

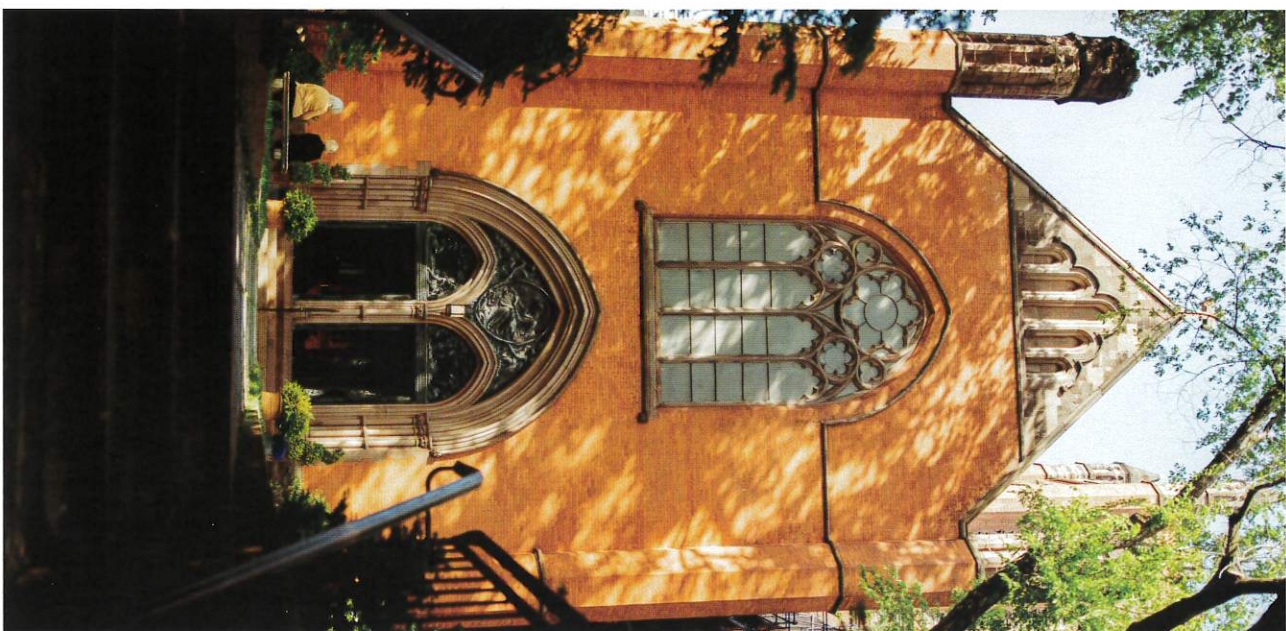
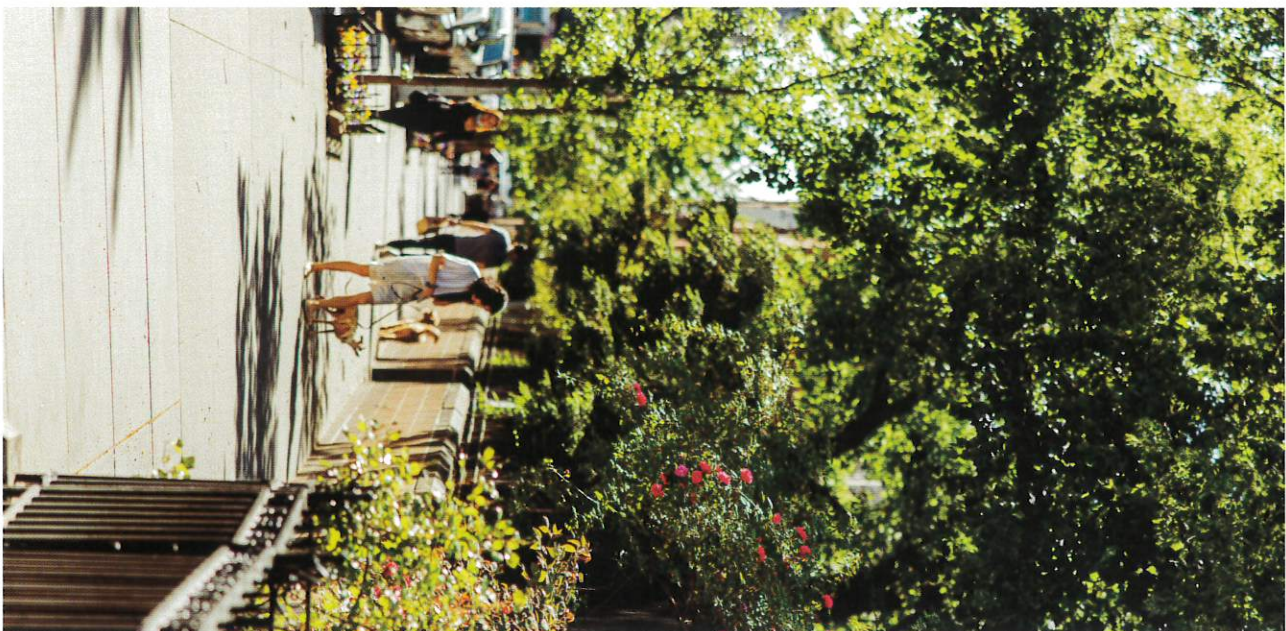


# THE CHELSEA SQUARE

Celebrating  
50 Years of Women at General

Honoring Our Own:  
The Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray '76

Reflections from the  
200th Commencement





THE CHELSEA SQUARE is named for the spiritual home of the General Theological Seminary.

For generations, these grounds in the heart of New York have gathered, inspired, and nurtured Christian leaders for lives of purpose and impact. These pages are an archive of the memories formed here, and our collective dream for the Spirit present within our community to pour upon all places.

As a community and as a church, we live in a rhythm of reflecting and rejoicing. Every feast day marked in our Chapel and every commencement and reception on the Close are holy invitations to make space to see the Spirit's presence in our lives and in our history.

These photographs are a reflection of one week in May which encapsulated the concurrence of two major celebrations at General: the anniversary of the seminary's 200th commencement and the conclusion of our celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the first female matriculants at General Seminary.

Looking back on the legacy of our beloved institution, we give thanks for the witness and ministries of the many matriculants and graduates who have come before us. They entered this Seminary community, entrusting us with their formation, education, and training, and they left through our gates empowered and equipped for service and leadership.

Upon the receipt of her honorary Doctorate of Divinity from General this past May, The Very Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas commented on the legacy of General Seminary, particularly in light of Alexander Crummell, Pauli Murray, and others whose prophetic witness to the expansive and inclusive love of God in Jesus Christ have continued to call us, as a Seminary, to align our institutional trajectories toward justice.

The Very Reverend Doctor Michael W. Delashmutt









SEPTEMBER 1971, the first two women entered the Master of Divinity program at General Seminary: Peggy Muncie and Page Bigelow.

Throughout the year, alumnae contributed remembrances of their time at General, reflecting the depth and diversity of educational and formational experiences women have had over these past fifty years. Curated by Director of Alumni Relations Jonathan Silver, these stories have served as a reminder of the role women have played on Chelsea Square throughout our history as a seminary.

Read the full reflections at [gts.edu/50years](https://gts.edu/50years).



There's nothing like exploring the past to enrich and lift one's perspective of the present and the future.

During a time when General Seminary once again faces the headwinds of change, I have been coordinating and curating the commemoration of 50 Years of Women at General. Connecting with alumnae spanning generations in the life of General -- and the church -- has been a wondrous opportunity to hear stories that illuminate the joys, frustrations, and challenges of the path for women called to ministry during a period of momentous change. What a blessing it has been to learn the depth and diversity of educational and formational experiences united by the one thing they have in common: the passion to serve. What an awakening to recognize how critically important women have been in the life of GTS and the church, even prior to the time they could embark on a path to ordination. Facilitating workshops, seminars, and webinars focused on women in the church and led by women of the church, I've had a front row seat to their wisdom, passion scholarship, and humor:

I will be forever grateful to have had this opportunity to listen, learn, and reflect on the everlasting impact the women of General – and the church – have brought to our collective spiritual life.

Jonathan Silver, Director of Alumni Relations





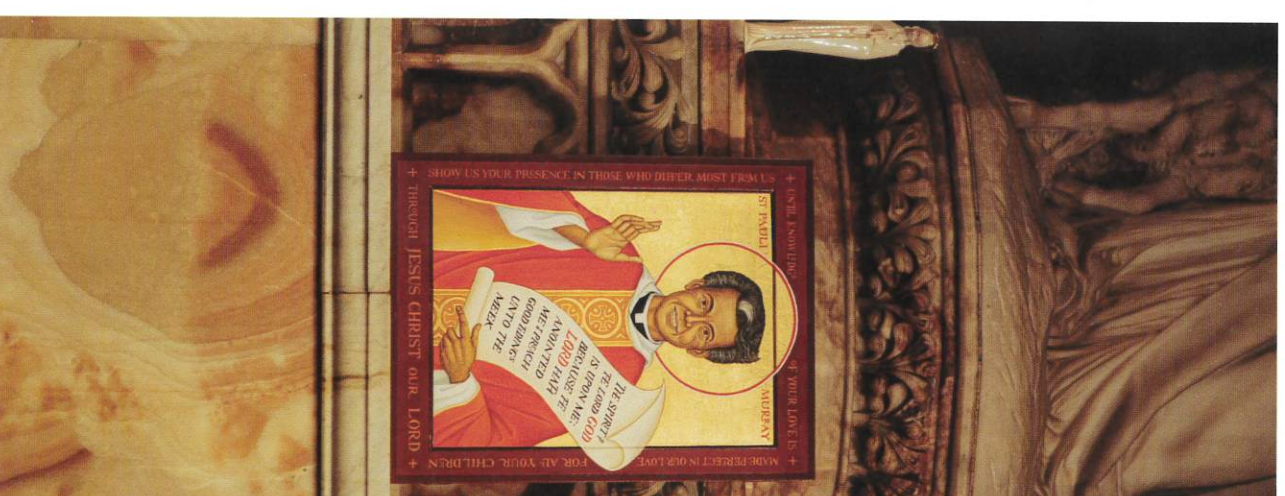
This year marked two celebrations, the honoring of The Very Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas with an honorary degree, and the commemoration of GTS alumni

The Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray.

A legal scholar, intersectional feminist, author, Episcopal saint and priest, labor organizer, and LGBTQ+ advocate, the Reverend Doctor Pauli Murray was a trailblazer in the defining movements for human rights throughout the 20th century, including Brown vs. Board of Education, the inclusion of women in Title VII, and an extension of rights to LGBTQ+ people based on Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Murray's path to ordination — and time at GTS — encountered the same challenges faced in other male-dominated institutions. Murray's thesis "Black Theology and Feminist Theology: A Comparative View" reflects a theology of liberalism and commitment to political and social change that pushed the boundaries of a seminary and a church not quite ready to grapple with the "interstructuring" of racism, sexism, and economic exploitation. Murray graduated in 1976, and was made a local saint of this institution in Winter 2022.

An icon to Pauli Murray, written by New York based iconographer Zachary J. Roosemann, was consecrated in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.





The legacy of trailblazers like Pauli Murray is being powerfully carried on through the witness and scholarship of leaders like Kelly Brown Douglas.

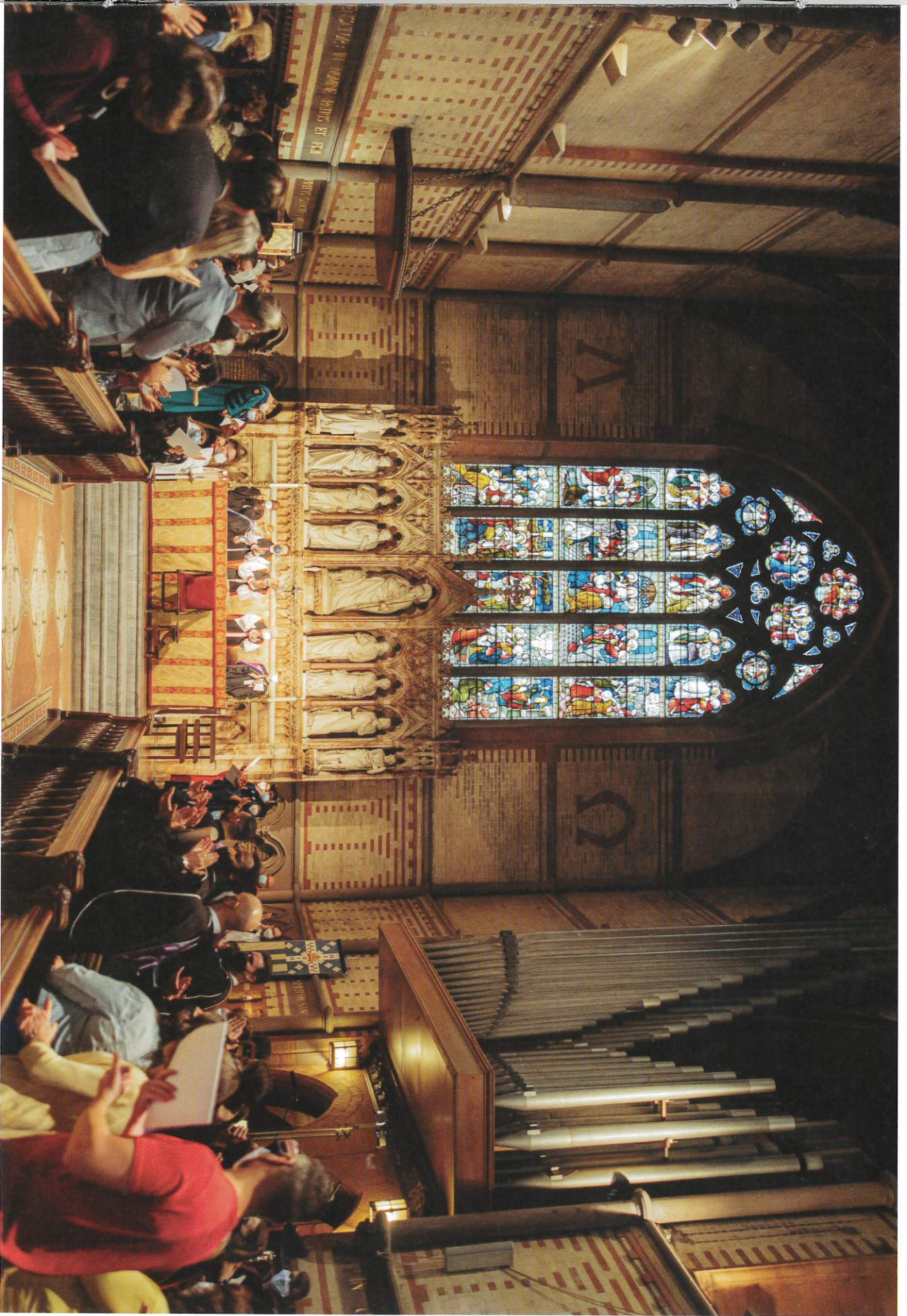
Their examples raise our awareness to the Church's mission as a herald of God's reconciling love of Christ in and for the world.

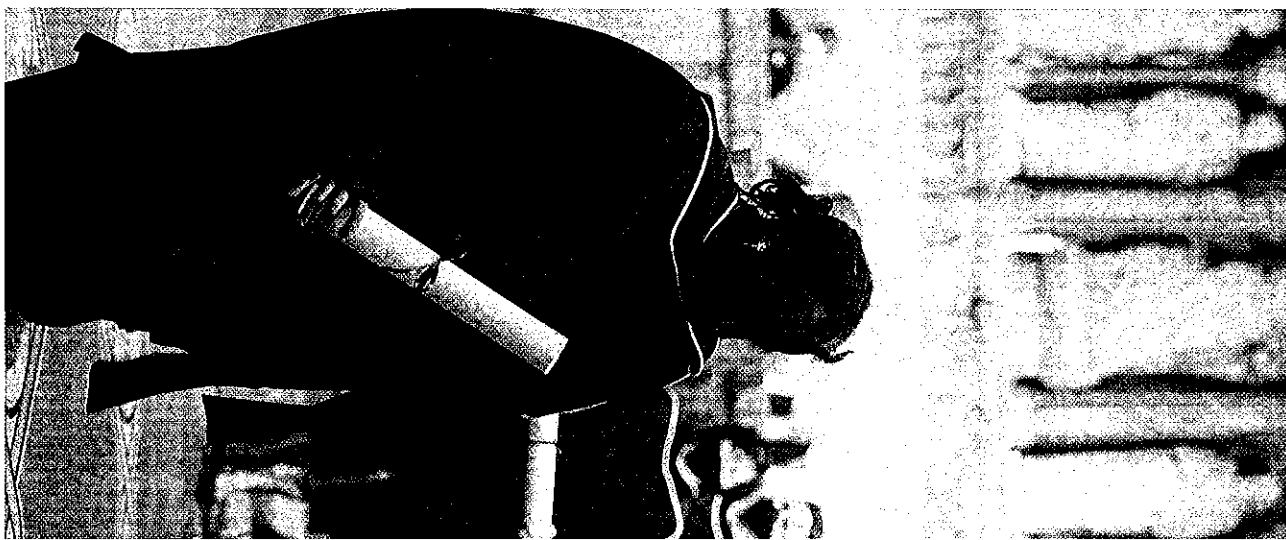
Dean Michael

THE FIRST STUDENTS to complete the course of study at the General Theological Seminary were graduated at Commencement Exercises held in Christ Church on lower Manhattan, July 26, 1823. This parish church was the site of subsequent Commencements until 1826, at which time they were moved to St. John's Chapel on Varich Street (forerunner of St. Peter's Church on West Twentieth Street).

In 1838, with the completion of its present building, St. Peter's Church became the site of the annual Exercises and here they remained until completion of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd in 1888. The Chapel has been the site of the General Seminary's Commencements ever since.

The form of the Exercises was devised by Dean Eugene August Hoffman in 1880-1881 and, with minor exceptions, is the same witnessed in subsequent Commencements.

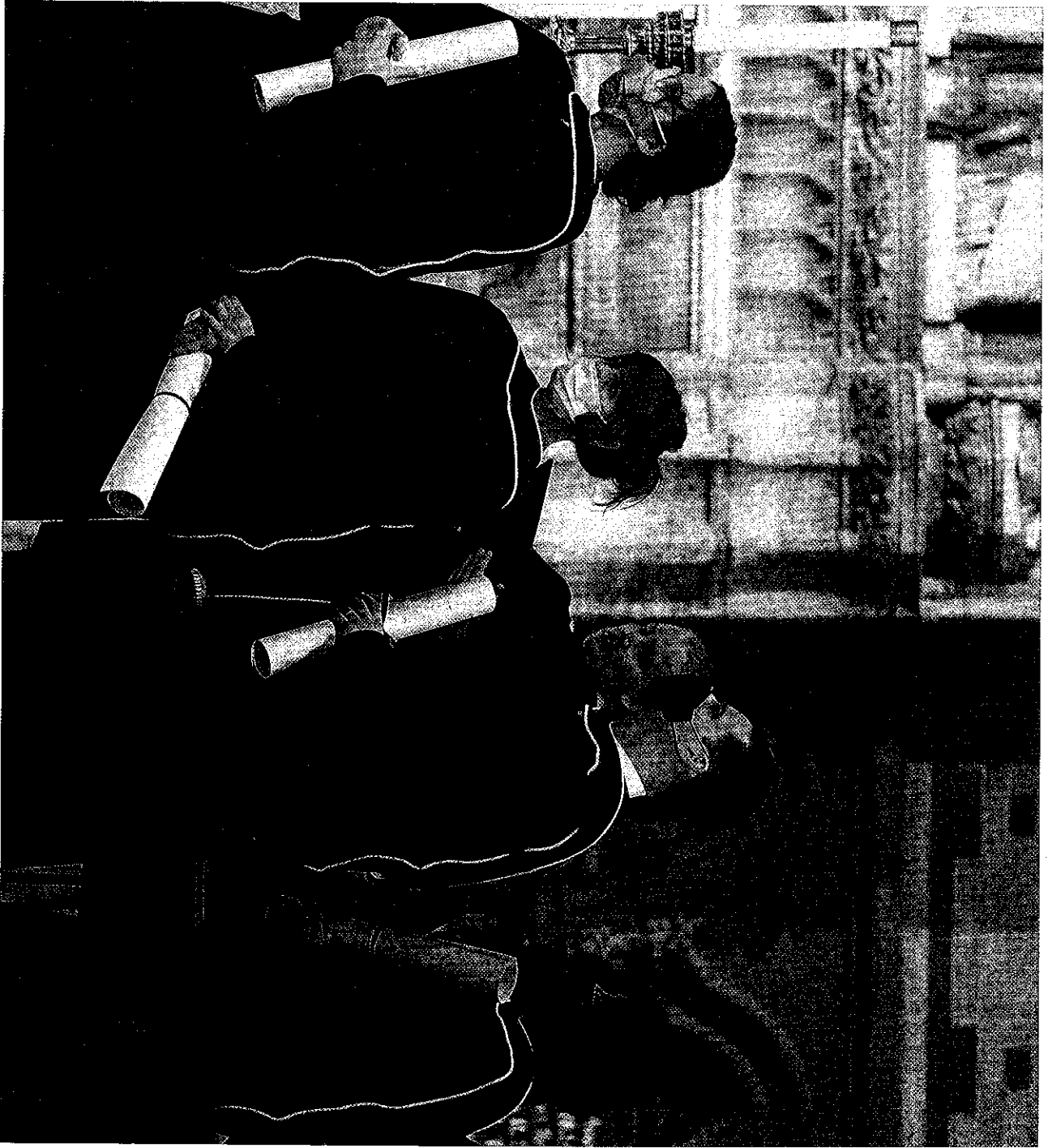




*Pray for a due supply of persons fitted to serve God in the Ministry and in the State; and to that end, as well as for the good education of all the inhabitants of this land, pray for all schools, colleges and seminaries of sound and Godly learning, more especially for this, The General Theological Seminary; and for all whose hands are opened for their maintenance: that whatsoever tends to the advancement of true religion and useful learning may forever flourish and abound.*

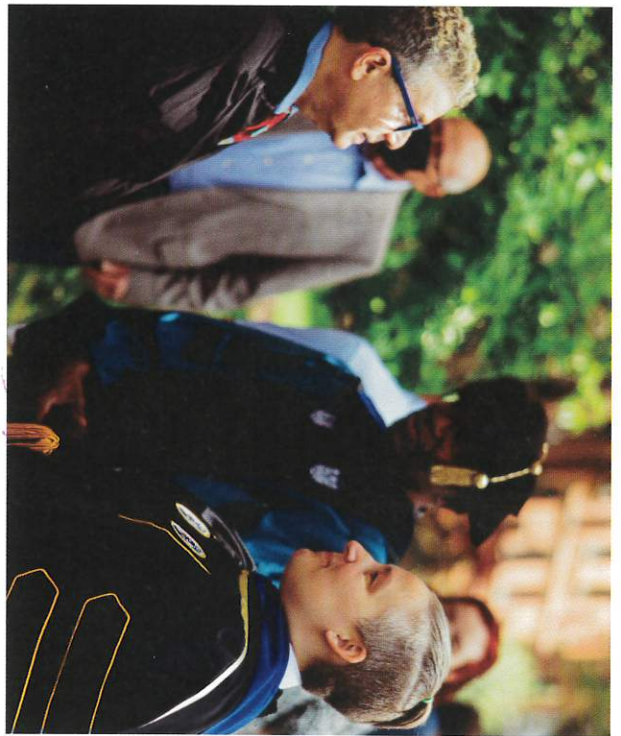
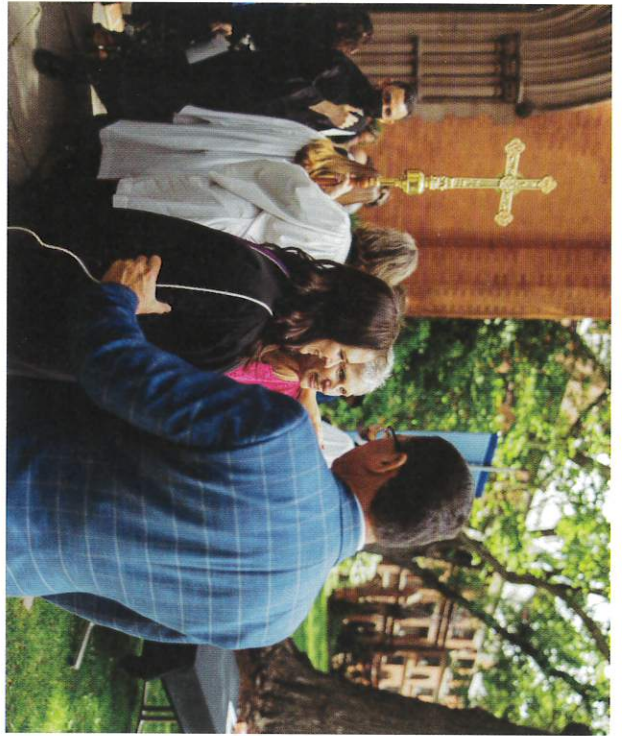
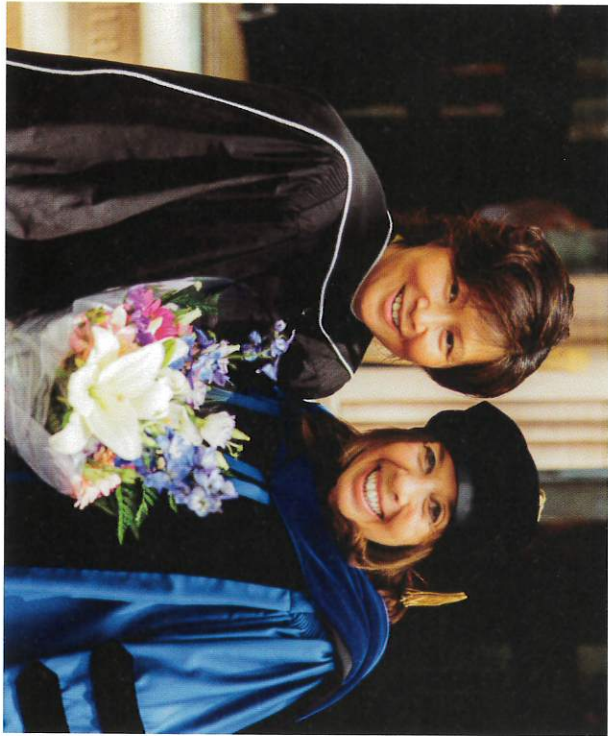
*Let us show forth our praise for God's manifold gifts and blessings, above all for the inestimable love shown to us in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; and let us give hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in the saints in their several generations: praying that we may profit by their examples and be made partakers with them of the glorious resurrection unto life everlasting.*

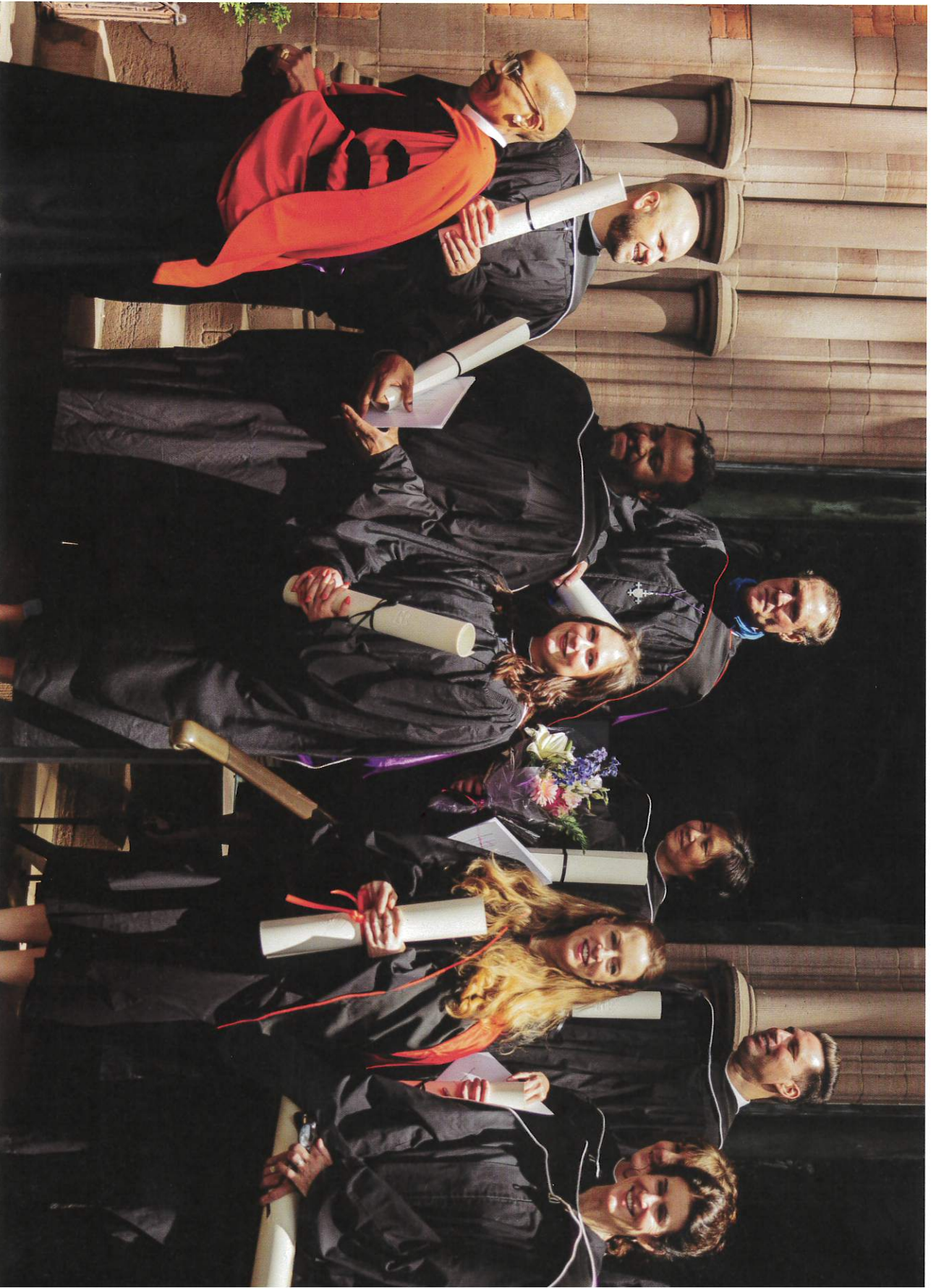
Adapted from The Bidding Prayer







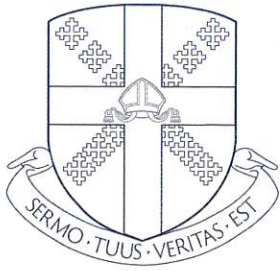






Whether you are an alumni, friend, supporter, or neighbor, thank you for loving us, hearing us out, being our family. Thanks be to God.

Give to General at [gts.edu/giving](https://gts.edu/giving).



THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
— OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH —

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