S. Elliott writes Holy Spirit-inspired poetry: "Who then devised the torment? Love. Love is the unfamiliar Name Behind the hands that wove The intolerable shirt of flame Which human power cannot remove. We only live, only suspire Consumed by either fire or fire." Love is torment, passion, painful longing. It would be less painful in a world without love. We would die like bugs, without knowing, without caring, without feeling.

The great cause is love, for God so loved the world. The great commandment is love: Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind. For love God made us, and redeemed us, and led us to Himself. God is love. He inspires passion in us, puts it in our breast, fans the flames and places the objects of our desire before us. He is really quite without shame in this, for Love is His greatest purpose. He wants us to dive in, get involved, make a mess, get hurt, but in the end we will know that we've lived. Without love, life means nothing, and the existentialists can laugh at us for the fools we are.

Young people are telling us, "We are a fatherless generation. You are being fathers to us, teaching and loving us, giving us a father's love." I have great hope for our world when I see young people.

Jesus gathered His young apostles around Him that night and said, "I give you a new law: Have love one for another; even as I have had love for you, so are you to have love one for another. By this it will be clear to all men that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." John 13:33-35 The only way we can authenticate God to another is through love. Jesus meant those words. The world will know we are His disciples only if they see we have love for one another.

Conversely, if we do everything well, have the best music, the largest and most beautiful church, thousands packing pews, and I had hair again—in the end, if we failed the love test, no part of it would matter in the least. The world outside would simply shake its head and say, "Nope. It's not here. If there is a God, they don't know Him." Love authenticates us as God's people. A world without love is a world without God.

Without love, the very fabric of the world loses its vitality, comes loose, tears and shreds and falls to ruin. Without love, we speak words without understanding, read books without comprehension, drive north or south or west, but with nowhere to go. Without love, where would you be now? I won't stay in a world without love.

Love makes sense of the sacrifices we make, translates this foreign language into comprehensibility. Love, four letters that mean what life is for. God is love. Without love... without love... nothing. With love, when we love, as much as we can love, all things become alive, have meaning, find their reason, and give life, again and again. With love, for love, by love, in love. Be in love. Be love. Love. +PFH

ACW-DWS Notes, March 2025

Just two more months until our 34th Synod and ACW Conference! Please register and make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. The deadline for our group rates at the hotel, and for the lower rate for registration is APRIL 1, 2025, so please do not delay! Photos and descriptions of items for the Drawings in aid of Bishop Morse Youth Camp, to be held at the Synod Banquet on Friday, May 9, 2025, should be emailed to gillian.golden@yahoo.com no later than April 6, 2025. This will give us time to get the brochure out to all the churches for Easter. Grateful thanks to all those who have already sent photos. Small items for the Welcome Bags may be sent to: Donna Holloway, 1424 Lear Way, Redding, CA 96001, where, thanks to the members of Saint Luke's ACW, the bags will be assembled. March 5, 2025, is Ash Wednesday, and if you haven't ordered your Lenten Mite Boxes, please email gillian.golden@yahoo.com, and I will send some to you. Proceeds from these boxes goes towards Student Support at Saint Joseph of Arimathea Seminary and perhaps will benefit someone from your church! This is such a painless way of contributing and every member of the family can be involved. A few coins every day soon mount up! Thank you to all churches that have paid their annual ACW dues. Reminders will go out in March to those who have not yet paid. Please remember that we always pay Provincial ACW the full amount due to them, and this decreases ACW-DWS funds. We are hoping to build up a fund to help ACW-DWS members go to synod, and some of this money will come from dues.

Gillian Golden, President ACW-DWS

Love is the Last Word

St. Valentine was a Christian priest in Rome around the end of the fourth century. He was martyred on February 14 during the reign of the Emperor Caligula the Goth for his refusal to deny his love and loyalty to Christ. After he was beheaded, his followers buried his relics on the Appian Way outside of Rome. The site became a special place of devotion, and gradually a chapel, then a church, was erected there. It became very famous over the centuries as pilgrims on their way to the Eternal City would stop there first on their way to the tombs of Peter and Paul. Our romantic English ancestors, who visited the shrine of St. Valentine on pilgrimage at the time of Chaucer, noted that the birds choose their mates in February and identified this event with St. Valentine's Day. As St. Valentine had given his life in love and loyalty to Christ, so they would be so committed to their chosen love. Marriage is not only the mystery of Heaven. The nuptial union is the Paschal Mystery, the mystery of Christ, for through His death and resurrection He will make all things new. As anyone who has been in love will admit, I saw life for the first time and everything became wonderful and new. Love is a many splendored thing! The saints and mystics describe Heaven in terms of the nuptial union, for in our fallen and fragmented world our union with our bride or groom prefigures in time our coming union with the Holy Other, God in eternity. As Dom Gregory Dix writes, the Mass is the eternal transfigured in time, the celebration of this mystery here and now. In this age of distortion, pornography, and sexual liberation, most have not heard the good news that Christ came not only to reconcile mankind and God, but to reconcile man and woman. Christ came to free us from the enmity between the sexes that existed in the pre-Christian world. He came to restore the gift of romantic love—that you and I were created to love on every level of our being. Yet marriage and love cannot be experienced apart from sacrifice and commitment. St. Paul's Epistle on love appointed for Quinquagesima, often falls near February 14, St. Valentine's Day, no mere coincidence as we enter into the mystery of Lent. In the Paschal Mystery, in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ, we glimpse the heart of God's love. As catholic Christians, Anglicans believe that God did not create the opposite sex just to reproduce the race. In His infinite creativity He could have chosen some other way. He created the opposite sex to give man and woman an invitation to love. To love in the Christian sense is to love that which is other than one's self. This is the very nature and meaning of the Holy Trinity. God in Himself is what He asks us to do—interpersonal love. Marriage. The nuptial mystery itself is the mystery of Heaven. Our Lord refers to Himself as the Bridegroom. The Book of Revelation describes Heaven as the Wedding Feast of the Lamb

+Robert Sherwood Morse