



The
Episcopal Diocese
of New York

A Report given to the
247th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York
By the Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool
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Bishop Dietsche, Bishop Heyd, Bishop Shin, Beloved People of the Diocese of New York: I graduated from seminary in 1981, one of four women only two of whom were going into parish ministry. At that time a mythical story was making the rounds as priests who were women continued to fight for acceptance, not to mention jobs. The story went like this:

A newly ordained woman was called to be vicar of a small, country parish. The Vestry had voted 5-4 on the call, and the Senior Warden and the Junior Warden were not in agreement, but they decided to give her a chance. Early in her first month on the job, the Vicar received a call from the Senior Warden inviting her to accompany both wardens on a friendly fishing trip. She enthusiastically agreed, and the Senior Warden said *We'll pick you up at 4:00 am on Saturday and drive to the lake where I keep my boat. Be sure to wear appropriate gear! We'll provide a rod and tackle.*

The Vicar was waiting outside the Vicarage when the Wardens pulled up at 3:55 am on the day in question. They drove to the lake, got into the boat, and motored out to a spot in the middle of the lake to fish. No sooner had the Senior Warden cut the motor, then the Junior Warden exclaimed *Oh geez! I forgot my thermos of coffee! It's back in the car.* Without hesitation, the Vicar said *I'll go get it*, and she jumped out of the boat and walked across the water to the shore. The Senior Warden elbowed the Junior Warden and said: *See! I told you she couldn't swim!*

During the next year we all have the wonderful opportunity to celebrate women in ministry in the Church, not only in the Diocese of New York, but also in our country and the world. A small task force which I have the honor of convening is working to coordinate, publicize, and support many events throughout the Church whose singular purpose is to tell the story – I should say *stories* – in all their fullness, as significant parts of the narrative of the People of God. We start with recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Ordination of the *Philadelphia Eleven* at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia on July 29, 1974. This was certainly an event that caused the tectonic plates to shift, in the Church at least. A documentary film titled *The Philadelphia Eleven* is being screened at parishes and other organizations across the country. On December 10 at 4:00 pm at St. James Church, Hyde Park the film will be shown, followed by Evening Prayer with a candlelit reading of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration*

of Human Rights. December 10 is the 75th Anniversary of the release of that publication, and Eleanor Roosevelt, whose spiritual home was St. James, Hyde Park, was the lead author and primary proponent of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If you are interested in attending this event or even helping out, I'm sure the Rev. Meredith Kadet Sanderson, Priest-in-Charge of St. James, would welcome your inquiries.

One thing leads to another we often say, and while we recognize the ordinations of the *Philadelphia Eleven* as the first such ordinations in the Episcopal Church, they were not the first in the Anglican Communion. Florence Li Tim-Oi was born in Hong Kong in 1907. After attending Union Theological College in Canton, she was ordained deaconess in May 1941, and despite the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, she continued her ministry of service. On January 25 1944, Bishop Ronald Hall of Hong Kong ordained Florence priest, the first woman so ordained in the Anglican Communion. Her story, which is rich in service and the love of God, can be read online, and we are honored to have a task force in the Diocese, led by the Rev. Deacon Pam Tang, planning for the 80th anniversary celebration of Li Tim-Oi's ordination as priest. There will be several events celebrated in our Diocese culminating in an event on Friday, May 10th, 2024 at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

On Saturday, December 9, 2023, right here in this Cathedral beginning at 10:00 am, the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, Dean and President of Episcopal Divinity School, the Rev. Dr. Carter Heyward – one of the Philadelphia Eleven, retired Professor of Theology and author of many books, and I will have a panel discussion of how these events and the role of women in general have impacted the life of our Church. There will be an opportunity for some discussion at large, as well, and further connections through our storytelling will undoubtedly be made. And make no mistake, we will be honoring and celebrating the vocations of *all* women: lay and ordained, whether they can swim or not, because we are mindful of those whose ways of selfless service laid the foundation for these events, as well as the responsibilities we have to honor and support the next generations seeking to make the world a better place.

It continues to be a privilege for me to work with the Diocese of New York's *Global Women's Fund*, whose focus is providing seed money and other forms of financial support for educational opportunities to women and girls throughout the world. Judi Counts is the Chair of the Board, who, along with her fulltime job as Executive Director of the House of the Redeemer, faithfully continues to call the Board together and focus us on our work. The Global Women's Fund is a wonderful opportunity for any of you who might be looking for a way in which to serve the educational needs of women and girls through the distribution of funds, and also for the building of relationships that mutually benefit the participants. Again, I know Judi Counts would welcome your inquiries and I am deeply grateful to Judi for her solid leadership.

It's not a competition, yet sometimes I think I have been blessed with oversight of the choicest fruits of ministry and service in the Diocese of New York. The Global Mission Commission, under the incredible leadership of Mr. Patrick Kidd, held its 7th annual Global Mission Fair just one month ago on October 14 at Trinity Commons. With the theme *Harmony Unveiled: Exploring the Ecological Soul of Global Mission*, the day long event featured keynote speaker Ms. Karenna Gore – Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Earth Ethics – and the largest distribution of Sustainable Development Goal Grants ever made by the Diocese of New York. We think that the entire Diocese should take appropriate pride in continuing to fulfill a resolution passed by the entire Church at General Convention in 2018 to designate 0.7% of our General Operating Budget towards the SDGs. Over seven years, the Diocese through its Global Mission Commission, has awarded \$368,262. Dollars in SDG grants. More importantly,

we are seeing an increase in the number of parishes and organizations who are engaging with this program, and we won't stop in our work until every congregation in this diocese has the opportunity to participate.

Additionally, our Liaison for Global Mission: the Rev. Yamily-Bass Choate, continues to give wide ranging support to our global mission programs and projects. Our Spanish Language/Mexican Culture Pilgrimage to the Diocese of Cuernavaca still has a few openings for any eager to learn Spanish – especially for liturgical purposes, so I invite you to connect with Yamily+ if you are interested.

The Social Concerns Commission is that exceedingly large umbrella holding together Creation Care, Anti-Racism Training, Domestic Violence Prevention, LGBTQ+ concerns, Human Trafficking, and the relatively new Advocacy and Action Committee. The Commission is ably chaired by the Rev. Allison Moore who works with a talented group of leaders from across the Diocese to engage a myriad of issues and concerns.

Whenever we sing the hymn *Who are these like stars appearing?* I think of our College Chaplains and the communities they serve. The Rev. Ryan Kuratko is our *Canterbury Uptown* Chaplain centered at Columbia University and Barnard College with tentacles out at Fordham and colleges in the Bronx. The Rev. Megan Sanders is our *Canterbury Downtown* Chaplain centered at NYU and Grace Church, Manhattan, with similar connections to the plethora of schools in lower Manhattan. The Rev. Judy Ferguson continues to minister faithfully to the cadets at West Point, and the Rev. Allison Moore serves New Paltz State College with branch ministries at some of our community colleges in Ulster, Sullivan, and Orange Counties. The Rev. Emily Clark has joined the team as halftime Associate at Christ Church, Poughkeepsie, and halftime Chaplain to Vassar College. These chaplains are the face of the Episcopal Church to a host of younger people eager to make their way in the world, and they do us all proud! The College Chaplains Committee is ably chaired by Mr. Nicholas Birns, and for him, along with the chaplains themselves and all who assist them, I am deeply grateful.

The Ecumenical and Interreligious Life Commission continues to be led by the Rev. Curtis Hart, who does an excellent job of managing an increasingly pluralistic group of people. Focused mostly on education and understanding, the Commission includes representation from the Interfaith Center of New York, whose Executive Director: the Rev. Chloe Breyer is an established leader in the larger community; the Episcopal Church: the Rev. Margaret Rose: the Presiding Bishop's Officer for Ecumenical and Interreligious engagement is a member; the New York State Council of Churches, led by the Rev. Peter Cook; and many of our educational institutions as well. Of particular note this year, the Ecumenical and Interreligious Life Commission and the Interfaith Center of New York co-sponsored a gathering held October 16 in the evening for the purpose of networking and greeting our Bishop Coadjutor: +Matt Heyd. It was a mere week after the terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel, and we thought that maybe our Jewish sisters and brothers would decline to come. Yet they *did* attend, and were able to be in Donegan Hall with Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, and others to express whatever they needed to express, pray together, and call for peace. These are the relationships that, I believe, will ultimately address and heal great divisions, bringing about that peace *which passes all understanding*.

You all have heard much from the Reparations Commission and the groundbreaking work in which they are leading us. Co-Chairs Cynthia Copeland and the Rev. Richard Witt coordinate a hardworking group of laity and clergy from the Diocese. The Moses Commission has been launched. Educational and resource materials for every congregation in the Diocese and beyond are available. And the Reparations Commission continues to dig deep in order to lay

the foundation for reparations to become not just one time gifts or awards to historically oppressed people – and not even a series of such gifts – but a whole way of life for our Diocese and beyond. *Dare to repair!* Is not just a clever slogan. It reflects what we find in Scripture, that *if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old is passed away: see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.* (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)