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First Female Presiding Bishop Elected 2006 General Convention Elects 26th Presiding Bishop

Special points of interest:

- New Presiding Bishop Elected

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Every nine years the Episcopal Church elects one of its bishops to be its Presiding Bishop. Katharine Jefferts Schori, 52 Bishop of Nevada, was elected on the fifth ballot June 18 by her colleagues in the House of Bishops from a slate of seven nominees. The House of Deputies confirmed the election the same day, as is required by church law. The election took place during the church's 75th General Convention, meeting in Columbus, Ohio.

The 26th Presiding Bishop-elect will be the first woman to hold the top post in the church's nearly 400-year history. The committee charged with nominating bishops for the position first issued its call for nominees in March 2004. They requested nominations of bishops "intensely grounded in the love of Jesus Christ, living out their lives in the Spirit and articulating zeal for the Gospel," who would "lead us into the reality of a multicultural church, promoting community, embracing persons, congregations, and dioceses with vast differences in ethnicity, language, particularly Spanish and French; geography; age; and socioeconomic backgrounds." The Presiding Bishop is charged with responsibility for leading the church, and oversees the planning, development, implementation and assessment of its programs.



Bishop Schori's nine-year term officially begins November 1. She will be invested and seated November 4 during a liturgy at Washington National Cathedral. Upon her acceptance of the post, the Bishop addressed deputies and visitors gathered in the Columbus Convention Center in English, Spanish, and French. She thanked the other nominees and emphasized her passion for mission.

Compilation, Episcopal News Service

ST. PAUL'S WITHIN THE WALLS:

BLESSING OF RESTORED CARILLON and PREMIERE OF ST. PAUL'S MASS

St. Paul's Within the Walls was the site of great excitement and celebration the weekend of May 19th! The Rt. Rev. Pierre Whalon, Bishop-in-Charge, presided over a special service, receiving and confirming 23 people, including four members from the Orvieto Mission! Fr. Michael Vono, The Rev. Susan Skillen and representatives and friends from the Vatican, the Anglican Center, and All Saints (St. Paul's sister church) made a very special and illustrious Altar Party. Filling the pews were many prestigious personages including The Rt. Rev. John Flack, director of the Anglican Centre and The Rev. Canon Don Balard, Secretary to Walter Cardinal Kaspar, President of the Pontifical Council on Promoting Christian Unity, Rome-based Ambassadors, members of the Council of Advice, and faithful members of St. Paul's congregation. The Latin American Community provided music and dance, a lively addition to St. Paul's exquisite choir.

As if there could be more...but there was! Another highlight of the weekend was the celebration and blessing of the church's restored carillon, consisting of 23 bells. It is the only one of its kind in Italy, and one of the finest in Europe. The bells were first received in Rome in June 1876. The largest of them, which weighs three quarters of a ton, bears the tribute to St. Paul, Rome's great martyr. The other bells are inscribed with phrases from the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed and the Gloria. The carillon has been restored and digitized. "The newly restored carillon is important because it represents the very lively spirit which is St. Paul's unique charisma in Rome. It serves as a symbol of 'harmonious community' realized in our multi-cultural, multi-lingual ecumenical-interfaith community," said the Rev. Dr. Michael Vono,

rector of St. Paul's.

Later that evening, St. Paul's hosted a celebratory concert. As part of their well-established concert series *Luminaries - Music by Candlelight* - the church's choir, together with the Nova Amadeus Orchestra, premiered "The St. Paul's Mass." The expansive and moving work, played to a large and appreciative audience, was written by the church's Organist and Director of Music, Dr. Stefano Vasselli.



The Bishop, Evelyn and Connor Fay, with acolytes Peter Isoko and Dominic Ballayan and The Rev Susan Skillen, hear the restored carillon for the first time.

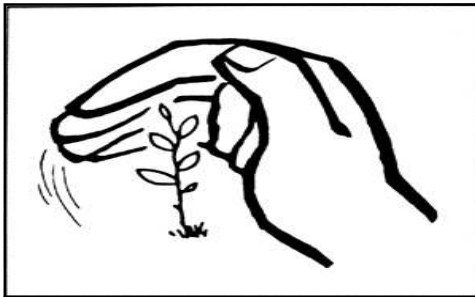
The Mandaean An Ancient Religious Community Seeks Refuge

In the ancient region of Mesopotamia – now part of modern day Iraq – a small religious community struggles to survive. The Mandaean community is the fascinating legacy of a pre-Christian religious sect that considers John the Baptist to be the last great prophet and teacher. For today's believers, baptism remains the central focus of their religious practice. Followers participate in an elaborate baptism ritual several times throughout their lives. The baptisms are performed only in running waters, so that one is cleansed from sin in the exact manner as John the Baptist first baptized his earliest believers in the river Jordan two-thousand years ago.

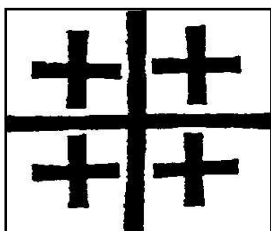
Fifty percent of the estimated 60,000 Mandaean living worldwide today are originally from Iraq, with a growing Diaspora in Europe, the U.S., Australia and the Middle East. Iraqi Mandaean live mainly in the provinces of Baquba and Ramadi, but smaller numbers are found in practically all cities throughout Iraq. In February 2003, Bishop Pierre was welcomed at the Mandaean's central temple during his visit to Baghdad.

The Mandaean suffer a long history of religious persecution. A modern-day refugee exodus, which first began under the rule of Saddam Hussein, continues today. Since then, nearly 17,000 of the 30,000 Iraqi Mandaean have sought safe haven in neighboring countries, primarily in Jordan and Syria. The Iraqi Mandaean are victims caught up in violent power struggles between Iraqi political factions and religious groups, and a surge of Islamic extremism which has given rise to radicalized mobs that target religious minorities.

Mandaean living in exile are facing a different security issue. Ironically, so little is known about Mandaeanism, Mandaean are finding it difficult to prove they are being persecuted for reasons of their faith, and that is necessary for securing UN-protected refugee status.



One anonymous Mandaean refugee has found support and community at Emmanuel Church, Geneva. Her presence brought the parish closer to the realities of war, and made obvious their call to mission in support of needy refugees living in legal limbo and poverty in Jordan. After a trip to Amman, Jordan in December 2005, she reported, "Violence is driving us out of our homeland; most of lower Mesopotamia is now empty of Mandaean. Some of the reports indicate that the security issues are the result of general lawlessness in Iraq. As usual, the weakest members in the community pay the price. In some cases, people are simply being deprived of their faith, but Mandaean men have been murdered and women and children have been kidnapped, raped and assaulted. As a Mandaean myself, I was shocked and horrified by the stories of violence I heard from Mandaean taking refuge in Jordan."



We ask for your prayers for The Rev. Bernard Vignot who suffered a stroke on June 17th in Hanover, Germany, and is recovering slowly at his home in Rouen, France

Nourishing our Souls Emmanuel Church, Geneva

The Rev. Bill Strehlow, Geneva

The words of the hymn below were sung for the first time at the Convention of the Convocation in Frankfurt. It is a hymn that speaks of the sustaining presence of God's grace in the ministry of the Church in Europe.

I thought of this hymn a few months ago when a member of our congregation, a young woman exiled from Iraq, came to my office visibly shaken by the latest death of a member of her family in Iraq. She showed me pictures of her cousin's body after his death at the hands of insurgents. Ghastly. She spoke of family members killed during this current war and of her father killed at the hands of Saddam.

She is a member of our community because, while alone and looking for a place to belong, she met our former Rector. Because

*The Bible as their strength and stay,
their psalms robustly sung,
those exiled here rejoic'd to
pray in their own mother tongue;
and seeking refuge, folk still come
to share in Europe's dream;
let fear of strangers be o'ercome
and 'Welcome' be our theme
Bishop Jeffery Rowthorn*

he welcomed her, and he spoke Arabic, she felt Emmanuel to be a safe place. She built a relationship with a woman in the church who, over the years, has assisted in various ways with the regulations that are the day to day life of Swiss bureaucracy. Her friend also knows her way around the block with embassies and airlines, and she made sure all the dots were connected. Our sister, a tough woman, negotiated her ticket in Arabic, French, and English while I sat and kept my mouth shut. One learns.

And what I might do for her, I asked? "Help me go to see my family that has fled to Jordan," she answered. And so we did. Over a period of three weeks, financial donations were received, clothing and medicines were given, a scale to weigh the 8 cartons that were to be taken was donated, her friend negotiated with the airline for the free shipment of cargo, the Jordanian Embassy responded to an emergency FAX to expedite a visa, Bishop Whalon chatted with her during his visit and promised financial assistance, etc. To be sure, there were some who questioned what this was all about: will this be a precedent? Who knows.

Finally, two carloads of stuff were taken to the airport. A friendly clerk overlooked some excess weight in the baggage, and I thought, 'grace happens.' A prayer was given, an embrace was exchanged, and nervousness was acknowledged.

Our assistance for our sister was costly in money, time, energy and emotion. We learned a great deal about the truth of the consequences of war and of persecution. We learned that the presence of refugees in our midst gives pastoral care and mission a distinctive political and economic dimension. We learned too, that a brother here and a sister there, through the giving of time, do in fact serve the Lord, and on certain occasions, do so with alleluias.

Confirm-Receive-Renew



Family and Friends Gather after the Special Service at St. Paul's Within-the-Walls, Rome

What does it mean to be a woman at the dawn of the third millennium?

Anglican Women Attend 50th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

Michèle Spike, St. James, Florence

What does it mean to be a woman at the dawn of the third millennium? That is the question asked of women representing 191 nations and approximately 500 nongovernmental agencies (NGOs) at the 50th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in March 2006, at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

CSW was established at the formation of the United Nations in 1946, and dedicated to the principle that 50% of the population should have 50% of the seats of power. When Eleanor Roosevelt proposed her prophetic vision to the governments that created the UN, most women in the world did not even have the right to vote. Today, women preside over the governments of Germany, Chile, and Liberia.

Even at the beginning of the 21st century, women continue to be denied equal access to education, to health care, economic resources, and to the centers of power. Women and girl children suffer discrimination in all areas of human rights, encouraged by the media. Selective abortion and infanticide is employed to eliminate girl babies.

Throughout its history, CSW has successfully focused global attention on some of the most difficult and challenging human rights circumstances facing women. In 1979, CSW first advocated for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), since adopted by 180 nations around the world. In New York, we heard from participants from Cameroon and Kenya who described how the framework of CEDAW has made it possible to combat violence against women and to promote women's access to health care in their nations.

In 1995, women worldwide enacted the Beijing Platform for Action calling upon the world to recognize the disproportionate

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A view from the Parishes

20's 30's ministry at the American Cathedral

Philip Cacouris, The American Cathedral, Paris

Oscar Wilde wrote that all wicked Americans end up in Paris. Whether or not the deliberate intention was to refute this dictum, the American Cathedral has created a venue for people in their 20s and 30s to meet on a regular basis.

Under the creative guidance and planning of our curate, the Rev. Jonathan Huyck, the 20s/30s group was founded in 2004. I have had the good fortune to be a participant. The mission is defined more by the target group than by a specific activity, and our focus has been both social and spiritual. To me, this reflects the broad mission of the Cathedral as a center for Christian activity and also a meeting place for Anglophones.

Beginning with the 2004 Christmas party that launched it, the group has had an event every month – in the parish hall, the dean's garden, and even, spectacularly, in the tower apartment. The events are at various times social, educational/spiritual, or service-oriented. At the social events, there is often music and even dancing as the evening goes on, with a particular emphasis on the music of the 80s – the songs of our youth! The invitation email list has over 100 names on it, and we typically attract around 50 people to each gathering. I have met new people at every one of the events, and some have become friends in the regular worship at the Cathedral, while others I see only at the monthly group events.

The 20s/30s group comprises people who have come to Paris for studies, for work or just for a fresh and challenging life experience, and whether individually, or with partners, we are all trying to establish ourselves in a new city. While our common language is English, many nationalities are represented in the group, just as they are in the Cathedral at large. I appreciate the chance to swap stories and feel supported and understood by fellow travelers.

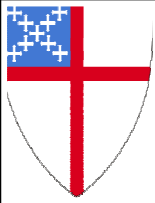
My experience of the Cathedral has always been marked by its openness and its hospitality, so I am pleased to feel that our group can provide this to active parishioners in their 20s and 30s and our peers who are not regular worshippers with us and may not even be practicing Christians, but have come to the group through friends. These visitors are often shocked to see that a church would not only allow young people to partake of French wine and Belgian ales and dance to 80s music in their parish hall, but that 80 people would show up to do so. Apparently, such things are rarely done in French churches.



At the social events, there is often music and even dancing as the evening goes on, with a particular emphasis on the music of the 80s – the songs of our youth!

The group has also engaged in various ways in the broader life of the Cathedral. There was a day of service, during which we invaded the apartment of Jill and Chris Cameron to wrap gift boxes for needy children through the Love in a Box program; and we usually make up the lion's share of participants at the Wednesday evening Bible studies led by Bill Tompson and other wonderful speakers. Developing the aspect of spiritual sustenance in our activities, we went on a group retreat in June to the Orval monastery in Belgium. This was a blessing for our life as a group and for our individual spiritual lives. It is just the latest step in the evolution of our group and I cannot wait to see what we get "up to" next!

If you would more information about the 20s/30s program, please contact Jonathan Huyck at curate@americancathedral.org



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Status of Women (Cont....)

burden women suffer from poverty and violence. It is the women from Beijing who later inspired the UN to enact the Millennium Development Goals aimed at ending poverty and inequality worldwide by the year 2015. Moreover, it is the women from Beijing who inspired the UN to create the Peacebuilding Commission in 2005, recognizing that peace holds when women are involved in the negotiation process at the beginning or the end of armed conflict.

A main topic at this year's CSW session was the massive violence perpetrated against women worldwide. Women are victims of domestic abuse, religious degradation, and genital mutilation, and suffer the burdens of armed conflicts at the hands of soldiers in humiliation, degradation, rape and murder. A brutal multibillion-dollar sex trafficking industry victimizes women in every country worldwide, including the so-called developed nations.

These hard facts are all true, but the challenge for each of us is to find relevance in our own lives. Our Episcopal/Anglican delegation — nearly 100 women from every province in the Anglican Communion — spent a lot of prayer time focused on how to translate our individual experience for the approximately 50 million women in the Anglican Communion who we represented at the session in New York.

How do we “empower all of us together to spiritually awaken the world?” To hearken to the call of Phoebe Griswold, who led our Anglican delegation, we create a Global Community of Women, “Christ’s disciples, called by God to a life of prayer, transformation, and reconciliation, within ourselves, within our companionship, within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, within our faith communities and within the whole creation.”

One first goal is connection. We want to encourage women in our congregations to claim a sisterhood, a global, universal solidarity with one another. To that end we propose to form “Beijing Circles,” groups of women that focus on the world’s goals for peace and equality. Their task is simply to do the work of discernment: prayer and conversation to name and nurture everyone’s personal charisms. What are charisms? It is those gifts given to each of us by God which, being freely given, can be freely given away. Once we have discerned our gifts, we must then go public and share our charisms with the world — speaking and acting publicly with the Gospel conviction that we are compelled by our faith to so do, knowing that the work that women are offering is good for the world.

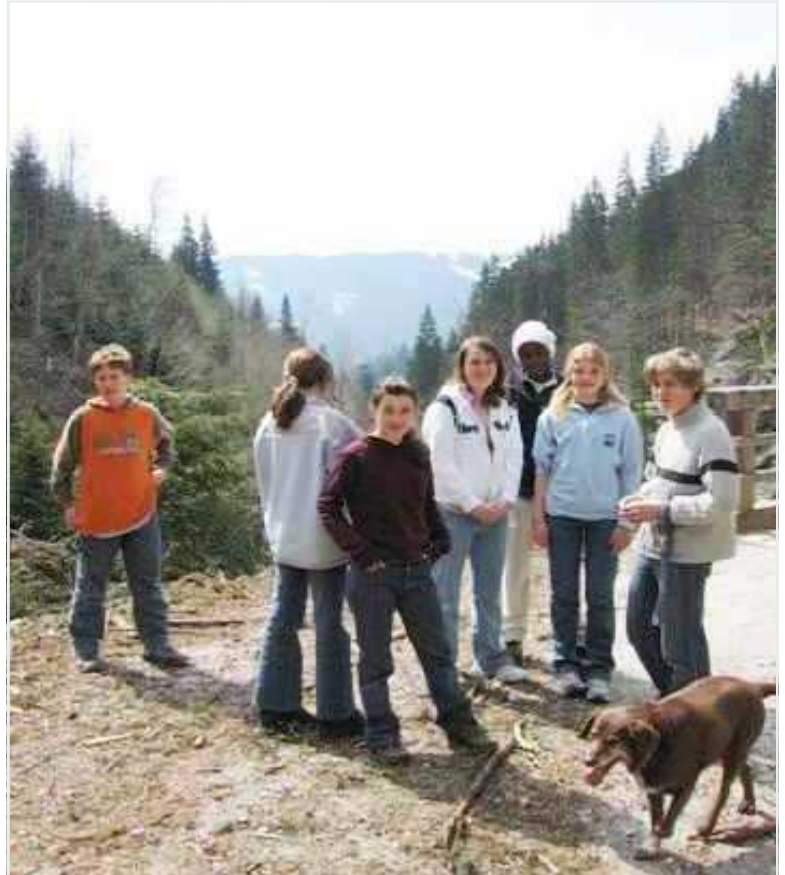
For further information about the work of the UN Commission on the Status of Women or to learn how to participate in a Beijing Circle, you may contact, Michèle Spike (St. James, Florence) jtspike@peoplepc.com or Helena Mbele-Mbong at (Emmanuel Church, Geneva) helena.mbele-mbong@wanadoo.fr, representatives of the Convocation and of The Episcopal Church, respectively, in the Anglican Communion Delegation at

Munich Confirmands in Austria

Clemens Pilgram, Ascension Church, Munich

On the 5th of May, 2006, Bishop Whalon, Father Tom, Dorothee Hahn and our group of confirmands (Caroline Clark, Alexia Dawes, Richard Osei, Clemens Pilgram, Ellen Trinklein and Oscar Scharf from Munich & Esther Balatoni from Ingolstadt) left Ascension Church, Munich for a retreat at The Rev. Clair Ullmann’s house in Hochkönig near Salzburg, Austria. Our group spent their time in theological discussions, rehearsing for the confirmation, taking walks, grilling and watching movies.

The atmosphere was very relaxed, and we really got to know each other better, including the Bishop. On the train down to Hochkönig we had a Bible quiz, boys against the girls. Guess who won? The boys!



Confirmands Explore the Dramatic Austrian Countryside with the help of “Muddy” Ullmann

Mission 2006 Strategic Planning Committee Prepares for Convention

As a follow-up of the Rastatt Mission Conference Consultation a year ago June, participants in the 2005 Convention identified six priority areas of Mission work for our congregations and the Convocation itself: Young people, Training and Nurture, Building Missions, Spirituality and Worship, Social and Environmental Justice, and Leadership and Vision. Since then, the Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Cynthia D’Alimonte (Florence), has been working to refine these general priorities into a few concrete activities and projects to be voted on at the Paris Convention in October. The purpose of Mission 2006 is to unify our efforts, working as a community in ever more faithful ways, in discerning and fulfilling the mission God has given us to do. Other members of the Committee include The Rev. Jonathan Huyck (Paris), The Rev. Dr. Luk DeVolder (Clermont-Ferrand), and Helena Mbele-Mbong (Geneva). Canon Jere Skipper is committee liaison.