

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH

Monday in Easter Week

April 17, 2017

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this holy season commemorating the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ it is with genuine thankfulness that I am able to share the following good news with you. The Bishop of Haiti, the Bishop Suffragan of Haiti the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Haiti and I as your Presiding Bishop have entered into a Covenant with one another.

This Covenant seeks to address and resolve many of the issues of conflict that have been burdening the Diocese, and sets the stage for a healthy and positive way forward for the Diocese and the Diocese's relationship with the larger Church. I am grateful to both of my brother bishops and also the President and members of the Standing Committee for their willingness to reach a Covenant which I believe serves the cause of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Haiti for the continued rebuilding and renewal after the earthquake and as the Diocese of Haiti prepares to elect its next Bishop Diocesan.

The Covenant has entirely resolved the Title III matter that involved Suffragan Bishop Beauvoir's relationship with the Standing Committee of the Diocese. Further the Covenant, together with the Memorandum of Understanding (both attached) reached by Bishop Duracin and myself last year, and pastoral conversations between Bishop Duracin and myself have fully resolved the Title IV matter that has been pending against Bishop Duracin. I am pleased by these measures, as they reflect a commitment by all parties to the ongoing work of healing and reconciliation.

Let me tell you how we got to this point. As I announced on December 1, 2016, I appointed a three-person panel (the Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane, Bishop of Maine; the Rev. P. Roger Bowen; and Paul B. Nix, Jr., Esquire, In-house Counsel for the DFMS in New York) to investigate the situation. (See <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2016/12/01/presiding-bishop-releases-letter-about-the-diocese-of-haiti/>) After careful interviews and listening to both bishops, to the Standing Committee, and to a group of clergy identified by Bishop Beauvoir as having important concerns, the panel reported the following:

First, they reported that nearly everyone involved was deeply wounded by things that others have said, and their pain was real and deep. Despite this, relationships among the clergy are generally regarded as "fundamentally sound." While the tensions among the clergy have been severe, there appeared to be a willingness and perhaps strong desire among many of the clergy to try to achieve resolution among them. The clergy have worked with each other for a long time, and their commitment to the Diocese was evident. There was a general sense that good relationships

The Most Reverend Michael Curry
PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE



among the clergy can be recovered with courageous and careful work. There was also a shared sense that there is much important work to do in the Diocese that is not being attended to because of the energy taken up by current disputes, and an eagerness to get on with that important work. In contrast to the relationships among the clergy, it appeared to many that the brokenness of the relationship between the two bishops was not retrievable, at least at this crucial time. There was evidence of a profound lack of trust between the bishops, manifested in part by multiple reports of their openly trading insults. The state of their relationship had given rise to much sadness, frustration, and anger, not just between the bishops, but also among the clergy, some of whom may have loyalties to one bishop or the other, but who also sense that the struggle between the bishops has cast an unhealthy overlay to the functioning of the Diocese.

Finally, each clergy group expressed deep concerns about the exercise of authority of one or the other of the bishops, which each group believed is not serving the best interests of the Diocese. There were concerns that Bishop Beauvoir, before taking his leave of absence, exercised his role as Suffragan Bishop without a full appreciation of the limits of the authority of that office, such that his actions undermined the good order of the Church. On the other hand, there was evidence that Bishop Duracin has failed to support Bishop Beauvoir's suffragan episcopate, financially and otherwise. There were also concerns that Bishop Duracin exercises his authority to transfer clergy around the Diocese in ways that are widely perceived as improperly rewarding or punishing those he favors or disfavors. There was also a fear that the upcoming process to elect a successor to Bishop Duracin will lack integrity by excluding the voices of clergy who are not in all ways aligned with Bishop Duracin.

In the light of this complicated and heartbreaking situation, and with all the best hope and prayers for a positive, forward-looking outcome for the health of the Diocese of Haiti, I proposed a Covenant to be entered into by Bishop Duracin, Bishop Beauvoir, the Standing Committee of the Diocese, and myself. It was my hope that this Covenant would provide the basis for resolving the Title III and Title IV proceedings then pending, and would set a course for a healthy Diocese and upcoming episcopal election.

After deep conversations and negotiation, we have now reached a Covenant with which all parties are comfortable, and that everyone has now signed. The text of the Covenant is found below, as is the text of the Memorandum of Understanding which provides a template for our partnerships characterized by equality in decision making and relationship, financial transparency, accountability and mutuality in mission whether in Haiti, elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or beyond. With the Covenant and the Memorandum of Understanding now agreed to and in place the pause that I placed on fund raising for Haiti is lifted.

Lastly, while the Covenant has been agreed to and signed by us all, we will all come together for the formal liturgical signing of the Covenant in the context of the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, 10:00a.m. at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Port Au Prince, Haiti.

I am truly thankful for Bishop Duracin and Bishop Beauvoir, the clergy and lay leaders of the Diocese of Haiti and for all throughout the Episcopal Church who have prayed and worked for this moment.

May the blessings of the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus be with us all as we go forward together to proclaim the Good News into God's new future.

Your brother,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Michael B. Curry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church