

Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey
Report of the Committee on Priesthood to the 224th Annual Diocesan Convention

Current Status of Individuals in the Process

- Ordained to the Priesthood
 - Of the three transitional deacons ordained to the diaconate in June 2007:
 - One was ordained to the priesthood in December 2006.
 - The other two transitional deacons were ordained to the priesthood in January 2008.

- Postulants and Candidates
 - There are currently 11 postulants and candidates at various stages:
 - Recently approved (1) – There was only one applicant to the priesthood in 2007 who was interviewed for further ministry discernment in September 2007. This individual was accepted as a nominee into the process, had a COP liaison appointed for guidance, and was placed in a parish, other than her home parish, for further discernment. This nominee was interviewed for postulancy in January 2008 and was approved.
 - Juniors or middlers in seminary (5): Five postulants are attending seminary full-time – four juniors and one middler. One of these junior seminarians is attending part-time.
 - Seniors in seminary (5) – Four postulants were approved for candidacy in the spring of 2006 and one in November 2007. These individuals took their GOEs in January 2008.

- Nominees in Process
 - There are seven nominees in various stages of completing work with their Parish Committees on Ministry.

Visits with Seminarians

Members of the Committee on the Priesthood visited our seminarians at General Theological Seminary in New York City and the Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts. The GTS seminarians joined Bishop Romero and the Co-Chairs of the COP for lunch in November 2007. A visit to seminarians at the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, is planned for February 2008.

The COP inaugurated what is expected to become an annual event in June 2007. An afternoon of fellowship and bible study was held at St. Matthews in Pennington so that seminarians and members of the COP could get to know each other better and to ensure that there was interaction before the seminarians are interviewed for candidacy. Generally, the length of time between postulancy and candidacy interviews is more than two years for postulants attending three years of seminary after becoming postulants. This event was initiated to ensure more frequent contact with the COP as a group.

Recruitment

The COP Recruitment Subcommittee, chaired by The Rev. Ronald Pollack, placed four college students in its summer internship to encourage college students to consider the priesthood. Funding to support this effort was obtained from members of the COP, the Girl's Friendly Society, churches, rectors, and individual donors. The summer interns visited General Theological Seminary and Trinity Church Wall Street in New York City. Interns receive between \$3,000 each - \$2500 stipend and \$500 for books and materials.

The Subcommittee on Recruitment/Development of Clergy of Diverse Racial and Cultural Backgrounds, under its chair, The Rev. Haroldean Ashton, has been exploring ways to increase the diversity of clergy in the diocese and are collaborating with the Union of Black Episcopalians in discussing recruiting Blacks for the priesthood at the Absalom Jones event.

The COP has viewed the recently issued DVD entitled, *Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process*, produced by the Office of Ministry Development and the Ethnic Congregational Offices of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American Ministries of The Episcopal Church. The COP has recommitted itself to aggressively pursue recruitment as a whole, including the recruitment of individuals from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. As a start, the resource manual accompanying the DVD is under review.

Discernment Shepherds

The sub-committee formed to provide guidance and training to Parish Committees on Ministry continued to shepherd discerners and PCOMs. All PCOMs with nominees in the process have been trained. This committee also monitors the progress of each nominee at the very early stages.

Financial Aid

With the approval of the Standing Committee, the COP awarded \$111,000 in financial aid to nine postulants attending seminary in the 2007-08 academic year. All postulants who applied for financial aid received assistance.

Submitted by
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