

Province II Report

Diocese of NJ Convention

March 3, 2012

Bishop, Members of Convention and Guests...

Good Afternoon...

I bring you greetings from Province II, where I have been the Executive Coordinator for the past eight and a half years. Province II includes all six dioceses in NY State, the two dioceses in NJ, plus the Virgin Islands, Haiti and the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. There is a total of nine provinces that include the breadth and extent of the Episcopal Church worldwide. By the way, it is due to the worldwide nature of the church that we are encouraged not to refer, any longer, to the Episcopal Church as the “national church”; rather, we should use “The Episcopal Church”, or TEC.

The Province is in quite a state of episcopal flux. We have elected, or consecrated, three new bishops in the past year...Bp. R. William Franklin, Diocesan in WNY; Bishop-Elect Andrew Dietsche, Co-adjutor in NY, and Bishop-elect Oge Beauvoir, Suffragan in Haiti. And, I should mention that Bp. Lawrence Provenzano, another product of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, is relatively new in Long Island. And, Nj will be added to this list soon. Bishop Council is proud to note that eight or nine of the bishops in the Church...including him...have held key posts in Western Mass. during their formative years in ministry. So, those of you with episcopal visions might well consider a call in Western Massachusetts.

There is great vitality in our Provincial dioceses. I see this in my regular visits throughout the Province. This year, I will have visited all stateside dioceses by June; I will have attended six Diocesan

Conventions, and I am in regular touch with numerous contacts throughout the dioceses by way of our twenty-plus ministry networks.

Perhaps the most vital of our activities will occur in early May at our Provincial Synod in Albany. It is here that all Bishops, General Convention Deputies and Alternates and numerous guests and presenters will gather to get prepared for General Convention. In fact, the Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, will be with us this year, as well as the President of the House of Deputies, Bonnie Anderson. One of the key sessions will address the early developments having to do with a potential re-structure of our church. This is being seen as a significant undertaking that will affect us all. We expect whatever does result to have a much greater focus on mission, and to rather dramatically affect the way in which the work of the church gets done...and, maybe, save us some money! Other important topics will include same-sex blessings, Title IV (the legal part of the Canons associated with clergy discipline), Lay Pensions and the Denominational Health Plan and the Anglican Covenant.

Of course, one of the great tragedies that struck our province was the severe earthquake in Haiti a couple of years ago. Recovery is underway, but it is slow. Terri Mathes, wife of Bp. Mathes, San Diego, has been leading a major fund raising effort call "To Rebuild the Cathedral in Haiti". This is a church-wide undertaking. Terri, along with Bishop Zaché Duracin, will be the featured presenters as Synod keynoters.

In addition to General Convention preparations, we will do some Provincial Business...that of electing new officers, passing the Province's triennial budget and approving new provincial ordinances. We have a lot to do in a day and a half!

In spite of reorganizational work to be considered and completed over the next few years, there is the expectation that the provinces will continue to exist, perhaps in a much more robust fashion.

Meanwhile, Province II has truly benefitted from considerable assistance offered by a number of our NJ folks...Bp. Councill was our Vice-President for several years, Connie White has been Chair of our Ministry Development Network, Fr. Greg Bezilla is Chair of our Higher Education Network, Kep Short was Chair of our Youth Network for a couple of years and Debbie Clarke continues to serve on that team. Doris Crocker chairs the Haiti Network, and numerous others have lent a hand. I urge you to get involved; provincial work can be very rewarding.

Thank you!