

# **The Episcopal Church**

*Office of Public Affairs*

## **A Lenten Letter from Episcopal Diocese of Haiti** **Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin** *'The earthquake has not destroyed our hope in the future'*

[March 5, 2010] The following is the Lenten letter from the Rt. Rev. Jean Zaché Duracin, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti.

*'The earthquake has not destroyed our hope in the future'*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Seven weeks after we were hit by the 7.0 earthquake on the Richter scale, the situation is still very serious in Haiti.

As you know, many people were killed, perhaps as many as 300,000. Thousands and thousands of others have been injured. In the Church, we have lost many people. Millions of Haitians have no place to live; many are sleeping in the streets in tents, and some of them still have not found any shelter at all. All the infrastructure of the country, as well as all the key institutions of the Diocese, have been destroyed, especially in the capital of Port au Prince. The situation is very difficult.

Many of our famous churches are gone, especially Holy Trinity Cathedral, which was not only a place of worship, but a place of culture. The Cathedral was a very important institution for the whole country. Yes, it has been physically destroyed, but our faith is still here and our communities are still alive. The earthquake has not destroyed our hope in the future. Despite the difficulties we face, many of our parishes have grown larger since the earthquake, because more and more people trust our Church and are turning to us for help spiritually, socially and morally.

We are still a strong Church and we will continue to work with you in partnership to be able to build up the Kingdom of God on earth through evangelism, education, health care and our development programs. We will work together to preach a holistic Gospel so that human beings may become more fully human in the face of God.

We will have to rebuild all of our communities. We in the Diocese are working very hard to have a Master Plan to replace the physical structures of the Church, so that we may continue to serve Haitian people with the same love, the same care, and the same support that we have always shown. Our mission will not change. We pray that God will continue to give us strength to do all this work despite so many difficulties. We ask you to please be patient and wait for our guidance as we put together this plan so that we can determine how our resources can be used most effectively. Once we have made our decisions, we will announce the plan. To assist us in using all of our resources in the best possible way, and to provide the best accounting of donations, I ask all of our partners in traditional programs to resume sending donations through the Partnership Program. The fastest and safest way to do this is by wiring the money into the Partnership Program account; the Rev. Kesner Ajax, Partnership Program Coordinator, can provide that information to any who require it.

I am grateful for all of the support and assistance of the Church Center and especially of the Presiding Bishop and Primate, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori. Her visit to us in February, even though it was short, gave us great strength here in Haiti, and I am deeply thankful for our time together. We appreciate very much the willingness of the Church Center to continue to work with us in the Master Plan to rebuild the Diocese. In addition, I give thanks for the visit of the Rt. Rev. Pierre Whalon, Bishop Suffragan of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, who is visiting right now on the Presiding Bishop's behalf. I also give thanks to all of the bishops and dioceses of The Episcopal Church for their prayers and support, and for telling our story. Some of them have been directly involved in supporting me and my wife, Edithe, during our difficult time; all of our family is especially thankful for this.

Special thanks must be given to Episcopal Relief & Development; all of us are grateful for its assistance and work in providing us food, shelter, water, medicines and all other forms of support to help us survive these difficult times.

In addition, it was very good to receive the Most Rev. Thabo Cecil Makgoba, Primate of Cape Town, and the Rt. Rev. Laish Boyd, Bishop of Nassau and The Bahamas, who are visiting at this moment. I also give thanks to all other bishops and archbishops of the Anglican Communion who have expressed their support to us.

The earthquake of Jan. 12 was our baptism; now is our new creation. In this new creation, we pray to all work together, and we ask that you give us the time we need, first to care for our people, then to rebuild the Kingdom.

In this Lenten season, the season of repentance, conversion and intense prayers, we ask you to remember our Diocese and all the people of Haiti in this difficult moment. We also ask you to continue to support us by your prayers and your gifts, so that by Eastertide, we will be able to sing together with great joy, "Alleluia! He is Risen!"

I bid you my blessings for this holy season.

Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin  
Episcopal Diocese of Haiti

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