



RELIGION

Send notice of your church activities and events to:
Religion Editor, Portland Observer
P.O. Box 3137
Portland OR 97208

St. Andrews hosts refugees

A caravan of Central American refugees en route from Tucson to church sanctuaries in the Seattle area arrived in Portland this week.

Members of the caravan stayed for the night at St. Andrews Catholic Church, 806 N.E. Alberta St. St. Andrews is a member of the Portland Sanctuary Coalition along with Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church and St. Mark Presbyterian Church. The coalition provides public sanctuary for a Salvadoran

refugee at St. Andrews.

A caravan of about 40 cars left Tucson on June 27th. They are transporting a 25-year old medical student who will be in public sanctuary at University Friends Meeting in Seattle and a four-member Guatemalan family who will live in public sanctuary at East Shore Unitarian Church in Bellevue. The churches are the 149th and 150th in the United States to declare themselves open for public sanctuary.

Vietnamese hold celebration

The ninth annual Vietnamese Celebration of Freedom will be held at The Grotto, the National Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother, on Sunday, July 8th.

Vietnamese pilgrims "come from throughout the Northwest and northern California to celebrate the freedom they now enjoy," said Rev. Vincent Minh, CSsR, of Portland's Southeast Asian Vicariate.

Many attending the event will be dressed in the traditional and colorful clothing of Southeast Asia. A

picnic, dancing, music, a mass and a procession of Our Lady, will highlight the day at The Grotto. The Sunday celebration is part of a three-day convention of Vietnamese who have met in Portland each year for the past nine years to discuss "common experiences and to have a chance to see friends," said Rev. Minh.

The event is free and open to the public. For further information, call the Southeast Asian Vicariate at 249-5892.



Sisters from the American Muslim Community relax with the children during 'Idul Fitr (the Festival of Fastbreaking). In Al-Islam, 'Idul Fitr is one of the great festivals having profound significance for all Muslims. The festival is celebrated to commemorate the completion of the month of Ramadan, the obligatory fasting period for all able Muslims. The festival was held at Peninsula Park, Saturday. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)



Rev. Alcena Boozer receives communion following her ordination to the priesthood of the Episcopal Church. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Northwest's first Black woman priest ordained

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — A spiritual call influenced and shaped by St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, led Alcena E. Boozer to become the Pacific Northwest's first Black female priest in the Episcopal Church.

Mother Boozer observed, "I was called by God but the congregation sent me. The primary theology school is the local congregation and whatever ministry I end up in, St. Philips will always be a part of me and I a part of it."

Raised in an atmosphere of Christian service provided by her family and the extended family of St. Philip, Mother Boozer said she benefited by observing the humanitarian interaction of Blacks in the isolated Northwest during the 1940's and 50's.

"Also within that community came my understanding of the gospel as I processed it spiritually, intellectually and theologically."

The double-edged sword of life carved out a period in her life which she called a "questioning one." "I was wondering if the gospel was true and after my two children were born both handicapped, I came to see that there was a source for everything and this source was God."

This insight demanded from her more than a verbal commitment to her spirituals. "We ought to be living in such a way that people will know that we are Christians as we learn to be more selfless and reach out to others."

In 1979, during this evolutionary process, she became a deacon. "The deacon's role is to interpret the church to the world and the world to the church," she added.

A part of her functions as deacon is to carry the sacrament to the sick and shut-in. "Once people become

ill and they can no longer get to church, they must be able to participate in communion, prayer, and we see what other needs there might be that the church can help meet," Boozer explained.

The needs of the people she was ministering to demanded more from her than her role as a deacon called for. As she concentrated her energies on the service role as a deacon, her husband, Jim Boozer heard her call to the priesthood. In recalling her last transformation, Boozer said a remarkable series of events happened. "We put our house up for sale during a time when the housing market was not good. Two people came asking to purchase our house before we put it on the market. Also, we went to Berkeley, California, with the intent that after I finished seminary, I would come back and resume my employment with the Portland Public Schools."

But Boozer applied for the Dean of Student Services at the Oregon Episcopal School and was informed of her selection Easter day. She said her voluntary termination from the school district a "difficult decision" but she felt, "Liberated from the tyranny of possessions" when her family sold their home.

Since 1976, the Episcopal Church has recognized women priests, but there are a few, within and without the church, who have not. Boozer predicts this non-acceptance will erode. "Half the people in the seminary are women and in the long-term, you can project what will happen as more and more women begin to function as priests in the community."

St. Philips was once the spiritual haven for the pioneers of Portland's Black community. The foundation they established in Alcena Boozer has proved historical.

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Contact Bill Hunter: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. M-F 249-5511.
After 6:00 call 775-3055. Leo Brown: 289-1961.

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