
A MESSAGE FROM 'MARTIN LUTHER'

February 7, 2016

May We Be Strengthened

Dear members of the L.A. Diocese, Bishops, and Friends:

With Epiphany drawing to a close, we want to share an update about the ongoing events and our situation at St. James the Great Episcopal Church, Newport Beach.

Trial Set for Aug. 1

Our legal case against Bishop J. Jon Bruno to prevent the sale of the St. James the Great Church property has been joined with the Bishop's case against the original donor of the property, The Griffith Company. We go to a jury trial on August 1, pending any settlement. We are grateful we prevailed against the Bishop's attempt to have sanctions put on our Save St. James the Great group for extended discovery information. We're also grateful for the stalwart support of The Griffith Company and their tenacity defending generations-old wishes to maintain the church property. There will be more hearings and motions over the next six months as the legal process takes its course. We appreciate and are thankful for your support and prayers as we navigate this uncharted journey.

Title IV Conference Panel Convened

In mid-January, we were informed by The Rt. Rev. Catherine Waynick, President of the Disciplinary Board for the House of Bishops, that a Conference Panel will take up our complaint against Bishop Bruno. This is step four of the five-step process. Mr. J.P. Causey is serving as the Church Attorney for the Conference Panel, and the other members are the Rt. Rev. Dorsey Henderson (Chair), the Rt. Rev. Rob O'Neil, the Rt. Rev. Scott Mayer, the Rev. Angela Shepherd, and Mr. Joseph Alarid.

We continue to hold TEC in prayer to its role as the governing body of the Church. While we have placed our faith in the Title IV process, we should not forget that this is a denomination facing dwindling membership and, therefore, more parish families and seminaries may face a similar fate. Only strong leadership and vision will reverse these trends. There is an opportunity for TEC to show the type of leadership needed, by supporting those congregations that have shown growth, have increased relevance in their community, and have stood up to the weak argument espoused by some who prattle on with, "The church is not a building" or "we can become a church without walls." Try holding confessions at Starbucks, or weddings, funerals, baptisms and confirmations without sacred space.

Public Disclosure of Corporation Sole Audits Stalled

Despite publicly promising to provide audits of Corporation Sole at Diocesan Convention on December 5, 2015, Bishop Bruno has yet to provide the documents. To avert a potentially embarrassing vote at the Convention on a resolution requiring a public, third-party audit, Bishop Bruno promised to release these audits of Corp Sole, for which he is the sole officer and can make all financial and business decisions without any review. Through our own review of public records, Corporation Sole holds upwards of 60 real estate properties plus other assets. You can learn more, here: <http://www.newportbeachindy.com/29031-2/>

Newport Beach Community Supports St. James the Great

Working through the challenges we have encountered from our own Diocesan Episcopal leadership, St. James the Great continues to be an important community asset to the people of Newport Beach and greater Orange County. As an influential parish in our section of Newport Beach, the community continues to request our leadership as a light in the community. Recently, our vicar was asked for representatives of St. James the Great to serve on a city chartered forum to address local homeless issues. Additionally, she has been asked to provide the opening prayer at numerous Newport Beach City Council meetings.

Meanwhile, Spiritual Growth Continues

Our Lenten program on Islam and its relationship to Christianity and Judaism begins on February 17. Each Wednesday in Lent, we will host a nationally recognized speaker. Our program is open to the public and we look forward to stimulating discussions and greater understanding among our brothers and sisters of many faiths. We welcome your interest and hope you will please join us Wednesday evenings in Lent beginning on February 17th at 6PM for our Soup Supper Lenten program at:

Gray Matter Museum of Art
485 E. 17th Street, #101
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

Feb 17: Imam Jihad Turk – overview of Islam
Feb 24: Edina Lekovic – dialogue about Islam and women
Mar 2: Aziza Hasan – dialogue about Muslims and Jews
Mar 9: Lori Margaret – dialogue between Christians and Muslim

St. James the Great remains committed to serving the needs of our Community and the Newport Beach area. Through our outreach programs, service on city panels, or creating opportunities for dialogue among the three great Abrahamic faiths, or serving the hungry at the OC Mission, we hold an important place in the community and are considered a leader in our community.

As we wrap up Epiphany and will pray together this Sunday, “O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” Help us be even more effective and relevant by moving us back into our church building. Encourage Bishop Bruno to abandon his current, autocratic and mis-prioritized focus on generating cash and secular real estate holdings and return to building Episcopal congregations and serving the communities in our region.

We thank you for your continued prayers that the Truth will prevail. To learn more details and provide support, please visit our website at: www.savesaintjamesthegreat.org.

Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The congregation of St. James the Great

Learn more about our community’s efforts to save the church at: www.savesaintjamesthegreat.org