

Opening Address of Bishop Marsh
 -A Synopsis-
Clericus, Alfred, Maine, June 15, 2011

The Psalm from the Lectionary for tonight's Evening Prayer included Ps. 84. Verse 11 seemed to stand out especially:

I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

The Doorkeeper watches carefully to see who is entering the House of God. He is appointed to welcome the guests and strangers who are seeking entrance.

Diocesan and International News (ACA and TAC)

There has been little interest in the Ordinariate concept within our Diocese. One clergyman has asked for admission to it. The offer has been open to any parish to make the move, as well, but none have elected to do so, thus far. It is time for all parties to make a final decision on this matter. The result of not doing so would be fragmentation. "I feel personally called to serve here within the ACA. I am inflexible in this resolve," he said.

The ACA House of Bishops met recently in Arizona. The initial half-hour of the meeting was contentious. A bishop had ordained two clergyman in California against ACA canon law. Bishop Falk resigned as Presiding Bishop. Both he and Bishop Langberg will remain faithful to the ACA. When asked if he would suggest a gift to be given him in honor of his service to the ACA, Bishop Falk quipped: "I would like the block of wood upon which Charles I was executed". His request was met with a miniature replica. Although there were initial tensions at the meeting, the humor was helpful. The Executive Council meeting proceeded peacefully. Bishops Strawm, Williams, and Marsh left the gathering feeling that they had made "a strong stand for Anglicanism".

When Bishop Falk resigned, bishops who had left the ACA for the Ordinariate wanted to remain for the time being in the House of Bishops. They have been permitted to do this, but without voting rights, leaving only four remaining bishops with both "voice and vote".

The struggle now includes such questions as: "What are the boundaries in the ACA during this time of change?" "What about parishes and clergy who leave, but want to return at some future point?" You can't have it both ways. Two weeks ago, at a conference of the Continuum in Victoria, B.C., Bishop Marsh gave the keynote address. The gathering included clergy and laity from the ACC and the APCK. It was a "coming together as Anglicans".

Anglicans are uncomfortable with the concept of “one Primate”, and the process of organizing them may be a bit like “herding cats”. But the question came up: why not pool our resources? There seemed to be a sense of walls beginning to break down. “Merger” may not be necessary, but what are the basic things upon which we all as Anglicans can center upon? The meeting in Brockton this fall will be “Part II”. There is a lot of hope for the Continuum.

Question and Answer Period:

Father Hiles asked about the “12 Points” of Anglicanism posted on Virtue On-Line as part of the Victoria conference. Bp. Marsh replied that Bp. Robinson of the UECNA had offered them, and that Bp. Marsh liked a number (but not all) of the points. Some of the conference participants have joined the ACC because the Canadian emphasis on the Ordinariate was done with such force that the church was fragmented as a result.

Anglicanorum coetibus (AC) is a wake-up call to the Continuum to find a way forward. This may mean “much less parsing” of the 39 Articles.

Fr. Jim Davis: “My thinking is Anglican. I have freedoms that I don’t think exist on the ‘far side of the Tiber’. And the Episcopal Church I knew doesn’t exist any more.

Bishop Marsh: What makes us Anglican? The absolute elements are the Primacy of Scripture, and the Book of Common Prayer. The AC says nothing about either, but much about the Roman Catholic Catechism. The Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral spoke of “four elements” that are essential. Anglicanism is at its best when it “relentlessly draws us to God”. We also have the Affirmation of St. Louis, and our Liturgy. It’s like jazz: you know it when you see and hear it.

Fr. Jeff Monroe: Modern Anglicans have an identity crisis: 1. Everyone is trying to tell us *what we are*. We don’t need to be defined by anybody. We have been defined by God. 2. We who are Anglicans are *already* in communion with each other (i.e. we don’t need the “full communion” offered by the Ordinariate).

Bp. Marsh: Unity in God is not political unity. It is a unity of the Spirit.

James ___: (Speaking of himself and another layman from St. Augustine, Patrick) We are brand new to Anglicanism. My perception of Anglicans had been that they were “straight-laced, stuffed

shirts”. But I have found them to be loving, caring, and Spirit-filled. My faith and knowledge of the Bible have been strengthened. I feel at homes. You guys have “got it”!

Patrick___ (a former Catholic): There was no emphasis in the Catholic Church on Scriptures. I learned nothing in it, although they have “a very thick Catechism”.

James: The Catholic Church is not big on independent thought.

Bishop Marsh: A family of very sad countenance approached him in one of the diocesan churches claiming they were not sure if they were saved. After a year they were smiling.

(In response to a question about the primacy of Scripture:) Our Reformation DNA gives us this attitude. We possess not only the traditions of the Church but also the legacy of Scripture. The Catholic Church answers all questions theologically through the Catechism, but we look to Holy Scripture. The Ordering of Priests (BCP) requires the Bishop to ask the ordinand: “Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all Doctrine required as necessary for eternal salvation...”.

Fr. Monroe: Every parish should have a good Bible study program. We use “Our Daily Bread” as a good tool for study.

Fr. Koller: We must be careful, however, not to substitute “one pope” with “many popes”, each having his own interpretation of the Bible. It is always important to refer to the Church Fathers. We must know our traditions and creeds. We are not free-wheeling.