

The Ecumenical Center for Pauline Studies

An initiative of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in collaboration with
The Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, The New England Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
St. George's Orthodox Cathedral, Springfield & The Massachusetts Bible Society
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For Immediate Release

Various Christian traditions come together to mark year of studies on St. Paul *Unique and timely April gathering to begin this unique collaboration of various denominations*

Springfield – Pope Benedict XVI has designated a “Pauline Year” to commemorate the second millennium of the birth of St. Paul, whose writings are critical for understanding for all Christian traditions. This effort has been joined by the leaders of other major Christian denominations. The Pauline Year, will begin June 28, 2008, ending June 29, 2009, and will bring together Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christians in programs to revitalize faith and encourage prayer and work for Christian Unity.

The Ecumenical Center for Pauline Studies, an initiative of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in collaboration with The Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, The New England Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, St. George's Orthodox Cathedral, Springfield and The Massachusetts Bible Society, will coordinate Pauline Year activities in western Massachusetts. The Ecumenical Center will be fashioning a year long series of programs and pilgrimages under the theme suggested by Bishop Timothy McDonnell: “Paul for the Twenty-first Century”.

In preparation for the Pauline Year, a day long symposium titled “Living Christ in a Pluralistic World” will be held at St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Springfield on **Tuesday, April 8th**. The symposium begins at 8.30 am and concludes at 4 pm. With the assistance of three renowned biblical scholars the symposium will uncover St. Paul's own insights of living in the pluralistic world in which he himself was active.

The featured speakers at the April 8th symposium will include the Reverend Professor Karl P. Donfried an ordained Lutheran minister and professor-emeritus from Smith College. Rev. Donfried is an internationally recognized New Testament scholar. Rev. Donfried has also taught at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, as well as served as a visiting professor at Yale, Brown and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He will be joined by Jesuit Priest and Professor Thomas Stegman, S.J. who is currently associate professor of New Testament studies at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge. Rev. Stegman has done research into the interpretations of New Testament writings especially those of St. Paul. The final speaker for this symposium will be Episcopal Rector, the Reverend Paul F. M. Zahl from Chevy Chase, Maryland. Rev. Zahl is rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Chevy Chase and has authored a number of books. His most recent is **Grace in Practice: A Theology for Everyday Life**.

In the spirit of St. Paul's call for “an offering for the poor in Jerusalem” an offering will be collected for the Christians in Iraq and distributed by the International Orthodox Christian Charities www.iocc.org. Until March 28, pre-registration including lunch is \$15.00. Registration at the door is \$20. You can register by mail to the Pauline Symposium, Massachusetts Bible Society, 14 Beacon Street, Suite 510, Boston, MA 02108. Checks should be payable to *The Ecumenical Center for Pauline Studies – RCB*

Another event planned is a 10-day ecumenical and educational trip to Malta, Sicily and Rome in which local pastoral and academic leaders will take an in-depth exploration of St. Paul's final journey to Rome. Planned for Nov. 21-30, reservations and deposits are needed by April 10. More information is available by calling Rev. John McDonough at 452-0819 or Rev. Edwin Larson at 513 536-3369.