

**Address to the 109<sup>th</sup> Convention  
of the Diocese of Northern Indiana  
Howe Military School  
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*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I've recently added a new wrinkle to my cell phone: a built-in GPS. "GPS" stands for "Global Positioning System": the cell phone logs onto to a cell tower, which is in turn connected – frankly, I don't know *how*, the technology is well beyond me – to a satellite in geosynchronous orbit. The satellite knows exactly where the cell phone is, to an accuracy of ten feet. You program a destination into the cell phone's memory, press a button, and the tiny screen produces a small map showing your current location. Not only that. The cell phone begins barking commands: "Prepare to turn left in one mile. Prepare to turn left in five hundred feet. Turn left *now*." There's one problem, however. The screen is so tiny that you can't see where you've been or where you're going. The road behind you and the road ahead of you are off-screen and invisible. So, to be honest, there's something unsatisfying about a cell phone GPS. It's true that this gadget has gotten me out of some jams, as recently as last week when I got stuck in road construction on the way to a meeting in Milwaukee. But if I want to understand my route, I need the big picture: what's back there, where I am now, and what's up ahead.

And that, I think, is what you and I need as Christians: the big picture – what's behind us, where we are now, what's ahead. And that's what we need as we look at the Diocese of Northern Indiana, a "big picture" approach to our life together – what's

behind us, where we are now, what's ahead. In other words, it is essential that we look back at our spiritual roots, that we look around us and take stock of where we are right now, and that we look ahead and try to catch a glimpse of the journey upon which the Lord Jesus invites us to embark.

I'm going to start this address in the distant past, well behind us on the road, with a look back nearly two thousand years, at a church which can rightly claim to be the first missionary congregation. Listen to St. Luke's description of the Christian church in the city of Antioch, in what was then northern Syria and is now the southeast corner of Turkey:

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.

So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians”.

At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

After completing their mission, Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

- Acts 11:19-30; 12:25-13:3

I'm going to list five characteristics of the church at Antioch; and then, as this address unfolds, we can ask ourselves how our own priorities in the Diocese of Northern Indiana measure up to theirs.

First, the church at Antioch was *mission-driven*. Up until this point in the church's life, it didn't occur to anyone that Christians ought to take the initiative and reach out to Gentiles. Christianity was a subset of Judaism, with the occasional Gentile almost accidentally becoming a believer. Something changed in Antioch. For the first time, Christians "spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus." Later on, it was the church at Antioch that dispatched the first Christian missionaries, Barnabas and Saul (later known as Paul), along with Barnabas' cousin Mark. You and I are Christians today because the church at Antioch sent missionaries to Europe.

Second, the church at Antioch understood the importance of *teaching*. As the church grew, and as more and more converts were added to their number, first Barnabas and later Saul embarked on a systematic, year-long program of teaching, what we would today call catechesis. While St. Luke doesn't tell us about the content of the teaching program, we can assume that it included the story of salvation as it unfolds in the Hebrew Scriptures, the way that those Scriptures point toward the coming of Jesus, and an account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus – and the significance of those events in the everyday lives of Christian believers.

Third, the church at Antioch demonstrated Christian *compassion*. Jerusalem was about three hundred miles from Antioch, an enormous distance in those days, yet the Christians in Antioch responded immediately and compassionately when they heard that their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem faced a famine. They took up a collection and sent two of their own to carry it personally to Jerusalem. In doing this, the Christians in Antioch recognized the principle of interdependence. We are connected to one another – across miles, language, and culture – and what happens in one corner of the church affects every other.

Fourth, the church at Antioch was a church of *miraculous expectations*. They expected that the Holy Spirit would speak miraculously *to* them and would work miraculously *through* them. And so we're told that when they gathered for worship "the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" That moment changed the course of history forever. Saul and his traveling companions journeyed first to Cyprus, then to Turkey, then to Greece, and finally to Rome. Not only was the church at Antioch mission-driven. It was also Spirit-empowered. Our forefathers and –mothers in the faith expected that Jesus would pour out his Spirit on them as surely as he did on the day of Pentecost.

Fifth, the church at Antioch had a *Catholic vision* of the Christian faith and life. Their ministry of teaching was rooted in the teaching of the apostles. Their ministry of care and oversight and mission connected them to the apostolic center in Jerusalem. They understood that no church is a stand-alone community of Christians. We are bound

to Jesus; and because we're bound to Jesus, we are also bound to one another in a universal body of believers. Christians need each other. Antioch was incomplete without Jerusalem, even though most of those Christians had never met one another – and never would (in this life, anyway).

All of this leads me to look at our life together in the Diocese of Northern Indiana. In a general sort of way, I will try to move from past to present to future, a kind of “big picture” approach, though it may be impossible to separate out the time frames as neatly as I'd like. Even though I will begin with some difficult realities, I should say at the outset that I am filled with hope for our diocese. From the Illinois to the Ohio borders, from the Michigan line to Kokomo, I see exciting signs of growth and enthusiasm. The five characteristics of the church at Antioch – mission-driven, teaching-oriented, compassionate, expectant, and motivated by a Catholic vision of the Christian faith and life – are lived out in the ministry of the Diocese of Northern Indiana. And the five characteristics themselves find expression in the core values of our diocese:

- A passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- A heart for the lost
- A willingness to do whatever it takes
- A commitment to one another

Where we've been

Episcopalians have been worshipping in the northern third of the state of Indiana since the 1840s. Our spiritual roots are both Evangelical and Catholic: Evangelical in the sense that Bishop Jackson Kemper rode through these parts with a passion for the Gospel and a love for the church, introducing people to Jesus and drawing people into the Christian community; Catholic in the sense that historically we have embraced sacramental and liturgical life at its fullest, and have understood the church to be an extension of the incarnation of our Lord himself. For more than a century and a half, Jesus has transformed lives through the ministry of the Episcopal Church in Northern Indiana.

More recently, however, we have encountered difficult and sometimes discouraging trends. Over the past several years, diocesan average Sunday attendance has been in decline, from a high of just a bit over 3,000 in 1999 to 2,575.34 in 2005. Happily, in 2006 we measured a slight upturn, to 2,597.6 (if you do the math, that means an increase of 22.26 people per Sunday, probably statistically insignificant, but at least moving in the right direction). Our decline is the result of several converging realities – aging congregations with a decreasing number of young families; economic hardships in a number of communities served by our parishes; and, in some places, fallout from the continuing struggles in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. In a few cases, I can attribute decline to specific congregational issues.

Our financial picture is mixed. Most parishes are able to pay their bills, but the stress often very high. Last month, four congregations asked Diocesan Council for a

reduction in their diocesan assessment, requests that totaled about \$71,000, more than a tenth of the diocesan budget. As always, Council listened and responded with compassion, though we were not able to grant the full amounts requested. As I looked at the four requests, I noticed some trends. All four congregations have an average Sunday attendance between 70 and 75. Three of the four find themselves in the midst of a transition in their clergy leadership. And three of the four face complex facility issues. That leads me to conclude that it's often our parishes in the middle range of attendance and finance that have the most difficult struggle when it comes to making ends meet. Very small parishes have relatively limited financial requirements; and larger ones often (though not always) have adequate resources, at least for immediate needs. It's parishes in the middle range that struggle the most. At the moment, 15 of our 37 congregations are led by priests serving in a full-time capacity; that number, however, has been in decline over the past few years, and several of the parishes currently served by a full-time priest are in danger of being unable to continue to do so.

None of this, of course, is new. I've been citing these trends for several years, and encouraging us to look at them fearlessly and with faith in the transforming power of the Gospel. What's new is that we are now embarking on a process to address them and change directions. In last year's convention address I said that the Whatever It Takes Task Force had recommended that we embark on a four-fold plan of congregational development, focusing on

- Conversion

- Evangelism
- Local Mission
- World Mission

We called this plan Actions for Congregational Transformation (ACT), and I said that we would be reorganizing the diocesan staff and reorienting the diocesan program specifically to encourage each congregation to develop its own strategy for mission and ministry. We've taken an enormous step forward with the call of our new Canon to the Ordinary, SuzeAnne Silla. Canon Silla, of course, oversees deployment in the diocese, and serves as colleague and counselor to the bishop. But she brings to her ministry gifts, talents, and training in the area of congregational development, and that is where I have asked her to invest a large share of her time and energy. You will be hearing directly from her later in the convention. In the meantime, it will be sufficient to say that she has already made a major impact as she's worked with vestries and leadership groups around the diocese. In 2008 we will begin a two-year cycle of training in congregational development, four weekends each year, a process that will help parish leadership groups to design their own plan for growth and renewal tailored to their own ministry needs. I encourage you to pray seriously about the possibility of your congregation taking part in this first cycle of training. I should add, by the way, that the emphasis on congregational development that's been added to the ministry description of Canon to the Ordinary has resulted in a certain shift of responsibilities around the bishop's office. Our new bishop's secretary, Jon Adamson, for example, has taken on some administrative duties that had formerly been on the canon's desk. The bishop's office is served by the same number of

people, but we are carrying out our ministries in a new and highly intentional way. This is a “work in progress,” and one that fills me with joy and enthusiasm.

### Where we are

Meanwhile, Jesus continues to call Christians into the ordained ministry as deacons and priests in unprecedented numbers in our diocese. Since our last diocesan convention, I’ve ordained four transitional deacons (Jesse Abell, Jonathan Melton, Jason Shelby, and Aune Strom) and six priests (Jesse, Jonathan, Jason, as well as Margie Shaw, Larry Biller, and John Houghton). On November 16, Marion Carpenter from St. Anne’s, Warsaw, will be ordained to the vocational diaconate, and on December 15 I will ordain Aaron Evans, Rachael Evans, Mike Fulk, Julie Handschumacher, and Sean Maloney as transitional deacons. In addition, four other postulants are preparing for ordination, either in seminary or in our local formation program, and several more are in the discernment process as they seek to discover if our Lord is calling them to serve as deacons or priests. This is simply amazing! I am deeply grateful to our hard-working Commission on Ministry, and to Anne Donnelly, the commission chair, who oversees the work of this key element in our diocesan life. I am grateful as well to Fr. Henry Randolph, our vocations director, who keeps track of the immensely complicated paperwork in the ordination process, and who supervises the Northern Indiana School of Theology, our training program for those who are formed locally for ordination – and to Fr. Ted Neidlinger, who coordinates the Formation Group that is such an essential aspect of our local training program.

I should add that many of those who are ordained through the Diocese of Northern Indiana find themselves called to serve in other dioceses. This is particularly true for those who attend a residential seminary and who are planning on full-time stipendiary ministry. Our diocese does not offer sufficient full-time positions for the number of ordinands we produce. I believe, however, that we ordain people for the *whole* church, not simply for our own diocese; and those ordained through Northern Indiana during the years of my episcopate are now bringing their gifts to dioceses as far-flung as Los Angeles, Western Michigan, Montana, Ohio, West Texas, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Indianapolis. Hoosiers are making a significant impact on the church!

This leads me to a related issue: deployment. As I mentioned earlier, 15 of our 37 churches are served by full-time clergy. Of those 15 parishes, seven are in or are about to begin the search for a new priest – almost half. That’s a startling statistic. It means, among other things, that the leadership of this diocese will look very different when we gather next October for the 110<sup>th</sup> Convention. It also means that Canon Silla and I are devoting a large portion of our time to working with vestries and search committees, and then seeking candidates for these ministries, and rightly so: clergy transitions shape not only individual parishes, but also the diocese as a whole. It’s important that you be aware that this task involves an enormous amount of energy, creativity, and networking on the part of the bishop’s office as we look for the right people in the right places. Canon Silla and I spend hours on the phone every week!

In addition, a number of our smaller congregations have also entered a time of transition. Typically, parishes served by clergy on a part-time basis may call a retired priest or a bi-vocational priest, or may raise up one of their own members to be trained in our diocesan formation program. In some cases, small churches are served by a series of supply priests, with the senior warden providing primary administrative and pastoral oversight. Canon Silla and I struggle in these situations to identify supply clergy or clergy available for part-time ministry, an especially difficult task when the parish is located in an outlying area, far from a metropolitan center. This is going to be an on-going challenge for us, and the solutions are neither quickly identified nor easily implemented. At the same time, I'm convinced that God can do wonderful things through the ministry of vibrant, small parishes. Providing priestly leadership for these churches is a key component of our emerging diocesan vision.

Once again, both our diocesan summer camp (led by Tim and Kim Gray) and our high school camp (led by Erica Vitale) were an enormous success. As most of you know, Sylvia and I were away this summer during my sabbatical; and I must admit that my primary regret was being unable to attend camp. It's a high point of my year and a reminder of what we're in business to do – pass on the Christian faith to the next generation of believers. Our camps are filled with joy, superbly organized, designed with creative skill, and powerfully effective. Young people return year after year. Friendships made at camp are carried through a lifetime; and a relationship with Jesus nurtured at camp carries young people into adulthood. This may be our most important investment, and I am deeply grateful for all who offer themselves for this essential ministry.

For the past two years, the Whatever It Takes Task Force has worked on developing a vision for renewal, growth, and mission. We can see its work simply in the way that the bishop's office has been reconfigured. Now that congregational development has been moved to the front burner of our diocesan program, WIT is changing its direction – symbolized by a change of name. We're now calling it the Diocesan Committee on Congregational Excellence. (One wag on the committee suggested that we call ourselves “Get ‘Er Done,” which does capture something of what we're trying to accomplish.) The committee will be working closely with Canon Silla as she inaugurates the two-year cycle in congregational development, providing a place for reflection and planning.

### Where we're going

I need to tell you about a conversation at our recently-completed clergy retreat. At the conclusion of a presentation on congregational development, one priest raised an important issue. We need to remember, he said, that the most effective way to reach the unchurched – people with no living connection to the Lord or to his church – is to plant a new church. Unchurched folks are more likely to try out a new congregation than to venture into an established one. (That's not to say that established churches can't attract new members, of course. A strategy of invitation, and a commitment to a ministry of welcome and hospitality, can indeed draw in new people. But a newly-planted church seems to be able to do so in greater numbers. When everyone's new, no one feels strange

or out of place. We've seen that powerfully in action at St. Thomas', Plymouth, where the Hispanic congregation now draws up to 60 or 70 people every Sunday, most of them unchurched before they came to Santo Tomas.) Therefore, this priest said, we need to begin thinking about starting a new church somewhere in the diocese. I must tell you that when he said that, there was something like electricity in the air. The priests and deacons at the clergy retreat seemed to recognize that this was a challenge we needed to hear.

And so I've found myself thinking about church planting, for the first time in several years. It is certainly true that there are places in the diocese where there's noticeable population growth, and no Episcopal parish to serve that population: for example, areas on the western side of the diocese within commuting distance of Chicago; or northwest Allen County, as greater Fort Wayne moves northward. All of this is to say that I want to put church-planting back on the table for discussion. At this point, I don't have anything specific for you – neither location, nor funding, nor the details of a church-planting strategy. But it's important that we begin the conversation, and reclaim the spiritual DNA that was encoded into the soul of this diocese over 160 years ago, when Bishop Jackson Kemper rode through this region on horseback, preaching the gospel, planting churches, and creating Christian communities. You and I are Christians because the church at Antioch dispatched missionaries to Europe; and you and I are Anglican Christians in the northern third of the state of Indiana because our forefathers and foremothers said Yes to a missionary call. As we plan to grow and develop our existing congregations, church planting is an important and balancing task, the other side of the mission coin.

Our mission outreach, of course, much stretch well beyond the borders of the Diocese of Northern Indiana. We need a global vision of the Kingdom of God. In last year's convention address, I commended the Millennium Development Goals as a wonderful way for Christians to join others in addressing issues of global poverty. If the Western world were to devote .7% of its resources to eliminate poverty in the developing world, we would make a significant dent in the suffering that engulfs countless millions of people. Those goals, as defined by the United Nations, are these:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education for children
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Create a global partnership for development

Last year's convention responded immediately with a resolution from the floor adding a .7% item to the diocesan budget earmarked for the MDGs. (I should report that Diocesan Council divided those monies between an AIDS orphanage in Uganda, a program to inoculate children in the developing world with polio vaccine, and a gift to the Diocese of Honduras.) You will notice that the MDGs have already been incorporated into the 2008

budget. I encourage every parish in the diocese, small or large, to do the same. Nothing is more effective in helping us to get beyond our own financial anxieties than to start giving money away.

Speaking of Honduras, our diocese has had a companion relationship with the Diocese of Honduras stretching back many years. Bishop Lloyd Allen's presence as our convention chaplain is a sign of that important connection, and I'm delighted that you will be voting later today on a resolution to renew that relationship. Over the years, teams from Northern Indiana – under the leadership of our Companeros Committee – have visited Honduras and seen missionary expansion that should encourage and challenge all of us. This kind of back-and-forth interchange gives us another view of the “big picture” and helps us to see how Jesus is transforming lives and building the Kingdom in another part of his world. I hope that we'll be sending more and more teams to Honduras in the next five years of our relationship, and welcoming teams from Honduras into our homes, our churches, and our hearts.

Our diocese responded wonderfully to the special offering which we gathered in early September for the dioceses of Louisiana and Mississippi. You will remember that these dioceses require long-term assistance as they engage in the massive work of rebuilding parishes and rebuilding lives. When the House of Bishops gathered in New Orleans, diocesan bishops were invited to bring gifts, with a suggested figure of \$10,000 for each diocese, the offering to be divided equally between Mississippi and Louisiana. I'm delighted to report that Northern Indiana's offering so far has totaled \$15,140.37. I

should add that my own visit to New Orleans brought home the magnitude of the disaster, the many, many years it will take to complete the rebuilding process, and the heroic efforts of our fellow Episcopalians in the midst of unimaginable devastation. Of course I had seen television images of, for example, the Lower Ninth Ward, block after block of flooded and destroyed houses. But nothing prepared me for how it would feel to stand in one spot, turn around 360 degrees, and see destruction everywhere I looked. Again, I encourage parishes to consider how they might continue the ministry of reaching out to our brothers and sisters on the Gulf Coast.

As we look ahead, we must inevitably address the conflict in the Anglican Communion that has drained so much of our church's energy in the past few years. I should begin by reiterating my dual commitment to the Episcopal Church and to the Anglican Communion, a commitment that I believe is widely shared throughout the Diocese of Northern Indiana. Last year, I asked convention to pass a resolution which affirmed the Windsor Report, its teaching and its recommendations, embracing the vision of interdependent life that Windsor lays out for the Communion. That resolution passed almost unanimously, and I sent copies to Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and to Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams. I was convinced then, and am even more convinced now, that it was and is essential for us to offer to the Archbishop a sign of our desire to be in communion with him. To be a Catholic Christian means to be in communion with a historic See, one that traces its apostolic roots back to Rome and ultimately to Antioch and Jerusalem and to our Lord himself. For Anglicans, that See is Canterbury.

In the year since our last convention, much has transpired. The primates of the Anglican Communion, meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, made some specific requests of the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops. They asked that the bishops affirm that General Convention Resolution B033 means that we will not ordain any more bishops living in same sex partnerships until a new Anglican consensus emerges on the painful and difficult topic of human sexuality. They asked as well that the bishops agree that they will not authorize public rites for blessing same sex unions in their dioceses. The Dar es Salaam communiqué also made reference to what it called a "pastoral scheme," a plan that would provide a structure for ministry to persons who perceive themselves to be a theological minority within the church.

The bishops met last spring at Camp Allen, Texas, and dealt primarily with the "pastoral scheme". In essence they rejected it, the argument being that the scheme violated the Episcopal Church's constitution and canons. I did not agree with that analysis and voted against the rejection. I was, and am, convinced that such a pastoral plan could be enacted within our own constitutional framework.

When the bishops gathered again in New Orleans last month, they responded to the two specific requests. Regarding the ordination of bishops, they agreed that "non-celibate gay and lesbian persons are among those to whom B033 pertains." Regarding liturgies, the bishops "pledge[d] not to authorize for use in our dioceses public rites for the blessing of same-sex unions until a broader consensus emerges in the Communion, or

until General Convention takes further action.” The bishops’ statement goes on to note that not all bishops do in fact abide by that pledge. It also commends Bishop Katharine’s efforts to provide the kind of ministry suggested in the primates’ “pastoral scheme,” and recognizes “a useful role for communion-wide consultation with respect to the pastoral needs of those seeking alternative oversight.”

The bishops’ statement moves in the right direction, I believe, though it is weaker on the matter of liturgies that I wanted, and it still has not substantially addressed the “pastoral scheme” proposed by the primates. Despite the weaknesses, however, the statement moves in a Communion-friendly direction and recognizes that we are part of a global family of Christians. What we do in the Episcopal Church affects brothers and sisters in Central and South America, in Asia, in Africa, in Great Britain, in Australia and New Zealand. That is at the heart of the Windsor Report’s vision of interdependent life.

But is the bishops’ statement sufficient in responding to the primates’ requests? I cannot answer that question. In the weeks since the statement’s passage, I do note two developments. First, the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates issued its own statement giving the House of Bishops’ statement a passing grade. Second, Archbishop Rowan is in process of consulting the primates of the Anglican Communion and seeking their own reaction to our response. But how will the Joint Standing Committee’s and the primates’ reactions impact the Episcopal Church’s relationship with the wider Communion? What will it mean for our participation in the

Lambeth Conference or the Anglican Consultative Council? Again, I cannot answer those questions.

This past week, however, Archbishop Rowan did provide a hint of his own thinking, at least in terms of how he views individual dioceses within the Episcopal Church. Bishop John Howe of Central Florida had written the archbishop with concerns about several congregations in his diocese that were in process of seceding from the diocese and from the Episcopal Church. The archbishop, in his response to Bishop Howe, says something very important about the relationship between himself and bishops around the Anglican Communion. This is sufficiently important that I will quote Archbishop Rowan directly:

Any Diocese compliant with Windsor remains clearly in communion with Canterbury and the mainstream of the Communion, whatever may be the longer-term result for others in The Episcopal Church. The organ of union with the wider Church is the Bishop and the Diocese rather than the Provincial structure as such. Those who are rushing into separatist solutions are, I think, weakening that basic conviction of Catholic theology.

All of this leads me to say two things. First, we don't know what the future holds for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, or how the conflict will play out. While Jesus sees the big picture, in this case we most decidedly do not. He has things well in hand, and I comfort myself with the doctrine that the church is indefectible.

(“Indefectible” means that the church can never in the end be destroyed.) We may not, however, see the resolution of this conflict in our own lifetimes. The Anglican Communion is struggling with complex and difficult issues of human sexuality, looking for ways to respond to gay and lesbian Christians, and at the same time is working out its own understanding of what it means to be a worldwide Communion. Despite instant communication fostered by the internet, the solution won’t be instantaneous.

Second, Archbishop Rowan’s letter to Bishop Howe does give us at least an indication that the Diocese of Northern Indiana is on the right track. We are compliant with the Windsor Report and are thus in communion with the historic See of Canterbury. That assurance provides both encouragement and challenge, as we continue to our commitment to our own Province – and to brother and sister Anglicans around the world.

#### Some questions in conclusion

I end this “big picture” address – past, present, and imagined future – by returning to our deepest roots, the church at Antioch, and posing some questions. I ask that you ponder them not only today, in the context of this convention and the issues that I’ve raised, but in your parishes: at vestry meetings, in adult education classes, informally at coffee hour. In the light of where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re going . . .

- How are we *mission-driven*? In what ways is the Lord challenging us to touch our neighborhoods, the cities served by our churches, and the world well beyond the Diocese of Northern Indiana?
- How can we more effectively *teach* the basics of the faith – the story of redemption; the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and the implications of our faith as it impacts our daily lives? What can enhance our ministry of teaching to adults as well as to children? How can the bishop claim and exercise more fully the teaching ministry that is inherent in the episcopate?
- How is Jesus asking us to demonstrate his *compassion* to the world around us, near and far? In what ways is he encouraging us to stretch ourselves for the sake of a world which needs his touch?
- Are we a church of *miraculous expectations*? Do we expect Jesus to speak to us and work through us? How can we open ourselves to a fresh outpouring of his Spirit today?
- How does a *Catholic vision* of the Christian faith and life inform our ministry today? How do we see ourselves connected to Christians around the world? In what ways do our Catholic roots guide us as members of the Diocese of Northern Indiana, the Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Communion?

Let us pray.

Come, Holy Spirit

and renew in us the fire of your love.

Fill us with holy expectancy

as we gather in the name of Jesus.

Give us a passion for the Gospel,

a heart for the lost,

a willingness to do whatever it takes,

and a commitment to one another.

Enflame us, embolden us, empower us

as disciples who make disciples

for Jesus' sake. Amen.