

Second Sunday in Lent
February 28, 2010

The Rt. Rev Robert L. Ladehoff

I feel it is such a privilege to be here today on what is truly an historic occasion in the life of this Cathedral. It's our opportunity to offer thanks to God for Sandy Hampton and for his ministry among us for the past two years. This is his last official act; he gets in the car after church and he and Mari go back to Anacortes. It also is the first time that our Bishop-elect, Michael Hanley, has been in this Cathedral on a Sunday morning; a chance for all of us to meet him and welcome him to this place and to this ministry. And what I want to do this morning is first of all to say a few words to my brother, Sandy; then a few words to my brother, Michael and then a lot of words to you who make up this congregation. (turns toward Bp. Sandy) My brother Sandy, thank you, thank you, thank you! (applause). We all give thanks for two absolutely wonderful years! You came here and the Diocese gave you an impossible job. You had all the headaches and all the pains of being a Bishop and none of the authority that you needed to straighten it out. We assured you it was a halftime job and so you spent two week here looking after the diocese, go home to Anacortes for two weeks and look after this diocese. I am personally very grateful to you for many things. I am grateful to you for the way in which you affirmed and build on the ministry of Johncy Itty. I am grateful for the way that you affirmed the ministries of all of us. You make us feel good about ourselves and our work. I'm grateful for the joy that you bring, the great sense of God's presence that it comes with you wherever you go. I'm thankful for Mari. I have been secretly in love with her for twenty years. I am thankful to you for your presence among us. My prayers and that of the whole diocese goes with you to the ministries that are ahead. And now my brother, Michael. ((turns to Bp. Hanley) Welcome, welcome, welcome! (applause) welcome to the best job in the church! Some of you know that our new bishop is going to hit the ground running. Back about the time of his election somebody said "What will you do during your first hundred days? He said "Well, I'm going to visit every church in Oregon!" Yeah! (laughter). Well, the letter went out this week – he's gonna do it! And what a wonderful experience this is gonna be for everybody. The congregations are so eager to meet you – looking forward to having you in their presence; looking forward to sharing with you the ministries they're engaged in. I think you'll find a couple of things – one is that

none of these churches has any money. They struggle to pay their electric bills. The other thing is that this doesn't hold them back. It doesn't interfere with their ministries in their community and beyond. You spoke during the forum this morning about churches having ministries beyond their own walls; you're gonna find this every place you go. At some point you're going to go to Powers, Oregon. How many of you have been to Powers? Well that's impressive. To get to Powers you will go down a little narrow windy road for about thirty miles into the Coast Mountains. You'll know you're in Powers because that's where the road stops. You will find St. Paul's Church, a lovely little wooden building and there will be eight little old ladies who will welcome you. Now the former vicar of the church told me this -- and believe it's true -- that when something happens to one of the eight -- she moves away or dies or whatever--the remaining seven go out and recruit somebody from the community to take her place. There will be **eight**. Now, don't sell Powers short. These women are extraordinary. Several years ago there was a crisis in their community. The only doctor in town died; he'd had a kind of a practice -- a little clinic in his home, but now he was dead and there was no medical care available for the community. To get to see a doctor you had to go through that long windy twisty terrible road. Several doctors in nearby communities said they'd be glad to come to Powers periodically and hold office hours. The only problem was there was no place for them to do this. They needed a clinic of some sort. Our eight little old ladies knew about the United Thank Offering of the Episcopal Church Women -- it's a national program of our church that funds all kinds of good ministries. So they decided if they would see if they could get some money for this clinic from the United Thank Offering. Now in order to submit a request it has to go through the Bishop and so I would read all these things. We'd have far more requests every year that the church could possibly fund and they were all done professionally, absolutely beautiful, flawless and here came the one from Powers written on notebook paper -- lined notebook paper in longhand -- and they got the money. This is the sort of thing you're going to discover. You're going to find these churches doing marvelous things in God's name -- some very small like Powers, some of them large and wonderful like this Cathedral. You're going to have a wonderful time at Trinity I believe. When you go to meetings of Bishops you're going to hear a lot of them complaining about their Cathedrals and particularly about their Deans. And in these place there's a long history of animosity between the Cathedral and the Diocese, between the Bishop and the Dean. You will find none of that here. There's a tradition that goes back long before any of us was around, long before Trinity was the Cathedral

of a close and warm and supportive working relationship between the Bishop and the Dean, between the Diocese and the Cathedral. This is one of the great gifts I believe you are going to receive. Your Dean is a man of wisdom, of vision, of compassion – you look out at this congregation and you see a great bit of the lay and clerical leadership of the Diocese, people who will strengthen and uphold your ministry in all kinds of wonderful ways. Now there are a couple of nice things about this Cathedral, one is that you won't have to worry about where you're gonna sit – they won't let anybody within ten feet of the Bishop's Chair! And perhaps even better, you don't have to worry about where to park. This is the only church in the Diocese that reserves a place for the Bishop to park, but more than that you'll find people ready to be your companions in ministry, to support and uphold you and to pray for you. Now I have a message for the congregation and my message to you all is to pray and pray and pray. This is the great gift that you can give to your new Bishop. Now there are many things that are important in the ministry of a Cathedral. If the Cathedral is healthy, the Diocese is healthy and we're all a part of a body. It's partly a matter of finances. The Cathedral gives generously to the programs of our Diocese and we'd be in trouble if you did not, but more than that, people come here to see how to do things right. To me it's one of the great things about Trinity, that you can come here and the liturgy is done beautifully, there's wonderful music, there are good sermons, an excellent educational program, great outreach programs; people come and see these and they go home and realize there are things they do at Trinity that we could do back home. This is one of your ministries to the whole Diocese. But there's something more and that is a ministry of prayer. When Solomon consecrated the temple in Jerusalem he said it would be a House of Prayer for all people and that's what any church is; it's certainly what this Cathedral must be. Unless this is a place build upon prayer, you're really pretty much wasting your time. Now one of the things you will do is week after week you will pray by name for our Bishop Michael. I remember how surprised I was when I became Bishop and was going around and people were praying for me by name and I realized this is going on in seventy some churches around the Diocese and I knew how much I needed it. I was spending a lot of time doing things I didn't quite understand, scared half to death and it meant so much to know that I was being prayed for; I was deeply moved. I was in the 8 o'clock service in the chapel the day after our Diocesan convention and we prayed for Michael, our Bishop-elect and I thought that is so great; this is what we must be doing. You see when he's out in other churches, he's there maybe once a year and that means

that a lot of people only know him as a name -- you happen to be out of town the week he is there, you don't even know who it is. Now you on the other hand know him well. This is his church home. He and Marla will be a part of this worshipping congregation and you will know where he is going. You'll have some idea of what he is doing and you above all can be intentional in your prayers because you know so much about him, his family and his ministry. Now this is my strong hope for this great congregation that you will be the community that supports our new Bishop by your prayers. When Paul wrote to the Philippians he talked about being strong in the Lord. That surely is God's calling to us all. And we also have the words of Julian of Norwich "All will be well – all will be well".