



A message from your bishops

March 14, 2008

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have just returned from the House of Bishops meeting at Camp Allen Conference Center in Texas in time for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. We look forward to walking with you on the journey from the cross to the resurrection.

As you know, the House of Bishops meeting was a retreat and primarily an opportunity for reflection and discussion. We spent most of our time in small table groups. Bishop Tom served as a facilitator for one of these groups, while Bishop Ken is the secretary of the House of Bishops. In the small groups, we talked a great deal about reconciliation and particularly about the difference between reconciled and reconciling -- about the importance of having an attitude of reconciling toward one another even if we don't agree. We exercised the discipline of seeking and serving Christ in all people.

We spent a lot of time preparing ourselves for the Lambeth Conference, the time this summer when bishops from around the Anglican Communion will gather at the Lambeth Palace at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. A group of bishops reported that Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire will not receive an invitation to the Lambeth Conference. Bishop Robinson plans to attend in an unofficial manner, and we hope that our brother and sister bishops have a chance to engage with Bishop Robinson without having the issue of homosexuality hijack the conference. Other key players, including several African bishops, have said they will not attend the Lambeth Conference. We are saddened to not hear the full range of voices. Anytime the body is diminished, there is less effectiveness.

We had very deep conversation about the possibility of an Anglican Covenant. Wide ranging opinions emerged on the issue, with concerns about the possibility of creating another level of hierarchy or the danger of relinquishing the unique, informal bonds of the Anglican Communion.

We heard several reports during the gathering. Linda Watt, chief operating officer of The Episcopal Church, gave an overview of the reorganization of the Church Center. This shift includes opening four satellite offices in Los Angeles, Seattle, Atlanta and Omaha, Neb., in addition to current offices in Washington, D.C., and the main church center in New York City. Linda compared how the reorganization would come together with the precision of the Ohio State University's marching band. We can only wait to see if church center staff learns how to march in script Episcopalian.

Bishop Tom is part of a group charged with exploring the future of theological education. We reported to the House of Bishops a structure for those conversations: we plan to convene all of the seminary deans followed by a theological education summit with participation by a variety of stakeholders.

Although our legislation was limited, we engaged in some difficult decisions. After much prayer and discussion, the House consented to the depositions of Bishop John-David Schofield of San Joaquin and Bishop Suffragan William Jackson Cox of Maryland. We also talked about ways to lift up the ministry of the continuing Episcopalians in the Diocese of San Joaquin. We encourage you to read about some of the other decisions, as reported by the [Episcopal News Service](#).

We are reinvigorated by this time with our brother and sister bishops. We are able to speak freely of our challenges and struggles, to worship and pray together and to draw strength from this community. We thank you for your support and prayers and wish you a blessed Holy Week.

Sincerely,

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