

January 14, 2010

Last year at Convention we voted unanimously to enter into a Companion Relationship with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic. As we begin to turn our attention to the Diocesan Convention 2010, I would ask you to spend a few moments thinking about how this partnership can become a reality for your individual parishes.

The Companion Relationship Program offers domestic dioceses in the United States opportunities to engage in mission activity with dioceses beyond the United States, as part of the **Partners In Mission** process.

Companion Relationships exist to strengthen each participant in ministry and mission by building a relationship in which each partner is both giver and receiver. Ideally, such relationships will involve the partners in increased awareness of the single mission to which each is called by God and solidarity in the cause of Christ. That mission includes:

Mutual encouragement and prayer for one another
Intensified knowledge of and concern for one another
The exchange of resources both spiritual and material

Partners In Mission puts into effect "mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ." It enables local churches to analyze their own situation, develop their own priorities and decide their own strategies of implementation. Companion relationships are people-oriented, that exist for the purpose of face-to-face mutual support and the strengthening of missions in the companions' own churches.

We will be partnering also with our fellow Episcopalians from the Dioceses of Michigan and Eastern Michigan to make this vision of ministry a reality. Opportunities to travel to the Dominican Republic in the form of school and church building will be forthcoming. And for those who are not able to travel to the DR, there are a multitude of ways to participate. Many ECW's and DOK Chapters communicate via mail and E-mail to share support, prayer and ideas of how they can take the love of Christ into their communities. Parishes can sponsor school children with supplies or scholarships enabling them to finish their education. But remember--this is not a one-way relationship. We are hoping to bring our partners to Michigan to share their ideas, their spirituality and enthusiasm in worship. Planting a new Spanish speaking Episcopal parish is not beyond our capabilities with the help of our Dominican partners.

We need your thoughts and prayers as we embark in this new relationship--we also need your commitment to this long term relationship. Please share this information with your parish members and begin to formulate a plan so that you'll

be ready for action when the Partnership is a reality. Be prepared for different ways of doing things. Different attitudes about what is and is not important. Different concepts and approaches to time, ministry, organization, stewardship and responsibilities in the church. Most importantly, be prepared to be blessed by a Christian relationship that need bear no time limits. More information to come!