



# THE CALL

Calling the World  
to the Cross of Christ

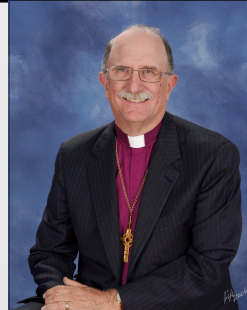
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## BISHOP'S MESSAGE

From Bishop Bill Thompson



### A Forgotten Season

One of our great traditions as Anglicans is the observance of the Christian Year. As we enter Advent each year, we begin our liturgical journey of living through the salvation history of our redemption once again.

Most of us know the names of the Liturgical seasons we visit throughout the year: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and the Sundays after Pentecost. In these observances our tradition guides us through recalling the mighty acts of God, directing us so that we can be with Him forever. God desires that we continually remember what he has done for us, recalling his saving mercy for each and every one of us who love him. This is the reason we have adopted this tool in our tradition.

On Sunday, November 27 of this year, the recitation of God's saving grace began again with the first Sunday of Advent. Most of you know that the word advent means "coming." These four Sundays of Advent remind us of three comings of Jesus: the coming of the Lord Jesus in the Incarnation, the coming of the Lord Jesus in each of our hearts, and the coming of the Lord Jesus at the end of the age. During this time in late November and December we are called to prepare ourselves for Him.

Our culture does not help us to contemplate Advent as a time to prepare for the Incarnation. In the ancient world when a festival occurred, everyone prepared for the event, focusing on the celebration. When the festival finally began, they would then celebrate the festival for some days. They rejoiced in the festival without getting bogged down in preparation because they prepared beforehand.

We, however, have a tendency to prepare and try to celebrate at the same time.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

*The Anglican Church  
in North America*



*Affirming Biblical Authority  
and Christian Orthodoxy  
within the worldwide  
Anglican Communion*



<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Kingdom Conference 2012	2
Calendars	3
Parish Newsletter Info	3
Icons Article	4

## Bishop's Message

*(Continued from Page 1)*

When we celebrate Christmas, we begin celebrating some weeks before December 25 and at the same time prepare for the feast. In our culture, that tends to bring exhaustion to us all. When December 25th finally comes, we are so tired that, functionally, we act as if Christmas is over. However, the Christian year reminds us that Christmas lasts 12 days, from the 25th of December to January 5th. This is supposed to be the time when we celebrate, but we are so tired we want to forget the whole thing.

I bring this up because I would very much like all of you to do the best you can to live out both Advent and Christmas in their proper order. Take time to contemplate the three comings of Jesus. Minimize the number of Christmas festivities you attend. Prepare your home, and prepare your hearts. Don't

overburden yourself. Save your energy so that you can celebrate the Incarnation of Jesus during a leisurely Christmastide.

I know that this is not what most of those around us do. Most of the people around us celebrate Christmas but do not celebrate Jesus. Historically, the Christian faith has been a faith that is counterculture. We are called to be different from the world. We have been transformed.

I ask you to Celebrate Advent, the time of the great coming. Prepare your home for the coming of Jesus. Prepare yourself spiritually for the Incarnation. Then let's celebrate Christmas with all our hearts during the 12 days of Christmas. And proclaim it to the housetops as loudly as you can!

## KINGDOM CONFERENCE 2012

*The Power of Vision: The Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

*March 23 - 24, 2012*

Watch! It is coming.....

In the blink of an eye, March 23 - 24, 2012, will be here and our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Kingdom Conference" will be happening. Thought you might like to be among the first to hear about the theme "The Power of Vision: The Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" for the 2012 Kingdom Conference. Mark your calendars for March 23 - 24, 2012, in Irvine, CA, on the campus of Mariners Church, same as last year. We gathered your many insights and suggestions from last year's conference and applied what was learned to offer an even more exciting and inspiring time for all of us.

If you would like to volunteer with any pre-event planning and/or work on-site during the conference, please contact Peg and Phil Bemis at 714-962-2182 or email [pegbemis@gmail.com](mailto:pegbemis@gmail.com). We're also planning a slideshow of our congregations, so gather six of your finest photos to showcase your church, and send them to the diocesan office at [office@westernanglicans.org](mailto:office@westernanglicans.org) by January 31, 2012.

**LET'S REJOICE TOGETHER IN THE POWER OF GOD'S VISION  
IN EACH OF OUR LIVES AND IN OUR CHURCHES!**

*Eph. 1:18, 19 - "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."*

## Bishop's Travels

December 3, 2011  
Church Planting Gathering  
St. James Anglican Church  
Newport Beach, CA

December 11, 2011  
Building Consecration  
and Confirmations  
Christ Church, Fallbrook  
Fallbrook, CA

January 14-15, 2012  
Parish Visitation  
St. David's Anglican Church  
North Hollywood, CA

January 16-18, 2012  
Board Meeting  
American Anglican Council  
Atlanta, GA

January 21, 2012  
Diaconal Ordination Service  
St. James Anglican Church  
Newport Beach, CA

January 28-29, 2012  
Parish Visitation  
Christ the King  
Anglican Church  
San Diego, CA



*Philippians 4:6 -*

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

## Interested in the newsletters of our member parishes?

*Here are some sites and emails you might want to visit to find and read the latest:*

St. David's, North Hollywood, CA  
[http://www.stdavidsh.org/newsletter/stdavids\\_newsletter.pdf](http://www.stdavidsh.org/newsletter/stdavids_newsletter.pdf)

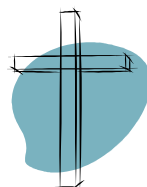
Christ The Redeemer, Yuma, AZ  
[christtheredeemeryuma@yahoo.com](mailto:christtheredeemeryuma@yahoo.com)

Christ the King, San Diego, CA  
THE MONARCH  
[office@ctksd.org](mailto:office@ctksd.org)

Resurrection, San Marcos, CA  
RESURRECTION TIMES  
[www.ResurrectionSanMarcos.org](http://www.ResurrectionSanMarcos.org)

All Saints, Long Beach, CA  
CARILLON  
[fr.don@allsaintsanglicanchurch.ccsend.com](mailto:fr.don@allsaintsanglicanchurch.ccsend.com)

*(To list your parish's newsletter, please send the information to [thecalleditor@westernanglicans.org](mailto:thecalleditor@westernanglicans.org) for inclusion in the next THE CALL.)*



## Diocesan Calendar

*For more information, please see the Events Calendar online at:*

<http://www.westernanglicans.org/calendar.html>

December 3, 2011  
Cursillo Secretariat Meeting  
St. Stephen's Anglican Church  
Tustin, CA  
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

December 10, 2011  
Executive Committee Meeting  
St. James Anglican Church  
Newport Beach, CA  
9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Friday, December 23, 2011  
through  
Monday, January 2, 2012  
*The diocesan offices will be closed*

December 25, 2011  
*Merry Christmas!*

January 1, 2012  
**A Happy and Blessed New Year!**

January 7, 2012  
Cursillo Secretariat Meeting  
St. Stephen's Anglican Church  
Tustin, CA  
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

January 14, 2012  
Executive Committee Meeting  
St. James Anglican Church  
Newport Beach, CA  
9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

January 21, 2012  
Diaconal Ordination Service  
St. James Anglican Church  
Newport Beach, CA

## *Icons in the Postmodern Church*

*By Fr. Jim Obermeyer, Christ Church, Phoenix*

Where do icons fit into the church of the 21st century and what is their meaning? In an age when many churches are dismissing religious symbols as something that are from another era and not needed, many people are looking for meaning and stability in their fragmented lives. Are symbols important? The question really should be, "Why are we Christians throwing out religious symbols and taking on the symbols of the world, and why is the world taking religious symbols and using them?" Churches are looking more like office buildings and malls are looking more like churches, complete with vaulted ceilings, icons (paintings) on their walls and towers with carillon bells. Ironic isn't it, that in my own community they built a bell tower at the commuter train station but there is not one church I am aware of with a bell tower in a town of around 300,000 people.

We human beings need symbolism. It makes life meaningful, right from the wedding rings and all the ceremony that goes with the wedding, to the birth of babies and the proverbial cigar given out to celebrate the new life coming into the world - and let's not forget funeral traditions. The truth is that if we throw out the symbols of the Christian Faith, we will adopt other symbols because humans are symbolic by nature. For instance, there is a church that refuses to put a cross up for fear of offense to visitors, but behind the pulpit stands a large globe of the world with flags lined up on each side. What is going on? In my humble opinion, there is a watering down of the Gospel message happening in many churches because of the misleading impression that symbols take away the true faith of the heart.

Why should not God's house of worship be the most beautiful building in town? Icons have been used in the church from the very earliest days, according to Eusebius in "The History of the Christian Church", written around the year AD 300. Icons have been called "windows into heaven" because of their pow-

erful symbolic value. There is a reason icons are painted the way that they are and used in Church buildings and homes and in worship.

Several points must be made concerning images in the church. What about the commandment, "Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image to fall down and worship it?" First of all, the same God who gave this commandment also told His people to make a Temple in Jerusalem and make two golden statues of cherubim or angels, with their wings touching over the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. Then He told them to carve angels in the gold of the walls of the Temple. If He was against images, He would not have contradicted His own word in telling them not to make images. The truth is that He was warning them about *worshipping* images.

There is a definite difference between worship and veneration. We worship God alone. However, we venerate His mother, the saints and icons, much as we venerate the grandmother that we love. We do not worship our grandmother, but we may have pictures of her and venerate them in showing our love for her. We are people of pictures and images and art. God made us that way because He is that way. He loves beauty and He created beauty. Beauty is important in our lives, and no one can contradict this. Why then should not beauty be a part of our worship? Personally, I find nothing inspiring about worshipping in an office building or a school or a church that looks like an industrial building. I know what it is like, because our church worshipped in a school for six years until obtaining our own chapel.

Icons express our desire to use our senses in worship. True worship in the Old and New Testaments used all the senses that God has given us. Our eyes are important. When we see icons or pictures, we experience something that makes our faith just a little

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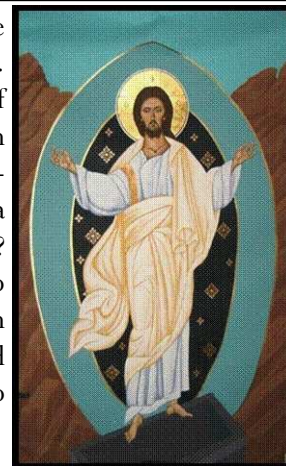
## Icons

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more real. It gives us a bit more of a connection with God in seeing a depiction of Jesus, God who became one of us. When we look at an icon of the crucifixion, we think of Him who suffered in our place. Icons tell a story. Think of how powerful the images were in the movie by Mel Gibson, "The Passion of the Christ." It made the passion of Christ so real to all who saw it. Not too many people left the theaters with dry eyes. Icons may tell of a Bible event, a saint's life, or just show us a bit of the glory of God.

There is much symbolism in iconography. The figures, whether of our Lord, His mother or the saints, are somewhat otherworldly. The proportions of the figures are not always exact to us, although there is a definite look that is similar in all good icons. The pattern of the icon of our Lord for instance, is taken from the earliest icon of Christ. Eusebius, in about the year 300 AD, tells us that there were color portraits of our Lord and the apostles that had been there from the beginning of the church. He even said that in his day there was a bronze statue he had seen himself of Jesus in his town of Caesarea. This was a statue of the woman with the issue of blood that had been erected in front of the house where she lived. Most of these have been destroyed since, but they once existed and were accepted in the early church. It is fascinating when we look at icons of the apostles that there has always been an accepted look for each of them. As with Christ, there have been icons of the Theotokos (God-bearer), or Virgin Mary from the earliest days of the Church. She is depicted much the same, and in fact tradition tells us that there are sev-

eral in existence that were painted by the evangelist St. Luke. There is a feeling of reverence when praying in front of icons. What inspiration is it to look up and see a tiled ceiling when praying? We may need something to help focus our thoughts on our Lord when praying, and icons are a great way to do that.



It seems that there is a tremendous resurgence of icons in many denominations, from Eastern Orthodox to Catholic, Anglican and even in Protestant (evangelical) denominations. Is it because our churches have been stripped of their beauty and the images that mean so much to practically all people? Educators have told us for years that we learn by seeing as well as hearing. If we follow the logic of many churches today, shall we strip our homes of their beauty by throwing out the photos of our loved ones including those who have passed on? Shall we toss the art painted by people who have been given talent by God to bring beauty into our lives? Everybody would agree this is ridiculous. Why not also be surrounded with "pictures" of our spiritual family with whom we will live forever?

Let us honor God with our heart and also our minds, eyes and talent.

**The Call**, the newsletter of the Diocese of Western Anglicans, is a communication tool bringing our member churches ever closer to one another and keeping Anglicans throughout the Diocese informed about events and programs.

Currently published bi-monthly, *The Call* is moving toward a monthly edition.

Please send contributions to the Editor, Twyla Arant, at [thecallditor@westernanglicans.org](mailto:thecallditor@westernanglicans.org).

Submissions will be considered for inclusion in the subsequent newsletter.

**Contributions may be submitted through January 1st for the next edition (for publication February 2012)**

Thank you for helping make *The Call* the best it can be as we seek to glorify God in our publication.