

DE TRINITATE

Newsletter of the Society of the Holy Trinity
Societas Trinitatis Sanctae

From The Senior

FORMATION IN THE LIFE OF THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY TRINITY

In my last article I began a reflection on the matter of formation within the life of the Society. I spoke about how I believe that such formation was somewhat lacking in the preparation of pastors for ministry within our seminaries today, but how I also believe that ongoing formation takes place within the life of the Society through our living out of the Rule. But it is the specific matter of formation in preparation for joining the Society which directly concerns me and I posed the question of how we might form and shape those pastors who are interested in signing the Rule into some deeper understanding of themselves and the Society before becoming a part of us. I solicited some response to this question. While I received some comments agreeing with this matter of formation and its importance to our common life together, I did not get any practical suggestions.

So here are a few thoughts of my own which I hope will form the basis of some further discussion when the Leadership Council meets next year for its annual retreat. First, there is the matter of prayer. To become a part of our Society one needs to understand what it means to be grounded in a life of prayer; after all it is by no means an accident that the first Chapter of our Rule is entitled "Formation in Daily Prayer." Now if we are honest, we pastors would all admit that sometimes our life of prayer gets a little neglected amidst the push and pull of daily ministry, family and other commitments. But we are not talking about skipping the occasional praying of Vespers or saying Compline in a more than abbreviated manner! Rather we are concerned about whether those wishing to

be a part of us understand the centrality of prayer in our common life together and how they will maintain that life of prayer on as regular a basis as possible. When I was in the novitiate during my time in a Roman Catholic Order, we were instructed in how to pray. Such teaching could be part of our practice as a Society, but then the recitation of the Daily Offices is a learning process in and of itself and we hope that prospective members will join us in prayer even before considering membership. Nevertheless, taking some time to talk more about prayer at our chapter retreats and to spend more time reflecting on Chapter 1 may be helpful in forming not only our current members, but also those seeking to join us.

Which brings me to our Chapter retreats. Most but not all those who have sought membership in the Society have come through chapters where they have attended one or more retreats. This is helpful in that it allows those interested in the Society to share in our common life together and to experience how we hear and understand the Rule. But this is often by happenstance. Would it be helpful for us to require of prospective members that they *must* attend some particular number of Chapter retreats as part of their formation process? Now I know that saying "*must*" to Lutherans seems to go against evangelical freedom and gets some folks a bit hot under their clerical collars! But perhaps it is good for us to think about this not in terms of requirements but rather as discipline...because living our Rule requires discipline of each and every one of us each

To become a part of our Society one needs to understand what it means to be grounded in a life of prayer...

and every day! The discipline of attending retreats regularly can be a formative process in and of itself.

Finally, there is the matter of learning. Many of the Church Fathers and other writers down through the ages have written extensively on the priestly office and have much to teach us about a life of ministry. Why not ask our prospective members to read some reflections on the office of ministry and discuss those with another person – perhaps a chapter dean or someone else who is already a member. Now I am sure that many of us would have a list of books that we personally would want to recommend. However, perhaps we could settle on three that would help form and shape pastors into a deeper understanding of their office and of what it would mean to sustain that office within the life of the Society. On my list would be three works which I have found helpful: St. John Chrysostom's *On the Priesthood*, Richard John Neuhaus' *Freedom for Ministry*, and *The Priestly Office* by Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ. (That means I have at least 10 more that I can-

not put on my list here!) But the principle is important – reading and reflection with another pastor who is already a member of the Society can be critical to understanding our common life together, and therefore should play a part in the formation of those seeking to join us.

As I noted earlier, it is my hope to place this matter on the agenda for the next Leadership Council and for us to consider how such a process might serve us better into the future. Meanwhile, I am open to other suggestions from all members of the Society, which in turn will be shared with Leadership Council.

May God continue to bless and support all those who have joined the Society and strengthen those who are discerning whether to join us.

In Christ's Service,
Paddy Rooney, STS
Senior

General Retreat Announcements

“The Senior shall gather the Society once each year...”
Rule Chapter IX.6

With these words our Rule calls for our Society to gather in General Chapter which we will do once again for the 21st time on September 25-27 at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois. I look forward to seeing many of you there. As I mentioned before, our theme over the next three years will be *“ecclesia semper reformanda”* a phrase that goes back to Augustine and more recently to Barth. We will explore what this always reforming church looks like through the lens of theology, liturgy and ecclesiology. Our teaching theologian this year will be Dr. Mickey Mattox from Marquette University. Dr. Mattox will present two sessions to us under the title *“Semper Reformanda: Luther's Reforms for Today.”* For our Wednesday evening session, I have asked two of our members to reflect on Dr. Mattox's presentations.

Additionally, there will be an election for Senior by pure ecclesiastical ballot and an election for Bursar by majority

ballot at the General Chapter meeting on Thursday morning. Because the election for Bursar is not by ecclesiastical ballot, we have solicited some names which we hope to share with you prior to the retreat. Pr. Rod Ronneberg STS will conduct the election for Senior and Pr. Robert Endruschat STS of the Florida chapter will serve as our chaplain.

I hope to see many of you at St. Mary next month. Please be sure to register through your dean.

In Christ's Service,
Paddy Rooney, Senior

STS 2019 Liturgical Calendars (published by Ashby Co.) will be available at the General Retreat. Cost is \$5 per calendar, \$25 for six. Deans are encouraged to purchase a quantity for inquirers and friends of the Society in their area. All proceeds benefit the Society. Advance orders are appreciated. Please contact Keith Forni STS at keithlformi@gmail.com or (815)600-3030.

Reflections on the Rule

THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

Our Senior thought it would be good to have members of our Society reflect on *The Rule of the Society of the Holy Trinity* and share those reflections for our mutual benefit. As a former Senior and a senior by age and longevity in STS, and because we will be electing a Senior at the 2018 General Retreat, I thought I would write about leadership in STS,

especially the leadership of the Senior.

The Rule addresses the office of Senior in the last paragraph of the Preamble, in III.12 on “Gathering in Retreats”, and in IX.5-9 on “Membership, Leadership, Organization”. The duties of chapter deans are addressed in IX.10-13. I think the most important item, repeated twice in *The Rule*, is giving

“pastoral direction to the Society” (Preamble, IX.7) --- “by life and teaching”.

Like many constitutions, our Rule is short on specifics. These get established by actual practice over the course of time. Our Society has had three Seniors in its history, and each one has built on the example of the previous. That means the “life and teaching” demonstrated by our first Senior, Philip Max Johnson, laid the groundwork for what followed.

Since the Senior is elected by “pure ecclesiastical ballot”, unlike elections of leaders in many church denominations in STS, there are no candidates and hence no party agendas. That is important for harmony in our Society, because the

Chapter Updates

The **Columbia River** chapter’s next retreat will be November 6-7 at the Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center in Mount Angel, Oregon. The Rev’d. John Eggert, of Concordia University – Portland, will lead a discussion of Lutherans Encountering Global Religions. To register, contact the Rev’d Dr. Joseph W. Hughes at j_w_hughes@hotmail.com or (217) 898-9063. On November 5-6 the **Florida** chapter will host a retreat featuring the Rev’d Dr. Mark Mattes discussing his book *Martin Luther's Theology Of Beauty: A Reappraisal*. The retreat will be at San Pedro Center in Winter Park, Florida. For more information, contact the Rev’d Lawrence Recla, STS at larryrecla@comcast.net or (352) 430-1114. The **Iowa-Nebraska** chapter plans a retreat November 12-13 at American Martyrs Retreat House near Cedar Falls, Iowa. Contact Gary Hatcher at ggh5297@icloud.com for more information. The fall retreat for the **Metro New York** chapter will take place in November. Pastor Ken Schnepf will lead a discussion on pastoral care for those in hospice and their families. Please contact Terrence Weber at tweber1978@aol.com for more information. The **Minnesota** chapter’s annual Advent Hymn Sing will take place during their retreat December 3-4

From The Secretary

Registration for the General Chapter Retreat is now open! The deadline to register is September 14. Members must register through their deans. Non-members affiliated with a chapter also register through that dean. Visitors and guests are warmly welcomed and encouraged. If you wish to attend, but are not associated with any chapter, you may register directly with me at revsbailey@redred.com. The cost for non-members is \$200. If you wish to arrive early, the cost for an additional night is \$65. You may choose to eat additional meals on campus (supper \$15, breakfast \$10). All payments

members are not of one mind on particulars of church teaching and pastoral practice. This reflects not only the different Lutheran judicatories represented in the membership, but also personal views, experiences, and practices.

Discussion of matters of church teaching and practice is encouraged in our Society. What has not been encouraged is a focus at retreats on church politics or on culture wars. Society retreats are not like church assemblies or conventions. Seniors have consistently tried to remind members that these discussions are not edifying to the purpose of retreats, which is to renew pastoral ministry.

This also means there should not be “side bars” at our re-

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at Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, Minnesota. Please see the Facebook page, “Society of the Holy Trinity – Minnesota Chapter” or email Trevor Bailey at tbail65@gmail.com for more information. The fall retreat of the **New England** chapter will be November 5-6 at the St. Joseph Retreat House, Milton, Mass., studying “The Kinship of Jesus, led by the author, Dr. Kathleen Mills. Contact Ryan Mills at tlnhp pastor@yahoo.com for more information. The **Susquehanna** chapter will elect a dean during their Advent retreat December 3-4, to be held at SS Cyril and Methodius in Danville, Pennsylvania. They will discuss Genesis 12-50 as well as the Infancy Narratives. For more information, email the Rev’d Kenneth Elkin, STS at kennethelkin@gmail.com. The next retreat of the **Upstate New York** chapter will be Nov 1-2 at Christ the King Retreat Center in Syracuse, New York. Contact the Rev’d John Priest at jpriest2@stny.rr.com for more information. The **Wisconsin** chapter will retreat November 5-6 at St. Norbert’s Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. The Rev’d. Carl Voges, STS, will present a paper entitled “Re-Gripped by the Holy Trinity’s Life for the Church’s Ministry”. For more information contact the Rev’d Tim Duesenberg, STS at stmaximos@aol.com.

must be sent to me prior to the beginning of the retreat. You can send a check payable to the Society to PO Box 116, Belview, MN 56214 or fees may be paid with a credit card via PayPal to societyholyltrinity@gmail.com. Keep in mind, there are additional charges associated with PayPal, so it will cost you a bit extra. Please contact me for further information on electronic payments.

In Christ’s Service,

Pari Bailey, STS
Secretary

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retreats. The fact that many like-minded pastors come together in retreats does not mean that time should be taken from the retreat to strategize about founding other events or organizations. The Senior's primary "pastoral direction" of the Society should be to keep our retreats focused on the purposes laid out in *The Rule*. We retreat out of the world, including the world of the church, in order to be renewed by prayer and study in our lives and ministries.

Retreats are opportunities for contemplation. Philip Max Johnson modeled this in his life and teaching in our earliest

From The Vicar

Summer is traditionally a time of travel, a scattering hither and yon until pedagogical requirements dictate a return to autumn routine. (As every parent knows, from the tough and wizened to the newly initiated, no matter how much we try to convince the kids otherwise, our world does indeed revolve around them!) During these "dog days," pastors expect to notice absences as they look out over the nave. Folks are away; they'll be back.

The liturgical calendar matches the timbre of the season. Spring's high feasts have come and gone, weeks of white and red giving way to perpetual green. We're in the middle of the protracted pilgrimage after Pentecost, before Advent. Not coincidentally, this is the overall circumstance the church has found herself in since her inception. We worship, work, and walk in this interim between the coming of the Spirit with tongues of fire and the coming of the King with the clouds in glory.

The first fruits of the Resurrection arrived at Easter, and now we're in the growing season. We work the fields of the Lord in obedience to his Great Commission, as the Holy Spirit feeds and prunes, waters and weeds us together in the Word and sacraments to bear fruit for the great harvest to come. Now is the time for focused adherence to the Word. We hear not only the call to comport our lives in obedience to Christ, but also the admonition to steel ourselves for the opposition we continually face.

In Memoriam

We remember with hope-filled sorrow our brother, the Rev'd Franklin G. Senger III, of the Chesapeake-Potomac Chapter, who died July 29, 2018. We thank God for his years of faithful ministry, and pray for those grieving his death. *Rest eternal grant him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.*

De Trinitate prints notice of members who have recently entered the Church Triumphant. If you are aware of a Society member's death, please contact our Secretary, Pari Bailey, at revsbailey@redred.com with name, date of death, and chapter affiliation.

retreats. As we learn from Jesus himself in the gospels, transformative change leading to action comes from having a clear view of our calling. That view comes from time spent in prayer before the Lord. Our Society is defined not only as a ministerium but as a pastoral oratory. Maintaining this purpose of our gatherings is the most important aspect of the Senior's or the chapter dean's leadership.

In Christ's Service,

Frank C. Senn

Jesus ruined the reign of sin, death, and the devil; and because Christ is our Lord, the enemy hates us. We face hardship and temptation, both direct and subtle. Patches of poison lie in wait in the foliage, and we're called to put on the gloves of the Spirit and root it out. When we get in it, we don't wallow around as the world does. We return to the tub in daily repentance, and the Spirit scrubs us clean with the gospel – the blood of Christ crucified that is stronger than any soap or agent we can bring to bear.

The days of working in God's mission field are long, but the weeks and years are short. As time goes on, we are separated by death. We look out over the Eucharistic assembly and mark the absence of those who now rest from their labors. But just as we note the brevity of summer vacations, the gospel reminds us of the transience of the grave. Absent companions are in the arms of Christ. We'll see them again, and that right soon.

By his death and resurrection, Christ has made all time holy. The gospel of the Lord makes our ordinary days extraordinary. Thanks be to God!

In Christ's Service,

Nathan Yoder, STS
Vicar

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Editor: The Rev'd Mrs. Katie Johnson

Editorial office: 2471 Pine Grove St, Muskegon, MI 49441 / 515-360-2381 / iowakatie1981@gmail.com

To be placed on the De Trinitate mailing list or to report a change of address, please contact the Secretary, below.

Senior: The Rev'd Patrick Rooney, 450 Ridge Road, Dillsburg, PA 17019 / 717-870-1154 / pastorrooney@gmail.com

Vicar: The Rev'd Nathan Yoder, 415 W. Main Street, Maiden, NC 28650 / 828-428-8527 / Yoder234@hotmail.com

Secretary: The Rev'd Pari Bailey, P.O. Box 116, Belview, MN 56214 / 507-938-3285 / revsbailey@redred.com

Bursar: The Rev'd David Aanonson, 2131 Rosemont Dr., Coralville, IA 52241 / 319-339-1961 / daanonson@mchsi.com

Society Website: www.societyholyltrinity.org