

The Shepherd's Staff Newsletter

The Right Reverend D. M. Ashman

April 2025



*Seek and you shall find
knock and it shall be open unto you*

My name is Father John LesCallett, and I am the vicar of the Anglican Church of the Atonement located at 11002 N. Saguaro Boulevard in Fountain Hills. In October 2018, we had a severe windstorm which blew our cross on the roof over and damaged the roof. Our roofers suggested that we remove the cross while they make the roof repairs and reinforce the area where the cross was mounted. The cross weighed over 200 lb., closer to 300 lbs. We had to hire a crane to take it off the roof and it took several strong men remove the cross to a sheltered area against the church near the main entrance, while the repairs were completed.

On Sunday October 14th I came to the church and discovered the cross was gone. The sheriff was called, and reports were made, we never heard anything back. The congregation together prayed for the individual(s) who stole our cross and for the Lord's forgiveness for this crime. Well now 7 years later after never knowing what happened I received the phone call from a pastor in Missouri. He reported to me that his parishioner came to tell him that he had in fact while on methamphetamines stole the cross. He dragged it (I don't know how he did this) to his truck and then drove to his home in Missouri. He went on with his life until by a miracle of God, he gave up his drug addiction and became an active member of the parish in Missouri. His pastor was avid telling me what a changed man he was and how he truly loved our Lord Jesus Christ. He had confessed the theft of our cross and gave the cross to the Missouri church so they could help restore it to its rightful place. They wanted to know how they could best ship the cross back to me but without hesitation I told him that first he should tell his parishioner that the people of Atonement Church forgave him, and that he should keep the cross as a reminder of the power of Jesus Christ to change lives. By the end of the call both the pastor and I were crying; the story was so moving - proving once again that Jesus Christ can do anything. So now we know the mystery of the cross.



Our new cross is beautifully designed to match the old one and has a wonderful patina making it absolutely beautiful. I invite you to come by and look up on the top of the front of the church at this beautiful piece of art made for us by a volunteer artist, Randy Frassetto who is also a fireman in Surprise Arizona. He had heard the story on the news and wanted to help. Not only did he make the cross, but the Surprise Firemen's Charity paid the cost of materials, so it was absolutely no cost to us. The cross was installed on a beautiful day with the sun shining, with our roofer Drew Schmitt of Schmitt Roofing's help. Randy Frassetto was present for the installation and blessing. These stories interweave the tales of sickness and healing and of need and generosity. God is good all the time. Amen.

The Very Reverend John LesCallett, The Anglican Church of Atonement, Dean

Saint Joseph's Seminary

Spring Classes in the Prayer Book, World History and Religion, The Great Divorce, Latin and Greek are moving along nicely.

Plans are being made for a Summer Session via zoom. Each of the five days will begin at 9:00 a.m. with Morning Prayer (or another Prayer Book Office) followed by lectures in theoretical and applied liturgics, led by Bishops Ashman and Hansen. There will be a two-hour lunch break. At 2:00 p.m. there will be lectures and demonstrations on liturgical chant and music, led by Canon Weber – concluding with Evening Prayer.

Please note that these classes are designed to help the clergy – young and old by date of ordination – but also keep in mind that interested laity are more than welcome (and encouraged) to join us.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that the repair and remodeling of the Morse House is almost complete; and ready to receive the Crew Team this fall. We owe much to the St. Joseph's Board and Canon Weber

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 it's 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!

(Updated) 2025 DWS Hotel and Synod Information

The 2025 Synod for the Diocese of the Western States will be held from May 6-10, 2025. 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.

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. The reservations 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. **(So you must act fast if you haven't registered)**

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"

Diocese of the Western States 2025 Synod Schedule

Updated as of March 19th, Saint Joseph's Day
There may be more changes, but we are getting closer...

Tuesday (Optional) May 6, 2025 – Saint Joseph of Arimathea Seminary

12:00 p.m., Low Mass: Dean Napier, Father Longworth, Father Karcher (a requiem for Canon Dillon)

1:00 p.m., Lunch in the Back House (hosted by the Ladies of St. Joseph's)

...followed by tours of the remodeled Morse Hall – you'll love what we have accomplished

2:00 p.m., Afternoon Meditation: Bishop Ashman *"as by thy special grace preventing us"*

3:00 p.m., Silent Meditation and Readings from the Gospels: Bishop Ashman, Father Karcher

4:30 p.m., Solemn Sung Evensong: Canon Weber, Father Karcher

Wednesday, May 7th, 2025 - Embassy Suites

8:00 a.m. Mass: Bishop Hansen, Deacon Schultheis

9:30 a.m. Standing Committee

10:30: Clergy/Laity Roundtable: led by Fathers Darius Gasatura, Rick Gregory and Charles Newcomb

Noon break (hosted light lunch for Standing Committee and Board of Directors)

1:15 p.m., Board of Directors

3:00 p.m. Anglican Church Women's Reception

5:00 p.m. Refreshments, Bishop's Auction

No host dinner

Thursday, May 8th, 2025 - Embassy Suites

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

10:30 a.m., Workshop: Father Canda, Father Brown

11:30 a.m., ACW-Clergy Luncheon

1:00 p.m., ACW Meeting

1:30 p.m., Clericus

3:30 p.m., Evening Prayer: Father Newcomb, Father Harrah

Clergy and Wives Dinner: Il Fornaio Cucina Italiana

No host dinner for laity – there will be an organized group, so no one is left out

Friday, May 9th, 2025 - Embassy Suites, St. Martin's, Embassy Suites

8:00 a.m. Synod Registration

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

9:30 a.m., Synod Delegate Registration

10:00 a.m. – Synod Business Meeting

No host lunch –

1:30 p.m. Clergy Practice - St. Martin's (Red Stoles)

2:30 p.m. Pontifical Mass – St. Martin's (lots of free parking)

6:00 p.m. Social Hour – no host bar

7:00 p.m. Banquet – Anglican Church Women's Auction

Saturday (Optional) May 10th, 2025 - Embassy Suites

9:00 a.m. Mass: Father Canda, Father Kelnhofer

No Host Breakfast and more time to socialize until next year

By the way, a sincere **THANK YOU** to the 15 parishes that have given \$2,500.00 to the support of the Synod!

A Sermon for the Second Sunday in Lent

We have all heard the verses that say, *“Ask and ye shall receive,”* and *“whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”* Jn 16:4; 14:13-14 Those assurances may frustrate you, because you have asked and you have made your requests, with tears, with great unmet needs. And maybe time and again you’ve felt the prayers bounce off the ceiling, unheard, unanswered except by silence. Where is that promise of our Lord? He is not the Genie from the lamp. You may have already gotten your three wishes and it’s over for you. Time to pick up your cross again and follow the bleeding steps of the Saviour.

That attitude’s pretty hard on God, but what are we to do with such promises? Now, any mature Christian is not making a formula of this, imagining our God as a big Santa, or leprechaun, bound to grant our wishes and whims. We aren’t asking for magic. These are serious prayers, and serious needs. These requests are for others possibly, who are hurting, who are innocent. Why in the world would God say No?

One of the things I most like about God is that He is not easy to offend by such questions. We can be angry at Him, and He receives our outcries, He deflects our punches made in childlike angst, because we are being honest. The way this blasted world works seems crazy and unfair. Good people suffer and the wicked get away with literal murder. And when we ask for the storied outcomes, endings of the great movies, where the child is cured, and the girl gets the guy back from across the wilderness, and justice is done to evil enemies, the orcs screaming as they cast themselves into fiery pits. But no. Why doesn’t life really imitate art? Can’t we ever have that happy ending?

We point these questions directly or obliquely at God, expecting Him to admit failure, or hoping to have Him at long last open the door hiding the prize from us, making us victors after all. Or maybe we just really take our best shot at Him and hunker down to weather His outrage. And He just smiles. And He gives us a hug. And He shows us the nail prints in His hands, the gash in His side. And we have not made Him an enemy. We have made of ourselves His allies and co-sufferers.

We weren’t angling for that. We wanted happiness. We got approval. We wanted to win an argument with God – that’s a rich idea – but we shared a moment with our Creator in which we shared for a brief tide, a glimpse of His world view. We didn’t get the prayed for relief. We got the Master’s vision. And we learned a little more of what prayer is about. Jesus and His three closest friends among His ragtag dozen Apostles went together up a mountain where He was emblazoned before them with the uncreated light of His divine nature. They would all talk and write of it later, but now they were dumb-struck, and fully convinced of His unlimited authority and power. Immediately upon descending to the plain, the other nine brought a man whose son was demon possessed. The boy was mute, self-destructive and beyond the prayers of the apostles. They’d tried. It’s always odd to hear God’s frustration expressed and here Jesus surprises them by crying *“O faithless generation, how long must I be with you, how long must I bear with you?”* Mk 9 Who is He speaking of: the devils besetting children, or people and their endless demands? We still don’t know which He meant. But He invites them to bring the boy.

Here we learn something. He asks the father, *“How long this way?”* From early childhood – a long time. It appears to be one of those much prayed for and long seated bitter troubles that never admit of a solution. The man is hopeless, and yet he brings the boy to every hopeful healer. Jesus tells him, *“If you can believe now, all things are possible to whoever believes.”* The weight of this sought out miracle is set back upon the shoulders of the father, and it belongs with Him to believe enough. It seems hard. We see modern healers, saying that your continued sickness is due to your lack of faith. If only you believed...

The man’s response is so honest, so much like our deepest truth about ourselves. *“Lord, I believe. But please help my unbelief!”* The tension, the conflict between my heart and my head, between my spirit and my brain is evident. How can I believe fully, without a shadow of doubt, when the outward evidence has always been a disappointment? Yet I do want to believe. Help me Lord! I can’t do this alone!

The nature of prayer, mature prayer, the prayers of true saints, is that in prayer we are not so much aimed at changing our circumstances, getting the gold ring, turning the course of history, rewriting the script we've been given, but aiming at a conversation from our deepest heart with the One who made that heart and Who has His purposes laid out for where it must go and what it needs to be. So much of the Sermon on the Mount revolves around the depths of our hearts toward God and toward others, and not our outward actions alone.

Outward obedience is fine but the inner world of our loves and hatreds are where God really finds us out, who we are and if we are His or not His. True prayer is the laboratory where God works with that heart of ours and molds it, shapes it, does spiritual surgery on it, with the goal of making it beat with His heartbeat and go out to the world with the heart of the Saviour. And for His tools, His surgical instruments, He uses what hurts us the most. The things in our lives we wish would change.

Today's Gospel has always touched me profoundly. A foreign woman, part of the Phoenician people of today's Lebanon, comes to Him while His band has left Israel for a break at the sea. She is part of a pagan people, worshippers of idols, sacrificing even their children to Baal, Ashtoreth, and other gods in superstition laced with devil worship. What is underneath this family drama that led her daughter to be bedeviled so? Is there a real cure for this complex problem, or is this a diversion from His mission? He deflects her requests, and we are a little shocked by Him. Calls her a dog, for the Jews regarded the Canaanites as subhuman. Dogs ran wild in packs. They were not house pets.

But see the two things that He saw. Her humility is astounding. "Truth, Lord, but the dogs may always eat of the crumbs dropped from their master's table." She won Him fully and proved her worth and her honesty, and He granted the song of her heart. Humility and Persistence. She kept it up. She did not get offended, nor did she get tired. If you mean it how long will you pray God for what you know is His will, now delayed? If you really want this, how many times will you ask and not grow weary? A poor woman begging a judge for an honest verdict illustrates this from one of Jesus' parables. God is impressed by continuous prayer, which we call prevailing prayer that brings us back to our knees and we ask again. Such prayer changes us, just as it touches the heart of God. What changes and what is touched? Both.

Do you have a prayer that has long been made to wait? So do I. God sees that we have no power within ourselves to help ourselves, in the terms of the Collect for today. We ask and go on asking. And as we do, our loving Father takes us up and receives both our prayers and us. +PFH

ACW-DWS Notes, April 2025

Suddenly, Synod is taking place very soon! Remember these dates, which will be on us VERY SOON! APRIL 1 (Tuesday) Last day for lower registration rates; APRIL 1 (Tuesday) Last day for group rates at the hotel; APRIL 6 (Tuesday) Last day for sending photos and details of items for the ACW Drawings

Please email photos and details of the items to me, gillian.golden@yahoo.com. Thank you to all of you who have already sent the photos. Small items for the Welcome Bags may be sent to Donna Holloway, 1424 Lear Way, Redding, CA 96001 Easter is on April 20 th this year, and it will be time to collect the Lenten Mite Boxes, count the money and send a check, made out to Provincial ACW with a notation Mite Boxes, to Gillian Golden, Provincial ACW Lenten Chairman, P.O. Box 558, Selma OR 97538

Thank you in advance for your participation and remember that someone from your church may be a beneficiary! Reminders for ACW Dues have been sent out. Thank you to all those who have paid their dues, and do not forget that ACW-DWS pays the full amount to Provincial ACW, so that any unpaid dues may hurt our ability to help somebody in need.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in Walnut Creek
Gillian Golden, President ACW-DWS

A Sermon for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

In my first-year Latin classes (“centuries ago”), I have used to teach common Latin expressions used in English. One of my favorite was *quid pro quo*, which roughly translates something for something. It means a favor for a favor; you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours; or just simply what’s in it for me? *Quid pro quo* then contains a universal idea that is as old as conscious human thinking. In law it is expressed as an eye for an eye, that is, that the punishment for a crime be literally as severe as the crime itself. This idea goes back to the famous Law Code of Hammurabi over 4,000 years ago. For example, if a person caused the death of another person's child, the first person's child would be put to death. My point is that what’s in it for me seems to be a basic component of our selfish human natures that we want things for ourselves, satisfaction for ourselves, compensation for ourselves FIRST, before we think of others.

The multitudes that followed Jesus in the Gospel today were no different. They followed him because they expected something in return for their investment of time and effort. They followed him because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. They expected a *quid pro quo*. So let’s look at what they got from three different viewpoints: the physical, the emotional and the spiritual. Physically, the people had been following Jesus for days and they were without food. So Jesus took five barley loaves and two fishes and made enough food to feed everyone so that they could return to their homes. Emotionally, they had the spirits lifted. I know that when I don’t get fed, I get cranky. I know that when we are fed, we feel better. Spiritually, I am not sure if the multitudes understood what was happening. Some to a degree, but most, I’m not sure. The Gospel does tell us that they said; this is of a truth that prophet. that should come into the world. But did they understand what that meant? Did they understand the spiritual *quid pro quo* as clearly as they did the physical and emotional?

The Gospel tells us that the Feast of the Passover was almost upon them. The Passover commemorated the passing over of the Angel of Death and the slaying of the entire first born of Egypt followed by the Hebrews winning their freedom from Pharaoh. A lamb was slain; its blood sprinkled on Hebrew doorposts; and while the Hebrews ate, the angel of death passed over their houses. The feeding of the five-thousand near the Feast of the Passover was meant to recall this first Passover. But it was much more than that, because it also prefigured Jesus’ replacing the Passover Lamb with Himself on the cross of Calvary. The old Passover lamb died so that the Children of the Hebrews might live physically; but they would someday die. Soon after the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus, the new Passover Lamb would die so that all men might live forever, even after their bodies died. That was the spiritual *quid pro quo*.

It is important to understand that the feeding of the five thousand also prefigured the Last Supper, which was the first Eucharist. Each time the priest takes the bread and wine and says the words of institution and calls the Holy Ghost down upon them, they become the flesh and blood of the Paschal Lamb who died on the Cross. Jesus himself said that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood has eternal life. This is the *quid pro quo* in every Mass, Eucharist, Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion. We come to him and offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, as a sacrifice and we receive in return heavenly food that gives eternal life.

However, my dear friends, there is a big difference (or there ought to be a big difference) between the multitude that followed Jesus and the Christian who comes to Mass. The people of Jesus’ day did not yet understand their half of the *quid pro quo* and that was love, the dispassionate love Jesus came to model and to teach. The multitude thought only of themselves, desperately and/or selfishly perhaps, but only of themselves. We, unlike the multitude, however, have been taught his love and have no excuse; we understand what Jesus came to teach; we may fail or reject his teachings, but we understand. So it is, that in the divine *quid pro quo* of the Eucharist what we give is the surrender of ourselves to that love, so that every time we come to the Eucharist in that love, we become an offering that is worthy of the divine *quid pro quo*: imperfect love for divine love; struggling love of eternal love; human love of limitless love. *+dma*