

Diocese of the Central States
15th Synod, October 2022
Bishop Ordinary Report

- I. Archdeacon Thompson, Diocesan clergy and wives, lay delegates and invited guests, it is wonderful to be together here in Lynchburg, VA for our 15th diocesan synod. Thank you, All Saints parish and Fr. Davidson Morse for hosting and organizing our Synod 2022, and thank you, New Covenant Schools and Fr. John Heaton for opening the campus and this beautiful chapel for us.
- II. Welcome fellow clergy and wives. I am grateful for your friendship, prayers, and partnership in this honored and blessed Gospel ministry.
- III. Welcome lay delegates...on behalf of all diocesan clergy, thank-you for supporting our work and for the gifts you bring to our parishes and ministry, and a personal thank-you from me for taking care of our clergy families and for your concern for their well-being and needs as they labor in God's harvest.
- IV. And welcome guests, we are glad to have you with us...if you have questions, I hope we can answer them. Please know of our appreciation for you and of our desire to join hands with you in serving our Lord however we can.
- V. I will begin my fourth year as Ordinary in January, and I am particularly grateful to the all the clergy and members of the Diocese of the Central States for the ongoing trust you have placed in me and for the many expressions of prayer and encouragement I have received from you over the past year.

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Please continue to pray for Janice and me and for our diocese as we move forward in ministering in our Central States region. May the blessed Apostle's admonitions remain alive and fresh within us: *Rejoice in the Lord always, count all things loss in order to gain Christ, forget what lies behind, press on to what lies ahead!*

- VI. I have divided my activities report for the past 12 months into three sections: DCS, REC, ACNA.

- VII. First and longest the Diocese of the Central States. Again, this is our 15th synod, and there are currently 21 parishes and missions in our diocese covering eight states with at least one parish in seven of the eight...come on West Virginia!
 - A. Since beginning my work as Ordinary, I have come to regard this position as a common denominator, uniting our parishes and clergy spread out over such a broad geographic area. Despite the distance, it is important for me that we continue to develop a sense of working **together** as RE clergymen and parishes wherever, whenever, and however we can. I therefore plan to continue to visit each parish at least once between annual synods to maintain our connection and help us move forward.
 1. In my role as Ordinary, I made 22 Episcopal visits over the past twelve months, and have appreciated the warm and gracious welcome I have received each time. I conducted

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71 confirmations during those visits. 71 Confirmations is very encouraging. There were 11 in the last term... admittedly there was a COVID backlog, but still 11 to 71! ... Our church is growing...our network of influence is increasing...people are being added to our fellowship day by day!

2. *In this regard, clergy please continue to prepare people for Confirmation. Confirmation is an important part of our disciple-making efforts. As I have been reminding our parishes, St. Paul wrote about running the race, and Confirmation uniquely recognizes and celebrates the Holy Spirit passing His Gifts... "passing the race baton" if you will, from generation to generation of believers. The Church and her bishops, through the laying on of hands, communicates the very real connection...that very personal touch...each generation of believers and each individual believer has with Jesus, the Holy Spirit and His Church through the ages.*
3. We have two Convocations in our diocese, Ohio Valley includes parishes in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee ...Piedmont include parishes in Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama. We'll decide upon where to place West Virginia when we have a parish there...come on WVA!

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4. The Convocation structure provides another avenue for clergy to interact and strategize concerning their shared ministry region and to encourage one another. I participated in the Ohio Valley Clericus in April and in the Piedmont Clericus in September. I also held a zoom meeting with each convocation to discuss specific issues.
- B. Regarding diocesan clergy, I instituted Rev. Duane Veley as Vicar of Covenant Roanoke in September. Covenant was one of five parishes which were without a rector when I began in 2020. All positions are now filled...praise God!
1. I also ordained four deacons this term, all within the past 3 months: Jameson Lowery, Andrew Costa, and Tim Kline who are with us...be sure to congratulate them. The other, Aaron Pelot is in Scotland where he began Phd in theology studies at St. Andrew's last month.
 2. I also received 2 new postulants, Coleman Rafferty and David Heng. David and Coleman were unable to be with us. Postulants wear a black line on their clerical collars...we have a few here for synod, be sure to greet them and encourage them in their studies and express your appreciation for their entry into the discernment process for ordained ministry.

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3. So, there are currently 29 presbyters, 7 deacons, 5 postulants (Jameson Overton examined yesterday), 2 deaconesses and one deaconess candidate for a total of 44 individuals resident within our diocese. By my calculations, among these individuals there are 8 in their 70's; 11 in their 60's; 11 in their 50's; 6 in their 40's; and 8 in their 30's. I think that is a pretty good range of ages, especially with 14...31% of the total...falling in the 40's, 30's, 20's range. Remember to pray: Increase of Ministry: p. 60.
 - a) It is also important to note that there are 8 retired clergy resident within our diocese. Six of these have assisted with ministry activities in various ways, some regularly, others as needs have arisen over the past year.
 4. Finally regarding clergy, on a sad note for me personally, in July, I received the resignation of Dcn Tanner Moore, terminating his position as Deacon in our Church and Diocese. I devoted a considerable amount of time in resolving this problem. The separation, though difficult, was necessary and amicable. Tanner has since requested transfer of his church membership to another denomination. He will complete his Phd studies at Purdue next year.
- C. Regarding Church Planting, we currently have one active REC 100 church plant in Connersville, IN. I visited the fledging

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parish to award the grant in March. The REC 100 grant allowed the clergy-planter, Fr. Richard Tarsitano, to transition from full-time to part-time secular work and devote more energy and time to the effort. I returned to worship and visit with them several times during the past term. Some new families have begun attending services regularly, and the work is progressing well.

1. Our other church plant, Holy Cross Mission in Amelia, VA, Fr. Ken Mills clergy-planter, has grown and is in the process of moving to full parish status. I visited them in March and confirmed 7 people with 60 people in attendance. The congregation has purchased a building and is now in the process of adding a parish hall and classrooms attached to the original structure. Fr. Ken gave me a tour of the new addition under construction while I was in Virginia for meetings in August, and it looked great! Fr. Ken also conducts Sunday services at a senior living facility nearby. Congratulations and continued blessings upon this work!
 - a) While on the topic of church buildings, I presided at two building consecration services. First, right here...the remodeled Marie Macdonald Chapel in December 2021, a glorious service of thanksgiving and praise for the ongoing work of the Gospel at New Covenant Schools and All Saints Church, and then Holy Trinity, Chantilly/

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formerly Fairfax, VA in January 2022. Holy Trinity purchased their own place after nearly 20 years renting, moving, setting up. Significantly, there were seven ordained RE clergymen present at the building consecration, all of whom had come through the work in Fairfax and continue to serve in several different RE parishes!

2. Back to church planting: I had wanted to start another church plant this year. While that has not happened, I am looking into one solid opportunity for a plant to begin in 2023. I have also had discussions with an established congregation considering a move into the REC and our diocese.
3. Also, Church of the Redeemer in Owensboro, KY has, on my recommendation, applied for an REC 100 grant. The congregation really is a church plant. After nearly closing several years ago, Fr. David Goodwin took over, studied, was ordained presbyter and has overseen the steady progress of the congregation. I ordained Tim Kline as deacon and confirmed 6 there last month with 50-60 in attendance. The congregation has been meeting at Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Owensboro at 3 pm on Sunday and now has more in attendance than the Presbyterian congregation currently meeting in the morning. As a result, the groups will flip meeting times...Central Presbyterian to

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the afternoon slot, Redeemer to the morning time. The grant will enable Fr. David, who is bi-vocational, to devote more time and energy to bringing the mission to full-parish status.

- D. Church Schools: At our last General Council, Bp. Sutton encouraged parishes to consider starting Christian schools. Fr. Eric Parker, opened St. George's Classical School this year in Lexington, VA. In my discussions with Fr. Eric and Adn. Thompson, it seemed best to organize the venture as a diocesan school functioning as a ministry of the DCS. Fr. Eric navigated the organizational details and legalities, and we now have our first diocesan school! There are four other schools in located our diocese: Dominion Academy, a ministry of Christ the King REC, Dayton; Appomattox Christian Academy, a ministry of St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Appomattox, VA, Hunter Classical School in Richmond, VA, and right here, New Covenant Schools, governed by an independent Board while maintaining an affiliation with the REC through our DCS.
1. Fr. John Boonzaijer heads the Anglican School Association...I've asked him to give a brief update on the Association during his BFM presentation,
- E. Adn. Scott will have further details on church growth, church plants, and schools in his Canon Missioner report.

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F. Regarding other diocesan activities:

1. I formed a Committee to create a Child Protection Policy for our parishes. Fr. Paul Edgerton served as chair. His committee has crafted an excellent guide/template for parishes to use in forming their own policy adapted to their local situation and state laws. Without exaggeration, every bishops' meeting I have attended over the past 3 years (REC and ACNA) has addressed this issue in one way or another. Rectors and delegates, it is imperative that each parish has a policy in place by the end of 2022. The Trustees have offered to provide financial assistance, through 2022, for parishes struggling to meet the policy requirements for background checks. Fr. Edgerton will have a report...and remember, while it is bad and unacceptable not to have a policy in place, it is worse to have a policy and not adhere to its guidelines and protocols.

G. Other activities: I established our first diocesan intern program this year. We brought Postulant and RE Seminary student, Matthew Hynd, to southwest Ohio to work with Fr. Chris Herman at St. Lazarus Mission, our unique and growing nursing home ministry there. Matthew also assisted Fr. Mike Fitzpatrick at Christ Our Hope in Fairborn, Ohio during his two month internship. According to all parties involved, the program was a

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great success. We will continue to develop internships for postulants and seminary students for the upcoming term.

H. Other activities: I also took part in various diocesan committee meetings via zoom throughout the year

a) Standing Committee meetings: Fr. Josiah Jones has ably filled the large gap left when Fr. Paul Edgerton completed his term as Chair. Along with the usual Standing Committee responsibilities, the group faced some difficult issues this term. I am grateful for their council and assistance in overseeing the diocese.

b) Board of Trustees: Tyler Crocker current chair, Ken Mills treasurer. This committee ably and faithfully performs the all-important task of managing and stewarding our diocesan finances to the glory of God. Thank you everyone!

c) I value the camaraderie and working relationship I have with both groups...Standing Committee and Trustees. Each will present their reports today.

I. Other activities: I am also in regular communication with Archdeacon Scot Thompson and was able to visit with him three times in-person as well as have many phone conversations with him over the past year and discuss

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diocesan matters. Adn. Scott is a wise counselor, a trusted friend, a tireless servant of our Lord, and an excellent Archdeacon for the DCS. Thank you, Fr. Scott and MaryJane!

1. I also would like to thank our deaconesses Michelle Caldwell and Teresa Johnson who are always accommodating to my requests for assistance with diocesan needs and issues. I have made it a point this term to gather articles, photos and parish news as I visited and interacted with clergy and congregations, and Dss. Teresa has done a fine job in producing our diocesan newsletter. If you have news and photos, send it to me, I'm functioning as editor; and I will send it on to Dss. Teresa.

2. Finally, our administrative Secretary, Mary Bailey has provided invaluable and superior service to me and our Diocese. I meet with Mary weekly at our office at Trinity Mason to handle the various administrative tasks of the Diocese. In addition to these administrative tasks, Mary has been instrumental in producing our directory, the new clergy ID's, and our improved confirmation certificates. She is currently working on producing a Baptismal Certificate for the diocese and ably assembled our bottles of anointing oil. Thank you dearest Mary Bailey!

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- J. Finally, a diocesan concern/exhortation. In the time leading up to my consecration as bishop, I asked Bp. Grote to recommend some helpful reading in preparation for my new duties. To my surprise, He immediately responded, “Read and know the Constitution and Canons!” I have endeavored to do so, and have come to appreciate his direction. I now encourage our clergy and delegates to read and know our diocesan and REC Constitution and Canons and our Diocesan Customary. They are important guide-rails describing who we are and how we function. Parish life moves on day-to-day, and we will certainly encounter difficulties, along the way. These well-studied and prepared documents are extremely helpful in finding a way forward and making a way through.

VIII.Next section: REC relations...

- A. Council of Bishops: I participated in two half-day REC Bishop’s meetings via zoom, and I am in regular communication with Bp. Sutton and the other REC Bishops. Our working relationships are superb, and we have become good friends. Whenever we are together, attending various meetings in-person, we make it a point to have some time together and update one another on our diocesan work. Please continue pray for us!
1. Also regarding our Council of Bishops, I attended and participated in the service of consecration for now Bp. Willie

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Hill. Bp. Hill replaced retiring Bp. William White as Ordinary of the Diocese of the Southeast in September.

- B. General Council: I serve as Vice-president of the General Council and as a member of the General Committee. I participated in the bi-annual General Committee Meetings via zoom as well related sub-committee zoom meetings and calls. The General Council of the REC will meet and celebrate our 150th anniversary in Charleston, SC in June 2023. Make plans to attend!
- C. I serve as VP for the Board of Foreign Missions and took part in two committee meetings via zoom as well as several related meetings called to address specific issues. Canon Boonzaaijer is with us and will give a BFM report.
- D. Last year, I chaired a committee which produced a statement on women in the military for our church now posted on the REC website. Based upon the recommendation of that committee, a new committee was formed under my general oversight to produce an instructional guide for use by REC parishes in light of the current confusion and conflict concerning gender and human sexuality. Adn. Scott Thompson served as chairman of the new task force which produced the guide entitled “Godly Men and Women in the Church and World.” The committee’s

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final draft is under review, and we hope to publish it and have it ready for distribution to our parishes in 2023.

IX. Last section: ACNA relations

- A. I participated in three zoom meetings, the annual in-person week-long Bishops meeting, and the in-person, weeklong ASCNA Bishops Conclave. I also attended the ACNA Provincial Council meetings in June.
- B. Our REC bishops agree that it important for us to maintain our association with the ACNA. It provides us with a “place at the table” with other traditional Anglicans. The Women’s ordination issues remain. The REC regards our position on WO as a first order issue which we will not compromise. Our sub-jurisdiction status within the ACNA allows us to maintain our male-only clergy stance while developing healthy relationships with other like-minded Anglicans.

X. Finally, a wonderful answer to prayer...Roe V Wade was finally overturned. A great victory for human life and dignity has been won on the national level...but abortion and its advocates remain as determined as ever to keep the heinous practice going. For years, our bishops had asked that until the practice of abortion on demand was 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.

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Furthermore, our clergy were directed to prepare and deliver a sermon on that theme at the worship services on that day. With Roe overturned, I ask that we continue to designate the Third Sunday in January, or the Sunday closest to Holy Innocents as Sanctity of Life Sunday, adding a time of Thanksgiving for this answer to prayer to the sermons and instruction on the Sanctity of Life theme.

- XI. In conclusion, I especially thank my wife, Janice for her constant patience, encouragement, and love. Janice retired as public school ESL teacher this year, and will hopefully be able to accompany me on some parish visits. You'll be happy she did!
- XII. *Finally, St. Paul's admonitions: my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord always...count all things as loss to gain 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