

Dear Friends,

This past Sunday was a momentous day at Church of Our Saviour. Bishop Bruno joined us at both services to introduce to us our new Priest-In-Charge. He is The Very Reverend Canon Dr. Michael Battle.

Michael Battle is currently Canon Theologian for the Diocese of Los Angeles and Provost of the Cathedral Center of St. Paul. He is also Chaplain to the Episcopal House of Bishops and one of the six preachers at Canterbury Cathedral in England. Before coming to Los Angeles Michael was the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Vice President, and Associate Professor of Theology at Virginia Theological Seminary. He has also previously been a professor at Duke University Divinity School and the School of Theology at the University of the South. He has been the Rector of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church in Raleigh, NC, Associate Priest at Church of the Holy Family in Chapel Hill, NC, and Assistant Priest at Christ the Mediator in Cape Town, South Africa where he was ordained in 1993 by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

A native of New Orleans, Michael grew up in Raleigh, NC. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Notre Dame and Duke University. He has Masters degrees from Princeton and Yale and a PhD in Theology and Ethics from Duke University. He has written nine books, coauthored more than a dozen others, and published scores of journal articles on subjects such as reconciliation, theology, prayer, and Christian spirituality.

Michael and his wife Raquel have three beautiful children; daughters Sage (8 years old) and Bliss (turning 6 in February) and a 2 _ year old son, Zion. In his spare time Michael enjoys weight lifting, running marathons, and scuba diving among many other activities.

We are blessed indeed to welcome the Battles into our COS family.

So what does it mean when we say that Michael is a “Priest In Charge Under Special Circumstances”? It means that he has all the authority and responsibility of a Rector without the tenure that goes along with that title. He may become our Rector, but that decision will be made collectively, deliberately, and over the next eighteen months. Unlike a traditional rector search process where a committee interviews several candidates and a vestry chooses one, this is like a very extended job interview in which the entire parish participates. We will live together with Michael as our de-facto Rector for eighteen months during which time we will regularly evaluate the relationship and after which we will decide whether or not he is the one God is calling to lead this place. If so, he will become our Rector. If not, we will begin another search. At six-month intervals we will conduct “mutual ministry reviews” with Michael, the Vestry, Bishop Bruno, Bishop Talton, and Canon Joanna Satorius who is the Clergy Deployment officer for the Diocese. In this way we will continue to keep our finger on the pulse of the parish so that when the eighteen months is up it should be clear to us all whether or not Michael should become our Rector.

This is an exciting time for our church. After a year of transition that has provided many opportunities for uncertainty, anxiety, and discord we now have an opportunity for hope, vision, and mission. For months we have prayed every Sunday that God would send us challenging and compassionate leadership. I believe the prayers of the people have been heard.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Alderson
Senior Warden