



JOINT CD NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter of the Companion Diocese and missional relationships with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic: the Dioceses of Georgia, Southeast Florida, Southwest Florida, Western Louisiana, South Carolina, East Carolina, Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Western Michigan, Quincy, Southern Virginia, Virginia, and others.

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(Editor's note: The DR Diocesan Convention took place Feb 12-14. Out of it comes much fodder for the Joint CD Newsletter. I am please to share with friends of the DR Bishop Holguín's comments to the Convention, and a few other items to help update you. There is a lot to communicate here for I haven't sent out a Joint CD Newsletter since October 2008.)



The 52nd DR Diocesan Convention

The Diocese of the Dominican Republic held its **52nd Diocesan Convention** February 12-14 in Boca Chica, hosted San José Episcopal Church in Andrés, Boca Chica. Andrés, is the working class suburb of Boca Chica, and adjacent to the municipality center of Boca Chica on the edge of the Santo Domingo metropolitan area. At San José we have the church itself, a school of the same name with classes through high school, and the Bishop Isaac Home for the Elderly.

Ordinations

One of the principal highlights at the 52nd Diocesan Convention was the **ordination of nine deacons** at the concluding Eucharist on Sunday February 14th. Six deacons were ordained to the transitional diaconate (**Roberto Gómez, Adolfo Moronta, Carlos Santana, Alfredo Romero, Manuel Díaz and Ramón Gil**) and three to the permanent diaconate (**Lourdes Zya, Miguel Kingsley and Fermín Liriano**). These nine ordinations are testimony of the continuing dynamic growth of the Dominican Episcopal Church.

Over 1000 persons attended the closing Eucharist and ordinations in a covered basketball arena in Andrés. The Eucharist started with **a mile-long procession** from Andrés' central park to the basketball arena. **Never in the history of Andrés** has there been an ordination in that town, nor have **six bishops** along with some **40 national clergy**, many **visiting clergy**, and **1000 other persons** ever processed along the streets of Andrés. The **Rev. Margarita Santana** and many other persons from San José did an outstanding job in coordinating the events of the Eucharist and the Convention.



Bishop Holguín's Convention Address



In his **Convention address** Bishop Holguín emphasized that the Dominican Episcopal Church is a **missionary church** and that the **reason for being** of the Church is the **proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ** to transform each and every person, as well as society in general. He said this is the responsibility of all baptized believers for we are all missionaries of the Lord and sent by him. Each member knows that their fundamental commitment is to be a **representative of Christ** and that they are called then sent to proclaim the Gospel, giving personal testimony by living their lives in accordance with the teachings of this same Gospel.

Accordingly, in 2009 there were **372 confirmations and receptions** in the Diocese. Espiritu Consolador (Manuelito Estévez) in Dajabón led the way with 78, followed by La Redención and San Jorge (Alvaro Yepes) in Azua with 31 and 25 respectively, Santa María Llena de Gracia (Bienvenido López) in Mao with 22, and San Pablo Apóstol (Jesús Mosquea) in Jimaní with 20.

Guests at the Diocesan Convention included several bishops: **Robert Gepert** of Western Michigan who also represented the Dioceses of Michigan and Eastern Michigan; **Scott Mayer** of Northwest Texas; and **Scott Benhase** of Georgia. Georgia is a long time companion with the DR Bishop Holguín assisted in Bishop Benhase's consecrated in January. Also present was **Wilfrido Ramos**, retired bishop of Central Ecuador and currently the liaison from the Episcopal Church Center with the dioceses of the Ninth Province.

Dedications during 2009: Bishop Holguín noted that over the recent past the Diocese has dedicated at least two new churches each year. For 2009 the Diocese dedicated **La Redención in Barahona** (presided over by Bishop Holguín and reported in the April 2009 Joint CD Newsletter) and **La Encarnación in La Romana** (presided over by Bishop Skilton and reported in the September 2009 Joint CD Newsletter).

Ongoing Constructions: Three churches continue under construction at this time: **La Reconciliación in Azua**, **San Miguel in Doña Ana**, and **San Pedro y San Pablo in La Barquita**. Construction continues on the **schools San Gabriel in Consuelo**, **San Antonio de Padua in Carretón**, and **San Matías in Santana, Baní**. In January Colegio La Redención opened as a study hall, with plans to open as a school in September. Bishop Holguín hopes that construction will begin on San Simón Apóstol in Puerto Plata, San Tito in Boca in Cachón, Jimaní, and Espiritu Consolador in Dajabón.



New Companion Relationships: The Diocesan Convention approved new formal Companion Diocese relationships with three dioceses of Michigan (**Michigan, Eastern Michigan, and Western Michigan**), and with **East Carolina**. Western Michigan was represented at the Convention by Bishop Gepert, Deacon Beth Drew, and Fr. Henry Fulton. Along with the approval of the companion relationship, the Convention urged each new companion diocese to become a member of the Dominican Development Group. Thus they would formally join the other dioceses (**Georgia, South Carolina, Southwest Florida and Western Louisiana**) who overtly work through the DDG to support the dynamic development of the Dominican Episcopal Church and its self-sufficiency. Bishop Scott Mayers of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, along with Fr. Jim Liggett, visited the Diocesan Convention and the DDG Board Meeting looking at the possibility of becoming a companion diocese with the Dominican Republic. DDG Board President, David Morrow, is also from the Diocese of Northwest Texas.



New Cathedral: In other actions at the Convention, the Diocesan Cannons allow the bishop to name his cathedral so during the Convention Bishop Holguín named the **Church of the Epiphany** in Santo Domingo to be the Cathedral for the Diocese of the Dominican Republic. Given that for years Epiphany has functioned as the Cathedral even though it had not officially been named the cathedral this seems quite appropriate.

Finances & the DR Endowment: With the financial struggles of Episcopal Church due to the problems in the world-wide economy and other issues, the General Convention has had to **reduce its support** of the Dominican Episcopal Church by **30%**. Bishop Holguín

says that this challenges us to be much more entrepreneurial in our goal of financial self-sufficiency. He says that the Diocese has been conscious of this potential situation for some time now, and, in fact, it is part of the reason the Diocese **sold the Bishop's residence** at a significant profit, purchased another residence for the bishop, and **invested the remainder in the DR Endowment (FOCA)**. Furthermore, over the past few years the **DDG has raised almost \$2 million** for the DR Endowment. Thus, from Diocesan sources and the DDG, with good stewardship, the earnings from the Endowment basically cover the cuts from "815" without touching the corpus of the Endowment.

Since 1991 the Dominican Episcopal Church has made steady progress towards its goal of financial self-sufficiency. In that year the DR Diocesan budget was 84% dependent on funds from the US Episcopal Church. Over the years, by placing a strong emphasis on **stewardship, apportionments** from the Episcopal schools, and from the **DR Endowment**, the Diocese has reduced that dependence to 20%. This is especially significant for several reasons: 1.) all the congregations are missions so a significant portion of congregational expenses must be covered out of the Diocese; 2.) the Diocesan budget is several times the size it was in 1991; and 3.) a large majority of the congregations are located in poor neighborhoods. We must not drop our guard though for there may be more cuts in the future. We want to continue to underwrite this dynamically growing diocese so we must continued our efforts to build the DR Endowment.



Personal Notes: For her MANY years of service to the diocese (Diocesan Treasurer, Episcopal Church Women, Daughters of the King, Companion Diocese Committee, Micro-loan Program, and to the broader Church at the provincial and American levels) Bishop Holguín made **Srta. Virginia Norman** an **Honorary Canon** of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic. Virginia was quite ill and in the emergency room last December but now has her medication regulated and is doing just fine.

The **Rev. Alberto Cutié** led the reflexive portion on the first day of the Convention, and preached at the opening liturgy. Padre Alberto visited the DR along with the Venerable **Bryan Hobbs** and Archdeacon **Tom Bruttell** from the Diocese of Southeast Florida. **Bishop Benhase**, representing the Diocese of Georgia's long-standing companion relationship with the DR, spoke to the Convention.



Bishop Holguín informed the Convention that **Bob and Ellen Snow** dearly beloved and long term missionaries have announced their **retirement**. After 15 years of service in the DR, Bob & Ellen plan to retire in August of this year but continue on part-time with the Diocese. Bob & Ellen hope to become involved in a street ministry in Santo Domingo. Bishop Holguín noted that they have given the best years of their lives in service of the Lord in the Dominican Republic. We will all miss them for they have touched so many people, Dominicans and Americans, in so many positive ways sharing the love of Christ through their words and activities.

Other News

As is customary, the **Dominican Development Group** held its annual Board Meeting immediately following the DR Diocesan Convention. In addition to electing two new board members (**Bill Kunkle** of Southwest Florida and **Jason Roberson** of South Carolina) the Board received reports from Bishops Holguín and Skilton, President David Morrow, and Executive Director Bob Stevens. David Morrow noted that over the years people have contributed more than \$8.7 million to the programs and activities of the Dominican Episcopal Church, particularly for the DR Endowment, for scholarships for children, for infrastructural development of the Church, and for disaster relief (in Haiti as well as in the DR).



The purpose of the Dominican Development Group is to assist in the development and self-sufficiency of the Dominican Episcopal Church. No other such organization exists in the Episcopal Church. The DDG has a board of 25 members who meet twice a year to oversee its business. The DDG's office is located at the DaySpring Episcopal Conference Center in the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

Requests. The US and world economies have had a drastic effect on the DR scholarship program this year. If you are

able to, **please contribute a scholarship** for a child in one of the Episcopal Schools. You may send your scholarship contribution to the DDG at the address below.

Also, EPISCOPAX Editor, Nereyda Féliz says the Communications Department needs a **video camera**. EPISCOPAX is the official newspaper of the Dominican Episcopal Church.

FORMAL COMPANION DIOCESE COMMITTEE CHAIRS & CONTACTS

(Although many dioceses and churches send mission teams to serve God through the Dominican Episcopal Church, six are formal Companion Dioceses. Although the Dioceses of Nebraska, Quincy, Southeastern Virginia and Virginia are not formal companions, they have also been major companions with the DR.)

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