

Summary of 234th Annual Diocesan Convention

The theme this year, “Know your Story. Live it Boldly. The Convention opened with Holy Eucharist, spoken in English, Spanish, and Igbo; several of the hymns were in Spanish. There were over 850 attendees; seating arrangements differed from the past that allowed small group conversations. After the first reading, Acts 11:19-30, we were asked to reflect within groups. One of the comments made to the audience that gave me pause to think stated, “we need get our Antioch”.

Bishop Stokes announced the recognition of three new canons, Canon Karen Mitchell, Canon Jane Oasin, and Canon Bob Legnani. The installation of these priests will be at the cathedral, an Evensong on May 12.

The main thrust of the convention were the five Anglican Marks of Mission, Mark 1 – Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom, Mark 2 – Teach, Baptize, and nurture new believers, Mark 3 – Respond to human need by loving service, Mark 4 – Transform unjust structures of society, and Mark 5 – Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. We were asked to break into small groups to discuss each mark of mission block. Some of the key points I found meaningful in my groups were the variety of events churches engage in to build relationships with each other and the community, use the book of common prayer, embrace the mystery of God, the fervor expressed when discussing unjust structures of society, Green Faith, stewardship in our individual churches and to the diocese, the love for our earth.

The diocesan budget was discussed at length by the treasurer. He explained that 141 Marks of Mission Giving letters were sent out to congregations. To date 125 responses have been received with the following statistical results: 45 congregations responded to the Ask or better; 17 congregations responded below the Ask, but at least at the tithe, 63 congregations responded below the tithe. I was disheartened to know that Grace Church is below the tithe.

The Diocesan Convention is an educational and enlightening experience. I talked to many of the attendees, made new friends, shared breakfast with the youth of Crossroads, a camp and retreat center, and listened to many impassioned recitations of experiences and community/congregational programs that follow our baptismal covenants. I urge members of Grace Church to consider being delegates next year.