

**Sermon for Morning Prayer
The Bestowal of the Denver Succession
to the Episcopate upon the St. Louis Churches**

Lessons:¹

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the thirty-fifth Chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.²

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

“Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

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The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the seventeenth Chapter of the Gospel According to St. John.³

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

The Rev'd Canon John A. Hollister⁵
January 28, 2009.

¹ The Lessons appointed for occasions of Christian Unity in *Psalms and Lessons for Special Occasions* (1943), THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xliii (PECUSA 1928).

² Isaiah 35:1-10 (KJV).

³ St. John 17:1-26 (KJV).

⁴ St. John 17:6 (KJV).

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the Episcopate in some one place or time seemed in doubt, we must marvel at the care with which Providence has provided for its continuance.

The importance of these events to us is well illustrated when a priest is able to stand here with you and together with you offer that *anamnesis* by which Christ allows us to re-present before the Father Christ's own "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world". At that time, he can only present, on your behalf, your "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" because at some time previously He was ordained a Priest in the Church of God by some Bishop who, in almost all cases, had himself been ordained by the Bishops of a Continuing Church who, in his own turn or in that of his immediate predecessors, was ordained by one of those first four Bishops from the Denver Consecration.

(I say "in almost all cases" because from time to time we have been blessed to receive Priests who were ordained in the Roman Catholic Church, or in one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, or in one of the legitimate Old Catholic Churches.)

As we have just reviewed, these first four Bishops were Bishops through the act of Bishops Chambers and Pagtakhan, and they themselves were Bishops in significant part through the act of the Scottish Bishops in consecrating Bishop Seabury. But had the true Church of Scotland remained a state church, and not been displaced by the greed of the Presbyterians, those Scots Bishops would have been bound by the same constraints as were the English ones.

Thus in the event we commemorate this morning we see yet again that God is ever watching out for us, providing for our most basic needs, in this case for the Sacramental integrity of our Church.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Text:

From the Second Lesson: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."⁴

In the Name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Introduction:

We are a Catholic Church, a fact we acknowledge each time we recite one of the historic Creeds. In the Orders

for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer, we recite the Apostles' Creed, with its affirmation "I believe in ... The holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints". In the Eucharist we recite the Nicene Creed where, despite a printer's typographic error in 1549 which omitted the word "holy" from the "Marks of the Church", we still acknowledge "one Catholic and Apostolic Church".

One of the principal points which distinguishes the Catholic Faith, and which, therefore, distinguishes a Catholic Church, is its reliance on objectively valid Sacraments as incarnational occasions of God's Presence in this physical world. Almost all of these Sacraments, however – all but Baptism and Matrimony – require that they be administered by a duly-ordained Priest or Bishop who stands in the authentic Apostolic Succession.

Thus, without the assurance of this Succession, there can be no assurance that we are within the Catholic Church to which we give our allegiance in those Creeds.

Development:

Thus when the founders of the Continuing Anglican church movement determined that an authentic Catholic church life could only be maintained in separation from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA and from the Anglican Church of Canada, one of their first concerns was to assure that their new jurisdiction would possess the historic Episcopate, the Episcopate which is the essential minister of all the Sacraments except Baptism and Matrimony and from which both of the other grades of Holy Order arise.

Today marks the thirty-first anniversary of the consecration of four new Anglican Bishops in a service held in a Lutheran Church in Denver, Colorado. Those four new Bishops, Charles Dale David Doren, Robert Watterson, James Orrin Mote, and Robert Sherwood Morse, were con-

tish Church. Thus for Seabury's perseverance and fortitude, and for the Scots Bishops' generosity and vision, we must always be deeply grateful.

The Anglican Missal recalls Seabury's consecration by providing special Propers for a special Votive Mass on November 14, under the name "The Bestowal of the American Episcopate". It is certainly fitting that we should celebrate that service whenever possible, giving thanks for what it has brought to us.

3. Finally, the third of these events which led directly to the Denver Consecrations took place in 1948, when the Philippine Independent Catholic Church received the Anglican Episcopate from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA. That completed a process begun in 1902, when native Filipinos formed a new church for their new nation because they were dissatisfied at the integral part the Roman Catholic Church had played in the oppressive Spanish colonial regime.

When you consider how grudging was the attitude of the Episcopal Church in the 1970s toward the founders of our church, and the extreme lengths to which it was prepared to go to prevent us from receiving the vital gift of the Apostolic Succession, it is ironic to recall how generously that same Episcopal Church in the 1940s extended that gift to these Filipinos, whose situation was in some ways similar to our own.

It was that somewhat unlikely generosity that made it possible for Bishop Pagtakhan, thirty years later, to join with Bishop Chambers in passing on to us the historic Anglican Succession that the Episcopal Church was so anxious we should not have.

As we look back along the past three and a half centuries and recall these particular times when the survival of

signed the Treaty of Paris, recognizing the political independence of the new United States after the Revolutionary War, the scattered and disorganized Parishes here of the Church of England were suddenly cut adrift and could no longer form part of the Established Church in what was now a foreign country.

When the clergy of the new State of Connecticut elected Samuel Seabury as their Bishop, he sailed for England to seek consecration there. That act alone was one of considerable courage. The passage by sea took many weeks and risked all the perils of sea travel in the age of sail. Once Seabury arrived in England, he immediately risked catching smallpox, from which many American travelers died, because that disease was not endemic in the colonies the way it was in the mother country. Thus the colonists, unlike the native English, rarely built up any natural immunity to this killer.

Nevertheless, Seabury persevered. He approached the English Bishops, who were generally favorable to assist the new church but who were unable to do so. They served an Established Church which was an integral part of the English legal and governmental system which then permitted them only to consecrate Bishops for service within the British Isles.

(One result of Seabury's experience, and the fact that he was able to be consecrated in Scotland, was Parliament's later passage of statutes which provided for the consecration of "Overseas Bishops" and which were the actual beginnings of the late Anglican Communion. But that is another story.)

So Seabury traveled to Scotland, where he met with the Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and convinced them to aid the new American Church by providing for its first Bishop. Through Bishop Albert Chambers, we have received Bishop Seabury's line of succession from the Scot-

separated in order to carry Christ's authority, and the Office of His Apostles, to the new church jurisdiction that had begun a year-long process of formation at a large meeting at St. Louis, Missouri, in the Fall of 1977. This process was to have continued, and in part did continue, when the founders of the new jurisdiction met again to draft its foundation documents at Dallas, Texas, in the Fall of 1978.

Bishop Doren was consecrated for the Anglican Catholic Church's Diocese of the Mid West, Bishop Watterson for the ACC's Diocese of the Southeast, which is now its Diocese of the South, Bishop Mote for the ACC's Diocese of the Holy Trinity, and Bishop Morse for the Diocese of Christ the King. This latter still exists but never actually came under the same Church administration as did the others.

I stress these diocesan affiliations because it is very important that these four new Bishops were *not* consecrated just to give them personal titles or increased prestige. Instead, they were commissioned to be the pastors, the shepherds, of real jurisdictions within Christ's Church, and to oversee and care for actual flocks, the people of their respective Dioceses.

Four other Bishops were involved in planning for these consecrations, two of whom were members of the Episcopal Church in the USA, three of whom were within the Lambeth Communion, and one of whom, while not in the Lambeth Communion, was in communion with it and had received his Episcopal Orders through that Communion. The actual consecrators were Albert Chambers, the retired ECUSA Bishop of Springfield, Illinois, and Francisco Pagtakhan, the Missionary Bishop in the U.S. for the Philippine Independent Catholic Church. At the last moment, the other two were unable to attend but gave formal consent to the consecration of the new Bishops; these were Charles Boynton, the retired ECUSA Bishop of Puerto Rico, and Mark Pae, the Bishop of Taejon, Korea.

This action assured that the new church movement would stand in the Apostolic Succession, and thus would be able to minister to its people Christ's Own Sacraments, for which we must be ever grateful. That is why today's anniversary appears on our Ordo Kalendar. However, as we celebrate and give thanks for that inestimable blessing, we should at the same time remember that the Bishops who coöperated in bringing this gift to us did not do so without difficulty or danger to themselves.

Further, behind them, stretching back in history, stand other Bishops, who likewise at great personal cost, or in actual or potential danger, and despite great difficulties, assured that this line of Apostolic Succession would continue in a way that brought it, ultimately, to us. Without their courage, their vision, and their sacrifices, we would not be going, in a few minutes, to encounter and receive Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the consecrated elements on His Altar.

In particular, there were three prior occasions upon which decisions were made and acts were taken that would be crucial to preserving the lines of the Bishops who brought this gift to us. Each of these occasions involved danger, trouble, and sacrifice on the part of those involved in them and so it is appropriate that today, of all days, we should stop and remember them with gratitude.

1. The first of these occasions that was critical to our receiving the historic Episcopate took place in 1690. That was during a civil war in the British Isles which goes by the name of "The Glorious Revolution" and was the second time in the 17th Century that Parliament took upon itself to expel the legitimate monarch.

What happened was that a son was born to King James, the VII of Scotland and II of England, who had for

many years been a Roman Catholic, and to his second wife, a Roman Catholic princess from Italy. The new Prince of Wales would, of course, be raised as a Roman Catholic and the British Crowns (there were three of them) would be Roman Catholic for the foreseeable future.

Parliament feared that in the international situation of the times, this would weaken Britain's ability to protect its interests at home and abroad, such as by resisting the expansionist megalomania of Louis XIV of France and his allies. So James was expelled and his Protestant daughter Anne, with her husband and cousin, William of Orange, were installed as joint Sovereigns.

Politically, the new government needed to placate the Scots, whose nationalistic and religious fervor had played such a great part in the upheavals of the previous fifty years. Therefore the Crown abandoned all its attempts to return Scotland to the historic Faith and permitted the Scots Parliament to disestablish the old, and Episcopal, Church of Scotland, putting the Presbyterian Church in its place. The true Church actually became illegal, and struggled to continue to exist as a persecuted underground body. At that time, this was, of course, a great tragedy for its leaders and members and led to much oppression and suffering. However, as things turned out a century later, it was also an act of Providence that was vital to our receiving the Apostolic Succession.

2. The second occasion that was crucial to our Succession occurred on November 14, 1784, when Samuel Seabury was consecrated in Aberdeen, Scotland by the Bishops of that illegal, underground Scottish Episcopal Church of which we have just spoken. Our Ordo Kalendar calls November 14 "The Bestowal of the American Episcopate" because Seabury was the first Bishop of the newly-independent American church. His consecration, or the consecration of someone like him, was necessary because once Great Britain