

# The Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

September 24, 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The bishops of The Episcopal Church (about 150 or so) gather twice a year in various parts of the country to pray, study the bible, worship, and take counsel together for the sake of the Church's participation in God's Mission. We write to you as your bishops in the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut upon our return from the Fall House of Bishops' meeting, which was held in Phoenix, Arizona, from September 16 to 21, 2010.

This year's meeting was planned to be in Phoenix well before the passage of the controversial Arizona legislation SB1070 that allows for police officers to question suspected undocumented people for proof of residence without cause. The fact that we bishops were going to Arizona in the wake of passage of SB1070 propelled migration and immigration concerns to be a central concern of our meeting.

Before our meeting in Phoenix began there was an opportunity for some bishops and spouses to travel to the United States/Mexican border in Arizona to learn first hand about border realities. Bishops Douglas and Curry were blessed to participate in the border experience, while Bishop Ahrens represented the diocese at a bishops' meeting on theological education at that time.

The time that bishops and spouses spent on both sides of the huge steel wall that now separates our two countries was incredibly enlightening, difficult, challenging, and spiritually transformative. Those who gathered on the border were blessed to meet and have conversation with migrant families and individuals newly returned to Mexico, with border patrol agents, with ranchers, with health care workers, with town officials and police officers from both sides of the border, and with pastors, priests, missionaries and lay-workers who were ministering to border communities and migrant families. We learned that border issues are incredibly complex and not easily resolved through sound bite political posturing. Above all, we learned that enlightened immigration reform that is humane, just, and economically fair to all on both sides of the border is needed.

The Rt. Rev. Kirk Smith, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, reminded us in his closing sermon at the House of Bishops meeting that "immigration reform is one of the great human rights issues of today." We agree.

The Pastoral Letter and Theological Resource (links below) are the result of our experience, expert testimony, theological reflection, and prayerful deliberation as the House of Bishops. By canon, Pastoral Letters from the House of Bishops are to be read, or made available, in all congregations of The Episcopal Church. We ask that as the clergy of the diocese you read this Pastoral Letter in your congregations on or before Sunday, October 10. We also commend to you for study in your congregation, the accompanying theological resource on migration and immigration, entitled, "The Nation and the Common Good: Reflections on Immigration Reform."

God bless you in this important work.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas  
The Rt. Rev. James E. Curry  
The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens

[Click here for House of Bishops Pastoral Letter](#)

[Click here for Theological Resource on Migration and Immigration](#)

[Click here for full article about the HOB meeting \(with more links\) from Episcopal Life Online](#)