

# *The Shepherd's Staff Newsletter*

*The Right Reverend D. M. Ashman*

## *March 2026*

### *Chili, Football, and Boots in Oklahoma*

While many churches observe a pre-lent pancake supper, The Church of the Holy Cross in Oklahoma City had its first chili cook-off combined with a Superbowl watch party on February 8. Parishioner Ashley Morgan (center) took first place in the contest, Cayla Domenack (right) won second, and Lindsey Canda (left) took third. Boots are preferred attire for a chili cook-off. Note the rector's black ostrich leather Lucchesees. Cooks and eaters alike hope to make this an annual parish event.



## Shrovetide

[As] we enter the holy days of Shrovetide, from Shrove Saturday through Shrove Tuesday, which is the Church's doorway into the great fast of Lent. The Old English word "shrive," the origin of Shrovetide, signifies confession and absolution. These days provide an opportunity for sincere self-reflection and a renewed reliance on God's mercy.

Before Ash Wednesday, we have a daily opportunity to reflect on our lives and where we need healing. This season, we must form resolutions, whether they involve prayer, fasting, or generosity, to remove hindrances separating us from a closer relationship with Almighty God. I encourage each of you, before Ash Wednesday, to deliberately review your life before God and ask where you need forgiveness.

Shrovetide consistently offered simple, joyful fellowship before the austere observance of Lent. Pancake meals and shared tables used rich foods set aside during the fast, reminding us that God's gifts are good when received with thanksgiving and shared. I have read that pancakes became the traditional feast at many churches on Monday or Tuesday prior to Ash Wednesday because the ingredients used are symbolic of the rich items many give up from their diets during the Lenten observance. If you have a family observance or gather with church family for pancakes, remember to begin your meal with prayer. As you eat, reflect on your Lenten discipline.

Many churches customarily gather Palm Sunday crosses from the previous year and burn them to create the ashes used to mark foreheads on Ash Wednesday. This practice symbolizes how praise and repentance are intertwined at the foot of the Cross. From Shrove Saturday to Ash Wednesday, we ask the Holy Spirit to grant us true conversion: attentive listening to God's word, a spirit of fasting that frees the heart, and a renewed love for Christ and our neighbors, especially the poor and the suffering.

May the Lord bless and keep you during these days of preparation and grant us all a holy Lent that leads to the joy of the Resurrection.

Father Ternahan  
Church of Our Saviour, Santa Barbara

## Seminary Update

The Prayer Book Class which was almost concluded last fall had to be canceled because of Archbishop Schultz's medical issues as reported in the February issue of the Shepherd's Staff. Please keep the Archbishop in your prayers. This summer the Seminary will offer a Liturgics Class which will cover much of the Prayer Book class instruction.

Our other classes are continuing but **note the time change for some of them.**

**Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m.**, First Year Latin

Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m., World History and Religion

**Thursdays at 5:00 p.m.**, Seminar on the Screwtape Letters

[Note, it is never to late to join this seminar as we cover a different letter each week]

[We just finished Letter sixteen and will begin letter seventeen next week]

Fridays at 11:00 a.m., Advanced Latin; Reading Saint Luke's Gospel

Fridays at 2:00 p.m., Third Year Greek; Beginning Readings from Saint Matthew's Gospel

## *Confirmations in Denver*

On January twenty-fifth, the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Bishop Ashman visited Saint James Parish preached and confirmed Piper Holmes and Jefferson Canda, assisted by Father Daniel Canda (the vicar) and Father Richard Andrews (priest in charge of St. John the Baptist in Omaha, NE).



# Synod Reminders

TO: CLERGY, CONGREGATIONS AND ACW PRESIDENTS (DWS)  
FROM: NONA GOURLEY 1 (209) 324-5009, GILLIAN GOLDEN 1 (541)-597-4270  
Co-Registrar/Coordinators (DWS/APCK)

The 2026 35th Synod for the Diocese of the Western States will be hosted by several parishes in the Diocese on April 21-25, 2026, in Walnut Creek, California. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 1345 Treat Blvd. Walnut Creek, CA 94597. The hotel is a short walk from Pleasant Hill BART (Bay Area Rapid Transportation) Station, which provides direct access to San Francisco, Oakland International Airport(s). Each room includes: separate living room, two 42" HDTV's, in-room coffee maker with coffee and tea selections, microwave, mini-fridge, desk with ergonomic chair and stay connected with complimentary WiFi. There is an in-door pool, 24 hour fitness center complete with free weights and cardio equipment. A complimentary breakfast and evening reception for all those staying at the hotel.

Each person will be responsible for securing his/her own reservations.

**The hotel rates are \$189.00 PLUS tax PLUS standard rate for self-parking.**

Self-parking information: At the bottom of the driveway ramp the hotel parking lot is to the left. Guests will need to pull a ticket to open the gate. When they come upstairs to check-in, please bring the paper ticket along and have the front desk clerk activate it. The self-parking structure adjacent to the hotel (at 2999 Oak Road, right turn at the bottom of the ramp) is not affiliated with the hotel. That lot uses a pay-by-app system so anyone who parks there needs to have a cell phone in order to scan a QR code to exit.

To receive group rates state you are with the Diocese of the Western States. You may email your RESERVATIONS to reem.najdawi@hilton.com or phone 1 (925) 934-2500 and select option 4 to sales office. 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 March 20, 2026, 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 March 20, 2026**

\$205.00 Clergy and Laity

\$180.00 Registration for Seminarians & wife who are NOT Lay Delegates

Students, age 18 and under who are NOT Lay Delegates

\$ 45.00 ACW and Clergy Lunch "No Host"

## **Registration fees AFTER March 20, 2026**

\$350.00 Clergy, Laity, Seminarians, Students, Observers, Guests

\$ 45.00 ACW/Clergy Lunch "No Host"

## **REGISTRATION FEES IF YOU DO NOT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SYNOD PACKAGE FEES**

\$180.00 Synod Business Meeting

\$100.00 Friday Banquet

\$120.00 Thursday ACW Conference and ACW/Clergy Lunch

(You MUST REGISTER TO ATTEND ACW CONFERENCE OR CLERICUS TO ATTEND LUNCH)

*Ash Wednesday at Saint Joseph's Collegiate Chapel*



Father Franz Longworth administering Ashes: *Remember O man that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return.*

## *A Homily for Ash Wednesday*

"Remember, O man, from dust thou didst come and to dust thou shall return."

These words are a solemn reminder of our mortality. Today, Ash Wednesday, we begin our forty-day pilgrimage of penance to Easter when we celebrate Christ's resurrection and gift to mankind of eternal life.

From T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets:

*These are only hints and guesses,  
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest  
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought, and action.  
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.*

If we want to receive Christ we must be reality-oriented, for we must ask for the grace to accept the cross of suffering and death. We know it's our cross because it is the one we don't want.

Eliot again, from "Little Gidding" in Four Quartets:

*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.*

Our choice is to burn with the love of God or be burned by it. Some are threatened by love for they might have to give something of themselves.

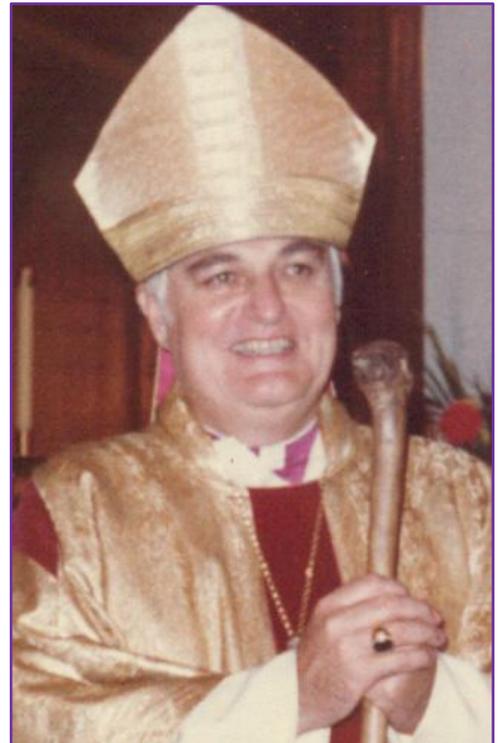
In an unforgettable speech that Steve Jobs gave to the Stanford graduating class, he said, to paraphrase, that our maturity depended upon accepting failure, suffering, and our approaching death.

The only thing that makes sense of our existence is God. Otherwise, our life is ultimately meaningless. St. Thomas Aquinas taught that salvation is for man to attain his end which is God. We believe that in the end we will have the beatific vision, the very vision of God, "that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee."

It is reported that in the last few moments of the life of the great intellectual Bishop Gore he repeated, "It's getting lighter, it's getting lighter!" until he disappeared into uncreated light.

And they say, that while they don't know what he saw at the end of his life, Steve Jobs said simply, "Wow!"

The Most Reverend Robert S. Morse



## ACW-DWS NOTES, MARCH 2026

The 2026 Synod and ACW Conference of the Diocese of Western States begins in less than two months, at Embassy Suites Hotel, 1345 Treat Blvd. Walnut Creek, CA 94597 from April 21-25 2026. Please register and make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. The deadline for hotel group rates and lower registration is March 20 th This is such a great opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones, to learn something new, and to keep up with our church family. For some, it is meeting face to face with those you have only known on ZOOM or email and sharing stories about your church and state.

Don't forget to send pictures and descriptions of items you are donating for the ACW Drawings to me (gillian.golden@yahoo.com) no later than March 16 th , so we can include them in the brochure. Tickets and a copy of the brochure will be sent to each church so you will have them in time for Easter. Tickets are \$2,00 each, and please include name, email or phone #and the number of the item you would like and give the tickets to someone who will be attending Synod or mail them to me, Gillian Golden. PO Box 558 Selma OR 97538-0558 to reach me by Friday, April 17 th .

You will also be receiving tickets for 'Peonies', which are \$5.00 each. Items for Synod Welcome Bags can be mailed to Michelle Henderer, 2725 Vine Drive, Livermore CA 94550

Thank you to all the churches that have sent their ACW Dues. Reminders will be sent to those who have not yet paid. Remember that we always pay the Provincial ACW the full amount due to them, so non-payment decreases ACW-DWS funds even more. Looking forward to seeing many of you at Synod.

Gillian Golden,  
President ACW-DWS



## *The Lenten Array at St John the Baptist, Omaha, NE*

