



The Forward

March 2008

Letter from the Bishop

At the beginning of February, I gave the keynote address at the convention in the Diocese of Southern Virginia and was the preacher at the ordination of six individuals to the diaconate. The Diocese of Southern Virginia is in the process of choosing their next bishop after more than two years without a bishop. They are a much larger diocese that, most often, has more than one bishop. After spending three days with them and participating in the entire convention, I want to share with you the major difference between their convention and ours—Nothing! It really was amazing. They have the same people, with the same concerns, and ultimately the same desire to serve God. If you attended our convention last year, then you will appreciate knowing that they even had major problems with their voting.



Having the opportunity to see the wider church from time to time reminds me that we are all part of one body. Traveling around our own diocese [Canon Martha and

I have traveled more than 50,000 miles since September] reminds me that all of our congregations are also part of the one body. Our mission, whether in the largest or smallest of dioceses or congregations, is to reconcile the world to God in Jesus Christ.

I am confident that as we continue to pray for discernment and exercise discipline in our various callings, God will surprise us with vision and the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. Blessings as you continue to embrace this time of Lent.

Bishop Sean

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Diocesan Focus Groups by The Rev. John Wesley

In the previous issue of The Forward, we talked about communication in the Diocese and particularly the need to have strong participation in the upcoming focus groups on the mission and purpose of the Diocese.

As a reminder, these focus groups will be held:

April 16 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Saint John's, Franklin

April 20 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Grace, Ridgway

April 21 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Saint Mark's, Erie

For those who have not attended a focus group; it is a process through which individuals gather into small groups to respond to questions or discuss topics posed by a moderator. The responses then help in the planning process for the mission and purpose of the Diocese.

Please attend and encourage others join you; this is an opportunity to serve God by sharing your thoughts and insight on our future as a diocese.



Diocesan Health Team Prayer Request by the Rev. Canon Martha Ishman

As you know, we are in the planning stages for three regional focus groups which will occur during the month of April (see related article on the first page). They will be patterned after, but not necessarily the same as, the focus groups that were conducted during the search process for our next bishop. All of that work was covered in prayer by individuals, congregations, and groups within congregations. The Diocesan Health Team is asking for that same prayer support. Each month in *The Forward* you will find a prayer request pertaining to the ongoing work of the Diocesan Health Team. This month, our specific prayer request is for the design and implementation of the April focus groups. Pray that both the structure of the event and the questions raised will lead to an open and honest exchange of ideas about the direction of mission and ministry in this diocese. Prayer is foundational to all that we do. We are asking that you pray and that you ask others to pray on our behalf. Thank you.



Local Religious Goods Store Has a Personal Touch

Hofmann's Church and Religious Goods' motto is "Our best seller is not a book...it's service," and they try to live up to that. The family run business strives to give a personal touch to churches and individuals looking to purchase anything from books to vestments to candle wax.

Many of our churches have already benefitted from using Hofmann's. The store, which carries brands often used by Episcopal churches such as Church Publishing and CM Almy, has been able to help our churches save money; not only can the store get many goods for a lower cost, but there are no shipping costs to the customer.

However, Hofmann's does not only save our churches money; our churches also benefit from the service-driven motivation



of the store. Some of our churches are already used to seeing the familiar face of Patrick Hofmann, who goes to long lengths and distances to help churches and individuals with their purchasing needs.

Patrick, whose wife is a member of the Cathedral of St. Paul, travels far and wide in our region not only for deliveries, but also for consultations, right down to getting the measurements for priests' and deacons' vestments, all for no cost. He has also helped alleviate the hassle of an order that comes in wrong; rather than the church or individual having to deal with the issue, Hofmann's does it for them.

Drop in to Hofmann's Store, located at 420 East 26th Street in Erie, or give Patrick a call at 814-455-8094 to find out more on how your church could benefit from using Hofmann's.

If you have news, story ideas, or pictures that you would like to share with the diocese, please contact Vanessa at the Diocesan Church Center at 814-456-4203 or at vbutler@dionwpa.org.

Bishop Appoints Representative to Cathedral Chapter by Jack Malovich

The by-laws of our Cathedral of St. Paul permit the bishop to appoint one person from the diocese to serve on the Cathedral's Chapter.

In November, Jack Malovich, a member of St. Mark's, Erie, joined the Cathedral Chapter as the appointee of Bishop Rowe.

I am thankful for this appointment and, having attended two chapter meetings and the Cathedral's annual meeting, it is certainly a privilege to be serving Our Lord in this new capacity.

As the diocesan representative to the Chapter, I am trying to define the duties and responsibilities of this appointment.

If anyone has any ideas on how to make this appointment effective for our diocese, please let me know. You can contact me at (814) 864-6207 or e-mail at jm2pk@hotmail.com.



Bishop Sean to Attend House of Bishops

Bishop Sean will be attending the spring meeting of the House of Bishops from March 7-12 at Camp Allen in Navasota, TX. To follow the news from the House of Bishops, go to www.episcopalchurch.org/elif.

Input Wanted for Diocesan Website

One goal for 2008 is to update the diocesan website not only in its appearance, but also in its content. As a part of this, we would like your input. What would you like to see on the website? What would make it more helpful? Are there sections that are already helpful that you would like to see stay on the website? Any sections that are not so helpful that could come off?

Please contact Vanessa by phone (814-452-3779) or by e-mail (vbutler@dionwpa.org) with your suggestions. We cannot promise they will all be followed, but we can promise we will try our best this year to make the website more functional and useful.





Trinity, Warren

Bishop Sean's & Canon Martha's Visitation Schedules March 2008

March 2nd	- Bishop Sean - Memorial Church of Our Father, Foxburg
March 9th	- Canon Martha - St. John's, Franklin
March 16th	- Bishop Sean - Trinity Memorial, Warren - Canon Martha - St. John's, Kane
March 23rd	- Bishop Sean - Cathedral of St. Paul, Erie - Canon Martha - St. Mary's, Erie
March 30th	- Bishop Sean - St. Augustine of Canterbury, Edinboro - Canon Martha - St. Stephen's, Fairview

2007 Journal and 2008 Directory Coming Soon!

The 2007 Journal and 2008 Diocesan Directory will be coming soon to your churches. This year, we have decided to try a different format that is utilized by many dioceses. The journal and the directory will be one publication that will come out around March every year. This helps cut production costs of doing two different publications and ensures that the journal will be done early in the new year, rather than waiting as we have done in the past. Having one all-encompassing publication will also help reduce desk and shelf clutter, which I'm sure is good news for everyone! Expect to see them in the mail and on the website soon.

Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner at Trinity, New Castle



The vestry of Trinity, New Castle, is sponsoring a Pork & Sauerkraut dinner on Sunday, March 8 from 5:00 to 6:30. All proceeds from the dinner will help to support the 2008 operating budget for Trinity. Tickets are \$8.00 for adults and \$3.50 for children. Macaroni and cheese will be available for those kids who may not care for pork and sauerkraut. Take out is also available. Contact a member from Trinity or the church (724-654-8761) for more information or to purchase tickets.

Prayer Request for Diocesan Churches in Search Process

Please remember the following churches in your prayers as they go through the search process for their next rectors:

- St. John's, Franklin
- St. Clement's, Greenville