

- I. Presiding Bishop Sutton, Archdeacon Thompson, diocesan clergy, lay delegates and invited guests, it is wonderful to be together in-person here in Mason, Ohio for our 14th diocesan synod. I am grateful to the members of the Diocese of the Central States for the trust you have placed in me as well as for the many expressions of prayer and encouragement I have received from you as I navigated my second year as diocesan Ordinary. I am especially delighted to have Bp Sutton with us in-person this year. I am always challenged and encouraged by his devotion to Our Lord, His Kingdom and to the REC. His wise counsel and the generous contribution of his valuable time are a great help and blessing to me and our diocese. Thank you Bp. Ray!

- II. As I begin my third year as Ordinary...I want to stop talking about the virus...how about you?! Certainly issues and conflicts and concerns and disagreements remain regarding COVID. There are still things to sort out and things to be further discussed, but for our purposes this morning...here are some excerpts from St Paul's famous admonition in his letter to the Philippians: *Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord* (he was writing from prison: *rejoice in the Lord!*).... *Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord...then: whatever things were gain to me, these things I have counted as loss because of Christ....and finally: one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I*

press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- A. On the road to our glorious union with Jesus, there are bumps in the road...bumps that look like mountains and bumps that are indeed mountains, but the blessed Apostle's admonition stands: *Rejoice in the Lord, count all things loss, forget what lies behind, press on to what lies ahead!*
- III. This is our 14th diocesan synod, and there are currently 21 parishes and missions in our diocese. In my role as Ordinary, I have focused on advancing and expanding the following areas of diocesan ministry and life.
1. First: **Administration and diocesan staff**...I have an office at my home for my work as Ordinary, and the Trustees recently approved funds to convert a section of a room here at Trinity Church for use as a diocesan office. The location at Trinity has become our official diocesan address. Our files and supplies are kept here, and our administrative secretary works from here as well. I am grateful to the vestry of Trinity Church, Mason for providing the space and giving us a home in their building. We have postponed any discussion about designating Trinity Church as the cathedral parish until a later date.
 - a. Our new administrative secretary, Mary Bailey, assumed her duties in July. Mary retired four years ago after 27 years

managing various accounts for an advertising agency. (Be sure to greet her during our synod). Mary and I meet every week here at the church and work on keeping our administrative house in order. We also contact our Treasurer, Fr. Ken Mills, during that time to maintain communication with him regarding diocesan finances. Fr. Mills continues to faithfully serve in his role as treasurer. His expertise and dedication have been invaluable as our diocese has grown, which has increased the demands upon our financial management. He devotes considerable time every month in balancing our books and paying our bills in addition to his work as church planter for the Holy Cross Mission outside of Richmond, VA. Thank you Fr. Ken!

- b. Archdeacon Scott Thompson has an important administrative role as well. This April we were finally able to formally install Fr. Scott as Archdeacon of our diocese during a service of HC at St. Jude's, Richmond. Adn. Scott, with the help of his dear wife, Mary Jane, is beyond generous in giving his time, energy and outstanding talents towards building up the diocese and encouraging our clergy. He has become a treasured and trusted friend for me. His partnership makes me look good, which is not so easy to do!
- c. I also applaud the work of our Standing Committee and our Board of Trustees in maintaining good order and assisting

me with the administration of our diocese. The cooperation and teamwork between us has been encouraging, essential and effective as our diocese continues to grow and mature. I especially want to recognize Fr. Paul Edgerton for his service as president of the Standing Committee. Fr. Paul's term ends this year, and his efforts have provided an invaluable supply of processes and procedures to build with as we look to grow and develop our diocese and seek and save the lost.

2. My second focus area is **Communication**. The large geographic expanse of the DCS requires extra effort in developing a sense of unity and working together among clergy and parishes. COVID was certainly a distraction and obstacle over the past two years, but, remember my dear Bishop Peter, we are not talking about COVID and instead are reaching forward to what lies ahead! So...
 - a. Convocations: Our two convocations, Piedmont (parishes in the states of VA, NC, and AL), and Ohio Valley (parishes in the states of OH, KY, IN, WVA, and TN) each held clergy gatherings...the clericus...over the past year. The meetings were well attended, and provided an opportunity for fellowship, the exchange of ideas and reflection/discussion about ways we could assist one another in leading our parishes and expanding the reach of our ministry in our specific regions.

- b. Communication-Website. Over the past year, our webmaster, Andy Figuero made significant improvements to our website. It has become an important communication tool for our diocese, as well as a way to introduce outsiders to our ministry. If you have suggestions about future improvements, contact Archdn. Scott or me.
 - c. Communication-Directory. Our directory has been updated and now includes all of our postulants and retired clergy. Contact Mary Bailey with any corrections or updates.
 - d. Communication-Newsletter. Thanks to Adn. Scott and Dss. Teresea Johnson, our newsletter, the DCS Epistle, is up and running again. We need parish news and pictures. Submit these to Adn. Scott.
- IV. My third focus area is **Parish Health**. I gradually resumed my episcopal visits in April as virus concerns were declining. The pace of my visits has continued to increase. I am currently scheduling visits into February 2022. Please contact me to schedule a visit for the new term. I would like to continue Bp. Morse's practice of visiting each parish in the diocese at least once a year. My visits have gone very well...and you know what?...our parishes are growing! For instance, in two weeks I visit St. John's, Chelsea, Fr. Scott Houser's parish, and have 8 confirmations scheduled. Confirmations and receptions have been the norm with my visits...

which is, of course, very encouraging. I have presided at 11 confirmations and 22 receptions since April 2021. In this regard, I **must** mention COVID one more time!...for I **must** reiterate how grateful and impressed I am for the way in which our clergy have led their parishes over the past year and a half. It was not easy!... and we did not have a manual to follow regarding how to respond to the fallout...religious, political, financial, relational, otherwise... that we have had to endure. *The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep*, was how our Lord described it, and I saw that quality in action in our clergy's response....and now the fruit has begun to appear.

- A. Also under parish health, St. Paul's in Lexington, VA hosted a church revitalization seminar presented by Canon Mark Eldridge, the Director of Revitalization for the American Anglican Council. Canon Eldridge has been working with our REC 100 program, and we considered his time at St. Paul's as a test-run for our diocese. Fr. Eric Parker, rector of St. Paul's, gave a highly favorable report concerning the value of the seminar. Several of our rectors are now interested in hosting one in their parishes. Funds are available to help with the cost of sponsoring a seminar. Adn. Scott has the details.
- B. Parish Health-In September, I participated in the dedication of Boone Hall in Appomattox, VA. The historic building was beautifully remodeled and now provides additional classrooms for St.

Andrew's Academy, a ministry of St. Andrew's Anglican REC, where Fr. Damien Grout is rector.

- C. Parish Health-Holy Trinity, Fairfax, VA, after nine years of renting space and setting up chairs, has purchased a building for their parish home. They're currently remodeling the facility. I am scheduled to visit the parish for the building dedication in January, 2022. Congratulations Fr. Josiah and Holy Trinity parish!
- D. Parish Health-My report officially covers the 12 months ending on September 30, 2021, but it is worth noting that on October 3, I participated in the 150th anniversary celebration of the Church of Our Savior, Oatlands in Leesburg, VA. The church has a remarkable history of faithfulness to the Gospel and the Anglican Way despite serious opposition and calamity. The parish has produced a record of the key events in the life of the parish which I hope we can publish in our newsletter. Fr. Jonathan Kell just celebrated his first anniversary as rector of the growing parish.
- V. My fourth focus area is **Clergy and Clergy Development**. ...And here is more good news. If you recall, we specifically prayed the prayer "For the Increase of the Ministry" from our prayer book during our last synod. We had several open pulpits at the time within the diocese. Well, in answer to our prayer, the pulpits have been

filled with the last one in the process of being filled. There are also six postulants and one deaconess candidate in our diocese. I have been particularly encouraged by the number of men, aged 45 and under...several in their twenties, who are enrolled as postulants or currently serving in our parishes. God is answering our prayers! Young men seeing visions and old men dreaming dreams...the Spirit at work in each of our lives, young and old alike...His gifts among us adding their unique and vital quality and flavor to our fellowship and ministry.

- A. Clergy-In February, Fr. Rich Workowski retired as vicar of Covenant REC in Roanoke, VA. It was at least his third retirement having been pressed into service several times since his first retirement after serving for ____ years in several parishes in Diocese NE and MidAtlantic...he held final post as rector of St. Mark's, Rydal, PA for 30+ years! Fr. Rich and his lovely wife Joan are tireless servants of our Lord and dedicated advocates of the REC who have been always ready to help. We are blessed to have them resident in the DCS. Thank you Fr. Rich and Joan for your love of the Gospel and exemplary Christian lives. May your years be blessed with the fullness of God's presence and love.

- B. Clergy- Fr. Mel Williams took over for Fr. Rich and is currently serving as vicar of Covenant Church, Roanoke, VA. Fr. Mel is on loan to us from the *Christian Episcopal Church*. He and his

wife, Ella, live in Roanoke where Fr. Mel has a legal practice.

Be sure to greet him/them during the synod.

- C. Clergy-In May, I ordained Stuart Fitzpatrick to the diaconate. Dcn. Stuart has served St. Andrew's mission in Asheboro, NC under the leadership of Fr. Ian MacGregor. Dcn. Stuart's ordination will greatly expand his role and ministry in the mission. Special recognition to Fr. Ian who regularly made the hour-plus drive to Asheboro for many years to minister to the mission there while also serving as rector of All Saints parish in Raleigh, NC.
- D. Clergy-September was a big month for our diocese. In September, I received Fr. Richard Tarsitano as a presbyter in our diocese. Fr. Richard and his wife, Meghan, began a church plant in Connersville, IN in January 2021. Connersville and the surrounding area have had a difficult time recovering from the closing of an automotive plant there several years ago. Fr. Richard was moved by the suffering many have had to endure because of the resultant poverty...especially the high rate of opioid addiction. Fr. Richard was able to purchase an empty former Episcopal church building to begin a ministry there. We are blessed to welcome him, his family and Holy Trinity, Connersville into our diocese.

- E. In September and very close to home, Trinity REC, Mason called Fr. Matthew Joyner as the rector of their church. As many know, Janice and I moved to Cincinnati in September 1989 to plant the non-denominational church which eventually became Trinity REC Mason. We're still here!...and I am pleased to pass the baton on to Fr. Matthew. Fr. Matthew comes to us from the Orthodox Church of America. He and his wife, Ashley, moved to Mason in September...they both actually grew up in this area. We will install Fr. Matthew as the second rector of Trinity RE Church this Sunday, October 24.
- F. In light of these changes at Trinity, I especially want to thank Fr. David Truax for his loyalty and faithful service to me and the Trinity Parish. Fr. David was there at the very beginning of the church, and has served as deacon and then as assistant priest for many years. Fr. Truax, his wife Jennifer and family have been vital to the parish's existence and growth.
- G. Clergy-Finally, I remind delegates to be sure your clergy are enrolled in the REC Pension Plan as well as in the Clergy Disability and Life policy. Enrollment information can be found on the REC website. Special note: some are still using the old Pensions and Relief address in Blue Bell which no longer houses those offices. New address (3-4 years!) is on website; 200 Glen Gary Dr., Havertown, PA.

- I. My fifth focus is on some **particular challenges** we are facing.
 - H. Legal Issues. The Standing Committee has approved my recommendation of Mr. Dan Bell as Chancellor for our diocese. Throughout our history (REC) we have always used, when necessary, professionals for legal counsel on an as-needed basis. Given, however, our growth as well as the cultural challenges for Christianity, the time has come to appoint a lawyer, who is a member of the Reformed Episcopal Church, to be available for legal guidance. Mr. Dan Bell has been recommended to us and is willing to serve as our diocesan chancellor. Dan and his dear wife, Criselda, are active members of Church of Our Saviour, Leesburg. Dan is retired, and was a highly regarded attorney in VA/DC area for the many years he practiced law there. I personally thank Dan for his willingness to serve our diocese in this capacity. We especially pray for him in his new position and for the protection of our parish ministries, their clergy and laity, from actions that would have detrimental legal ramifications on them and all of us.
 - I. Particular challenges -Legal Issues-I have asked Fr. Paul Edgerton to lead a Child Protection Committee tasked with developing a Child Protection Policy which can be easily adapted for use by our parishes. The DMA has produced a template for all of our diocese to follow in crafting their own policy.

- J. Particular challenges -Cultural issues and concerns- Adn. Scott Thompson is leading a committee for the REC that is developing materials for use in our parishes to instruct our members on the Biblical roles of men and women. Adn. Scott's committee originated from the work of another committee which I headed that was tasked with crafting a response to a bill before congress that will require women as well as men to register for the military draft. The Bishops' statement based on the work of the original committee is posted on the REC website.
- K. These three issues: diocesan chancellor, child protection policy and instruction material for parishes on the roles and men and women are being developed in response to the cultural challenges of our day.
- L. Particular challenges -Church Planting...in addition to our parish revitalization work, I would like to get one or two church plants up and running before our next synod. We have some REC 100 funds available. Thank you for supporting the Lenten "Give 100" offering which funds church planting within our diocese. Fr. Tarsitano's work in Connersville is a church plant. We are discussing the details regarding how to proceed with that project...and we are looking for other opportunities. We had success in praying for our pulpits to be filled last year...I'd like to build upon that success and pray for our parish revitalization and church planting efforts: REC 100 Prayer...Let us pray:

- M. Almighty Lord, Triune God of the harvest, we thank you for the Great Commission of your Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. By His command to spread the Good News, we are led at this time to a particular vision of planting 100 new missions and parishes in the Reformed Episcopal Church. We ask for your favor, grace, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Gospel call that many might come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We humbly petition you for the workers of the harvest as well as the funding required to support them. Mindful that without your help we can do nothing, we pray for your hand of blessing to be upon us for your glory; in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.
- N. Particular Challenges: Foreign Missions. Fr. Jon Boonzaaijer is here and will provide important information about the BFM. In special memory of our beloved departed missionary leader and a dear personal friend, Canon Bill Jerdan...3 things from me: I hope each parish will aspire to become a "Sending Parish," will participate in the Circle of Three program, and will plan a generous Advent offering this year.
- O. Particular Challenges-Women of the Church...the goal is for each parish to develop a Women of the Church ministry. This will be addressed later in our meetings as well.
- VI. Finally, as my predecessor and all REC Bishops following the lead of our beloved, departed Bp. Grote have always done, I direct that

until the heinous practice of abortion on demand is abolished in this country, the Third Sunday in January, or the Sunday closest to Holy Innocents, be designated Sanctity of Life Sunday and observed in all our parishes. Furthermore, I direct our clergy to prepare and deliver a sermon on that theme at the worship services on that day.

VII. I especially thank my wife, Janice, our children and grandchildren. You are all a constant source of encouragement, refreshment and joy to me. I thank Trinity Church; assisting priest, Fr. David Truax again; the Trinity vestry and Mary Bailey for their work.

VIII. And finally, special thanks to Ds. Michelle Caldwell who serves both the Trinity parish and our diocese in many ways. Thank you, especially. Dss. Michelle, for organizing this year's synod. Your devotion to our Lord, His Church, and His people has kept our heads above water and kept everything moving forward!

IX. *Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord...count all things as loss because of Christ....and forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Respectfully submitted,

+Peter Manto

