



**THE BISHOP OF NORTH CAROLINA**

The Feast of All Saints A.D. 2012

My Sisters in Christ:

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The theme of the 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women this year is “Believe Out Loud!” I suspect the wording of the theme is not intended to indicate decibel levels of our public proclamations, or to suggest that Episcopalians need to become obnoxious about the faith we hold. I do suspect it has something to do with being living witnesses to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus as we have received it in the Episcopal way of being Christian.

It is particularly fitting that the Reverend Petero Sabune will be with us as the keynoter for this Annual Meeting. Father Sabune and I have been friends and colleagues for many years now. He has been a witness to the Gospel as a parish priest, prison chaplain and an instrument of God’s reconciliation here in the United States and on the continent of Africa.

It is equally fitting that at this Annual Meeting attention will be focused on women who have been witnesses in their times and generations. The titles of the presentations about them say it well:

*A Woman Named Brigit  
The Ladies of Hillsborough  
A Woman Named Pauli*

As you may know, the commemoration of the life and witness of Pauli Murray was added to *Holy Women, Holy Men: A Celebration of the Saints*, the book of official commemorations on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church.

Blessed Pauli and the host of women and men included in *Holy Women, Holy Men* represent people who in their generations faithfully followed Jesus and witnessed to the Gospel. They lived lives that were different. They were not creatures of the status quo. They were children of the dream of God and by following Jesus into that dream, by doing things, great and small, that help the world to reflect something of God’s dream, their lives made a difference. They are lifted up in a celebration of the Saints, not because they were better, but because by following in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth, they were different, and their lives, by God’s grace, made a difference.

And so, we remember them as a solemn reminder that God is not finished with the world yet, and even now, saints are being summoned through the waters of baptism to make faithful, bold, courageous and compassionate witness to the love of God that has been revealed in Jesus of Nazareth.

This Annual Meeting is a call to BELIEVE OUT LOUD! It is a call to witness to Jesus now in our lives and in our times.

Keep the faith,

Michael B. Curry,  
Bishop