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Church of the Advent

Celebrating 150 Years

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Walking in Beauty

Fundamental to the Navajo or Diné Weltanschauung is the principle of hózhó, most aptly defined as “walking in beauty”. “Walking in beauty” is not simply a statement of personal aesthetic but rather an integrated, harmonious, duty and commitment to live in peace with one’s self, one’s extended community, all of creation, and the creator(s). When such harmony is broken or abandoned, a return to health may be facilitated by ceremonies that include songs, dance, sand paintings, other ritual acts, and prayers.

The “Blessing Way”, one of five or six major such ceremonies, may be performed not principally to heal brokenness but primarily as blessing qua blessing. The authentic, correct, and accurate performance of the ceremony is itself the blessing. The desired result may be approximately understood as “for good hope” and though centered upon the one “sung over”, the extended attending community may obtain benefit as well. (Note that though geographically adjoining and sharing some similar features, the worldview and cultic practice of other Southwestern Native Americans such as the Pueblo, Zuni, and Hopi may meaningfully vary from those of the Navajo.)

For the vast majority of English speaking American “People of the Book” (i.e. Jews, Christians, and Moslems), not only are there no optimal, exact translations of significant Navajo cultic expressions and ways of experiencing the world, but the fundamental concepts themselves may seem baffling to the point of misunderstanding, mystification, and arrogant ethnocentric dismissal. Does this matter? Why is this pervasive de facto if unconscious rejection and ignorance of any current consequence?

The state of the US contemporary body politic, exemplified by the 2016 presidential choices (both utterly dismal candidates) and the election itself, is characterized by dissention, deception, dissembling, dishonesty, and deceit to the extreme. We as a people have cravenly, utterly rejected the necessity, possibility, and significance of “walking in beauty” out of cynicism, cowardice, and/or distorted self-interest. We have little in the political realm “for good hope.” Blessing, harmony, and the healing of brokenness have become alien, enigmatic notions to our time and place.

How are we to heal, to return to harmony, to become blessed as well as to bless, to experience “good hope”? How are we to “walk in beauty”? How can we again live in unity and peace? Several steps seem essential though of extraordinary challenge.

1.) Healing is not possible unless we genuinely, consciously, intentionally, humbly acknowledge that we corporately and individually need to be healed. Effective acknowledgement will not be accomplished by blaming others, rotely bemoaning that things need to change, or complaining that the system is broken. As unpopular and politically incorrect as it sounds, what is in fact required is confession motivated by contrition. We have as individuals, institutions, groups, and coalitions majorly screwed up! It is all too facile to blame political parties, economic conditions, world events, and the actions of our predecessors as excuses for our own poor choices, gutless acquiescence, and lazy disengagement. WE have screwed up and screwed up “bigly”!

2.) Undergirding these failures is a fundamental lack of shared vision. We have lost sight as a people of from whence we came, of who we must be, and for whom we must be. The author of Proverbs (29:18) foretold: “Without a vision, the people perish.” We have lost a sense of purpose larger than ourselves that is grounded in values far grander than our own self-centered desires. We routinely settle for platitudes that in our souls we know to be hollow, for promises we know to be disingenuous, and for goals we know to be bogus. Together we are obliged to construct a vision that unites, a vision of who we are and should become, of where we must go, and how we will get there.

3.) Contrition grounded confession is necessary but by no means sufficient. A vision constructed devoid of courageous implementing action yields nothing more than saccharine satisfaction. We must persevere and commit to correction. That correction will not come cheaply nor will we achieve immediate consummation. We must act not just for near term amendment of our errors, but as critical, for the sake of those who follow us and are subject to the fruits of our labors, both for good and for ill. We must correct our trajectory and cultural tenor for honorable generational stewardship. Sir Edmund Burke famously wrote: “The only thing necessary for evil to prevail is for the good to do nothing.” Failure to act, to correct, to remedy would be our cohort's tragic failure of will creating a persisting, perilous legacy encumbering generations to come.

To “walk in beauty” requires humbly acknowledging our need for healing, the creation and commitment to a shared vision, and concerted concrete transformational action. Blessing and “good hope” are viable future possibilities and though grace never comes cheaply, the cost of stasis is an insufferable inheritance to pass on to our successors.

--Doug+



ASCENSION DAY SERVICE

Ascension Day is one of the earliest Christian festivals dating back to the year 68 CE. According to the New Testament, Jesus met several times with his disciples during the 40 days after his resurrection to instruct them on how to carry out his teachings. It is believed that on the 40th day he took them to the Mount of Olives, where they watched as he ascended to heaven. Ascension Day marks the end of the Easter season and occurs ten days before Pentecost.

We will celebrate The Solemnity of the Ascension with The Holy Eucharist on Thursday, May 10 at 6:00 PM. Following the service we will meet in the Parish Hall for a salad bar supper. Please join us.

CAPE MAY MUSIC FESTIVAL

The 29th annual Cape May Music Festival will hold four concerts at Church of the Advent during May and June. Parish members may attend these concerts for half price.

Tuesday, May 29 - 8:00 pm

NEW JERSEY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE "Folk and Dance in Chamber Music"

Special guest: Oren Fader, guitar

Tuesday, June 5 - 8:00 pm

NEW YORK CHAMBER ENSEMBLE "Chamber Jazz: Musical Crossroads"

Featuring Sam Reider and friends

Tuesday, June 12 - 8:00 pm

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHAMBER PLAYERS "Repertoire for strings and woodwinds"

Thursday, June 14 - 8:00 pm

NEW YORK CHAMBER ENSEMBLE "The Italian Influence"

Notes from the ECM

The next breakfast meeting of the ECM will be Tuesday, May 8. The breakfast and meeting begin at 8:30 AM, with coffee ready by 8:00 AM. The cost is \$5.00 and all men of the parish are invited.

Notes from the ECW

The next ECW meeting will be held on Thursday, May 17 at 10:30 AM in the Parish Hall.

ECW RUMMAGE SALE



Spring is here and it is time to clean out closets, attics and basements. The ECW rummage sale will be held on Friday, May 4, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM and Saturday, May 5, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Donations of clean, used clothing, household goods, books and linens can be dropped off in the Parish Hall April 30 to May 3. **Please, no office electronics such as computers, printers, etc., no VCRs or typewriters or encyclopedias.** We can always use additional hands to assist with sorting the treasures, so if you would like to help come to the Parish Hall Monday, April 30 through Thursday, May 3 at 9:00 AM.

THE BLESSING PROJECT

In cooperation with Cape May County Habitat for Humanity parishioners may purchase for \$50 a framing stud board for the construction of the new home for a homeless family and have the creative opportunity to decorate the “purchased” board with scriptural verse of choice and accompanying art work as was done last year. The boards will be available in the Parish Hall from May 7 to May 21. The Outreach Committee is sponsoring this project.

THE NEXT VESTRY MEETING IS SUNDAY, MAY 20 AT NOON

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Plans are underway for Vacation Bible School at Church of the Advent. The dates are July 30 to August 3, 2018 and it will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. If you would like to be a part of the VBS adventure this year, please contact the church office at 884-3065 or adventsecretary@comcast.net. Many small tasks go into creating a successful event, so please do not hesitate to share your talents and interests! We begin our serious planning this month.

30th ANNUAL CAPE MAY CHOIR WEEK

Sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey and Church of the Advent, the program's focus is on learning to use the gift of our voices and enjoy the art of singing. It is open to all youth ages 10 and up, whatever their faith home. The camp begins on Sunday, July 15 and ends on Thursday, July 19 with an Evensong service, to which the community is invited.

For day students the camp will begin at 9:00 AM and end at 5:00 PM. The fee for the week is \$50 (scholarships are available). Students or parents who are interested should contact Church of the Advent, 609-884-3065.

2018 CHURCH DINNERS

Enclosed in this issue of The Anchor is a refrigerator card with the 2018 Dinner Schedule. The first dinner is Saturday, May 26, featuring Chicken Salad and Fried Oysters. The remaining dinners are scheduled for the fourth Saturday of each month, through October. All dinners will offer coffee, tea and homemade desserts and will feature a vegetarian entrée. Patrons may bring their own beer or wine. Service and take out will start at 4:30 PM and end at 7:00 PM.

The cost of the dinners is \$15.00 for adults and \$6.00 for children under the age of 12. Adult tickets are \$13.00 if purchased in advance. We also have a 10 meal seasonal ticket for \$120.00. You may use the season ticket any time during the year for single meals or for your entire party.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING ADULT FORUM

The Outreach Committee is sponsoring a forum on this topic on Wednesday, May 9, 2018, at 7:00 PM in the Parish Hall. Members of the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office will give a presentation and take audience questions on this nation-wide problem for the most vulnerable among us. The forum is open to the public. The presentation is about an hour long.