



PARTICIPANTS AT APL 2016 – ‘COME AND GROW’ | SAY ‘YES’ TO GOD’S CALL TO SERVICE

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*A Note from John Perris+ to his parishioners at Christ the King, Frankfurt*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I really wish that you could have joined us, last weekend, in Munich!

Six of us gathered at the Schloß Fürstenried Retreat House with 35 members of other congregations of our Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. We all came together for the annual program of the Academy for Parish Leadership (“APL”) – and it was great!

Using the Myers Briggs Personality Indicator, we each considered how our own personality is predisposed in four areas. We looked at the degree to which we are naturally inclined (1) to be energized by time alone or with others, (2) to focus on the big picture or the details, (3) to reflect with thinking or feeling, and (4) to value the making of a decision or the process of deciding.

In group discussions, we recognized the value of every person, whatever personality type God has given her or him. It can be hard to feel that you are God’s beloved son or daughter, if other persons routinely criticize you

for your personality. (For example, someone might put you down for not being more outgoing, when God made you introverted.) So, we need to recall that – in the words of Psalm 139 – God has “marvelously” made us!

Knowing that God has marvelously made all people encourages us to be more appreciative towards those whose personality is different from our own. During the APL, we talked about what we value about different types of personalities. We recognized that we complement each other, when we value each other’s strengths, leading us to be more whole in community.

During the second part of the APL, we used a tool for assessing our spiritual gifts. Through a set of questions, we identified the ministries (ways of serving) in which we find fulfillment. We assessed our preferences for administration, discernment, encouragement, evangelism, faith, giving, healing, helping, hospitality, intercession, leadership, mercy, and teaching – a reminder that God has given each of us gifts for ministry and desires us to use every one of those gifts.

Although we spent most of our waking hours in study and discussion, there was plenty of time for informal conversation over meals. One of the great joys of taking part in the APL is the chance to get to know better both fellow parishioners and members of other congregations. I felt particularly blessed to facilitate my small group – which included Episcopalians from Brussels, Florence, Frankfurt, Geneva, Munich and Wiesbaden – and to lead Evensong on Saturday night and preside at the Holy Eucharist in the chapel on Sunday morning.

Could this APL be a good model for our next parish weekend retreat? Please let me – or a member of our Vestry – know whether you wish to help build community in our parish. And remember: God has made you marvelously to know, love and serve Him in His love for all creation!

God’s peace,  
John+