“I WILL, WITH GOD’S HELP”

“We have all we need to live where we are. At the very least we have an Archbishop who exemplifies what it means to live patiently in time by refusing to let us isolate ourselves from one another. The name we give to that refusal is ‘communion’.”

The Rev. Dr. Stanley Hauerwas

These were the words spoken by the Rev. Doctor Stanley M. Hauerwas, the Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics at the Duke Divinity School, Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, in his address to the sixty-eight graduating students at Virginia Theological Seminary’s (VTS) 183rd Commencement ceremony on May 18, 2006.

Said Hauerwas in his address entitled, Ordinary Time: A Tribute to Rowan Williams, “The anthropologist David Scott has described our time as damaged. By damaged he means we live in a time in which the once familiar characterizations of time no longer seem compelling.”

“Yet I believe that living in damaged times and in a damaged church is where God would have us be. The hardest thing in the world is to be where we are’ is Rowan Williams’ way to remind us that the time we have been given, our confusing and damaged time, is all the time we need to attend patiently to what seems to be the intractable and contingent problems that beset us.”

“For to live well in ordinary time,” Hauerwas continued, “is no easy achievement because we are tempted to the dramatic in the desperate attempt to make our lives significant if not heroic.”

“Williams argues that we cannot and should not try to make our lives more authentic by dramatic gestures. Rather we must learn to engage in everyday tasks as common as learning to speak the truth and, perhaps even more demanding, to hear the truth through the time consuming work of conversation. For when we are no longer able to speak and hear the truth, language decays making it impossible to trust ourselves or our neighbor. We lose the ability, as Wendell Berry puts it, to ‘stand by our words’.”

“The art of ordinary living, according to Williams, requires that we learn to live without fear of the complexity of everyday life. To learn to live with the complexity of everyday life means the church cannot fear having the conflicts necessary for peace.”

Inside this Issue

- The Suzanne F. Thomas Faculty Research Award
  - Page 4

- 2006 Commencement Photos
  - Page 5

- Francis Scott Key Society
  - Page 7

continued on page 6...
Last week I had the privilege of preaching at the ordination of four new deacons, including two members of the VTS class of 2006. I was struck by what an act of courage it was for these four individuals, three of them under the age of 33, to pledge themselves to a life of service to our Church at a time when so many questions are being raised about our future. It was also an act of courage for the individuals and congregations who have supported them along their journeys. By promising to uphold them in their new ministries, the people of the diocese made a strong affirmation of faith about the future of the Church in East Tennessee.

Along with the members of the VTS graduating class of 2006, those four new deacons are signs of hope and promise to me as our Church prepares to gather in Columbus, Ohio this June. Amidst the anxiety and the uncertainty about our future there is much to celebrate. Throughout our country, in dioceses large and small, a new group of bright, faithful, well-trained men and women are committing themselves to the preaching of the Gospel and the mission of the Church.

As all eyes are directed towards General Convention, I want to suggest that it may not be the best place to look for signs of the incredible vitality and faithfulness that exist within our Episcopal Church. As I travel from place to place, visiting congregations in different parts of the country, I am continually reminded of the depth of authentic Christian worship, fellowship, outreach, and witness that constitutes the Episcopal Church in the United States.

One of the great privileges of my job is the opportunity to travel to congregations and dioceses throughout our Church. It is in those congregations and in the many faithful diocesan gatherings that this is where the Church is to be found, with an immediacy and a reality impossible to duplicate in convention center ballrooms.

Will decisions made in Columbus change the Church as we know it? What will ECUSA look like five or ten or twenty years from now? None of us can know the answers to these questions that are so much on our minds. I am encouraged, however, by the class of 2006 and the enormous potential and promise they represent for the Church we love.

Martha J. Horne
Dean and President

Some of the members of the Class of 2006, representing 68 graduates, more than 24 dioceses, and four countries.
DEAN HORNE ANNOUNCES 2007 RETIREMENT

On May 16, 2006 at the Board of Trustees and Faculty meeting, Dean Horne announced her intention to retire next year as Dean and President of Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS).

Said Dean Horne during her announcement, “There will be plenty of time for farewells next year when I return from my sabbatical leave in the fall. Meanwhile, I give thanks for the great privilege of serving this wonderful institution and for the joy of living and working in such a remarkable community.”

In a letter to the Seminary Community, the Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee, Bishop of Virginia and Chairman of the Seminary’s Board of Trustees wrote, “We are thankful to God for the wonderful gifts that Dean Horne has brought to this seminary. She has a remarkable gift in identifying and recruiting effective members of the faculty and she has set a pattern of excellence in the exercise of her leadership that has very positively influenced the life of the Seminary. We are sorry to see her go, but respectful of her plans.”

Bishop Lee also announced the appointment of Dr. David Charlton, a long time member of the Seminary’s Board of Trustees and a former faculty member, as Chair of the Search Committee that will begin the process of searching for Dean Horne’s successor.

A copy of Dean Horne’s announcement can be found at www.vts.edu/news.

Virginia Seminary Welcomes New Pastoral Theologian to Faculty

The Very Rev. Martha J. Horne, dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS), and the Board of Trustees have announced the election of the Reverend Dr. Joyce Ann Mercer to the faculty of the Seminary, as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology. Dr. Mercer will move from California to Alexandria with her family in July and will begin teaching in the fall of 2006. Her appointment is the culmination of a year-long faculty search process.

“We are delighted that Dr. Mercer will be joining our faculty,” said Dean Horne, “She brings clinical training and experience, excellence in academic research and teaching, and skills from the practice of ordained ministry. Having taught for three years at a seminary in Manila, she will also bring welcome insights into our ongoing conversations about cross-cultural opportunities for members of the VTS community.”

The Search Committee, consisting of faculty members Michael Battle, Roger Ferlo, Jacques Hadler, Barney Hawkins, Tim Sedgwick and Dean Horne, reviewed over sixty applications and interviewed six extremely well-qualified finalists for this position. Three finalists returned to the campus for a second visit, to make a classroom presentation, and to meet with the search committee, faculty, and student body representatives. Following those visits, the search committee voted unanimously to recommend Dr. Mercer’s appointment to the faculty and Board.

Dr. Mercer holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia, a Master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Connecticut, the M.Div. from Yale Divinity School, the Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary, and the Ph.D. degree from Emory University. For the past six years she has served on the faculty of San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California.

Ordained in the Presbyterian Church, Dr. Mercer describes herself as a “sacramental Presbyterian” who has a “love and hunger for good liturgy.”

“I see this as an exciting opportunity to join a faculty committed to excellent teaching and solid scholarship for the sake of the church,” said Dr. Mercer, “That is important to me because I really understand my vocation in terms of contributing to both the academy and the church. I look forward to joining a community that is intentional about the many ways theological education forms persons in their identities as faithful public church leaders.”

She is married to theologian Dr. Larry Golemon, and has twin nine-year-old sons and a daughter who is seven.
Dear Friends,

Please join me in congratulating the Virginia Seminary Class of 2006! It is a joy to see this gifted and energetic group of graduates leave the “Hill” for the mission fields of our church.

On May 17, you elected a new group to the Alumnae/Alumni Executive Committee. They are the Very Rev. M. L. Agnew (’67), the Rev. Catherine Campbell (’88), the Rev. Vincent Harris (’79), and the Rt. Rev. F. Clayton Matthews (’73). We elected the Rev. Canon Saundra Richardson (’89) to the Board of Trustees and the Rev. Thomas “Lonnie” Lacy (’06) as the co-opted member of the class of 2006. We look forward to their participation in our work as a link between you and the Seminary. We are also grateful to those who were nominated.

The General Convention is only a few days away and I am looking forward to greeting many of you in Columbus. It is a special treat to be present at General Convention with a whole new perspective!

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Rosemari G. Sullivan
Director, Alumni and Church Relations

PS. Don’t forget to mark your calendars for Convocation on October 2-4, 2006.

STEPHEN COOK RECEIVES VIRGINIA SEMINARY’S SUZANNE F. THOMAS FACULTY RESEARCH AWARD

On May 16, 2006, at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS), the first presentation of the Suzanne F. Thomas Faculty Research Award was held and the award bestowed upon Stephen Lloyd Cook, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The VTS Suzanne F. Thomas Faculty Research Award was established in July of 2005 in honor of Suzanne F. Thomas of Aylett, Virginia and her strong commitment to excellence in education and the mission of the Episcopal Church.

Since 1996 Stephen Cook has been a member of the faculty at Virginia Seminary. From 1992-1996 Cook was the Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College with Honors in Religion, a Master of Divinity, Magna cum laude, Master of Arts, and Master of Philosophy, and a Ph.D. degree in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, with distinction, all from Yale University. Dr. Cook has written over 50 books, articles, and reviews. His 1997 book, Prophecy and Apocalypticism, was named an Outstanding Book of the Year by the professional journal Choice, a leading conduit to academic libraries published by the American Library Association. His writings have appeared in the Anglican Theological Review, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, and Journal of Hebrew Scriptures among many others.

The Suzanne F. Thomas Faculty Research Award will be given annually, at the discretion of the Dean of the Seminary, to a member of the Seminary’s faculty to support faculty research and foster excellence in scholarship at VTS.

Over many years, Suzanne Thomas has served the Episcopal Church with devotion and distinction in many ways, including service as a member of the Vestry at St. Paul’s Church in Alexandria, Virginia, service as a trustee of St. Agnes School, and Episcopal High School, President of the Church Schools of the Diocese of Virginia, Vice Chair of the Washington National Cathedral Chapter and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation.

Throughout her career of service to education and the Church, Suzanne Thomas has encouraged research and scholarship as a key ingredient to excellence in teaching and the vital mission of institutions of greater learning. She is the mother of Margaret Campbell Thomas, Alexander Young Thomas and William Griffith Thomas III, who has served as a member of Virginia Seminary’s Board of Trustees from 1999 to the present.
Class of 2006

Commencement

From top left corner clockwise: Helen McKee and Donyelle McCray; Honorary Degree recipients William S. Craddock, Jr. and Charlotte Hanley Scott; Carol Jablonski and Susan Daughtry Fawcett; Evan Garner and Sari Ateek; John James Derkits; William White and Peter Swarr; Marlee Norton and Mary Norton; Caron Gwynn, Melissa Roberts, Sandra Lawrence, and Laura Fabrycky; Daniel Hall; Graduates listening to Commencement speaker; Given Gaula; Robbin Melchiorre; Fran Gardner gives a farewell hug to Tim Sedgwick.
Concluding, Hauerwas stated, “You are in the time God has made possible, kingdom time, and the work you do is the peace of God. Be patient, practice word care, keep the conversation going, and may God help you even learn to love our damaged church which is the only hope we have if we are to endure this damaged time.”

The full text of Dr. Hauerwas’ address can be found on the Seminary’s Web site at www.vts.edu/news/.

The Class of 2006 graduates, representing more than 24 dioceses and four countries, were awarded with degrees of either Master in Divinity, Master in Theological Studies, Master of Arts in Christian Education, Doctor of Ministry, Post-Graduate Diplomas in Anglican Studies, or Certificate of Work Accomplished.

“This is a very serious-minded and thoughtful class,” said Jan Sienkiewicz, coordinator for Admissions and Community Life at VTS, “They’re lots of fun and there’s lots of craziness with the group but they’re solid people.

I mean, this is a group that was brand new in the dorms when Hurricane Isabelle hit, and a year later they had to deal with the loss of a fellow student... they really soldiered through though. They’re also very mission oriented and quite internationally savvy.”

Senior Matthew D. Cowden (Diocese of Southeast Florida) quoted, “I have an awesome class. They give me great hope for the Episcopal Church because of their creativity, their comprehensiveness, the honesty in their work, and because of what they attempt to articulate in what they do - everything from social justice to multi-media, theology to liturgy - they don’t throw the baby out with the bath water and do new things for the sake of being new... they keep the best of the old with the best of the new, one hand reaching fully back and the other hand fully forward.”

Cowden was one of two recipients of the Seminary’s Dudley Speech Prize, awarded to graduates who, in the opinion of the faculty, have demonstrated excellence in the public reading and interpretation of the Scriptures and Liturgy. Cowden shared the award with Sandra Lawrence (Diocese of Northern California). The recipient of the 2006 Ford Chair, a gift of Susan Ford to a member of the graduating class who has exhibited a strong commitment to the community life and mission of the Seminary, was Mary K. Norton (Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania).

Recipients of the Harris Award, given each year to candidates for Holy Orders who have demonstrated academic excellence and leadership ability, were Carol J. Jablonski (Diocese of Southwest Florida) and James P. “Peter” Swarr (Diocese of Maine).

Five honorary degrees were awarded this year by VTS. More information about the honorary degree recipients can be found on the back page of this newsletter.
At Virginia Seminary—the deepest questions of my life were being answered.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas D. Bowers, VTS 56

As members of the Class of 2006 approach their future ministries in the Church, other graduates and friends are helping plan for the financial future of Virginia Seminary.

Just as we provide for our own educations, careers, and retirements, the Seminary must strive to assure its timeless ministry to future students and the Church.

At the beginning of this year, Mrs. Marnie Trotter, wife of former Dean Jesse Trotter, VTS ’36 and Bishop Ted Eastman, VTS ’53, Co-Chairs of the Francis Scott Key Society, invited many of you to join them and others to help provide for the Seminary’s financial future by including the Seminary in your estate plans as others have for nearly two centuries.

Since January 1, 18 individuals have joined the Francis Scott Key Society, which today includes 225 graduates and friends who have made this special commitment to the Seminary’s future.

One of these was The Rev. Dr. Thomas D. Bowers (pictured left), VTS ’56, who called to say “I have had the Seminary in my will for a very long time and had not told you because no one had ever asked until now!”

“I came to the Seminary after serving in the Korean War and then studying, one on one, with a priest in the undergraduate school at Sewanee by the name of Frederick Quentin Shafer. He helped me grapple with the deep issues in my life, which had been kicked up by my experiences in the war. That led me to Virginia Seminary where I found the deepest questions in my life were being answered. My seminary formation with scripture, theology, and church history has been a central foundation for my ministry since graduation.”

During my seven years on the Board of Trustees and past four years as Vice President, I have been impressed by the dedication and excitement of our graduates as they have gone on from Commencement to serve the Church and its witness to the world. The powerful impact the ministry of graduates like Tom Bowers has had on many congregations and individuals reaffirms my own faith and commitment to the dynamic ministry of this Seminary. Our appreciation for the work of Seminary graduates led my wife Sherry and me to join the Francis Scott Key Society several years ago.

I would be delighted to share ways you can provide for the Seminary’s future in your own estate plan. Members of the Francis Scott Key Society are recognized in the Fall Issue of the Virginia Seminary Journal, unless a request is received that the names not be made public.

The continuing generosity of the Seminary’s many friends over the years does make a difference. Thank you.

Ed Hall
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

2006 NEW MEMBERS OF THE Francis Scott Key Society

The Rev. Anthony F. Andres; the Rev. Dr. Thomas D. Bowers; the Rev. Dr. Cheryl L. Clark; the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Daniels; the Rev. Thomas B. McCusker III; the Rev. Rita B. Nelson; the Rev. John James Ormond; Ms. Sandra Poole; the Rt. Rev. F. Neff Powell; the Rev. F. Vernon Quigley; the Rev. Grant H. Robinson; the Rt. Rev. Philip A. and Barbara A. Smith; Mr. and Mrs. M. Waldron Vail II; the Rev. Canon Samuel Van Culin; Anonymous.

For information please call or write Edwin King Hall, Virginia Theological Seminary 3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22304. 703-461-1711 or 1-800-941-0083 Email: ehall@vts.edu  Website: www.vts.edu
Honorary degrees are awarded every year by Virginia Theological Seminary in recognition of faithful and notable service and also creative and innovative leadership in parish ministry, in overseas missions, academia, and in ecumenical, social, diocesan, and national church ministries.

This year, the Seminary awarded five honorary degrees to acknowledge the service of a highly distinguished group of people. William S. Craddock, Jr. (pictured far left), Managing Director, CREDO Institute, and Charlotte Hanley Scott (pictured center), University of Virginia Professor Emerita of Commerce and Education received Doctors of Humane Letters, honoris causa. Three Doctors in Divinity, honoris causa, were given out as well to the following: the Rt. Rev. Edward Ambrose Gumbs (pictured second from left), Bishop Diocese of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, Stanley Martin Hauerwas (pictured far right), Ph.D., Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics, Duke Divinity School at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, and the Rev. Alfred Alfonso Moss, Jr. (pictured second from right), Ph.D., Associate Professor of History at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland.

Five Receive Honorary Degrees from VTS

Virginia Theological Seminary
3737 Seminary Road Alexandria, VA 22304