



ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA

The Most Reverend Chandler Holder Jones, SSC
Presiding Bishop

The Presiding Bishop's Charge to the XI Provincial Synod of the Anglican Province of America

Synod itself

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

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who by thy Holy Spirit didst preside in the Council of the blessed Apostles, and hast promised, through thy Son Jesus Christ, to be with thy Church to the end of the world; We beseech thee to be with the Council of thy Church here assembled in thy Name and Presence. Save us from all error, ignorance, pride, and prejudice; and of thy great mercy vouchsafe, we beseech thee, so to direct, sanctify, and govern us in our work, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, that the comfortable Gospel of Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed, in all places, to the breaking down the kingdom of sin, Satan, and death; till at length the whole of thy dispersed sheep, being gathered into one fold, shall become partakers of everlasting life; through the merits and death of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Praised be Jesus Christ! It is the supernal privilege of my life to stand before you on this day for the first Provincial Synod of my ministry amongst you and for you as Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Province of America. As a sign of our Apostolic Succession, this may be my first Provincial Synod as your Presiding Bishop, but it is the 11th Synod of this Province of the Catholic Church. Our Lord Jesus Christ is doing a wondrous work in our midst. Words fail to express the intimidating awe and reservation I feel standing in this position before you today, and the love and gratitude I have for each and every one of you. These are terribly big shoes to fill. In this moment, I stand where Bishop James George, Bishop Anthony Clavier, and our most beloved previous Presiding Bishop, the Most Reverend Walter H. Grundorf, have stood before, all the way back to 1968, before I was born. God bless them all.

The continuity of this Provincial Synod hearkens back to Mobile, Alabama 55 years ago, when a small group of determined Churchmen gathered to ensure the preservation and perpetuation of orthodox Anglicanism on this continent in the wake of the heresies already engulfing the Canterbury Communion even at that time. The American Episcopal Church (AEC), the precursor in name to the Anglican Province of America (APA), was born. The APA, tracing its lineage back to that time, is the oldest extant Continuing Church in this country. We inherit the legacy of the AEC and I have inherited the ministry once titled 'Primus' in our original organisation. Like your first Presiding Bishop over half a century ago, I serve you as a son of Carolina, raised on the farms and the delicate red clay named in honour of Charles the First, Anglicanism's Royal Martyr. Certainly providential.

In a particular way today, I wish to thank the Right Reverend Robert Todd Giffin, Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central and Western States, and all the faithful of DCWS for their loving and committed ministries. I wish to thank the Right Reverend David William Haines, Missionary Bishop of the APA for Global

Partnerships, which includes Ecuador, the Caribbean, the Philippines, and India, our Bishop of Ecuador and the Caribbean, for his simply incredible work on behalf of our global partners and international work, about which we will hear at this Synod. And I wish to thank the Right Reverend William Perkins, Junior, our Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of the Eastern United States, for his tremendous loyalty and service. May God bless the House of Bishops of the Anglican Province of America.

I love you all – and I go to the Altar of God with all of you on my heart. The Church is ever ancient, ever new. Today marks a new beginning in many ways but also that continuity and contiguity which is a hallmark of Christ's true Mystical Body. It reminds one of the words of Saint Augustine, 'for you I am a bishop, with you I am a Christian.' Together we meet here simply as the Church – we are nothing less than the Church of the Apostles, the Fathers, and the Saints. Here gathers the fullness of the Church as instituted by and founded on Our Lord and established in the Apostles and their successors.

Of your Christian charity, please pray earnestly for this Synod and for its ministry and work, as we seek to conduct the administrative business of the Church according to the mind of Christ and His Gospel and to advance the mission, governing, formation, preaching, teaching, and evangelistic outreach of our unique branch of Christ's Body.

We encourage everyone to take a decided interest in the meetings and events of this Synod. Most critically, we invite everyone to enter into the spirit, significance, and purpose of Synod by prayer. Thank you all so very much for your loving support and encouragement during this special time in our corporate life together.

The following meditation was presented to the Diocese of the Eastern United States last year, but I would like to share it with the Provincial Synod in this my first address on the Provincial level.

The Little Flock

If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

I want this charge today to begin with Jesus, to continue with Jesus, and to end with Jesus. Today we stress our complete and absolute confidence in the project which God has Himself created and is called the Continuing Church. We have the capacity truly to rechristianise this country in the way of Anglo-Catholicism, the American Catholic Church, or the English Catholic expression if you will, the indigenous Church of this land, which is frankly older, more rooted, and grounded in our own culture and history, and theologically vastly more committed to the infinite transcendental truths of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful than any other form of Christianity found in America today, and that includes both the Churches of Rome and the East. Anglicanism is Mother Church. We are here because Our Lord has willed us to be here and to continue that magnificent flavour of Christian orthodoxy called Anglicanism. We are best positioned to reclaim our land and the world for Christ. Our mission, our missiology, is Jesus Christ in our neighbour – to draw all men to love Him, adore

Him, serve Him, and glorify Him, and we have been equipped to do precisely this for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Our evangelistic call is to activate and apply what we have been given, for the love of God and the love of our fellow men. We have at our disposal all that is needful.

We undoubtedly do not need to look anywhere else for legitimacy, credibility, recognition, and authenticity. We are the radiant heirs of true patristic worship, doctrine, and life. We are the heirs of the ancient Church, the heirs of the *Ecclesia Anglicana*, the heirs of the Oxford Movement and the Catholic Revival, the heirs of the Church in the English-speaking world and beyond. God has entrusted to us the Apostolic Deposit of Faith, the Faith Once Delivered unto the Saints. To us today can be applied the words of Saint Paul: 'to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.' So take heart little flock.

We have the fullness of the Faith revealed by Christ in the canonical Holy Scriptures, the three great Creeds, the Seven Holy Sacraments, the Apostolic Succession in Holy Orders, the faith-consensus of the first thousand years of Christian history, the Holy and Apostolic Tradition, the mind of the Fathers, and the Seven Ecumenical Councils. For what more could one possibly ask? In our Common Prayer and Common Life is found the Kingdom of God. Let us live it, and share it everywhere we go. This is not a matter of triumphalism, but a matter of sin, conversion, and salvation. We have been graced to offer mankind what is necessary for his eternal salvation and the forgiveness of sins, not through any merit of our own, but by the mercy of God. It is up to us to align ourselves with this gift and faithfully to provide it to the world. Are we doing so? For all of this to be effective, *we* must respond in faith, in hope, in love, and in repentance. We are called to humble ourselves before God and let *Him* work. Our task is to obey and not impede – and let God act.

We possess, by the grace and providence of Almighty God, the Pearl of Great Price: an incomparable liturgy, the original and patristic ecclesiology, a vibrant and personal way of parish life, a deeply engrained soul-empowering ethos, a truly Apostolic collegiality, and a rock-solid biblical metaphysical grasp of reality that can provide a shelter from the coming storms of the decaying culture that surrounds us. And not only this. We have the roots, the backbone, the character, and the theological and pastoral depth to persevere and bring the promises of God to fruition in our own time. We should never sell the Continuing Church short. We can never give up. 'No desertion, no surrender.' We are only getting started. We are not merely a movement, we are the Church - in movement.

Anglo-Catholicism in the Continuum is a time-tested, Mother Church approved path to maximal Christian life, practice, and holiness. Unlike much of what sadly passes for Christianity (or better yet, Churchianity) in our current postmodern situation, we must never dilute our Church into some cheap commodity that militates against the splendour of the infinite truth to which we are committed. We have the experience, the theological profundity, and the substance to withstand the coming tests. What defines the Anglican Catholic? Reverence, dignity, graciousness, a deep love for the individual soul, the treasuring of personal relationships, a concern for the salvation and sanctification of the human person. A sense of the transcendent and numinous, an intense awareness of the Incarnation of God the Word made Flesh extended in Scripture and Sacrament, humility before the majesty of God in adoration and worship, a totally theocentric focus on the glory of the Blessed Trinity with a living consciousness of His Kingdom manifested in His Saints and the whole Church in heaven

and earth. With these gifts, we can never fail. Again, we must remember we *are* the Church. Let us beg God to use us to His glory.

As I travel the Province I see life in our Church as never before – those parishes and missions that are growing swell with young families and children. In fact, most of the churches I visit have witnessed recently a significant increase in the number of younger people, even during the pandemic. The essential ingredient for our future growth and the reason why younger people, especially millennials and generation zed folks, are already attracted to our Church is the remarkable distinctiveness in the Traditional Mass and Sacraments of the Church in the primeval Western Rite, and the formation around that transcendent liturgy, way of worship, and life of a unique and altogether familial community of relationships rooted in biblical doctrinal teaching. Anglicanism simply is Western Orthodoxy, the Western Church in her repristinated instantiation.

We should do what we do best; we do not do megachurch, we do not do low or high church 1950s Episcopalianism, we do not do modern evangelical showmanship, we do not do rock bands, entertainment, and hootenanny, we do not do Calvinism or Lutheranism or any other sixteenth-century innovation, we do not do the neo-charismatic or the gnostic, we do not do antiquarianism, cosplay, or creative anachronism. We offer in our own contemporary context in the real world the Holy Sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself, the sublimity of the ancient Eucharistic rite of the Western Church according to Apostolic Tradition and the ministration of the Holy Sacraments in their ancient form. In other words, we are Deep Church. Not mere Christianity, but *more* Christianity. The fullness of orthodoxy, right worship and right belief. This is what makes us who we are – and we should treasure it and be eager to spread it abroad. As the Church is at the Altar, so is she in her formation, catechesis, development of meaningful relationships, and the fostering of Christian community. We are called to attention to detail in all of these areas. That meticulousness, attentiveness, and genuine care is our heritage and our gift to the wider Church and the world around us.

The Faithful Remnant

We need to develop a more substantive and robust understanding of ourselves as the faithful remnant. Resist the zeitgeist – we are the faithful remnant – don't be afraid – don't worry first about size, money, numbers, but rather, be concerned about your fidelity and obedience to Christ. *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11.5) And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward (Isaiah 37.31)*

By the mercy of God, we have inherited through no worthiness of our own the plenitude of the Christian Religion. We are now assuredly the orthodox Catholic Church of the West (thank you, Pope Francis). In truth, all kidding aside, we always have been, given our patrimony of the primitive and patristic. We are the Church, *katholikon*, 'according to the whole,' neither puritan nor protestant nor papal. It is most providential to be where we are, and the Lord has ordained our station from the foundation of the world, to be here, right here, right now – this is our time in the 21st century to *martus*, to martyr, to witness for Our Lord, His Gospel, His Church, His Faith, His Truth. Ours is the Divine Commission of St Matthew 28 – 'go teach all nations, preach the Gospel to every creature' - by now you can tell that I am fully convinced in the centre of my being that we are a central component for the present and future of orthodox Christianity in the Western world. A massive claim for a miniscule Church. But so be it. We remember the parable of the mustard seed!

To this end, because we are the faithful remnant dedicated to expanding the Kingdom of God, we are excited to share news today about...

Our Digital Media Director

Since early March 2022, Matthew (Stu) Stuart has exercised a brilliant ministry, upgrading Provincial, Diocesan, and 12 parish websites, creating a new APA telephone application, and launching new social media accounts on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. You have surely noticed and have come to appreciate his work on our behalf. That amazing work is now expanding into a whole new range of internet ministry, including podcasting. The APA has taken the lead on internet outreach for the Continuum in the 21st century, thanks to Stu's indomitable work and enthusiasm, and your support. At this Synod, Stu will unveil another new feature across our digital resources, a new page for the recitation of the Divine Office from the Book of Common Prayer.

It would be an impossible feat to describe all the work and hours that are being invested in the creation of these avenues of evangelistic proclamation and Christian formation, and I am intensely grateful for Stu's ministry, as I know you are as well. Please thankfully pray for Stu in his work and ministry. We are all delighted with the advances we now behold. We asked Mary Willis Fife to spearhead a branding campaign to update and more historically to ground our symbols and shield. Let us offer our profound thanks to Mary Willis for her creativity, research, imagination, and hard work, which have led to the creation of a new branding product that will withstand the test of time.

In the 21st century, nothing could be more important for bringing the Anglican Province of America into the reach of the world population and our local communities. Our reinvigorated and expanded internet presence is a major path, if not the key path, to making contact with the public at large. We are establishing an updated internet ministry that will easily put at anyone's disposal all that is needed to consider and embrace the Christian Revelation as found in Catholic Anglicanism.

Lenten Appeals

The 2023 Lenten Appeal is nearing completion! Your prayers are profusely appreciated as Mr. Ian Jarrells looks to serve Christ's flock of Saint Thomas the Apostle Church in Alto, Georgia. We are filled with hope for Ian, his wife Joy, and the faithful community of Saint Thomas, as the Lord Jesus continues to build His Church. Please continue to be generous – we still need your financial support to 'cross the finish line' and reach our goal of \$100,000 for our three-year support of Saint Thomas Church. God willing, Ian will soon be ordained to the Diaconate and will serve this promising mission full-time.

The 2024 APA Lenten Appeal, we are pleased to say, has now already been designated for one of the most encouraging and novel projects in our history, Saint Dunstan's Academy in Nelson County, Virginia. During this Synod, Father Mark Perkins, the newly-appointed full-time Chaplain, will update us on the remarkable progress already achieved in this work, the first residential boys' school ever established by Continuing Anglicans for the formation and education of young men in our tradition. Please pray for the burgeoning efforts of Saint Dunstan's Academy.

Presentations at this Synod

Our Provincial Synod is designed this year to concentrate on the three aspects of Church work which go to the essence of our present and future service: the upgraded websites and social media ministry of the APA, the development of schools for our children, and the refurbishment of our current Churches and fashioning of new mission plants. New internet resources, new schools, and new Church buildings. These signs manifest our corporate resurgence in Christ!

During this Synod, we will hear particular follow-up presentations on some of the main activities underway in our Province. There are too many to include in one Synod, so specific developments have been selected in order to highlight them and draw them to your attention:

- + The new Book of Common Prayer Morning and Evening Prayer application.
- + Holy Land Trip, October 2024 – Sondra Colonel – Trip Liaison.
- + New complex, Saint Barnabas Cathedral, Atlanta, Georgia – Father Daniel Trout.
- + Update, Saint Dunstan’s Academy, Nelson County, Virginia – Father Mark Perkins.
- + New building, Saint Matthias Church, Dothan, Alabama - Father Steve Miller.
- + New mission, Christ Church, Florence, Kentucky – Father John Longcamp.
- + New building, Saint Patrick’s Church, Brevard, NC – Father Nick Henderson.
- + Building addition, St. James on-the-Glebe, Gloucester, Virginia – Father Kevin Fife.
- + Classical School, All Saints Church, Mills River, NC – Father Erich Zwingert.

It will be most inspirational to hear what the Lord is perpetually doing in our Province.

Final thoughts

It would be herculean adequately to thank everyone who has offered so much to Our Blessed Lord to promote His Kingdom in this holy Provincial Church. If I begin to thank everyone personally, we could be here for many days! So a litany of thanks will not be attempted, to your substantive relief. I shall make the exception here and thank Lisa Ulrich, our Provincial Administrator, without whom I would be totally disorientated. Thank you so very much, Lisa. To all of you - please know how very much I love and appreciate each one of you, and how much I gratefully acknowledge your service and labour unto the Lord. Please remember that the aspiration of my whole life scope is to support you, to guide you, and to serve you – so please never hesitate to contact me at any time with any joy or request or concern. I am here for you. Please pray for me as I always pray for you.

As I conclude, we commend our Province, the Anglican Joint Synods, and all of our Christian lives and commission to the prayers of Blessed Mary, the Ever-Virgin Mother of God and our Mother, who says to us... ‘Whatsoever Jesus saith unto you, do it.’ God bless you all!