

# *The Shepherd's Staff Newsletter*

*The Right Reverend D. M. Ashman*

*June 2026*

## *Diocese of the Atlantic States Synod*

The Diocese of the Atlantic States held its annual Synod from May twelfth to May fourteenth. Tuesday May 12<sup>th</sup> the Board of Directors met followed by a combined Standing Committee and Examining Chaplains followed by the Bishop's Reception. On Wednesday the clericus and ACW met followed by lunch and the Business Meeting at which Bishop Ben Jones was elected Bishop Coadjutor. The Synod Banquet was held at Clara's Italian Restaurant and the Synod concluded on Ascension Day with the Pontifical Mass at All Saints Pro Cathedral in Bolingbrook Ill.



One sad note was the death of Father George Miley who went to God on May 5<sup>th</sup> and had served for more than a decade at the Church of the Holy Cross in Oklahoma City. Bishop Jones and Arch-deacon David Sweeney flew to South Carolina (Saint Timothy's ACC parish) to conduct his requiem mass. Father Miley who also served in Payson Arizona was a good and faithful priest. Of your charity please pray for the repose of his soul and for his surviving wife Louise.



# *Saint Joseph's Seminary*

The Spring Semester has concluded. The Summer Session will be held on the Zoom Platform from July twentieth to July twenty-fourth. The schedule for each day will be:

9:30 a.m.: Morning Prayer<sup>1</sup> using COMMON PRAYER ONLINE followed by short break

10:15 a.m.: Morning Instruction followed by Sext

Lunch Break

2:00 p.m.: Afternoon Instruction

4:00 p.m.: <sup>1</sup>Evening Prayer

## *Tentative Subject Outlines*

Monday Morning: The Nature of the Eucharist; the *Straight 28*

Tuesday Morning: The Missal Mass: Low Mass and Missa Cantata

Wednesday Morning: The Solemn High Mass

Thursday Morning: Priest and Deacon at Mass; the Deacon's Liturgy

Friday Morning: Hospital Mass; Requiem Mass; Graveside; Nuptial Mass

Monday Afternoon: Morning and Evening Prayer; the Litany and Penitential Office

Tuesday Afternoon: Baptism, Offices of Instruction and Confirmation

Wednesday Afternoon: Holy Matrimony; Churching of Women; Impediments and Annulments

Thursday Afternoon: Ministry to the Sick, Auricular and General Confession; Burial of the Dead

Friday Afternoon: Holy Orders; Consecration of a Church; Institution of a Minister

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Laity (if they wish) are encouraged to attend Morning and Evening Prayer with no tuition charged.

## *Fall Semester*

First/Second Year Latin, Advanced Latin and Greek will continue as will Screwtape Letters (which will morph into Mere Christianity) and History and Religion all beginning on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Starting August 19<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Hansen will be offering Dogmatic Theology Based on Dogmatic Theology by Francis Hall via Anglican Dogmatics Vol 1 and 2, Nashotah House.

**16 one-hour lectures live via Zoom and published on YouTube, with notes, reading assignments, discussion.**

**Theology** – The Queen of sciences, nature and supernature, miracles, faith; Approaches and difficulties, sources, Anglicanism, Dogmatic value and necessity, practical application

**Authority** – Truth claims and basis of them, grounds, Creeds, Episcopacy, Tradition, Councils, Biblical Interpretation, Essentials and non-essentials

**God** – Self existence, Apologetics for, Theism of Christianity, Proofs v. Agnostics, The uncaused cause, Teleological argument, moral argument, Ontological, Monotheism, Attributes of God

**Trinity** – Defined, Catholic doctrine, Revelation sources, Developing doctrine, Biblical sources, difficulties, meaning of Persons in God, Threefold Being, shared and unshared attributes and roles, Father, Son, Spirit

**Creation & Man** – Creation ex nihilo, Father, Son, Spirit's parts in Creation, Free Will and evil, Angels, Man, Religion, Sin, the Fall, Salvation, God's will, the question of predestiny, sanctification

**Incarnation** – Central truth of Christianity, Anglicanism, Biblical, developed doctrine, Virgin Mary; Christ's Godhead, Christ's humanity, Union of Person, Dual natures; Kenotic Theory, twofold operation, what he knew, Prophet, Priest, King

**Passion and Exaltation** – Sin, Redemption, Sacrifice, Death of Jesus; Mediator, Harrowing of Hades, Christ's Resurrection; Denials, Features of the cross, 40 days following, Ascension

**The Church** – Holy Spirit in OT, NT, Spirit and human souls, Ecclesia, Body of Christ, The Kingdom; Ministry, NT to Post Apostolic, Unity, Holiness, Catholic and Apostolic; Anglicanism, Grace by sacramental system: inward spiritual, outward

**Sacraments** – Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist in Bible, developed doctrine;

Eucharistic implications, benefits, varying theories; Penance, Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony, Unction

**Eschatology** – Developed ideas, Biblical warrant, Death and beyond; of saints, The Day of the Lord, the General Resurrection; and Punishment, the Heavenly Wedding and Eternal Life

**Weekly reading, questions and discussion, two mid-course quizzes and final exam.**

## *From Christ Anglican Church: The Church Sings*

Christ Anglican Church continued to encourage, support, and educate its parishioners to sing, sing, sing and “make a joyful noise!” One of these ways is to offer Hymn Sings. We do this 2-3 times per year. On March 21, 2026, The Church held its first festival of 2026. Led by Deaconess Obermeyer and Father Schultheis the Church gathered to sing a Celtic Festival of Hymns! In all We sang hymns sung as *St. Columba*, *Be Thou My Vision*, *The Solid Rock*, *Nunc Dimittis*, and our Bishop Hansen’s favorite, *St. Patrick*! All in All we sang 11 hymns, and all the verses, to ensure the whole authenticity of each hymn. The Parish Choir sponsored the Ice Cream Social by providing decorations, ice cream, cookies, Irish deviled eggs, and more ice cream! Thank you Father Schultheis for a great experience of worship!



*Rogation Sunday at Church of Our Saviour, Los Angeles*



## *Sermon for Ascension Sunday, 2026*

Psalm XXIV verses VII to X is often called the Ascension Psalm: *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*

Consider, if you will, the Apostles on that day when they watched their Lord and Master rise up and slowly fade away into the clouds. It was the only way they could describe what they were witnessing. And as Saint Luke described: *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.* Jesus earthy ministry was over. But was it? No. In a week we will celebrate the coming of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Now remember that comforter comes from the Latin root word *confirmare* which means *to strengthen*. Thus they would be strengthened to perform their ministries as apostles to preach to good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus did not leave them comfortless as they looked up into heaven. He would send them the Holy Ghost, and, under His guidance, the Church would become reality.

I would beg your indulgence to let me consider a kind of spiritual strengthening we don't always consider strengthening. And that is the virtue of humility. Virtue, by the way, also comes from a Latin root word *virtus* which means strength (being tough) like the expression the *power of love*. I looked up humility in Websters Dictionary and it defined humility as *freedom from pride or arrogance*. I hope you can begin to see my overriding theme: that humility is a powerful antidote to the *temptations*, as the Prayer Book teaches, *of the world, the flesh and the devil*. It is that power that is given to us at our Confirmations when we promise *to follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour*.

But there is also a sad corollary that lack of humility leads to spiritual suicide and death like arrogance, pride, egotism, and conceit. If the laity promise to follow their Lord and Saviour the ante is upped for clergy. Deacons promise to reverently obey their Bishop and his ministers set over them. Priests also promise obedience to the Bishop but are also pastorally warned that they will answer dreadfully should they bring harm or hurt to any member of the Body of Christ. And Bishops promising the same things are also asked: *Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in you, quietness, love, and peace among all men...?* None of these promises you will observe can be fulfilled without true humility.

So the overarching principle taught in Ascensiontide is that we cannot be mean, avaricious and prideful (or as I colloquially say: mean, dumb, vicious and stupid) and genuinely see the King of Glory in His heavenly majesty. That is a pitiful state! But this is not pulpit thumping puritanical diatribe. Indeed not, for the image of the King of Glory ought to engender a kinder and gentler vision and that is, when we are genuinely humble, we preach the gospel by the way we live our lives: meek, modest, merciful, forgiving and loving. Against all these the devil quivers and trembles.

Or as Saint Augustine of Hippo once quipped: *It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels.*

## *Various Clergy Pictures*



**Top:** Bishop Hansen and Father Newcomb with Confirmands Michael and Allie Hutton, Shannon and Daniel Billingsley, Angel Davidofsky, and Gessica Ogbalu. at the Church of the Holy Cross, Oklahoma City, OK

**Middle:** Bishop Mitchell and Archdeacon Mautner at the question of Confirmands at Saint Peter's, Oakland, CA

**Bottom:** Bishop Ashman and Deacon Kishur during the liturgy at the Church of Our Saviour, Los Angeles, CA

## *An Excerpt from the Bishop's Address at the DWS Synod*

[And yes indeed] our [three] bishops have their duties, but I want to get personal and praise the clergy in the trenches who carry the heaviest burdens in the work of spreading God's kingdom. Having few or many talents placed in their care, they carry the daily burden of investing our master's talents. Deacon Ron Reno teaches art in a private school and works in religious themes, many of which I have published in the Shepherd's Staff. But the deacon also makes time to care for Saint John the Baptist Church in Omaha assisting a dedicated priest Father Richard Andrews who drives to Omaha from Denver to celebrate the Eucharist once a month. Their work has doubled Sunday attendance from around ten to around twenty. And we must all help Deb Ponec, Saint John's treasurer, who publishes her weekly prayer list.

And we have two new priests, Fathers Rick Gregory of Saint Bartholomew's Washington and Charles Newcomb of Holy Cross Oklahoma City Oklahoma, who have worked hard to take strong parishes and make them stronger. In Colorado Father Daniel Canda shepherds Saint James' Denver and Saint Patricks' in Westcliffe. In Texas Canon Edward Jones is building a mission, Saint Mary at the Cross, in Plano, north of Dallas. And we are well served in Arizona by Father Ory Schultheis who is the curate working with Canon Steven Dart at Christ Church Carefree; and Assistant Priest at Atonement Fountain Hills working the Dean John LesCallett. Father Darius Gasatura (a new dad) is doing wonderful work at Saint Nicholas in Scottsdale as are Father Andrew Harrah and Deacon Richard Kishur at Saint Alban's in Peoria. And in Nevada Father Gordon Hines leads a thriving Saint George's parish in Las Vegas. Christ Church and Saint George's have five talents and are doubling them.

I would like to single out two exceptional and hard-working clergy, Father Jaime Torres who has transformed the multi racial parish of All Saints in Tulsa Oklahoma into a true parish family. Well done Father! And newly ordained Deacon Alister Morley Jaques who has done yeoman's service at the Parish of Saint Mark in Portland Oregon. I want to thank our Chancellor Canon Richard McNeeley not just for his legal counsel but also for his shepherding of Saint Thomas parish in San Francisco. And following the unexpected death of Canon Dillon last year, Father Benjamin Lawrence came to the rescue at Saint Stephen's in Oakville California and has become a talent-investing Vicar in his own right.

In the old heartland of the province, Saint Peter's Oakland continues on under the shepherding of Archdeacon Mautner and Father Paul Hauge. Saint Ann's Palo Alto fights the good fight under Canon Matthew Weber and Father Glenn Karcher. Saint Joseph's Seminary Chapel also fights the good fight under it Vicar Father Franz Longsworth and Dean David Napier. I am very proud of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Livermore led by Canon Larry Shaddix and Saint Mary the Virgin Chapel in San Diego led by Father Oliver Barrios. Nor can I forget my parishes in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara where I am assisted by Father Robert Greene, Father Boyd Britton and Father Philip Ternahan.

Nor must I forget to praise Saint Paul's Missionary Chapel in Newman California led by Canon Shaddix, and Saint Mark's Larkspur who worship at the Seminary; and faithful Father David LaBarbera and Saint Jude's in Grants Pass Oregon. And kudos to Father Benjamin Brown the Secretary of Synod, who with Father Dan Canda worked with our youth at Summer Camp. And the last church I want to honor (the one where we will celebrate the Synod Mass this afternoon), is Saint Martin of Tours in Concord, faithfully led by hard working Father Tom Kelnohofer who from this moment on is elevated to the rank of Honorary Canon with all the privileges thereto. Congratulations Father Tom, you have doubled your Lord's talents.

Finally, I want to honor you, our faithful parishioners in this room and back in our home parishes, who give of your time, treasure and talent for the spread of Christ's Kingdom. I think of my own parishes, and I see a multitude of faces who fought the good fight and have graduated to the paradise in the skies. I can't remember all their names, but I do remember their love and kindness. It was in those early days of my priesthood when I visited so many [of the] sick in so many hospitals all over metropolitan Los Angeles. And those tender moments visiting nursing homes and celebrating the Holy Communion by a bedside, or sometimes just talking and taking the loneliness out of ageing and their last earthy journey. They gave me grace and strength to actually be a priest. Like you, they saved me! And that is really what the miter and crozier are all about. Being important! God forbid! Rather, as Bishop Morse once said, bringing people to Jesus Christ.