

# UNITAS

In necessariis UNITAS, in dubiis LIBERTAS, in omnibus CARITAS Augustine  
In essential things, UNITY; in doubtful things, LIBERTY; in all things, CHARITY Augustine

News from the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

Fall, 2008

## From the Vicar

As the Church universal was celebrating the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, June 9, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople honored the recent tradition of both the eastern Church and the western Church celebrating together in Rome. The feast brought forth not only the Patriarch and his delegation to the Eternal City but also a joint proclamation dedicating the year 2008-2009 the Year of St. Paul.

While various parish programs will take their cue from this Jubilee Year by exploring the Pauline literature, the exciting moment for the advancement of Christian unity is the uncovering of various ecclesiologies among the early churches and Paul's resolve to unify by preaching the one God, the one Christ, the one faith, the one baptism.

Paul's Letters are a gold-mine of issues affecting diversity and unity. They testify to his struggles with leadership, re-catechizing the catechized, sifting through what is essential to the faith from what is non-essential.

In many ways, many of the same issues face the churches and ecclesial communities today.

*~Monsignor Raymond A. Barton*

## PARISH ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES (St. Paul and a Conflicted Church)

In this year of St. Paul, PERs are preparing to bring the ecumenical dimension of Paul's ministry to their parishes. Re-enforcing their preparation is the 2008 STATE LARCUM CONVOCATION AND CONFERENCE, November 15-16, in Portsmouth. Regional gatherings for the PERs are designed to investigate Paul's letters and draw on his priority for unity in Christ when other forces threaten that unity.

Teams from the Diocesan Commission for (see page 3)

## The Year of Paul – LARCUM 2008

In observance of this *Jubilee Year of Paul*, the sponsoring Bishops of the Lutheran – Anglican – Roman Catholic – United Methodist Covenant (LARCUM) in Virginia and their State Planning Committee have chosen to focus on the experience of the Apostle to the Gentiles in relation to Christian unity. Both the letters of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles tell of Paul's struggles with the differing infant communities in promoting unity.

Leading the 2008 LARCUM STATE Conference is the Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb, Professor of New Testament, at the Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA. The dates are November 14 & 15, and the site is charming downtown Portsmouth. The theme is PAUL AND CHRISTIAN UNITY.

Hosting the CONVOCATION early Friday afternoon, which attracts clergy, parish staff, and seasoned ecumenists, is Trinity Episcopal Church, 500 Court Street. Presenting the Methodist contribution to Christian Unity is retired scholar Dr. James C. Logan, Winchester, VA.

The LARCUM CONFERENCE opens Friday evening, November 15, with arrival and registration at 6:00 PM, at Monumental United Methodist Church, 450 Dinwiddie Street. An Orientation to LARCUM is provided by the State Committee for those new to this ecumenical venture before the actual program begins.

Hosting the Friday evening session at 7:00 is St. Paul Catholic Church, High and Washington Streets. Dr. Grieb will examine issues facing Paul in his own words and the challenge of unity. The evening concludes with a closing Prayer Service.

The following day, November 15, (see page 2)

## **The Year of Paul — LARCUM (con't)**

the morning opens with registration and refreshment at Monumental United Methodist Church, 8:00 AM – 8:30. Participants then proceed two blocks to the First Lutheran Church, 600 King St. for Morning Prayer. Returning to Monumental United Methodist Church, the attendees will be in place for Dr. Grieb's focus on challenges to unity in her second presentation at 9:00 AM and her third presentation at 10:15. Discussions in Small Groups will conclude at 12:15 in time for lunch at the same location.

Following lunch, Dr. Grieb will lead an "Open Mic" session after which evaluation of the event takes place. The Conference concludes at 3:00 PM.

Pre-registration can be sent to LARCUM Registrar, Ascension Catholic Church, 4853 Princess Anne Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23462. ***The registration for Convocation and Conference is \$35, and for students it is \$10; Friday's lunch is \$6. Make checks payable to LARCUM.***

Those sponsoring the 2008 Convocation and Conference are the Lutheran Virginia Synod ELCA and the Metro Washington DC Synod ELCA; the Episcopal Dioceses of Virginia, Southern Virginia, and Southwestern Virginia; the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arlington and Richmond; and the United Methodist Virginia Conference.

Hosting the events are First Lutheran Church, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Paul Catholic Church, and Monumental United Methodist Church.

Dr. Katherine Grieb is a theologian, Scripture Scholar, and has served on the Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission. The House of Bishops Theology Committee has benefited from her membership.

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### **Jewish and Muslim Communities:**

For many, the year 2001 will be remembered for the events of 9/11. It changed the way American view the world. But an equally seminal year from the perspective of interreligious relations was the year 1965.

It was the year that gave birth to the document *Nostra Aetate*, which formally changed the way the Roman Catholic Church viewed non-Christian religions. But for Americans, the year also saw the inauguration of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 change the religious and cultural landscape of their country.

No longer were Judeo-Christian religions dominant among the immigrants coming to America. As a result, mosques, and temples began springing up along side churches and synagogues.

Today, in the interest of promoting peace and harmony, people seek to find commonalities among people of different religions. But as Rev. Francis Tiso, with the USCCB points out in the recently published book *InterActive Faith*, "Today perhaps we are discovering that to ignore our differences is not only to risk losing our credibility, but might also subvert the purposes of interreligious dialogue."

He goes on to explain that for trustworthy relationships to endure, those involved must know, believe in and practice their own religions with integrity.

***~Barbara Hughes  
Bishop's Interreligious Liaison***

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### **Gifts During this Pauline Year**

A \$3,000 Grant from the Bishop's Appeal to the Diocesan Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs has produced the DVD "Handing On the Faith in An Ecumenical World." Each parish will receive this gift to be a catechetical resource in the parish. Christian Brother Jeffery Gros, seasoned ecumenist and Professor of Church History at Memphis Theological Seminary, presents an up-to-date Catholic approach to Christian unity with parishes in mind. He skillfully moves those exploring the Catholic Church's relationship to other Christian traditions into the guiding principles of Vatican II. With an understanding of one's Catholic tradition, inquirers will encounter degrees of (see page three)

### **Gifts During this Pauline Year (con't)**

communion which display the exchange of gifts from one tradition to another (John Paul II). The format of the presentation allows time for reflection and group interaction before building on the next level.

**The Gift of Ecumenical Witness**, the familiar hymn proclaims "In Christ there is no East or West, in him no South or North." In Chesapeake, Virginia, North America meets Central America in a spirited enterprise of producing a ready-made, completely furnished medical clinic the size of a forty foot shipping container. Catholics, Pentecostals, and other Christians shrunk religious bias, joined together to complete, ship, and situate the clinic in El Sitio, El Salvador. Deacon Darrell Wentworth and the New Creation Catholic Charismatic Community, Chesapeake were partners with Pentecostal Bishop Frank Allen and Bobby Hoyle, President, Lendahand Mission Teams. The Clinic is fully stocked with medical supplies donated by hospitals from Georgia and North Carolina.

**The Gift of Pilgrimage** will reflect the Pauline Year as St. Nicholas Parish, Virginia Beach undertakes "Journeying to St. Paul in Tidewater," January 17, 2009. Four churches named St. Paul will receive pilgrims with a welcome, Scripture reading and a reflection on "St. Paul in Our Tradition." The four churches and their locations are: St. Paul AME, Portsmouth; St. Paul United Methodist, Chesapeake; St. Paul Episcopal, Norfolk; and St. Paul Catholic, Portsmouth. This ecumenical pilgrimage occurs during the annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25.

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### **PARISH ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES (cont)**

Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs are leading the gatherings in Hampton Roads (southside and the peninsula), the Richmond area, and the Roanoke area. The PERs from Region 8, 9, 10 and 11 came together at St. Patrick's Church, Lexington, on August 16. The PERs in Region 1, 2, 3, and 12 will convene at St. Nicholas Church, Virginia Beach, September 27; PERs of Region 4 will gather at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Hampton, on the same date. Those from Regions 5, 6 and 7 will gather at St. Edward the Confessor, Bon Air, Richmond, October 4th.

Each of the Regional Sessions begins with Gathering at 9:30 AM, Program at 10:00; Lunch at 12:15; Program until departure at 2:30 PM.

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### **Some interreligious activities**

Members of ACT (Abraham's Children Together) broke Ramadan fast on September 6<sup>th</sup> with members of Rumi Forum at the Marriott Hotel in Norfolk.

Hamby and Judy Sayed, a Muslim and Catholic couple, married 40 years spoke at Resurrection Church in Moneta, Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ten members of Holy Trinity and Blessed Sacrament Parishes in Norfolk will attend the Shabbat Service at Temple Israel and share a meal with the Jewish community following the service on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kristallnacht will be marked with music and a prayer service at the University of Richmond Sunday, Nov. 9 at 3 PM at Perkinson Recital Hall. Bishop Walter F. Sullivan will offer remarks.

Malik and Annette Khan from the Islamic Center in Richmond will speak at St. Gabriel's in Richmond, November 29<sup>th</sup>.

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### **Diocesan Commission to Participate in the VCC's Joint Ecumenical Retreat**

Members of the Richmond Diocese's Ecumenical and Interreligious Commission will join their ecumenical partners from the Virginia Council of Churches at the annual Joint Ecumenical Retreat in Richmond, October 7 & 8. The Rev. Lyndon F. Harris will lead this year's gathering. Rev. Harris was the priest in charge of the relief ministries at Ground Zero offered through Saint Paul's Chapel after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. From September 15, 2001 through June 2, 2002 Saint Paul's Chapel was converted into a multi-faith relief center for the rescue and relief workers and victim's family members at the World Trade Center site. Saint Paul's offered food, massage therapy, grief counseling and chiropractic and podiatric care around the clock. By the end of the operation, over one half million meals had been served.

## Calendar

### 2008

- September 27 Eastern Vicariate PER Gatherings, St. Nicholas, Virginia Beach AND Immaculate Conception, Hampton
- October 4 Central Vicariate PER Gathering, St. Edward the Confessor, Richmond
- October 7 – 8 VCC Ecumenical Retreat, Roslyn, Richmond
- October 8 Diocesan Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Commission meeting, Roslyn, Richmond
- October 27 – 28 CADEIO, Region IV, Roslyn, Richmond
- November 4 – 5 VCC Assembly, Roslyn, Richmond
- November 14 – 15 State LARCUM Convocation & Conference, Portsmouth

### 2009

- January 18 – 25 Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- April 27 – 30 National Workshop on Christian Unity, Phoenix, AZ
- June 2 Diocesan Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Commission's PERS Planning Session, Church of the Incarnation, Charlottesville
- June 3 Diocesan Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Commission meeting, Church of the Incarnation, Charlottesville

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