

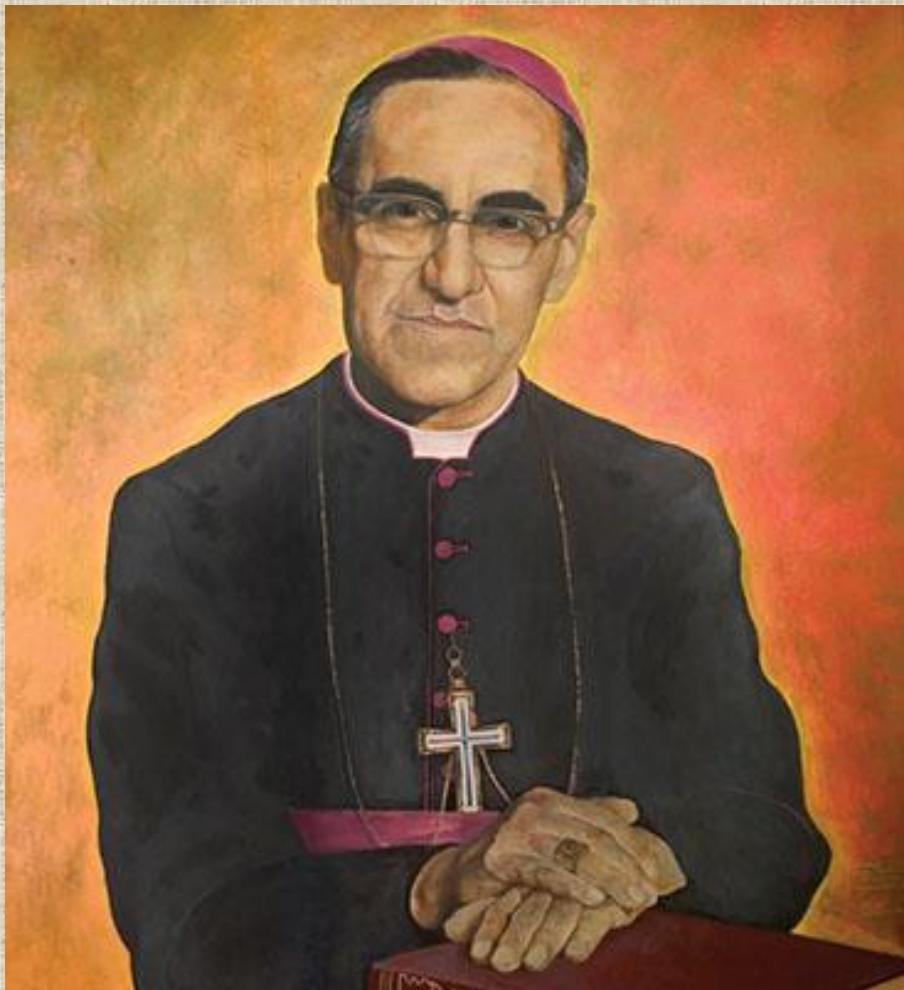
The New Epistle

a newsletter of

The Progressive Episcopal Church

Volume III Number 3

March 2017



ÓSCAR ARNULFO ROMERO Y GALDÁMEZ
1917-1980

The cover this month is Archbishop Oscar Romero, who is commemorated on March 24. As the United States is slowly seeing more and more acts of oppression and violence against non-Caucasians and non-heterosexual people, as well as of immigrants, it is perhaps appropriate that we call to remembrance Blessed Oscar Romero, who was beatified by Pope Francis on 23 May 2015.

Oscar Arnulfo Romero was born on August 15, 1917 in Ciudad Barrios, a small town in the Province of San Miguel, El Salvador. He began his religious career pursuing studies in San Salvador and Rome. In 1967 he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop to Archbishop Luis Chavez y González, in the Archdiocese of San Salvador.

At the beginning of 1977, in the midst of violence, repression and political confusion, Romero was chosen to succeed Archbishop Chávez. Once Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador, he began to truly understand the injustice and repression against innocent people. He became the spokesperson of thousands of poor Salvadorans and those persecuted by the military.

Soon after becoming Archbishop, Romero's close friend, Father Rutilio Grande, was assassinated by a paramilitary death squad. This had a dramatic and profound effect on Romero's life, changing him from a status quo moderate to a fierce activist against injustice.

Father Grande's assassination resulted in Romero's determination to redefine the nature of the Church as the defender of the poor and to denounce from the pulpit the evils of state-supported death squads. As a gesture of solidarity with the preachings of Father Grande, Archbishop Romero refused to appear in any public ceremonies with army or government personnel until the true nature of his friend's murder was brought out and true social change begun. Never before had such a high-ranking Church leader made such a bold movement. Archbishop Romero became the voice and conscience of El Salvador. His words and actions were heard internationally. His fight for human rights led to his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. He spoke words of peace, but they were a threat to the tyrannical policies of the government. With the world as a witness, it was harder to terrorize, torture and murder, so thought the Archbishop.

The three years Romero was Archbishop were a period of horror to El Salvador. 1979 and 1980 were perhaps the worst period in the history of the country. Security forces began a mass campaign of violence where death squads had the mission of "cleaning up" whatever or whoever became troublesome. During the first months of 1980, there was one assassination every three days. Archbishop Romero could do no more than denounce the atrocious events and pray for peace in his country.

His opposition to violence and repression came to a climax on March 23, 1980. During his Sunday homily, he called the National Guards to obey the law of God and not the law of their superiors who were ordering them to kill their sisters and brothers. "In the name of God and in the name of this suffering people....I plead with you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God: put an end to this repression!"

Shortly after this call came his enemies' reaction: on Monday, March 24, Romero was assassinated while celebrating mass at the small chapel of the Divine Providence Hospital in San Salvador. As he elevated the Eucharist, a shot from the back of the church struck him in his chest, killing him instantly.

An unyielding determination to do what was right, true and just was the guiding principle for Archbishop Oscar Romero. He sacrificed his life for peace, a peace found in human rights and assurances of basic dignities. He told

the world about all the people who had been tortured and slaughtered and in the process, became a victim himself. Romero's spirit lives on and his teachings remain. The people of the world must remember him and continue to strive for the realizations of his dream: truth, justice, dignity and human rights.



TPEC NEWS

Two new ministries in Arkansas

FEBRUARY saw the chartering of two new ministries in Arkansas, both under the leadership of Rev. Cn. Rick Ward-Harder. **OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH** in Little Rock was chartered 11 February on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The **ARKANSAS SOCIAL JUSTICE CENTER** was chartered 13 February, the Commemoration of Absalom Jones. The ASJC is a joint ministry between TPEC and Our Lady of Perpetual Help. More information on this in Fr. Rick's article beginning on page 5.



For the last two years, TPEC has been using Church Helpmate (CHO) administration software for maintaining clergy records. In 2016, Church Helpmate was acquired by (merged with) Realm, and encouraged all CHO users to transition to the new software. The new administrative software far exceeds the capabilities of CHO, the most remarkable of which is the multiple means of communication and accessibility by church and group leaders. It will allow us also for the first time to start including local parish membership. It is even more customizable than CHO.

The great benefit of this can be described thus: Suppose Canon Rick and his team were organizing a pro-immigration rights rally on a particular day and time. Rick+ would be able to create an Event and push the announcement about the event to everyone in the Texarkana/Little Rock ministry area, as well as to the entirety of TPEC. Members would receive the notice via email or even via text or Twitter. In a similar manner, our newsletter can for the first time be easily emailed to all clergy and registered parishioners. CHO's email capabilities were limited and awkward, and attempts to push out the newsletter via email had a remarkable failure rate, due to the

program's frequent failure to sync with my email server.

It is a software program for a 21st century church using 21st century technology. Your Secretary General is admittedly a dinosaur who still uses a landline, and whose cellphone is a dust-collecting flip-phone in a corner of the desk. It is remarkable that he has learned to use Twitter! The beauty of Realm is that so much of the modern communication tools are built in, and make it readily accessible from cellphone, tablet, etc., making it very easy for us dinosaurs to use. None of this was possible under CHO.

The costs associated with Realm are comparable to CHO. The lower level is \$44/mo, one dollar less than CHO; the next level (which we will probably find ourselves in) is \$59/mo. During the transition period of 2017, the normal \$500 data conversion fee is waived.

By mid-March, we hope to have Realm up and running and start running some pilot test communications.

Lent 2017

There is much on our minds as Lent begins on March 1. Many people give up things during Lent as a form of penance. Often these are small luxuries like ice cream, or perhaps one's weekly Friday pizzeria jaunt. Other givings-up may be more beneficial to one's health, such as giving up smoking or other detrimental habits. While these are all well and good, perhaps we might take a slightly different approach?

What are other bad and detrimental habits that we may engage in that adversely affect those around us? Do we perhaps find ourselves saying hurtful things to others? Trying giving up hurtful things, and say that which is kind. All too often, we are quick to point out faults or slights that we see, but how often do we stop and give praise or commendation to someone who has done good work? For example, if dining in a restaurant and your server is attentive, make sure you tell him or her that you noticed it and thank them for it. Servers are quick to be chastised by diners for the slightest perceived slight, yet are rarely praised when they provide good service.

Make it a point to say, "Thank you" for work well done, whether it is for you or something you have observed of another.

Is there someone in need? Perhaps of a helpful hand, help with finances, food, shelter, or anything else? Perhaps tasks around the house for someone who is disabled and could use a little help? Then do not pray about it. Far better to give up your prayer and go instead to offer yourself in person to give assistance – "praying with your feet and hands."

The message Pope Francis issued for Lent this year is summarized beautifully in a meme that have been circulating in Facebook, though not nearly enough. May this be not only your Lenten meditation, but also your practise.

Pope FRANCIS
on **LENT** 2017



- ✓ Fast from HURTING WORDS and say KIND WORDS.
- ✓ Fast from SADNESS and be filled with GRATITUDE.
- ✓ Fast from ANGER and be filled with PATIENCE.
- ✓ Fast from PESSIMISM and be filled with HOPE.
- ✓ Fast from WORRIES and TRUST IN GOD.
- ✓ Fast from COMPLAINTS and contemplate SIMPLICITY.
- ✓ Fast from PRESSURES and be PRAYERFUL.
- ✓ Fast from BITTERNESS and fill your heart with JOY.
- ✓ Fast from SELFISHNESS and be COMPASSIONATE to others.
- ✓ Fast from GRUDGES and be RECONCILED.
- ✓ Fast from WORDS and be SILENT so you can listen.

Social Justice: A Calling in Arkansas

Greetings in the Name of our God. As Progressive Episcopalians we naturally have a bent towards the liberal in most things social. We have some members who are conservative in matters of fiscal affairs, but in a social model we are liberals. Why, many ask? It is because we are called to model for those around us the message of Christ. **Christ was first and foremost a Radical Reformer.** He stood against the Theocracy of His day. He stood up for the marginalized in society. He went where other "holy men" feared to tread. He welcomed the misfits and "liberals" of His day to His table. He turned no one away. Recall for a moment the twelve men he assembled as his disciples, they were the poor, the uneducated, the overlooked by society, few of notoriety, one was a zealot (a purveyor of rebellion against the government), one a despised tax collector, many simple fishermen, and one possibly from nobility..

Think for a moment of the social justice and spiritually freeing acts Christ engaged in - the dinner with the most despised of society, a tax-collector; the prevention thru social action of the stoning of a woman accused of sexual impropriety; the public demonstration against the money-changers who were buying and selling in religious goods; the rebukes (there were many) of the religious leaders of the day who tried thru "laws" to subjugate women, the poor, the disabled, and the like. **Christ as our example MUST be the driving force to illuminate the path to Social Justice in this day and time.**

As The Progressive Episcopal Church we must find new and innovate ways to engage ourselves, from the Bishops of the Church to the youngest of the laity. We must become engaged in Social Justice until it is a natural part of our DNA. We must be aware of the world around us and stand, speak, and act. This all begins in our local community. Your parish may be small, even only one or two members, but look around you. We all have friends and even more acquaintances. Believe it or not you influence them and **many of them WANT to become involved** in the community. You must step out in faith and ask. If you do so, your parish will begin to grow.

The fact is that many do not attend church today. This is due in part to the hurt the traditional church has inflicted on so many. **We must be understanding of this and understand that "religion" turns many off. This is not a bad thing, it is an opportunity!!** This is the segment of the population that is a growth potential for TPEC. You see, I have found, that many of these good people still have a genuine care for society in their hearts and minds and still have a deep faith in Humanity. These folks are an opportunity for you, be you a priest or a member, to witness. I am not stating witness to the message of salvation or church membership, but a witness to transformational message of Christ. **Share TPEC's message of Social Justice, share the actions of Christ in social justice, share that our focus is social justice and that we live out our lives in this message within our communities.** You will be surprised at how many people want to be involved and thru the social justice message come to embrace the TPEC. Remember our standard in many of our logos is.....Ancient Heritage.....Progressive Faith.

Here in Arkansas we are working hard to make this message known from Hot Springs, to Texarkana to Little Rock. What began at St. Michael the Archangel in Hot Springs has translated into a movement that has been unexpected. Shortly after SMA Parish opened in Hot Springs, I was invited to Texarkana to speak before the city council on a non-discrimination ordinance. I had no idea it was being videoed and would be published. The video (*which can be viewed on the TPEC website*) went viral and some 10 million+ views later the TPEC is now known in Moscow, Sydney, London, Colombia, Peru, Germany, Italy, and the list goes on. The messages and inquires came from the world-over for weeks. If the words of one single priest in a small state like Arkansas can resonate so loudly, **image if we all joined in one chorus!**



original signers of the bylaws being the leaders of the equality group for the tri-state area of Texas, Louisiana, and

Following this, a small group formed in Texarkana and held loosely together until a set of bylaws and the incorporation documents have been signed for St Mychal Judge Progressive Episcopal Church. Licensed Minister Mark Hollis is working with our folks there to formulate a regular worship time. In the meantime many of these folks have continued a strong presence for social justice including two of the

Arkansas. We now have plans in place where Rev. Mark and I are able to switch weeks between St. Mychal Judge and Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Coordination and collaboration are the key. Also not being too up-tight about perfection (*which is hard with my type A personality*) is essential.

With success and the blessings of God comes some difficult growth and changes that are pre-destined to occur. We have been no different. There have been times when I, as the rector of these budding works, have wanted to throw in the towel. We had such a circumstance when my direct assisting minister determined to not continue with the parish ministries here and disengaged from the Canons of the Church. This produced some discomfort and many weeks of explanations, and resulted in a few lost members. As a priest I was unable to mount a defense in some areas as information was confidential. It should be remembered by any parishioner that your priest and clergy often must maintain confidentiality even when not to do so would be much more beneficial. **Trust your clergy, they truly are the shepherds who hold your best interest at heart.**

Moving thru this difficulty, has proven to be liberating and has opened so many doors. The result of what appeared to be on the surface a potentially bitter situation, was in-fact a blessing that was bringing new growth and opportunity for a much broader vision and impact on our state.

The Parish council met and after much discussion over a number of weeks, it was determined that we had to look to a new way of doing business. As a tent-maker priest (holding secular government employment) I spend a great deal of time in the capitol city of Little Rock. I have a number of political, non-profit, and community involved contacts there. Our members drive to Hot Springs from great distances (*some 2 hours or more*) weekly. Little Rock is located in the exact geographic center of the state (*approximately 45 miles from Hot Springs*).

We determined that it made sense to develop a new parish there and move St. Michael the Archangel to a *minor parish or mission status*. In doing so we have located a 1600 square foot space in Little Rock in which to develop a sanctuary, and office, and a space to open to community social groups. This is allowing for greater interaction with organizations that otherwise we would just see here and there on a sporadic basis.

We discussed names for the new parish at length and determined that it would be "Our Lady of Perpetual Help". This was chosen for it implied to all that we are open and affirming of women, many of whom feel rejected from the traditional church, many of whom also have unsettled concerns over a masculine dominated culture. It also affirmed that we are continual in our help to the marginalized. The Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help also shows not only a strong woman in the presence of Mary, but shows Christ, and St. Michael and St. Gabriel the Archangels. This represented who we are well.



When we began looking for space, we intentionally did not seek out the upper scale neighborhood, but chose to look in an area that is representative of an ethnic and cultural mix of Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic groups. We also were inclusive of economic mixes and chose an area that has a strong political representation that would mix well with our mission and vision.

We have chosen to implement with our inaugural service the inclusion of a social justice mass. As is provided for within TPEC Canons, we have developed a Mass that reflects our people and our mission while keeping a number of our ancient heritages. On the 1st and 3rd Sundays we use this traditional, yet modified, liturgy which provides a common ground for our spiritual growth.

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays we have the Social Justice Mass, which is an abbreviated version of the Eucharist followed by a Social Justice Dialogue with a local community leader. This will be a general discussion in an interview or Q & A format between myself and the leader followed by an open question and answer period afterwards. This engages the membership

in topics relevant to our day while still providing an element of traditional worship at the beginning for folks like myself who place the highest of esteem on the Eucharist. We have to date planned discussions with a State Senator on Race Relations, a Circuit Judge on Prison and Sentencing Guideline Reformation, another State Senator on Education Accessibility for the Poor and ESL, a member of *LULAC* to speak on Hispanic Relations and Immigration, a representative from the *NAACP* to speak on how we might enjoin with them in turning the tide on race relations, a member of the *Human Rights Campaign* to speak to LGBT equality, and an Episcopal Priest to speak to transgendered issues. Other topics planned include, the Arkansas Food Bank, Planned Parenthood, Native relations, moving from hate to acceptance, how to effectively produce change, disability advocacy, and the like.

It is felt that these topics will expose a number of people who otherwise would not attend church to the Progressive Episcopal Church and our message of Social Justice. Vada Hopper and Sandy Miller-Hayes both have been instrumental in helping us work out a vision that melds the spiritual and the social needs of our community together.

Our newest Licensed Minister, Evan Parker and Vocalist Demarkeon Arnett are working to develop relevant social media and other programming that reach out to a millennial generation and to provide musical needs for our growing programs. Melding the traditional, the needs of older populations and the progressive and millennials is challenging, but can be successfully done. The key is finding the common ground, which in our case has been several local and national issues that are political in nature but relate directly to the spiritual as well.



In addition to this we are chartering a new organization with a full TPEC approved Charter, ***The Arkansas Social Justice Center, a mission of TPEC – OLOPHLR***. This will be our outreach arm that will work to offer help to the needy, provide space for supportive organizations, provide unity in attendance at events, protests, etc. This will allow us to take an active role in social justice outside the walls of the religious entity of the church.

These are just a few of things currently in the works in Arkansas with many more planned as we move forward.

Now, to the remainder of the TPEC.....We know how hard so many of you work nationwide and we are grateful, honored and blessed in Arkansas to have so many supporters and friends among each of you. If we can accomplish what we are doing with all of us working 40+ per week secular jobs and being so few in number here.....**remember that you can accomplish the dreams, the ideas, and most of the callings you have as well.**

WE ARE a dynamic and growing denomination. Don't let anyone ever tell you or make you feel that we are NOT a national denomination. The fact that we are in full provincial membership with the *Free Anglican Communion*, and the fact that we have an *Ordinate for the Chaplaincy* with recognition by the United States Military clearly states our place and position among the denominations. **WE ARE NOT just another Independent Sacramental Movement (ISM) organization.** We have women and men who have worked hard beginning in 2010 before TPEC was born in 2012 to establish what we enjoy the fruits of today. Some of those persons are no longer with us, Bishop +Ronald come to mind, we owe them the dedication to our denomination and to the message of Christ, so that their labor shall not be in vain. I personally had the opportunity to work with former Presiding Bishop +Jack Stafford in the formation of the Diocese of the Holy Spirit which migrated into the Diocese of the South and ultimately into The Progressive Episcopal Church. I sat many hours with Bishop +Ron in my office when I first became a Chaplain in my state job and I heard the vision and grasped the enormity of the work to be done. **Today, we have not arrived, but we are well on our way....and it is because of each of you, laity and clergy alike. YOU ARE THE CHURCH.....Be the Church.....Know the Church.....Show the Church.....Live the Church.....**

It is our calling, it is our mission, it is our responsibility to step up, in both great times and in difficult times and move forward the banner of the TPEC and share the good news of Christ's message of love, grace, mercy and peace. **You have**

the gifts, the talents, and the ability. It is up to you to determine to use them. The journey may be tough, the road may be rocky, but the reward in seeing just one person find that sense of satisfaction and knowing that somehow your words, your care, your concern made the difference, makes all the work so worth it.

Join with us in making TPEC and more importantly our message a central part of your everyday. **Your voice is the only tool you need.** Christ has called us.....Christ has equipped us.....We must put these tools to work. We look forward to hearing of our sister churches and brother and sisters in TPEC share of the great victories and missional work that they are doing. We remember you all in our masses each week.

I want to close by saying that I had the privilege of visiting Fr. Errol Montgomery and his beautiful family and Parish Family in Biloxi, Ms. a few weeks ago. They had just the week before celebrated their first Parish Anniversary. It was an honor to be able to deliver a Homily and share in the Eucharistic Feast with them. He and his "*Beloved Tribe*" at **LightHouse Community Church** are doing a wonderful job of sharing an inclusive message with the costal Mississippi communities.

My husband, Scott, our son Evan, and I immensely enjoyed the fine food, the fellowship, the comradery, and the worship with these amazing folks. We especially enjoyed having a wonderful tour guide in Dylan Moore, as he spent some 8 hours showing us the area and giving us much knowledge on the history of the gulf coast area.

It was an honor and very humbling as the Suffragan Bishop-Elect of the Diocese of the Delta to share a message of Blessing from our beloved, Bishop +Daniel Varga and a welcome from The Progressive Episcopal Church. We were excited to see the vast diversity among the parish membership. We look forward to many more visits to Biloxi and to the many other TPEC communities around the country.

Blessings, Love, and Much Encouragement to our cherished TPEC Family,

Rev. Canon Rick Ward-Harder

Pastor/Rector

St. Michael the Archangel (*Hot Springs*),

St. Mychal Judge (*Texarkana, TX/AR*),

Our Lady of Perpetual Help (*Little Rock*)

Canon to The Ordinary – Diocese of the Delta

Suffragan Bishop-Elect – Diocese of the Delta

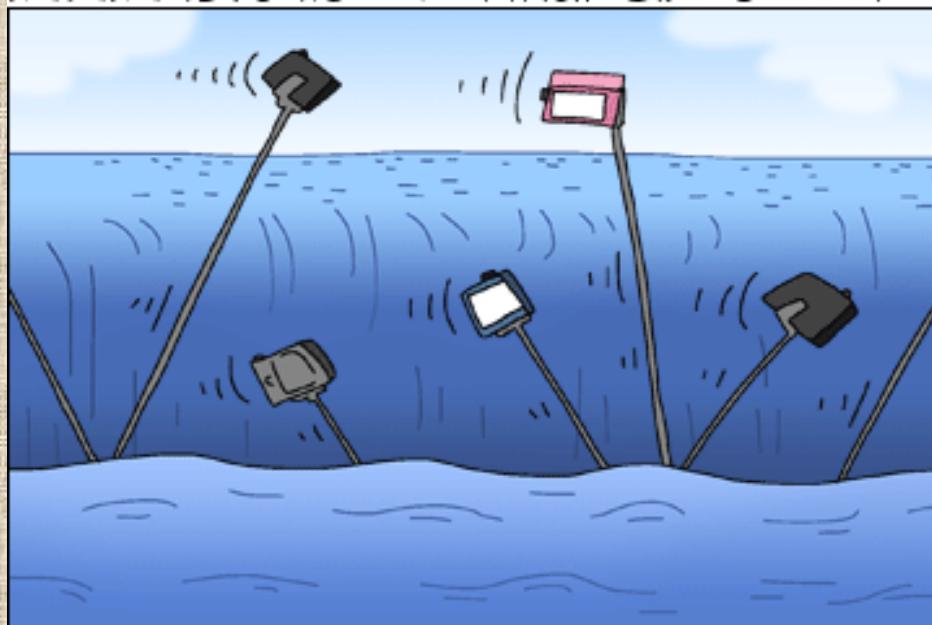


<h1>March 2017</h1>						
<small>Copy. 2016, Ashby Co., Erie, Pa.</small>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
READINGS Mass — Year A Office — Year One Weekday Eucharistic Readings for use throughout the year are found in LFF, pages 498-528. <i>See Notes on Reverse</i> [1 - In some Places	Glo.—Gloria Cr.—Creed Pfr.—Proper Preface of Adv.—Advent Inc.—Incarnation Epi.—Epiphany Hl.Wk.—Holy Week Eas.—Easter Asc.—Ascension	Pen.—Pentecost Tri.—Trinity Sunday A.S.—All Saints St.—Saint Ap.—Apostles Ded.—Dedication Bap.—Baptism L.D.—Lord's Day	ASH WEDNESDAY Fast 1 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria (Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, 672 - W) 2 (Glo.Prf.St.2) Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria (John and Charles Wesley, Priests, 1791, 1788 - W) 3 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.Pen.)	Lenten Feria (John and Charles Wesley, Priests, 1791, 1788 - W) 4 Prf.Lent 1
The First Sunday in Lent 5 Cr.Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria 6 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria (Perpetua and her Companions, Martyrs at Carthage, 202 - R) 7 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.St.3)	Lenten Feria (Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, 1910 - W) (Ember Day) 8 Prf.Lent 1 (Common of a Pastor I, Glo.Prf.St.)	Lenten Feria (Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, c. 394 - W) 9 Lent 1 (Glo.Cr.Prf.Tri.)	Lenten Feria (Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, 4th Cen. - R) (Ember Day) 10 Prf.Lent 1 (Common of a Martyr III, Glo.Prf.St.3)	Lenten Feria (Ember Day) 11 Prf.Lent 1
The Second Sunday in Lent 12 Cr.Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria 13 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria 14 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria 15 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria 16 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria (Patrick, Bishop and Missionary of Ireland, 461 - W) 17 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.Ap.)	Lenten Feria (Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, 386 - W) 18 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Cr.Prf.Ded.)
The Third Sunday in Lent 19 Cr.Prf.Lent 1	SAINT JOSEPH (Tr. from 3/19) Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. Commemorate Lent	Lenten Feria (Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1711 - W) 21 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.St.1)	Lenten Feria (James DeKoven, Priest, 1879 - W) 22 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.St.1)	Lenten Feria (Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop and Missionary of Armenia, c. 332 - W) 23 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.Ap.)	Lenten Feria [Gabriel the Archangel - W] 24 Prf.Lent 1 [Glo.Cr.Prf.Tri.]	THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. Commemorate Lent
The Fourth Sunday in Lent 26 Violet may be used. Cr.Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria (Charles Henry Brent, Bishop of the Philippines and of Western New York, 1929 - W) Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.Pen.)	Lenten Feria 27 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria (John Keble, Priest, 1866 - W) 29 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.St.1)	Lenten Feria 30 Prf.Lent 1	Lenten Feria (John Donne, Priest, 1631 - W) 31 Prf.Lent 1 (Glo.Prf.Epi.)	Lenten Note: All weekdays in Lent are Greater Ferias, with memorials either ignored or commemorated. The letter (R, W) denotes the color if the memorial is kept. Propera for Lenten Weekdays are found in LFF. All Lenten Weekdays are traditionally marked by Special Devotion.

March Birthdays

Rt. Rev. Thurlow Weed	03
Min. Reg Richburg	07
Rev. Dan Edmunds	11
Rev. Dcn. Michael Curlett	19

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(See Exodus 14)

05-29-2015

THERE WERE SO MANY SELFIE STICKS AT
THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA THAT IT
WAS NEARLY CLASSIFIED AS ANOTHER
PLAGUE