

**Oasis Task Force
Report to the 222nd Diocesan Convention**

The Oasis Task Force, a justice ministry of the Diocese of New Jersey, was commissioned by Bishop George Councill in 2004 with its' first full year of operation being 2005. The Oasis provides a safe and welcoming environment for those persons who suffer, in one way or another, because of their sexual orientation. However, everyone is invited and welcome to any Oasis gathering.

During the year 2005, the Oasis participated in Gay pride day in Asbury Park as well as the New York City Gay Pride Parade. In this latter event, the Oasis of the Newark Diocese joined with us. We foresee a close relationship between the two New Jersey Oasis groups in future work. The Newark Oasis has been very supportive of our effort since its inception.

During 2005, a Task Force Commission was formed for the Oasis with invitations being sent to about a dozen people, both lay and clergy, by the Bishop. This group meets once a month at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton. The group is shepherded by a two member executive committee.

A schedule of special worship services around the diocese was also set up for the winter and spring of this year. The list of coming services can be found at the Oasis web site: <http://oasisnj.home.comcast.net> . The group's email address is oasisnj@comcast.net .

The Oasis was present at the 2005 Diocese of New Jersey convention in Cherry Hill and staffed a table offering information, brochures, buttons, etc.

Two features of the Oasis ministry are a Welcoming Congregations Program and a Speaker's Bureau. The Welcoming Congregations Program allows parishes and missions, with the approval of the vestry, to declare themselves open and receptive to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, and intersex persons. The first congregations began joining this program at the end of 2005.

The speaker's bureau is in the formation stage and will establish a group of persons who are willing to travel to parishes and talk about sexual identity issues with the parishioners.

The Oasis looks forward to working with everyone in our diocese to more fully actualize the message of the Gospel.

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