



THE NEW FIRE

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World Consultation on the Continuing Anglican Churches

I hope everyone is having a blessed Advent as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the anniversary of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ; all the while looking forward to the day in which He will come again to reign eternally as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Indeed, Christmas can be seen on the horizon. But let us not forget that we are not yet there. During this season of Advent, as the world around us is already celebrating Christmas, the Church calls us to prepare ourselves to celebrate His Nativity and to prepare for His future return with thoughtful repentance seeking to keep His Holy Laws. Jesus himself never wavered from the Law. In fact, he even stated that he didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. What Jesus did was explain how we were to apply the Laws of God in our lives and he demonstrated that as well. So, as the Body of Christ, we are called to imitate him by trying our best to do the same. That is to obey the law, to love God the Father, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, through Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are reminded in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, on Advent Sunday, that the Old Testament Law does not cease to exist in the New Testament Church. Rather that love is the means by which the Law is fulfilled, and it is the discipline and direction of that Law which brings us to Christ. When we decide to keep the Law, not because we have to, but because we love him and our neighbor, it begins to form us such that we become more and more like him. Thus, Advent calls us to repent of our sins, to love God and our neighbor, and to keep the Law because we love him. My prayer this Advent is that each of us will make resolution to do our best to keep his holy Law each and every day of our lives, not because we have to, but because we want to out of love for him and that it will become second nature to us. This indeed will go a long way to prepare us for when He does return to reign eternally as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I do want to take a moment to report on what turned out to be a great event in the life of the Church, the World Conference of Continuing Anglican Churches. For this Bishop, it was great to be able to be with many of my brother bishops from within the Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC). The TAC was powerfully represented by Bp. Michael Gill, Bishop of Southern

Africa and Pretoria, Abp. Samuel Prakash, Metropolitan of India (whom I was delighted to meet for the first time along with his wife), Bp. Ruben Rodriguez, Bishop of Central America and Mexico (whom it was great to see once again). Of course, the USA was represented by Bp. Brian Marsh and me, as well as DEUS Vicar General John Vaughn. Together we were able to clearly demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of the TAC is united and looking forward to maintaining the Catholic Faith in the Anglican Tradition. I do want to note that Bp. Daren Williams was home recovering from surgery and that Vicar General Ian Grey, of the Traditional Anglican Church in England was unable to attend. Both joined us in prayer for this conference. Bp. Walter Grundorf, Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Province of America (APA) was also in attendance, and as always, it was a great to see him and his wife, Mary. I also want to report that it was a pleasure to meet Abp. Mark Haverland, Metropolitan of the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) and to spend some time with him in fellowship. I would be remiss by not saying that it was also great to meet Fr. James Hiles and the good people of St. Paul's Brockton as they were outstanding hosts for this historical event.

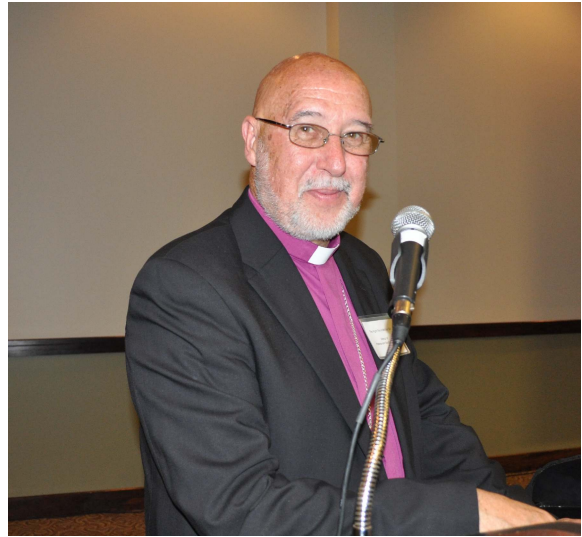


Fr. James Hiles, Rector of St. Paul, Brockton, and parishioners hosted the Conference.

The conference began with the first plenary session on Thursday afternoon with Bp. Marsh providing a short welcome to all in attendance. Following that he gave a talk on the history of the first 35 years of "Continuing Church." Abp. Mark Haverland, Archbishop of the ACC, presented his talk "Spirit of St. Louis: Theological Integrity in Communion and Continuum" at the second plenary session later that day. I thought both of these presentations were very good and to the point. In his opening statement, Abp. Haverland stated that "the Bishop of Rome has served as the instrument and promoter of Church unity, just not quite in the way anyone expected." Bp. Marsh has on several occasions referred to *Anglicanorum Coetibus* as a gift that appears to have propelled the "Continuing Church" to seek common ground and find ways in which we can work together at the very least. So it seems to me that both Abp. Haverland and Bp. Marsh agree in their acknowledgement that the Apostolic Constitution Rome issued has had a positive effect on us that Rome was not anticipating. Certainly it has encouraged us to step back and look at ourselves as Traditional Anglicans and to reevaluate the potential of unity. Indeed, there is no questioning the effect that *Anglicanorum Coetibus* had in moving us toward our Communion agreement with the APA. I do want to point out that, when it comes to unity, I agree with a major point of Abp. Haverland's talk; "that we can't mix bad Theology with good Theology" because, as history confirms in the Ordination of Women, "bad Theology will corrupt the good Theology." He went on to indicate that the foundational document must remain the *Affirmation of St. Louis* and that for the ACC "full *communio in sacris* requires adherence to the *Affirmation of St. Louis*, and that in turn means no communion with either the ordainers of women or with those who are in communion with the ordainers of women." I completely concur. I think that in considering unity we must be firm in requiring full adherence to the theology embodied in the *Affirmation of St. Louis*.



Bp. Brian Marsh welcomed attendees.



Bishop Michael from Southern Africa was the keynote speaker.

I think the highlight of the conference was Bp. Michael Gill's keynote address at the banquet. It was riveting and any attempt to summarize it would be desecrating to the address. I would simply say that you would do well to read his address as it is available online (as are all of the presentations). You can access from the website of the diocesan web site www.dmvaca.org. Friday morning, Bp. Paul Hewett of the Diocese of the Holy Cross (DOC) presented his talk "Ecumenism in the Continuum" to the third plenary session. Bishop Grundorf presented his talk "Continuum in Future Tense" to the final plenary session on Friday afternoon. Bp. Grundorf used Psalm 133 as a text for his talk: "*Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like precious oil upon the head that ran down into the beard... For there the Lord promised his blessing, and life for evermore.*" He has spent over 40 years ministering as an Anglican, all of which was as a "Continuing Anglican," even predating the Congress of St. Louis. He wondered what the history of the continuing Church would have been if we had followed the wisdom of these Psalm 133. He did note that we are facing an uphill battle as we seek to dwell in unity. But he also pointed out that God was a God of second chances, giving us numerous "mulligans." That certainly can be said about all areas of our lives. Bp. Grundorf reminded us that putting the pieces back in place will be much more difficult than breaking them apart. We must deal with personalities and egos along with turf protection -- all of which can seem insurmountable. So many efforts in the past have broken down, due primarily to those issues. He asked us, "Dare we try again?" I encourage you to read his presentation online as well to see how he answers this question in the affirmative.

The Consultation concluded with a question and answer session moderated by Fr. Hiles.

I really can't do justice to the conference nor can I provide a full commentary on all of the talks in this short

space. However, I hope that I was able to give you a glimpse of what was a great conference. Let me just encourage you to go online at www.dmvaca.org, clicking on "World Consultation: Continuing Anglican Churches." This will take you to the APA web site where you will be able to read the presentations. That will be of much greater value to you. Another thing I can't possibly do is paint an adequate portrait of what was likely the most important aspect of the conference and you won't be able to read it online either. That is the establishment of relationships that before *Anglicanorum Coetibus* most likely would not have been considered. That is one of those gifts that has been alluded to by Bp. Marsh. Indeed, the relationship with the APA was established over a year ago and has resulted in full *communio in sacris*. Since June there have been several occasions to get to know the Metropolitan of the ACC better and he us. The result was a coming together at Brockton in fellowship and prayer of five global TAC Bishops, the ACC Metropolitan, the APA Presiding Bishop, not to mention the presence of an Assistant Bishop of the Episcopal Missionary Church and the Bishop of the Diocese of the Holy Cross. Indeed, there are many opportunities and difficulties to discuss. But the blessing is that relations among the leaders of the primary Continuing Churches have never been so pleasant. The good news is that these relationships will continue be fostered such that increased cooperation will be possible. Where that will lead us God only knows, but one thing was evident at the Brockton Conference, truly, the Holy Spirit is at work.

In the words of the Collect for Advent Sunday, may God grant "us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now and in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility." May be granted like humility as we continue to forge ahead in our new relationships.

Have a blessed Advent.

+Stephen



Bp. Walter Grundorf, APA



Bp. Ruben Rodríguez, Guatemala, visits with a long time friend, Bp. Mark Haverland, ACC.



Bp. Paul Hewett, Diocese of the Holy Cross



Bp. Brian and Ljuba Marsh visit with Bp. and Mrs. Samuel Prakash from India.



Bishops attending the Anglican Conference, front row left to right: Bishops Wilbert Bailey (EMC), Rubén Rodríguez (Central America), Edward MacBurney (retired TEC), Stephen Strawn (ACA, DMV); back row left to right: Bishops Paul Hewett (Diocese of the Holy Cross) Mark Haverland (ACC), Brian Marsh (ACA, DNE), Walter Grundorf (APA) and Samuel Prakash (India).

Sunday, November 27 was Mission Sunday in the DMV. Please remember to send your donations to the DMV Global Mission Fund to:

DMV Global Missions
c/o Peg Downing
107 N. Clearwater Dr.
Highland Village, TX 75077

Recently, money is sent bi-monthly to Bp. Rodríguez in Guatemala and to the propane company for Fr. Apple to use to help the people have heat this winter. Please remember our missions with your donations and prayers.

The Rt. Rev. Daren Williams has resigned as Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the West citing knee problems that inhibit travel (specifically flying in cramped airliners). In fact, he recently had a knee replacement. At this point he is planning to continue in ministry and hopes to serve a parish/mission as a priest. As a result of that resignation, Bp. Strawn has been appointed Episcopal Visitor of that Diocese. Please keep that Bp. Strawn and the Diocese of the West in your prayers as they begin to chart the way forward.