

Presidents Report
The Dominican Development Group Annual Meeting February 13, 2017
Diocese of the Dominican Republic
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

“The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created--created first in the mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them, changes both the maker and the destination”. — John Schaar, futurist

Greeting Board Members and Guests!

It has been an eventful year for the Dominican Development Group and we look forward to 2017 with all of its changes and challenges. My journeys to the Dominican Republic in 2016 included the Michigan Tri-Diocesan Mission to Puerta Plata, where we concentrated our efforts in Mosovi. As always it was a wonderful time of meeting new friends, hard work, and even a visit from the youth of San Simon. I was fortunate to be able to travel to Santo Domingo and attend the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Bishop Holguin’s ministry and witness the impact of a vibrant vision realized. In October, I traveled to the Diocese of Southwest Florida to participate in their convention activities and preside over the Mid-Year Meeting for the first time. The Diocese of Southwest Florida’s continued support is both appreciated and critical to the success of the DDG, which is true of all of the Companion Dioceses.

2016 brought the success of The University of Nebraska’s Language Education Practicum, under the direction of board member Tom McGowan. Also, The Dominican Wave soap manufacturing micro-business in San Simon was initiated, but has met with financial sustainability issues that we are hoping to remedy in the coming year. Construction remains robust, the Mission Office supported 50 mission teams from various dioceses and the Exploratory trips continue to be fruitful.

2017 will bring change and continued challenges to our group. Change is imminent, and I know that this group will meet it with grace and gratitude. The Endowment Committee is working very hard to deliver a campaign that will see success in meeting the financial sustainability needs of our Dominican sisters and brothers. If we cast a wide enough vision, follow the plan our Endowment Committee sets before us, and back it up with inspired work—I am confident that we will realize our vision of “continuing to assist the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic as it moves steadily toward self-sufficiency”.

A few years ago, when I was raising funds to support the construction of San Simon, I kept the following meme on my desk. I retrieved it from my files and placed it back on my desk as a source of encouragement, once again, in the tasks that lie ahead in 2017.

F = Focus: Focus on the need you see that must be addressed. Help others to see it too. Confront the fears that keep us from stepping up.

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A = Assert: Arrange to speak with the people you must convert. Get on their agenda. Advocate for the needy. Argue with the inertia.

I = Insist: Insist and Inspire them to act. Encourage them to imagine the improvement they could bring about in the lives of others.

T = Trust: Trust in what you know is right. Don't waver. Don't forsake the mission even when it feels like nothing is going your way. Trust in truth.

H = Hope: Without hope, the darkness closes in. Even in the darkest of times.

Our future is one we will begin to create, with God's help and direction, in 2017. When change is upon an organization, it will be letting go of ideas, perhaps functions, structures, roles, authority, and even titles. At this moment, our leaders will need to focus the organization's vision, and, determine what preserves who we are and must come with us into the future. As in nature, a successful adaptation enables an organization to take the best from its traditions, identity, and history into the future.

Once again, the DDG cannot thrive without the support and commitment of our Companion Dioceses, At-Large members, missionaries, volunteers, and continual prayer. I thank you all for honoring our post communion prayer by going out and doing "the work God has given you to do"

Respectfully submitted,

Deacon Beth Drew