

VICAR'S JULY MESSAGE 2006 - Father Anthony Holder

Reflections of Seminary

As I look forward to being home, I usually pass the time on my six hundred mile (nine hour) trip home from seminary by reflecting on my time spent at Trinity. Now that I have attended three terms and am now half way in my program in terms of courses completed, I felt that I should share with you some of my experiences while I am at seminary.



Biblical Theology Class in January 2006

Trinity Seminary is located in a small town named Ambridge, about fifteen miles north of Pittsburgh. Usually, I stay at the home of one of the students who is preparing for the ordained ministry and having the opportunity to interact with the family as well. Sometimes the magnitude of my workload makes that opportunity minimal.

Each day, worship services are held in the seminary chapel across the street from the seminary. Morning Prayer with Sermon is held Monday to Thursday with the Officiant and Preacher being two students in the Master of Divinity (M Div.) program. On Friday, the Holy Eucharist is celebrated with two members of the faculty as Celebrant and Preacher. The style of worship is evangelical since Trinity is an evangelical seminary. The M. Div students are not normally in seminary when the D. Min. students are unless they are assigned specific responsibilities or are engaged in other courses.

Classes are very intense, starting each morning at nine-thirty and ending at four-thirty in the afternoon. On Mondays, classes are extended from six-thirty until nine in the evening. This last (June) term, my course was the New Perspective on Paul, a school of thought which gives a different perspective to the traditional view of what Paul says in his letters, particularly in Romans and Galatians. I will share this topic for a later message; however, it was an enlightening experience for clergy of different Christian denominations to share their thoughts and views on a teaching that is having a rippling effect on the church, its theology, ministry and one's beliefs.

One of the high points of the seminary week is fellowship with colleagues, sharing our ideas, ministries, learning from each other and being in a wholesome environment. I have developed close relationships with particularly three colleagues - a Canadian-born, who is an Anglican priest and one of the Archdeacons in the Diocese of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada, a Namibian-born priest in the Anglican Province of America (APA), presently pasturing a church in South Carolina and an American Methodist minister in Delaware. We have a standing arrangement to have dinner together at particularly two restaurants - The Bamboo (which is right across the street from the seminary) and The Rook's. The food at these two restaurants is great.

All in all, Trinity is a wonderful experience—enlightening and thought-provoking classes, gifted professors and great collegial fellowship and interaction.