

## REPORT OF BISHOP LEONARD W. RICHES

To the One Hundred Thirty-second Council  
of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic  
of the Reformed Episcopal Church

Dear Brethren:

The convening of this One Hundred Thirty-second Council marks the conclusion of my fourth full year of retirement as Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese. I am grateful for the opportunity of continuing to serve our Lord in the ministry of episcopal oversight, and pleased to offer the following summary of my activities in that capacity during the preceding year. Inasmuch as the majority of these activities relate to my service as Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church, and to my position as a member of the Archbishop's Cabinet for the Province of the Anglican Church in North America, I will report in detail only on those activities which relate directly to the Diocese. A more comprehensive record of my service in the wider church may be consulted in my report presented to the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church in June, 2011. Further details will be provided, Lord willing, in my report to the 54<sup>th</sup> General Council in 2014.

**CONSECRATION:** On Saturday, September 29, 2012, at 2:00 P.M., in the Church of the Atonement, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I officiated at the consecration of the Rev. Raymond Charles Gillin as a bishop in the church of God, he having been elected to serve as Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic of the Reformed Episcopal Church. Co-consecrators were the Rt. Rev. Royal U. Grote, Jr., Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Mid-America and Vice-President of the General Council, and the Rt. Rev. David L. Hicks, Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Other bishops participating were the Rt. Rev. Daniel R. Morse, Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States; the Rt. Rev. Oommen Samuel, Missionary Bishop to India (retired); and the Rt. Rev. Richard W. Lipka, Bishop Suffragan of the Missionary Diocese of All Saints of the Anglican Church in North America. The candidate was presented by the Rt. Rev. David L. Hicks and the Rt. Rev. Daniel R. Morse. Testimonials were presented by the Ven. Dr. Jon W. Abboud on behalf of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, and by the Very Rev. Gregory J. Miller on behalf of the General Council. The Rev. Gerald S. McLynn served as Lector. The Very Rev. Belgrave Pelle read the Psalter. The Epistoler was the Very Rev. William A. Jenkins, Sr. The Rev. Dcn. Jason A. Holloway served as Gospeler. The Litanist was the Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Headman. The homily was delivered by the Rt. Rev. Royal U. Grote, Jr. Presbyters participating in the laying-on of hands were the Ven. Dr. Jon W. Abboud, the Rev. Ronald D. Bretherick, the Rev. Barton L. Craig, the Rev. Dr. David A. Crum, the Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Headman, the Rev. Paul S. Howden, the Rev. Eric W. Jorgensen, the Rev. Donald L. March, the Rev. Gerald S. McLynn, the Rev. John Milligan, the Very Rev. Belgrave Pelle, and the Rev. Richard W. Workowski. The Rev. Mr. Workowski also served as Master of Ceremonies. A delightful reception was hosted in the undercroft of the church following the service of consecration.

**OPERATIONS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE:** Throughout the past year I have met on repeated occasions with the Program Executive Committee of the Operations Process Improvement Committee (OPI). Appointed with the unanimous endorsement of the bishops of the Reformed Episcopal Church, as presented in my report to the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Council in June, 2011, this Committee has undertaken to evaluate our present practices as a church, with a view to defining and implementing such organizational structures, policies, and procedures as will enable us more effectively to fulfill our mission, and more faithfully to transmit to succeeding generations those things which we have learned, which we have gained, and which we have effectively accomplished throughout previous years. Members sharing with me on the OPI Committee have been the Rt. Rev. Royal U. Grote, Jr., Vice-President of the General Council, and the Rt. Rev. David L. Hicks, Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Mr. Ronald E. Riches, President of the Trustees of the Sustentation Fund serves as Program Manager, offering his wide professional experience and expertise, acquired through many years working in the field of management and operations consulting, to the guidance and direction of the Committee. While the OPI Committee has been appointed at the level of the General Council, its efforts and outcomes promise to provide lasting benefit to the operations of the entire church, including the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic and its several agencies.

**THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:** It is my great privilege to I continue to serve as Professor of Theology and Liturgics at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church. In that connection, I am currently teaching the course in Thirty-nine Articles of Religion throughout the Trinity Quarter of the academic year 2012-2013. I also participated in the summer intensive course, taught in August, 2012, by the Rt. Rev. Keith L. Ackerman, entitled "*Liturgy as Lens: God, Community and the Self*". Because his wife's illness required Bishop Ackerman's early return to his home in Texas, it was my privilege to assist in carrying the course forward, by guiding the classroom discussions and projects that followed Bishop Ackerman's daily presentations via Skype.

I also continue my service as a member of the Board of Directors of the seminary, attending each of its called meetings during the course of the year, in keeping with the requirements of my travel schedule.

The completion of my responsibilities in the current academic quarter will mark the conclusion of the forty-eighth year of my service in teaching at Reformed Episcopal Seminary. While I have valued every opportunity afforded me to serve Christ through His church, nothing has surpassed the joy and fulfillment that have come with the privilege of being part of the Seminary's life and ministry. Throughout those nearly five decades there have been many changes: changes in the location of the institution; a fleeting change in its name; changes in its administration; changes among those who stand behind the lectern or sit behind the desk to teach; and a constant procession of changing faces belonging to those men and women whom God has led to enter this historic institution to be formed and equipped for service to Christ and His church. Gone are some whose names are held in esteemed memory, among whom some were my teachers, and also my colleagues: Bishop Howard D. Higgins, Bishop Theophilus J. Herter, Dr. Fred C. Kuehner, Dr. Robert K. Rudolph, Dr. G. Hall Todd, they having been called to enter the Church Triumphant. Others have gone on to serve in other ministries, or into a well-earned time of

retirement, among whom are the Rt. Rev. Ray R. Sutton, the Rev. Dr. Milton C. Fisher, the Rev. Dr. Dwight F. Zeller, and several others. But while the passing years have brought changes, the most important aspects of what Reformed Episcopal Seminary is have remained constant. Those things are her commitment to *fidelity, excellence, and mission.*

In maintaining her commitment to *fidelity* the Seminary remains stalwart in fulfilling the apostolic mandate to “...*contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.*” (Jude 3) In the pursuit of excellence, the Seminary strives constantly to structure an academic program that maintains the highest standard, pursuing the several disciplines of biblical and theological training through faithful, careful scholarship as “...*workmen that have no need to be ashamed, correctly handling the word of truth.*” (II Timothy 2:15) And the Seminary remains focused on her *mission*, which is to equip the people of God for effective ministry and service in the church of Jesus Christ – not only by informing minds, but by building character, so that those who are trained through her ministry may go into their several vocations enabled to commit what they have received to those “...*who shall be able to teach others also.*” (II Timothy 2:2) Throughout nearly forty-eight years of service, I have seen Reformed Episcopal Seminary undergo numerous changes. But in the passing of those years, she has maintained one driving commitment: to be “...*ambitious to be well-pleasing unto Him.*” The Seminary has earned our confidence, and she merits our faithful support.

**EXHORTATION:** “*Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us, and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*” – Ephesians 5:1-2.

Respectfully submitted,

(The Most Rev.) Leonard W. Riches  
Bishop Ordinary (Retired)  
Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church