



The Forward

Letter from the Bishop

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Practices of the faith such as prayer, studying Scripture, receiving the Sacraments, giving, and sharing our faith with others require significant effort on our part. Last month, in my article about excellence, I suggested that we need to create a 'stop-doing' list so that we can focus on the Christian practices that will advance the mission of the Church. Creating such a list is important in our personal life and in our congregational life.

At some time or another I am sure that you have thought to yourself, 'There are only so many hours in the day!' or 'I can't do everything.' Sometimes it takes us awhile (some longer than others) to realize that time is finite, and we actually have to prioritize. We even have to introduce a word into our vocabulary that is sometimes hard to say—'no.' Strangely enough, by saying no we are actually creating the space to say yes to other opportunities or to be clearer about what is important.

All of us have things in our personal life that we need to stop doing. Maybe we have over-committed and need to cut back or we are holding on to positions where we are no longer effective because we feel an obligation. Maybe we have some bad habits we need to kick or patterns of behavior we really need to change. Taking action on our 'stop-doing' list creates opportunities for spiritual growth and development.

I observe that it is harder for congregations to discern what to stop doing in order to grow more fully into the stature of Christ.



With our personal lives, if we have any kind of self-awareness, we can fairly easily assess what needs to stop. In the congregation it takes a bit more work especially when we consider that what might need to stop is the parish event that we started or that is especially important to our family. Who really wants to suggest that we stop having the rummage sale that we have had for years or the annual 'whatever?' More than one priest has found himself packing after decreeing the end of a beloved event. Are these events or activities really

advancing our mission?

Think about it this way. What if you took the energy you expend on your favorite event or sale or whatever and reappropriated it for development of the practices of Christian faith—for mission and evangelism? I submit to you that if you were willing to do that then you and your congregation would experience radical transformation.

Congregations continually dream about growth and the ability to thrive. That means creating and sustaining excellence in mission and evangelism. I continue to be optimistic about our ability to grow in mission and evangelism and to equip transformational leaders for transformational ministry. The fact remains—we can't do everything. If we want more growth and transformation, then we will have hard choices to make about what to stop doing. I know we are up to the hard work it will take.

Blessings,

+Sean

One Church of miraculous expectation under the Lordship of Jesus Christ equipping transformational leaders for transformational ministry through our missionary outposts — our congregations.

The Forward

Diocesan Convention 2010: Honoring Our Past, Imagining Our Future

Diocesan Convention will be held November 4-6, 2010, in Erie, PA. This year will be a little different than most because 2010 marks the diocese's 100th year of ministry and, to honor that, there will be some additional events and components to the weekend.

Convention has a theme this year, which we have not had before. Our centennial theme will be "Honoring Our Past, Imagining Our Future." The diocese has a lot to be proud of from its first 100 years of ministry, but we also have a bright future ahead of us. The theme signifies that and will be central to the events of convention.

We will kick off the convention weekend with Evensong on Thursday at 5:30 PM at the Cathedral of St. Paul. The business of convention will begin at 9:00 AM on Friday, following registration at 8:00 AM, at the Bayfront Convention Center.

Please note that this is earlier than most years, as we have a lot to fit into the weekend! Convention will recess at 4:30 so everyone can prepare for the evening's celebration.

Friday night will be a banquet and dance in honor of the centennial. Most years, only those who are attending convention go to the dinner, but we want that to be different this year. We would like everyone to feel welcome to attend the banquet. Everyone played a part in the diocese's first hundred years and everyone will play a part in the next hundred years, and we would like the celebration to reflect that. More information, including ticket prices, will be published in the coming months.

Saturday morning will be the convention Eucharist at 9:00 AM at the Cathedral. It was scheduled so people who attend the banquet the night before can spend the night and attend Eucharist the next morning. We plan on ending convention with the Eucharist; however, if business was not completed on Friday, there will be an additional business session scheduled in the afternoon. We do not plan on needing this session, but we have planned for it in case it is necessary, and clergy and delegates need to be aware that is a possibility.

There are lots more exciting plans in the works. 100 years of ministry is something to be proud of and we hope everyone will make plans to take part in the celebration!



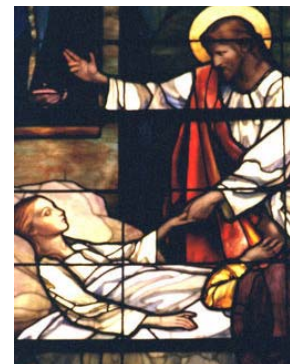
Healing Services

Two healing services have been scheduled for the month of April.

The first will be held at St. John's, Sharon, on Sunday, April 18th at 7:00 PM.

The second will be held at Holy Spirit, Erie, on Sunday, April 25th at 7:00 PM.

Both services, which are open to everyone, will be led by Bishop Sean and will include the opportunity for laying on of hands and anointing for healing.



Diocesan Church Center Closed

The Diocesan Church Center will be closed on April 2nd and 5th for the Easter Holiday.

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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.

Editor's note: The Diocese is celebrating its one hundredth anniversary this year. In honor of that, there will be pieces in each Forward that come from past newsletters. The first edition of a diocesan newsletter appeared in November 1915 under the title "The Diocese of Erie." Since 1915, the newsletter has been published off and on under different names.

From "Extracts from the Bishop's Address" by The Rt. Rev. John Ward (from the July 1926 issue of "The Diocese of Erie")

As we review the work of 1925 in the Diocese of Erie, we find sufficient reason for thankfulness. Personally, I am grateful for many things—especially for the faithful work of the rank and file of our people in all the Parishes and Missions.

We are grateful because in 1925 our Diocese gave towards the work of the whole Church and the Diocese, \$38,024.55. This is more than the Diocese ever gave before. We remember with joy and a keen sense of responsibility, that we have set for this Diocese the standard—that it pays its full Quota to the Church. I ask every one of you to realize the importance of this. Now that we have taken this step in advance, we must never retreat. I wish to say in all sincerity that personally I regard it as a point of Diocesan honor, and that never, as long as I am active in my present work, shall I approve of any other course than this. It is a fair application of the word, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."



Looking forward to the work of the near and distant future, we have every reason for encouragement. We can never forget the real resources with which we face our Parochial and Diocesan problems. We think often, and, most gratefully, of the rich gifts which we have in this Church of ours—and which we hold in trust for all the world. We shun the temptation to flatter ourselves or to disparage the position of others, but still we have our convictions.

We are grateful then because in this Church of ours we have:

1. The truth which comes from Jesus Christ, without addition or denial.
2. Historic continuity—internally by the presence of the Holy Spirit, externally through an organization unbroken from the Apostles' time.
3. Sympathy with, and understanding of, different groups of Christians—Eastern Catholics, Roman Catholic, and Protestant.
4. A tradition of reverent worship centering in and emphasizing the Sacraments, as the Master emphasized them.
5. Intellectual freedom from mechanical theories of infallibility, of a human being or of a written record—giving the opportunity of following the guidance of the Holy Spirit into that fullness of truth which is in Christ Jesus.

If we can combine loyal and intelligent use of these gifts with a widening and deepening fellowship with other Christians, we shall make a decisive contribution to the cause of Christian unity.

We are not unduly disturbed by controversies over matters of belief—such as those touching the facts of His (Christ's) life—His miraculous birth, and His real and complete resurrection. The King is coming more and more into His own. Men of all schools of thought are seeking Him, and spending their lives in His service. Such loyalty to Him will surely lead to a better understanding of the unique and Divine greatness of His Personality, and temporary habits of thought which keep men from recognizing some aspects of the truth will melt away. His Truth is mighty and shall prevail.

How to Kill Your Church (compiled from the October 1915 @ February 1927 issues of "The Diocese of Erie")

- Don't come. If you do come, come late.
- If too wet or too dry, too hot or too cold, don't think of coming.
- Kick if you are not appointed on a committee, and if you are appointed never attend a committee meeting.
- Don't do anything more than you can possibly help to further the church's interests; then, when a few take off their coats and do things, howl that the church is run by a clique.
- Criticize your pastor.
- Tell people you didn't like the sermon.
- Sit on the back seat.
- Don't give much. Charity begins at home, and you've got your own family to support.
- Don't sing. What's the choir for?
- Don't speak to anybody.
- Don't shake hands with the visitor; he might come back.
- Never invite anybody to attend your church. Mind your own business, and let him mind his. If he wants to go, that's up to him.

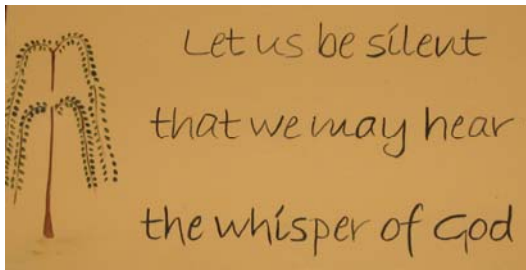
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Postcards from the Pew

by Cheryl Mumford

*"Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!'
And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'" - Samuel 3:10*

It seems unusual to us, in this day and age, for the Lord to show up at our homes, and call our names to get our attention, doesn't it? We usually hear about it in tabloid magazines. We may even roll our eyes or laugh about the person who claims these things as real events.



God calls us, even today, in ways that are not as straight forward as He called Samuel. In Isaiah (43:1) God has called each of us by name, just as He called Samuel. We, as Christians, do not doubt He exists, and that "God moves in mysterious ways." May we shake our heads in disbelief when a modern day Samuel speaks with God and tells us about it? May we doubt that God may have something to say to us, and the He may speak to us personally? Do we believe that God spoke to Abraham, Moses, Eli, and Isaiah, but doubt that He would speak to any of us today in the same way?

The Lord called to Samuel, and Samuel answered. When reading this scripture, I wonder, if I were in Samuel's place, how would I respond? Would I cower in bed, head under the covers, pretending not to hear? Would I run to answer, as Samuel did, or would I assume I was dreaming, roll over and go back to sleep?

Sometimes, it's the guilty feeling we have, or a strong desire to become involved in an organization or activity that we previously hadn't thought much about. Sometimes, it's a dream, or a sudden idea, or clarity of understanding while listening to a sermon. But God is calling us to use our talents and time in ways that glorify Him.

However it happens, I hope that when God calls my name, I respond as Samuel did, by saying, "Here I am."

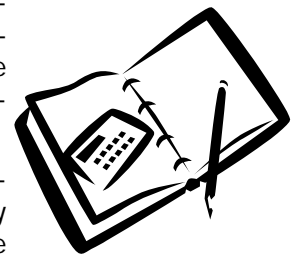
Editor's Note: "Postcards from the Pew" is a column that runs in Grace, Ridgway's monthly newsletter. This has been reprinted with their permission.

Diocesan Audit Guidelines

In 2008, Diocesan Convention passed a new set of canons that requires congregations to have an annual audit done that is of an acceptable quality to the ecclesiastical authority. Each congregation must have the results of the audit to the diocese no less than six weeks before convention or the lay delegates of that congregation will not be able to vote at convention.

Diocesan Council has recently passed a resolution stating that each of these audits must be done by either a CPA or by using the audit workbook provided by the diocese. The workbook can be acquired by going to the website (www.dionwpa.org/diocesanauditguidelines.htm). To have an audit team from the diocese do the audit for your congregation, please contact the Rev. Brian Reid at breid@westpa.net.

Any questions about the guidelines or the process can be directed to Mary Moffett at 814-456-4203 or at mmoffett@dionwpa.org.



Bishop Sean's Visitation Schedule

April 4th - Cathedral of St. Paul
April 18th - Holy Trinity, Houtzdale
April 25th - St. Laurence, Osceola Mills



St. Laurence

Diocesan Council Reminder

Diocesan Council will meet on Tuesday, April 20th at 7:00 PM at St. John's, Franklin. Council members, please let Vanessa know whether or not you can attend.