

One Hundred Thirty-Third Regular Synod

Champaign, Illinois

October 8-9, 2010

Remarks by the President of the Standing Committee

The Very Reverend Dr. Anthony B. Holder

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

On behalf of the Standing Committee, Father Alan Herbst, the Clergy, Vestry and Parish of Emmanuel Memorial Church, and Father Timothy Hallett, the Vestry and Parish of the Chapel of St. John the Divine, Champaign, Illinois, I welcome you to this One Hundredth and Thirty-Third Regular Synod of our Diocese. The theme of this Synod is “*Deus Dat Incrementum*” – “God Gives the Increase” – a reminder that we, as servants, co-workers, and ministers of God, are the ones who plant and water but it is Almighty God who gives the growth. I will not say any more since it will be the topic of my sermon at tomorrow morning’s Synod Eucharist.

I want to first extend our thanks and appreciation to the clergy and parishes of Emmanuel Memorial and Chapel of St. John the Divine for hosting this year’s Synod. We appreciate their warm and gracious hospitality and they are to be commended for a job well done in organizing this Synod. Thank you very much! Special thanks to Lori Dobrik, Parish Administrator of Emmanuel Memorial Church, for the tremendous work she has done and for doing far more than is expected in light of the absence of a Diocesan Administrator. Thank you very much, Lori!

It is with the greatest honor that I welcome, on your behalf to this Synod, the Bishop-elect of our Diocese, the Reverend Daniel H. Martins and his dear wife, Brenda. Father Martins has just returned from New York having completed his medicals, a requirement for the office of Bishop. So he may be tired at this point having made the one-day trip yesterday, arriving home in the very early hours of this morning, and then making a four-and-a-half hour drive to Champaign from his home in Warsaw, Indiana, to be here for our Synod. We thank Father Martins for accepting his election and call to the Diocese and look forward to his ministry among the clergy and people. Bishop-elect Martins will address us momentarily in the Synod. Please extend to the Bishop-elect and Mrs. Martins our gracious hospitality when you greet them.

It is a pleasure to welcome and recognize those who have joined us in ordained ministry or whose ministry status has changed since our last synod.

- *The Rev. David J. Halt* has come to us from the Diocese of Southern Ohio and is now the Rector of St. Matthew's Church, Bloomington;
- *The Rev. Phillip D. Boeve* has come to us from the Diocese of Milwaukee and is now Priest-in-Charge of St. Barnabas, Havana;
- *The Rev. M. Joan Coleman* has come to us from the Diocese of the Rio Grande and is now Assisting Deacon of St. Thomas, Glen Carbon and St. Bartholomew's, Granite City;
- *The Rev. Gus L. Franklin* has been canonically transferred from the Diocese of Quincy and continues to serve as Assisting Priest of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield;
- *The Rev. Canon Dale D. Coleman* was instituted as Rector of St. George's, Belleville, on July 25, 2010;
- *The Rev. G. William Howard III*, who served previously as Assisting Deacon of the Hale Team Ministry, is now the Assisting Deacon of the Eastern Deanery, primarily serving at St. John's, Albion;
- And *The Rev. Ann H. Tofani*, who served previously as Assisting Deacon of St. John the Baptist, Mt. Carmel, is now the Assisting Deacon of the Eastern Deanery, primarily serving at St. Mary's Church, Robinson. Both Deacons Howard and Tofani are serving under the supervision of the Dean of the Eastern Deanery.

We are thankful to God for having these members of the clergy serving among us and pray that their ministries will be richly blessed.

Since the last Synod, the tenth Bishop of Springfield, The Right Reverend Peter H. Beckwith retired on February 1, 2010, after serving for 18 years as our Bishop. Bishop Beckwith came in 1992, at a time

when the ordination of women was an important issue in the life of the Church and departed at a time when human sexuality, particularly as it relates to homosexuality, is a primary topic in the Episcopal Church. During his leadership, the Diocese accepted the ministry of women at all levels of ordained ministry as demonstrated by the ordination of women to the diaconate and priesthood and the consent of women elected to the Episcopate in the wider Church. He called attention to and encouraged areas of stewardship, evangelism, and Christian education through a number of programs, and encouraged congregations to be more faithful and consistent in their public worship. He was instrumental in advocating for youth ministry in the Diocese, attending, on a number of occasions, the closing Eucharist of the diocesan youth events. During Bishop Beckwith's episcopacy, a strong ecumenical relationship with the Central/Southern Illinois ELCA Synod excelled, resulting in a Lutheran pastor serving an Episcopal Mission within the Diocese and an Episcopal priest serving as an Interim Pastor in a Lutheran Church.

In the latter years of his episcopacy, Bishop Beckwith found the election of homosexual persons to the Episcopate, and the affirmation and support of the blessing of same sex relationships as opposing Scripture and Christian tradition as well as causing harm and misunderstanding to the ministry and mission of the Church, and as an obstacle to continued relationship with other Christian denominations.

We commend him for his ministry and wish him and Melinda God's continued blessings, good health and strength and an enjoyable retirement.

In addition to Bishop Beckwith's retirement, two of our clergy have retired and two more will do so by the end of the year. The Reverend James O. Cravens retired/resigned as Rector of Trinity, Lincoln, effective August 1, 2010, while the Reverend Canon Eugene A. Stormer, retired as Canon Missioner of the Darrow Deanery Cluster Ministry, which include St. Bartholomew's, Granite City and St. Thomas, Glen Carbon, on September 30, 2010. The retirements/resignations of The Reverend Thomas A. Davis, Vicar of St. Thomas, Salem, and The Very Reverend John C. Bettmann, Rector of St. Paul's, Carlinville and Vicar of St. Peter's, Chesterfield, will become effective on December 1, 2010 and January 1, 2011, respectively.

We thank Almighty God for the tremendous ministries these four clergymen have given to this Diocese and the Episcopal Church as a whole and wish them God's richest blessings, good health and relaxing and enjoyable retirements.

Just a few days ago, our Diocesan Administrator of seven years, Sue Spring, resigned effective September 30, 2010. Sue has been an exemplary Administrator, many times going beyond the call of duty, and always executing work that was of the highest professionalism. She displayed an extremely high level of knowledge of the Diocese and what her job entailed, always being able to answer questions readily. Such an accomplishment will be difficult for another person to follow. She has always been understanding and patient with people like me who did not submit information on time and has continually supported the ministries of those in the Diocese. On a personal note, Sue has supported me tremendously in my ministry during the entire time she was Diocesan Administrator, and more particularly during my tenure as President of the Standing Committee. The recent election process of a Bishop could not have been executed so smoothly without Sue's assistance and involvement. She will be greatly missed but we wish her God's continued blessings in her future endeavors.

On September 18, 2010, being the Feast of Edward Bouverie Pusey, Priest, we gathered in the Cathedral Church in Springfield as clerical and lay delegates of this Diocese, and elected the Reverend Daniel Hayden Martins, Rector of St. Anne's Church, Warsaw, Indiana (Diocese of Northern Indiana) as the Eleventh Bishop of Springfield. It was the culmination of a long process, a process that will reach its climax on the day of the consecration of the Bishop-elect. We are all aware of the process that was undertaken for as delegates, we, more than anyone else in the Diocese, with the exception of the Election and Standing Committees, have lived it. The members of the Election Committee, under the leadership of Canon Gene Stormer, are to be commended for their great commitment, ability, and yeoman service in helping facilitate the process of the election. [Thank you Canon Eugene A. Stormer, Mother Sheryl L. Black, Chuck Evans, Keith Gehrand, Harry W. Gore, Jr., Jane Hill, Therese Kobel, Elizabeth B. Langford, David J. Maurer, Joseph Patterson, Steve Pearson, Canon George E. Pence, Kathie Schmitt, Martha Heck Stiehl, and Sierra Gore].

But this part of the process is complete and we now turn to the Consent process and the Consecration. Many of you would be wondering now that we have elected a bishop what is next. First, there are four documents that need to be received by the Presiding Bishop's Office before the consent process can begin:

1. ***The Certificate of Election***, indicating that Father Martins was duly elected by a constitutional majority consistent in accordance with our Diocesan Constitution and Canons and complying with all requirements of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church;

2. *The Testimonial* required by Canon, which was signed by us, the clerical and lay delegates, at the Electing Synod signifying that a constitutional majority of the Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Springfield signed the document;
3. *Evidence of the Bishop-elect's Ordination as a deacon and priest*, which is provided by the Church Pension Group (CPG); and the
4. *Medical Certificates of fitness* of the Bishop-elect.

Three of these documents – The Certificate of Election, the Testimonial, and Evidence of Bishop-elect Martins' Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood – have already been received by the Presiding Bishop. Father Martins completed his medicals yesterday and the results are being awaited by the Presiding Bishop's Office.

Second, when the medical certificates have been received, a 120-day consent process will begin. A majority of the bishops with jurisdiction and the Standing Committees in the Episcopal Church have to consent to the election in order for the consecration to take place. A majority should be approximately 56 in each case. The Presiding Bishop's Office will inform the Diocese through the President of the Standing Committee as to whether or not a majority of consents have been received.

Third, once a majority of consents have been received from the House of Bishops and the Standing Committees, then the Diocese can proceed with the consecration of the Bishop-elect. In collaboration with the Presiding Bishop's Office, the date of the Consecration has been set for March 19, 2011, being the Feast of St. Joseph, in the First United Methodist Church, Springfield, Illinois, beginning at 11:00 a.m. The Presiding Bishop, The Most Reverend Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori will be the Chief Consecrator.

Fourth, after the consecration, the “fun” begins (and I am playing on the word “fun”). I invite you to pray for the consent process (for the bishops with jurisdiction and the Standing Committees who will make this decision), for the consecration, and for the Bishop-elect, his wife and family as they make this transition to Springfield.

On your behalf, I want to thank Bishop Parsons for graciously agreeing to perform Episcopal acts as directed by the Standing Committee during this transitional period. He presided at our Liturgy of Collegiality and at the Sacrament of Confirmation at some of our churches. Thank you, Bishop!

I cannot end these remarks without thanking and offering commendation to the members of the Standing Committee who have served you in this Diocese with distinction and seriousness during the past eight months. They have exercised incredible service and ministry during this time, giving up their time to work for God and for His people in this part of His vineyard. The Standing Committee has sought to be an agent that reaches out to all people across the Diocese, listening and assisting them whenever possible. I hope that we have been able to accomplish that goal. I recognize and thank Fathers Christopher Ashmore, David Boase and Shawn Denney, and Betsy Ross, Gerry Smith, Norm Taylor, and Randy Winn, (and now invite you to do the same).

Please allow me to end on a personal note. When I assume the Presidency of the Standing Committee in October last year, little did I know what I was getting myself into. At that time there was a bishop in office, although planning on retiring, no date was set as to when that was going to take place. This all changed the following month (November 2009) when Bishop Beckwith announced that he would retire effective February 1, 2010. My life changed! [For those who have been a Senior Warden during the interim of a priest would have an understanding of the magnitude of the work – but multiply that by 10 in the case of a President of the Standing Committee who is serving during the vacancy of a bishop]. Nevertheless, having to juggle between being in charge of a congregation, being a husband and father of two young children, while at the same time leading the body of persons who became the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in the midst of an Episcopal Election process was no easy task. In addition, sharing in the responsibility for countless diocesan and parish matters, except for those that were sacramental, that would have been reserved for a bishop, was an interesting learning experience. I now have a better understanding as to why the apostles decided to choose the seven deacons in the early church in Acts 6 so that they could devote more time to prayer and spreading God's Word.

Nevertheless, being able to serve during the past year in this position has been an extremely humbling experience, which was sometimes challenging, and yet rewarding at the same time. Maintaining a level of calmness meant crossing over each little mound instead of looking at the mountain ahead.

I can assure you that I have no reservation passing the baton on to my successor who will lead the Standing Committee and this Diocese until the consecration of the Bishop-elect. I know that you will pray for and give him and the members of the Committee the respect as you have done for me. The countless prayers, telephone calls, emails, and well-wishes, from several clergy and lay people across

the Diocese have enabled me to do the work which, for whatever reason God gave me to do at this time. In addition, it is because of the love, support and understanding of the faithful and incredible people of St. Michael's O'Fallon, and my family, that I have been able to do this. Most of all, I give God the thanks, praise and glory for all that He has done and continue to do in your lives, my life and the life of the people of this Diocese.

May God continue to richly bless our Diocese as it enters a new chapter in its life under new Episcopal leadership.

Thank you!