

Standing Committee approves women priests

by Pam Chinais

At its January meeting, the Standing Committee of the diocese voted 5 to 2 to certify two women deacons for ordination to the priesthood. They are Alison Palmer of St. Columba's, DC, and Lee Wiesner of St. Margaret's. The Standing Committee's approval is the second of three hurdles candidates for ordination must pass. The first is the approval of their own parish vestry. Candidates who are then certified for ordination by the Standing Committee must finally be approved by the Bishop.

Bishop Creighton has said that he will not ordain women to the priesthood until after the 1976 General Convention. Bishop Creighton has given firm support to ordination of women to the priesthood but at a meeting of the House of Bishops in Mexico in October he agreed with his fellow bishops to withhold such ordination until after the General Convention can consider the matter again.

Following an unprecedented open hearing Dec. 13, the Standing Committee voted 5 to 1 with one abstention to approve for ordination to the priesthood duly qualified candidates "without regard to gender". At that meeting, the Committee did not act on individual applications.

That action followed a 2½ hour open hearing in which 38 persons addressed the question of ordaining women. Of the speakers, 18 were men and 20 women. Of the men, ten were priests (6 pro and 4 con), and 8 were laymen (5 pro and 3 con). Of the women speakers, only two spoke against women's ordination.

Executive Council Adopts \$13.9 Million General Church Program Budget for 1975

The Executive Council has approved a General Church Program budget for 1975 in the amount of \$13,925,732, an increase of \$300,000 over the 1974 figure. The \$13.9 million budget was recommended by the General Convention in 1973 and is balanced with estimated income as required by the Convention. (*The General Program Budget and statement of estimated income appear on page 10.*)

The 1975 budget requests from Council committees and other church agencies under the General Church Program amounted to \$15.1 million.

Acting on recommendation of the Executive Group of the staff and the Finance Committee of the Council, the Council adopted an Income Development Program to find alternative ways of funding priority aspects of the church's program which cannot be included in the \$13.9 million budget. Presiding Bishop Allin said he hoped the Executive Council might "enable

this Church to provide the additional funds" needed to meet all the program requests.

The \$300,000 differential in the 1975 budget reflects both cuts in some programs—such as grants to minorities—and increases in other items—such as staff salaries and administrative costs.

Debated and defeated during the budget session were resolutions to restore proposed cuts to three programs: \$50,000 to the Board for Theological Education, \$78,000 to the three black colleges, and \$31,000 to the Ministry Council. Also defeated was a move to provide a \$50,000 subsidy to *The Episcopalian*. The 1973 General Convention approved a "one-year subsidy of \$150,000 for 1974" with the understanding that "would be the wind-up of its subsidization of *The Episcopalian*," the Rev. Robert Parks, chairman of the communication committee, reminded Executive Council members.

Other areas suffering budget cuts include the Commissions for Black Episcopalians, Hispanic Affairs, Indian Work and Community Action and Human Development.

(*Another story about the Executive Council meeting, including budget deliberations, appears on page 10.*)

Choral Society Premiering HYMNUS PARADISI

Two contemporary works by British composers are being offered by the Cathedral Choral Society Sat., Feb. 22, and Sun., Feb. 23, in Washington Cathedral.

In addition to Sir William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, the occasion will premiere in this area Herbert Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi*. Composed for the Worcester Festival of 1950 and written as a requiem for a son who died in boyhood, it includes passages from the Burial Office of the Book of Common Prayer and the Latin Mass for the Dead. In the Sanctus, Part IV, the Latin and English are sung simultaneously and at times in unison. Soloists are soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson, who has appeared frequently with the New York Philharmonic, the Boston, San Francisco and National Symphony Orchestras, and Gene Tucker, tenor soloist of the Washington Cathedral Choir.

David Clatworthy, baritone with the New York City Opera, will sing the title role in *Belshazzar's Feast*, composed in 1931 for the Leeds Festival. Performed in 1963 by the Choral Society, it was reviewed in *The Washington Post* as "exotic, neo-pagan, raucous and exciting, with the brassy sweep of an Old Testament spectacular, incredibly barbaric and lush."

For tickets, write or call Washington Cathedral, DC 20016; 966-3423. Cost is \$8, \$6.50, \$5.50 for reserved; \$3.50 for general admission. The Saturday performance is at 8 p.m., Sunday will be at 4 p.m.

Episcopal Bishop Favors Women Priests in Future

By Marjorie Hyer

Washington Post Staff Writer

A convention of Washington Episcopallians yesterday listened politely to their bishop's reasons for not ordaining women to the priesthood now, then adopted a resolution assuring him of their wholehearted support should he change his mind.

In his address to the annual convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, the Rt. Rev. William P. Creighton reaffirmed his commitment in principle to lifting the church's traditional barrier against women in the priesthood, a tradition he called "unconscionable."

He said, however, that for him to ordain a woman to the priesthood now — as his diocesan advisers have urged him to do — would limit her functioning as a priest to this diocese since the national church has yet to approve the ordination of women.

The church's next national General Convention scheduled for Minneapolis in October, 1976, is scheduled to rule on the issue.

In taking his position, Bishop Creighton has declined the advice of his top advisory body the Standing Committee, which has certified for ordination two women candidates — the Rev. Allison Palmer and the Rev. Lee Weisner.

The resolution was adopted yesterday by the annual convention meeting at St. Alban's School on the grounds of the

Washington Cathedral. It affirms the Convention's support of the bishop "should he at any time decide to proceed with the ordination to the priesthood of any women deacons recommended by the Standing Committee." In the Episcopal Church for men, becoming a deacon is a step on the way to becoming a priest.

In presenting the convention's resolution, the Rev. Edgar Romig, rector of the Church of the Epiphany and also chairman of the standing committee, reviewed the bishop's position on the women's ordination issue and said: "We do not presume to urge on the bishop an action deemed unwise."

He also noted that Bishop Creighton "has also said his mind is open to both sides."

While "respecting the bishop's reasons" for not proceeding for the ordination of women now, Father Romig said the intent of the resolution was to "assure the bishop in advance that should he, in his wisdom later on decide to ordain women before October, 1976... he has the loyal support of the diocese." The resolution, which engendered some debate was adopted 121 to 78.

Earlier, in her report from a special diocesan committee on the Ordination of Women, Helen Eisenhart registered her disagreement with Bishop Creighton's wait-until-'76 stance on ordaining women.

"For many years to come women will not be welcomed in some parts of the church so why not start now," she said.

Mrs. Eisenhart pointed out that the standing committee at its last meeting certified three persons for ordination: Miss Palmer, Mrs. Weisner and Fred Quinn.

"One of the three (Quinn) will be ordained in three weeks because he happened to be born male," she said. "The other two cannot be ordained because they happened to be born female."

The question of women's role in the church dominated this year's convention as it has for the past three years.

The assembly, which Susan Rich, president of Episcopal Churchwomen, pointed out is "87 per cent not female," also took action to purge its constitution and canon laws of restrictions because of sex.

A resolution, which would penalize any church for permitting "any knowingly unauthorized person or persons" to perform the sacraments, was soundly defeated.

Although no names were mentioned, the resolution was obviously directed at the Church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation which last November invited the Rev. Allison Cheek to celebrate the Eucharist. Mrs. Cheek is one of 11 women whose ordination to the priesthood last July 29 in Philadelphia was later declared invalid by the church's House of Bishops.

30.21.9

I suspect that all of us here wish that these (now four) women had not propelled us into this difficult situation. However no matter how uncomfortable or pained we feel, it has nothing to do with the rightness of these fully qualified and certified women being ordained to the priesthood.

I do understand your position, Bishops, but since you believe that General Convention approval of ordination for women is not necessary but only desirable--and since every authoritative body within this diocese has given assent to your ordaining now, it is regrettable that it is Bishop Barrett doing the ordaining and not one of you. We can certainly never know but I suspect the disruption and dissention would under that circumstance be minimized.

It may help to get through this knowing that in the historical perspective our inheritors will wonder what all the fuss was about. In fact many of our fellow protestants already do!

It is said that this ordination will damage the cause of women in the priesthood. Perhaps, but if so, then petulance and capriciousness must be attributed along with sexism to the opposition, for nothing should be able to affect the fulfillment of a cause that is ethically and morally right. Nor would there be any justice in punishing many in order to take revenge on a few.

Bishop Creighton, Bishop Walker--I respect you both. I do not act out of anger or defiance--but as long as women may not be regularly ordained, and as long as they choose to be irregularly ordained, I choose to stand with them.

Marcus W. Harvey