

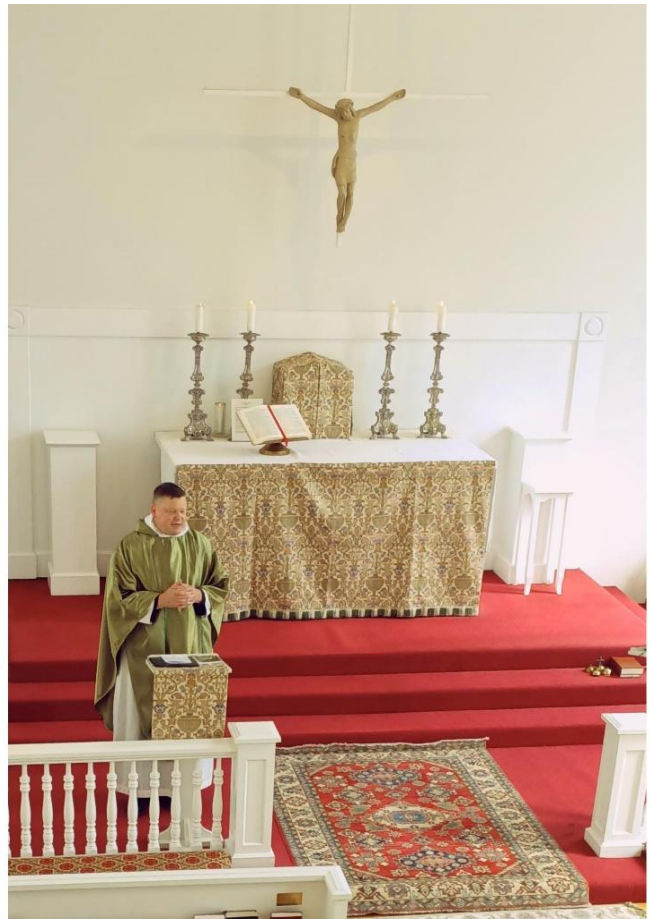
The Shepherd's Staff Newsletter

The Right Reverend D. M. Ashman

September 2025

And the Winner is...

At the Western States Diocesan Synod there was a special ACW drawing. Mrs. Deb Ponec had donated her late husband's (Father Robert Ponec) hand-made Green Mass Vestments. There was much excitement, and the winner was Josephine McGrath who bought tickets so that her husband, Father Daniel McGrath, might own his own set of Green Vestments. Father McGrath wrote, *At DWS Synod this year, my wife entered the ACW fundraising raffle and won Fr. Ponec's vestments. I had the opportunity to debut them last Sunday on the Sixth Sunday after Trinity at Christ the King Parish in DC (see below) where I sometimes fill in for Fr. Clark. Kind thanks to you, to the ACW, and to my wife Josephine, that I now have a set of green vestments of my own. From what I read, they were handmade in the African style for Fr. Ponec's ordination in 2006. They will now enter a new phase of meaningful service.*



By the way, the money from the Anglican Churchwomen's Raffle was donated to the Saint Joseph of Arimathea Restoration Fund.

Still Plenty of Time to Sign up for Seminary Fall Classes

Note that a First Year Latin is included and that the Archbishop's start date changed

- I. Practicum for the Diaconate [10 classes] will be offered by Archbishop Blair Schultz on Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time (3 Central, 2 Mountain, 1 Pacific) – [begins Tuesday September 16th](#).
**Required of all deacons (who have not completed the course) and all aspirants
- II. First Year Ecclesiastical Latin: will be offered on Wednesdays by Bishop Ashman at 10:30 a.m. Pacific Time – [begins Tuesday, September 10th](#)
- III. History and Religion II: Byzantine legacy, the Christian Religions of the East, Post Classical India, Asia, Europe, Americas, Africa; Exploration, Renaissance and Reformation will be offered on Wednesdays by Bishop Ashman at 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time – [begins Wednesday, September 10th](#)
- IV. Seminar: *The Screwtape Letters* (textbook necessary - very inexpensive, an Audio CD suggested) will be offered on Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. **or** 6:00 p.m. by Bishop Ashman – [begins Sept. 11th](#)
- V. Advanced Latin: Readings from the Old Testament, New Testament and the 1560 University BCP will be offered by Bishop Ashman on Fridays at 11:00 a.m. Pacific Time. – [begins Sept. 12th](#)
- VI. Fourth Year Biblical Greek: Advanced Grammar and Readings from Scripture will be taught by Bishop Ashman on Friday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. [begins Friday, September 12th](#)

The cost per course is \$250.00 for credit and \$50.00 for audit. Laity are encouraged to attend. Please address any requests for tuition relief to the Provost at bishopashman@gmail.com. There is much \$\$\$ so don't hesitate to ask.

When you sign up for your course(s), please send your registration (below – hard copy or email) to: the Provost (Bishop Ashman): bishopashman@gmail.com. Send your tuition and another copy of your registration to Canon Matthew Weber at 2316 Bowditch P.O. Box 40020 Berkeley, CA 94704 or saintannchapel@gmail.com – **Do not send money to the San Francisco office**

Saint Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological Seminary

Michaelmas Term 202 REGISTRATION

(HARD COPY OR EMAIL)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Cell Phone:

Parish:

Parish Priest:

Please list the courses you wish to audit or take for credit

A Sermon for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity

My adult life has evolved around two challenges which have been interwoven and intertwined almost every day of my life. The first has been to keep the Latin Language [and now for the Seminary the Greek Language] alive and important in the minds of my students and the second is to keep that Church which we call Episcopal or Anglican alive and untarnished from powers of darkness that would destroy it. For thirty-five years plus as a teacher and for the not quite forty years since my ordination to the diaconate I have fought (I speak as a fool) against those who see traditional Christianity and the Classics as irrelevant and unnecessary in the modern world. I have had students and parishioners “abandon ship” with heartbreaking consequences but I have also seen many of my students rise to greatness and many of my parishioners grow in grace for which I cannot take any credit. Both were the work of God the Holy Ghost!

August is the time of year when I think about teaching once again. The old questions recur, “Why take Biblical Latin? Why take Biblical Greek?” Good answers range from improving logic to amassing a superb vocabulary to understanding why he gave to book to him and me - not to him and I. In the Seminary, I want so much to have a new crop of students who will understand Holy Scripture more thoroughly because of their facility in language. I remember Star Trek, the Next Generation, where young Wesley back to the Enterprise from Star Fleet Academy and Captain Picard greets him in Latin and tells him how important the Classics are. But the best reason to read Latin and study the classics is to read about men and women who had the same hopes and dreams that you and I have. It is then we realize that we have never been alone; that men and women have always faced the same challenges, suffered the same pains, hoped the same dreams, and celebrated the same joys. Moreover, it is interesting to note that most modern science fiction and modern theologians have joined the ancients in doubting a real or happy life after death. Rather they celebrate the transitory and fleeting values of this world. (We call those values Mammon, the spirit of the age.)

Nevertheless, I love Book VI of the Aeneid where Aeneas visits the Underworld. At one point Aeneas and the Sibyl come to the River Acheron, the river of pain, and there they see a terrible figure, Charon, the boatman who decides who may cross over the river into the Underworld and who may not. Aeneas is astonished at the throngs of men and women, heroes and matrons, boys and girls all surging to the river. Some are allowed into the boat to cross and others are beaten back without mercy because they were destitute, and had no coin placed on their tongue to pay Charon. It is a terrible sight and my point is that, except for a few of the bravest, the souls of the dead on both sides of the Acheron “lived” a ghostly, phantom existence of forgetfulness like the heavy dreams of eternal sleep. In the Odyssey even the great Achilles says that a mistreated slave on earth lives better existence than a hero in the Underworld. So, the traditional humanism of the ancients is ultimately hopeless.

In contrast, the second great challenge of my adult life, the preservation of historic, apostolic and authentic Christianity, is the preaching of hope that helped Christianity sweep through the Roman world of eternal hopelessness in the first centuries A.D. The Classics teach us about how to function in human endeavors, but authentic Christianity teaches us a way of life that destroys hopelessness. There is much wisdom and loveliness in the Classics but there is knowledge of the Creator and Salvation in Christianity. It is rightly argued that God the Holy Ghost guided the ancients (Saint Paul’s Unknown God in Acts 17. 22-31) by prevenient grace

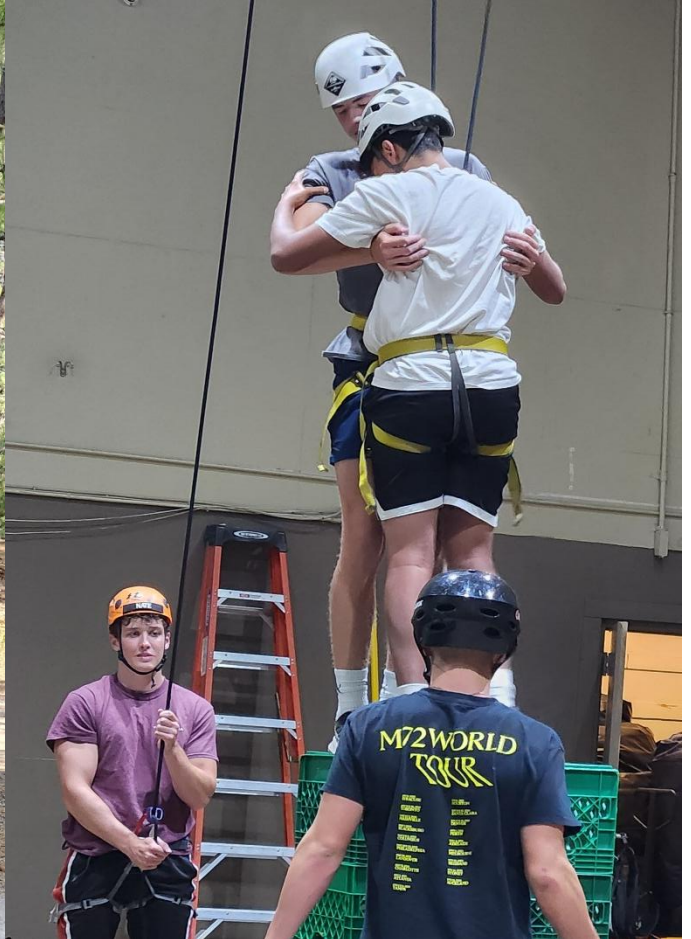
even though they did not know who He was or even if He had a name. But through God's revelation to the Jews and the Incarnation, God was finally made known to men and women. On the cross Christ died for a moment and then destroyed death. That is the crucial difference between Classical religion and Christianity. But Jesus came to do more than destroy death; He came to teach love. Do not forget that it was His love for us that destroyed death in the first place.

The Greeks and the Romans teach us valuable gifts of rational thinking, logic and philosophy that apply to many endeavors of life, but Jesus teaches us what to be in life. That is what the parables of Trinitide are all about: how to live as Jesus would have us to live. Today his parable focuses on forgiveness. By the values of this world, dare I say, by the values of right and wrong, the father had no business forgiving the Prodigal Son. But he did because his son was sorry. And he told his elder son, who was outraged at his younger brother's conduct, that he needed to forgive as well. When we consider such forgiveness for such an undeserving wretch, it ought to take our breath away and make us ponder about what religion really means. Someone once remarked that most unhappy people in the world are those who say, "Forgive? Never!" If you have ever seen Michelangelo's caricature in the Sistine Chapel of the Christianized version Charon driving souls into Hell, you can easily understand such unhappiness.

And this is why the elder brother deserves our special attention. He openly said, "Forgive? Never!" He wanted to be Charon! Did he think that he was better than his brother? Or was he just woefully ignorant of his father's love? I found a story about an eleven-year-old boy who, when there was a family emergency, was sent to live with his grandmother for a week or so. The grandmother loved her only grandson very much and the first morning made him the best breakfast she could, bacon and eggs, toast and jam. But he wasn't used to such food and complained and told his grandmother he hated it at her house. He wanted cereal or pop tarts and carried on till she got it for him. When he finished his breakfast, he noticed his grandmother wasn't in the kitchen. So, he went into the den and there she was. She didn't see him come in and he saw her quietly crying. He went up to her and for the first time in his life he said that he was sorry without being told. She instantly forgave him, and he was obedient till his parents came to pick him up. How happy that eleven-year-old boy was when his grandmother told her own son what an angel her grandson had been.

I know this mini parable is somewhat superficial and life always does not work that way but many times it does because forgiveness is applied love. And I also know that lack of forgiveness almost always produces bitterness and resentment. That unnamed grandmother taught her little grandson an important lesson when she was as happy as was the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son who told his elder son that it was right that they should have a big party because the younger son said he was sorry. But the story is silent about the elder brother. Did he forgive his brother? Did he go back to the party? (I suppose the cynic might argue that Jesus was a bit naïve.) The point is that we are not told what the elder brother did. But the elder brother did have a choice to make. And it is our choice. Do we forgive those who use and abuse us or not? George MacDonald once said that Forgiveness is the giving, and so the receiving, of life. Christ forgave from the cross and then gave life. Vergil did not compose his magnificent poem in dactylic hexameter to give life. Nay he told of a place where there is no forgiveness and no life and no hope. But Jesus tells us today's parable that we may learn to forgive and find life. Naïve? Well, just ask yourself who was happier: the father or the elder brother?

Bishop Morse Summer Camp in Colorado



Top: Campers relax with an arts and crafts exercise with Father Dan Canda; above left: Father Ben Brown prepares for “Ropes in the Trees”; Below right: Practice for the stacking of Crates.

A Priest, eBay, and a Farm in Western MO: When Worlds Collide

We all live in the compartments of our own worlds; Our neighborhoods, parish and secular jobs. Sometimes the compartments of our own worlds collide with the unknown compartments of our fellow humans. A couple of months ago, I was reading Evening Prayer and was inspired to check eBay for a traditional Baptismal Font. The Font our parish had was built to get the job done but lacked the Gothic decoration of our Altar.

It took a few searches, using different terms, to land on two fonts that were harmonious with our Parish Altar. Both Fonts were offered for sale by a gentleman in Western Missouri. I would later learn that his compartment is salvaging furniture and other items from closed churches to sell as antiques. These items are housed in a warehouse on his farm. Sadly, so many churches have closed in the US that church furniture salvaging is an active form of retail.



I settled on a wooden Gothic Revival Font that was the appropriate size, in very good condition and beautifully executed. The seller was very professional and excited that the font would be used for its true purpose and not wind up in someone's living room as a fern pot. There was a challenge though, how do we get the Font to Woodinville, WA?

To the rescue was St. Bart's own Superman, Larry Talbott. The Font at the time was located in Eastern Pennsylvania. The seller kindly offered to bring it to his warehouse in Western MO to make the trip from WA to MO shorter. Once all the logistics were in order, naturally curiosity took over and we all wanted to know the circumstances surrounding the Font and its exile from a church.

Mr. Larry Talbott stands in the Narthex of St. Bartholomew Church, Woodinville, WA with the Font he kindly retrieved from Western Missouri. Photo courtesy of AnnRene Joseph

The Font has a memorial inscription to a certain Annie Maria Jones. St. Bart's Superwoman, Nancy Feagin, undertook her own investigation and discovered the following: The Times Leader (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania) dated Wednesday, May 5, 1886

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/390485189/> Downloaded on Aug 17, 2025 Annie Maria Jones's obituary
Clipped By: nfeagin Aug 17, 2025, Copyright © 2025 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

To Be Buried To-day.
The funeral of Mrs. Annie Maria Jones, of Nanticoke, will take place this, (Wednesday,) afternoon at three o'clock, from her late residence on Broad Street near Market. The interment will be made in Hanover Cemetery. The deceased was the wife of Edward Jones and the mother of Charles B. Jones, and was in her 67th year.



A photograph of Mrs. Jones
Never the one to do things half-way, Nancy contacted the Episcopal Church Archives and found that the Font, given in memory of Mrs. Jones, was a gift to St. George's Church in

Hannover Pennsylvania which closed in the early 2000s.

We are thankful to our God that this Font is now home at a traditional Anglican Church and will continue as the vessel of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Fr. Rick Gregory, Rector, St. Bartholomew Parish, Woodinville, Washington.

Consecrations of Eight Years Ago



l-r: Bishops Brulc, Hansen, Ashman, Morrison, Upham and Schultz

On the Feast of Saint Matthew the Apostle, September 21, 2017, the Reverend Canon Peter Falconer Hansen (Rector of Saint Augustine of Canterbury in Chico, California and the Diocesan Treasurer; currently Coadjutor Bishop of the Western States) and the Reverend Blair William Schultz (Rector of All Saints' Parish in Bolingbrook, Illinois; and now the Archbishop of the Anglican Province of Christ the King) were consecrated Suffragan Bishops of their respective Dioceses by the Most Reverend Frederick G. Morrison (chief consecrator), the Right Reverend John E. Upham (the then Bishop Ordinary of the Atlantic States and subsequent APCK Archbishop), the Right Reverend Frank Brulc (the then Bishop Ordinary of the Southwestern States) and the Right Reverend D. M. Ashman (currently Bishop Ordinary of the Western States) at All Saints' Cathedral in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Lots of water under the bridge

Episcopal Visitation to Saint John the Baptist Parish



above: Deacon Reno, Mrs. Robert Ponec, Bishop Ashman

Bishop Ashman celebrated and preached at Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church in Omaha, NE on the Saturday before Trinity VIII. During his visitation the Bishop presented Deacon Ron Reno with a new Tippet. Saint John's is also served by Father Richard Andrews who drives from Colorado once a month.

ACW-DWS Notes. September 2025

\$5.00 tickets for this beautiful, framed, hand cross-stitched piece by Carol Karcher, measuring about 16.5 X 14 inches will be available early in 2026. The proceeds will benefit St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological College scholarships. The winning ticket will be drawn at the 2026 Synod Banquet. We congratulate Carol on her superb embroidery and are extremely grateful for her very generous contribution. Details on ticket availability will follow in a later publication of Shepherd's Staff.



Have you considered taking a class at St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary? There is so much to learn, both for clergy and laity. Why not start with the class on C.S. Lewis's 'The Screwtape Letters' which begins on Thursday, September 11 th ? Try it! You will like it!

Summer is almost over, and we begin to think about indoor projects. If your church holds a Christmas Bazaar or other function or fund-raiser, send pictures to Bishop Ashman so we can all enjoy your efforts. (and don't forget to tithe from the proceeds!) Thank you all for all that you do for our church.

Gillian Golden

President ACW-DWS

Something to Consider

Back in the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A tired, overworked waitress put a glass of water in front of him, and he asked, "How much is an ice cream sundae?" "Fifty cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it. "How much is dish of plain ice cream?" he asked. Some people were now waiting for a table, and the waitress (whose feet hurt) was a bit impatient. "Thirty-five cents," she said brusquely. The little boy again counted the coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and departed. When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard. On the table, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies - her tip.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. I remember that I last told this story of the boy and the ice cream in a sermon way back in the nineties. I don't have a copy of it any more. Nevertheless, it remains with me, and I still think it is charming and childlike, not childish. It is about the innocence and kindness we should all exercise. It is about love; a love some might say I still foolishly preach and teach. I don't need to tell you that the world lacks love, but it still amazes me – God amazes me – that every time I become cynical, love pops up somewhere, usually where I would least expect to find it: in a teenager, in a stranger, in someone I thought did not like me, in someone I thought I didn't like. The work of God the Holy Ghost continues to be mysterious and alive; pervasive and unceasing. So remember this story when you are served a meal or fill out a pledge card or asked to help at church, by your friends or when you see your brother or sister is hurting and in need.