

BISHOP'S REPORT

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last November I issued a pastoral letter permitting the use of the provisional rite for the blessing of same-sex unions, and in July I issued a further stipulation requiring clergy who use that rite to do so in conjunction with the revised civil marriage laws in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. However, there has clearly been a lot more than this going on in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, particularly in the three strategic priorities I articulated this past year: **Public Gospel, Missional Communities, Leadership Formation**. While I cannot mention all of our significant progress in these areas, here is what some of that has looked like in my own actions and observations as your bishop.

Public Gospel is really a matter of getting the word out into the world. I have talked to civic groups, prayed for labor union breakfasts, and been in the streets with protesting workers. I have made videos about Christmas, Easter, cancer and hope, and led discussions about learning Gospel lessons from *Breaking Bad*. I have administered ashes in Market Square, hung out with the homeless, and washed the feet of a wandering deacon. I have made Trinity Cathedral a priority as it resumes its place as a beacon of hope in the public arena. I have been chaplain to a gathering of state religious leaders and a keynoter at a pastoral care conference. I have joined other judicatory leaders in blessing the city's crèche and skyline. I have begun work with them to take on the twin curse of racism and inequality, and have signed on to help with the governance of prison ministry in Allegheny County.

Missional Communities are *you*, the congregations of the diocese. Weekly visitations remain the greatest joy of my ministry. Every time I walk in the door of a church on a Sunday morning, I am aware that I have been granted the enormous privilege of being welcomed into the inner life of a local family. How generous you have been to me and to Betsy! Every week I discover something new about the ways that you are salt and light for the world around you. If I have two desires for my episcopate, it would be to help you build on what you already do, and help you discover what new thing God would have you be about in the world around you. The Strategic Task Force (2.0) has opened up this field of conversation, and I extend an ongoing invitation to you to contribute ideas for local mission and ministry. We especially want to hear about what you are already doing in your neighborhoods, in the U.S., or abroad in obedience to Jesus command to *go into all the world*. The Task Force is also considering how to strengthen or reposition our assets to enable us best to proclaim the Gospel over the next fifty years.

Leadership Formation is not only the task of training effective clergy; it is also the work of building up lay leadership equipped for mission in their local communities. I still have the dream of a diocesan institute for missional leadership that will form deacons, priests, and lay leaders *together* for the work of the Gospel; the outlines of this are just beginning to emerge, and I am honestly not yet sure how this will look in the end. In addition to exploring further connections with Episcopal seminaries, over the past year I have begun to cultivate relationships with the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and with the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke Divinity School; these both hold out great promise for future partnership. Canon Jay Geisler and I are teaching a for-credit introduction to Anglicanism at PTS this fall, and I have visited Duke twice to teach and to assist in the formation of an ongoing community of young ordained leaders called the Scholar Priest Initiative. I ordained Ben DeHart, Eric McIntosh, and William Ogburn to the priesthood and Bert Daly to the transitional diaconate. I am also pleased with the number and quality of individuals in discernment for holy orders. While we all know that the number of full-time positions for clergy is shrinking across the Church, I have been happy to hear the way people who are thinking about ordained ministry are also thinking "out of the box" – bi-vocationally, or contemplating "cluster" ministry and other less traditional forms. Last but not least, I am delighted to have welcomed three new rectors: the Reverend Michael Foley at Redeemer, Squirrel Hill; the Reverend

Jonathon Jensen at Calvary, East Liberty; and the Reverend Scott Russell at Saint Brendan's, Franklin Park. These three colleagues have already thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the life of our diocese and I believe will be a valuable resource in our ongoing task of raising up a new generation of leadership.

In addition to these three emphases, and in fulfillment of my ordination vows to take my place in the councils of the Church, I have been getting out into the wider Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion. I attended semi-annual House of Bishops meetings in Nashville and Navasota, as well as the annual week of continuing education called *Living Our Vows*, a mandatory three-year training program for newly-ordained bishops. I attended the House of Bishops meeting in Taiwan in September, taking an extra few days to visit the Reverend Marc Jacobson, our missionary in the Philippines. I accompanied several of our youth and our youth leaders, Brent Hansen and Vickie O'Brien, to the Episcopal Youth Event in July, joining over a thousand other kids and leaders for a very exciting few days. I then led a team consisting of my wife Betsy, Canon Jay Geisler and Peter Balfe, a Pittsburgh city firefighter and member of the vestry at Saint Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, on mission with Pilgrim Africa (pilgrimafrica.org) to the Teso region of Northeastern Uganda. The team worked with other skilled professionals from London and New York in trauma treatment; with the Beacon of Hope School and the Soroti Fire Brigade in fire prevention and safety; and with local clergy and social workers to develop an AA-based infrastructure for alcoholism treatment and recovery. More on these trips can be viewed on my blog, accessible through the diocesan website.

None of this would have been possible without my colleagues on the diocesan staff: Canon Scott Quinn, formerly Canon to the Ordinary and now Interim Dean of Trinity Cathedral and Canon Pastor for the Diocese; Canon Dr. Jay Geisler, our Canon for Formation; Canon Dr. Cathy Brall, our Canon Missioner; Kathi Workman, our Treasurer; Marlene Rihn, our Financial Assistant; Vickie O'Brien and Brent Hansen, Co-Directors of the Pittsburgh Youth Initiative; Dr. Joan Gundersen, Director of Properties and Archivist; Rich Creehan, our Communications Director, and Andy Muhl, our Webmaster; the Venerable Jean Chess, our newly-appointed Archdeacon and Director of Administration; and our endlessly resourceful, patient and helpful Executive Assistant, Judi Rogers. I am more grateful than I can say for this bank of talent, for the hours they put in on your behalf, for their unflagging support and invaluable counsel.

Above all, however, I return again and again in prayer and thanksgiving for the greatest treasure of this diocese – you, the people of our parishes. Saint Paul writes to the Church in Thessalonica, *“What is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and our joy.”* (1 Thess. 2:19-20) This verse rings in my head every time I visit you, pray with you, hear from you, preach to you – even when I sit in meetings with you! After nearly two years I can still scarcely believe the abundance of the gift, the extravagant and humbling privilege, God has given me through your calling me to serve you as your bishop. Betsy and I are deeply grateful for you all and pray we may have the pleasure to be in your company on the road with our Lord Jesus for many years to come.

Faithfully,
+Dorsey

Statistics for September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014

Episcopal Visitations	34	Marriages	0
Confirmations	89	Burials	2
Receptions	19	Ordinations	4
Baptisms	2	(Order of Deacon 1; Order of Priest 3)	
		Renewal of Vows	1