It was good to gather, once again, in beautiful Ocean City for our Annual Synod and Retreat of our Diocese. Thanks to everyone who gave so much of their time, talent, and treasure to attend this important gathering of our Diocesan family. I appreciate each of you.

While we were disappointed Bishop Morales was unable to be with us, Bp. Ray Sutton, Presiding Bishop of the REC and Bishop Ordinary of REC Mid-America, and Bp. David Hicks, Bishop Ordinary of REC Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, joined us to speak on the issue of women’s ordination within the ACNA.

Some nine years ago, in preparation for my Consecration, I entered into a silent retreat. Listening for the “still, small, voice of God,” the Lord revealed to me two major things. First, never treat others the way you were treated in the Episcopal Church. Second, do your utmost to be totally transparent. As to the first item, you all know my story. So, let me address more deeply, this second item, for it is my desire that you all know my heart, as your Bishop.

As you are aware, the Bishops who uphold the Declaration of Common Faith of Forward in Faith North America; who uphold the Faith and Order of the Undivided Church in affirming that the “Christian ministerial priesthood is male,” called for a voluntary moratorium on the ordination of women until such time as a consensus is reached in the College of Bishops and in the Provincial Assembly of the ACNA. Each time we did so, our call was rebuffed by those who support the notion of “dual-integrity.” One supporter of Women’s Ordination told those of us who maintain the historic position, if we didn’t support the status quo of “dual-integrity” we should “Shuffle off to Rome.” Message received.

Let me press the issue of a moratorium a bit further. Several years ago, it was made known that the Province of Uganda and perhaps Kenya were considering the consecration of women to the Order of Bishops. In 2014, the GAFCON Primates responded by calling for a voluntary moratorium on the consecration of women as bishops and that a study on the issue should be made. Acting in direct defiance to the moratorium, the now-retired Primate of South Sudan consecrated a woman as Bishop, without regard to the Constitution and Canons of his own Province and without the support of his own College of Bishops. To make matters worse, while this illegal consecration occurred in December of 2016, it was kept secret for over a year and excuses were made.

All indications are that “dual-integrity” is here to stay. This issue of women’s ordination is part of a larger epidemic of anti-Catholic sentiment within the ACNA. Allow me to give you some examples. One Bishop of the ACNA openly posted that he is a Calvinist. I know that he is not the only one in the College of Bishops. At least one ACNA congregation is practicing credo-
baptism, reducing this Dominical Sacrament into something we do rather than God’s work in us. Another Diocese has affirmed by resolution that the 39 Articles of Religion are to be understood in their “plain and literal sense.” While the 39 Articles are an important historical document within Anglicanism, they were written to address specific issues at a certain time. Their meaning is contextual. As Anglians, we affirm our faith when we recite the Nicene Creed. We are not Confessional Christians. Finally, yet another Bishop stated that the goal of the ACNA is to “complete the Reformation.” Think about his words and consider what they reveal about the future of the ACNA and our place in it.

The effects of these developments have presented challenges to your Bishops. We have lost a few clergy, one parish, and I have received multiple emails and phone calls from clergy; some asking me to stay the course in the ACNA and some urging me to seek out an alternative to the ACNA. Then, of course, there is the issue of “sustainability.” Our diocese simply cannot meet all their sustainability requirements. If Bp. Rich and I were no longer able to serve as your bishops, our congregations desiring to continue in the ACNA would simply be assimilated by other dioceses.

Lately I’ve been thinking about how many hours, days, and years we spend waiting... waiting upon the Lord to know which direction to take. This is where we find ourselves today: uncertain about where the Lord would have us go, but trusting He will show us the way. We do not clearly see the way, but our trust in the providence of God is at least as strong as it was when we began this journey nearly nine years ago. We pray for direction. We patiently wait. But, we also turn our prayer into action. That is why Bp. Rich and I went to Ireland just several days ago, to participate in the 2018 Convocation for the Restoration and Renewal of the Undivided Church. We met with Non-Papal Catholics from the Polish National Council Church, as well as other groups represented throughout Europe, discussing how we might move forward in the spirit of a renewed Catholicity and Ecumenical Catholicism. I encourage you to check out the work that’s being done at www.pncc.org. Bp. Rich and I also continue our conversations with those inside and outside of the ACNA, that we may know how to best pray and move forward. Your Bishops, our Canon to the Ordinary, and our Standing Committee covet your prayers. Please pray with me that whatever path we take will be taken with the greatest possible degree of unity. You have all heard me say, we are all in this together. As your Chief Pastors, as Bishops in the Church Catholic, Bp. Rich and I are called to be defenders of the Faith and that is exactly what we are trying so hard to do. We cannot accomplish anything apart from God’s grace. His grace is always free, but our response to that grace can be anything but easy. I close my remarks with the words of Saint Paul: “But one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining forward to what lie ahead, we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Please address any questions to Bp. Rich or me.
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