

E-News: January 16, 2014, February is Theological Education Month

Aloha,

None of the Episcopal Church seminaries receive monies from the General Convention budget and therefore must rely on the good will of the church members and other resources to provide the financial underpinning necessary to accomplish their mission. For over 20 years, the General Convention has encouraged the Church to give generously to this important work through 1% giving (1% of net disposable budgeted income of all congregations) to the seminaries of the Church.

I hope your congregation has made provision to fulfill the 1% asking and that individual members are strongly encouraged to give to a seminary of the Episcopal Church or to some other group that supports theological education. Churches can send their support directly to the seminaries (there is no reason to send the money through the Bishop's office).

Because of long-term capacity and financial stability, depth of faculty and generous financial aid, I urge those called and affirmed to ordination (as postulants/candidates in this Diocese for ordination to the priesthood) and who will be educated/formed in a residential three-year Master of Divinity (M. Div.) program to visit three seminaries: Virginia Theological Seminary, The School of Theology at the University of the South, and Seminary of the Southwest. A postulant must attend a seminary with the Bishop's approval

Our newest diocesan seminary-trained Priest, the Reverend Leo Loyola, graduated from Virginia and he is now serving on the Windward side of O'ahu, and Ernesto "JaR" Pasalo and Annalise Castro are studying at Virginia now. Virginia has emerged, for now, to be the primary seminary of the Diocese. Further, the Diocese has entered into an agreement with Virginia to engage in partnership and exchanges. For at least a portion of your giving, I urge your support of Virginia. Please see the following for contact information and to send donations:

Virginia Theological Seminary
3737 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304
703-370-6600
www.vts.edu

The seminary of our Province (VIII) is:

Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP)
2451 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709-1217
510-204-0700
www.cdsp.edu

We have historic and Provincial ties to CDSP. Gifts can be made directly to CDSP.

I send my personal support to the seminaries from which I have degrees [General Theological Seminary (M. Div.) and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary (D. Min. in Preaching)], and to the two seminaries with diocesan ties, CDSP and Virginia (since that is where we have had and now have seminarians)].

I am also collecting money to support a seminary of the Philippine Independent Church (Iglesia Filipina Independiente or IFI) , Aglipay Central Theological Seminary in Uradanta City. The Episcopal Church is a full-communion partner with the IFI and many in our Diocese have historic ties to the IFI. I consider this an extension of support for theological education. If you would like to support the work of Aglipay Central Theological Seminary, please do send the money to me here at the office (checks can be made payable to "The Episcopal Church in Hawai'i" with a notation for the "IFI Seminary").

Lastly, there are two options to support theological education that I want you to know about:

Waiolaihui'ia is the local diocesan-based formation program to train candidates for the Priesthood. Please consider supporting this program for theological education by sending donations to the Bishop's Office (checks can be made payable to "The Episcopal Church in Hawai'i" with a notation of "Waiolaihui'ia"). For more information about the program, see this document (which can also be found online here: http://www.episcopalhawaii.org/uploads/2/5/4/8/25486559/4.3.0-5.5_doc_-_priesthoodformationprogram.pdf).

Another means of supporting theological education in The Episcopal Church is through the Society for the Increase of the Ministry (or go to: <http://simministry.org>). The Society for the Increase of the Ministry (SIM) supports scholars preparing for ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church. For over 150 years, the Society has awarded scholarships to qualified, full-time seminary students who are postulants or candidates for ordination and enrolled at one of the accredited Episcopal seminaries (or an accredited, bishop-approved non-Episcopal seminary). I know clergy of the Diocese have benefited from SIM scholarships through the years and this might be one another option for your congregational or personal support. Please send your checks to the following address:

The Society for the Increase of the Ministry

120 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06105

Remember that Theological Education Sunday (TES) is officially recognized on the first Sunday in February. It is a day parishioners set aside to pray for all laity and clergy whose ministry is theological education, wherever that ministry happens — in the home, preschool programs, parishes, colleges, universities, and seminaries. Established in 1999 by The Episcopal Church, this Theological Education Sunday on the church calendar is an occasion for all parishioners to focus on education as a key aspect of mission. I am sure any of the seminaries would welcome the opportunity to somehow be a part of your congregation's Theological Education Sunday program. Because that specific Sunday might get a bit hectic (it is Super Bowl Sunday), I think it is prudent to highlight theological education throughout the month. So, in the Diocese of Hawai'i, February is Theological Education month.

Theological education is important for the Church and there is a place for strong residential programs and local programs. The support of local churches and individual Episcopalians is essential for theological education to thrive and prepare future leaders for Church to fulfill God's mission.

Mahalo,

+Bob

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick