

Registrar's Report to the 223rd Annual Diocesan Convention

Article IX of the Constitution of the Diocese of New Jersey requires that the Registrar make a report to each Convention. It pleases me to report that progress continues to be made in our Diocesan Archives. The progress seems minuscule only because two and a half centuries of records require an enormous amount of time and effort to collate and make usable.

At present four of us work part-time in the archives. Assisting me are Deacon Mary Ann Jensen, Associate Archivist; Paula Morgan, Cataloger/Librarian; and Carol Bishop, Research Assistant. Carol Bishop continues her tedious task of converting our paper Confirmation/Reception records onto a disk format. She has finished the years of the 1940s and 1950s and is presently working on the 1960s. Eventually we will be able to speed our research with the typing of a name. The project, when finished, will have all the records from 1875 to the present.

One of our ongoing tasks is the organization of clergy files and church files that have been scattered in various corners of Diocesan House. Deacon Jensen is heading up this project. She also is helping with response to genealogical and church-related inquiries that continue to pour in.

Paula Morgan continues to organize, catalog, and file books, pamphlets, sermons, and paper ephemera in order to make the Archives user-friendly. She will soon begin to put this online so that researchers can have access to our considerable holdings.

I have taken on the multiple tasks of indexing some of our primary sources. Indices completed include a list of photos of clergy/laity found in the diocesan magazine from 1912 to the early 2000s; an index of photos of church buildings found in the diocesan magazine from 1912 to the early 2000s; an index of extinct parishes and their files. Indices in progress include the mention of all congregational beginnings in Diocesan Journals from 1785 until the present. Extinct parishes in the Index include every mention of the individual congregation from its roots to its ending. This index will be of particular help to those researching or planning histories of any congregation.

A report was prepared that included all clergy ordained in New Jersey from 1974 until 2002. The statistics included age, gender, parochial or non-parochial status, years in this diocese, and active or inactive status. This was given to the Rev. Elizabeth Geitz, Canon for Deployment, and other committees involved with recruitment and deployment.

The reliance of the Diocesan House staff on data and information from the archives has grown tremendously. It has included lengthy and detailed informational reports on various parishes, data from census reports, and projections over the next two decades. Pictorial displays have been mounted in the meeting room building of church buildings from two convocations and others will take their place, on the average of one convocation a month.

Many of our publications can be found on the Diocesan Website under Archives. Cynthia McFarland, Canon for Communications, has been of invaluable assistance and we are grateful for her dedication to the archives.

Your archives suffers from insufficient funding, especially in the area of the purchase of books, pamphlets, and paper ephemera that comes on the auction market for a short time and are part and parcel of our diocesan history. We are collecting the writings of clergy/laity who have been influential in our diocese, and this requires additional funding. The archives would be enormously grateful for contributions that would allow us to make the occasional purchase that becomes available.

I wish to thank Deacon Mary Ann Jensen, Paula Morgan, and Carol Bishop for their untiring efforts to make your history available to future generations. In addition, I wish to thank Bishop Council and the various staff members for their support and encouragement.

(The Rev. Canon) Laurence D. Fish
Registrar