

A Letter to the Active Clergy of the Diocese of South Carolina

August 10, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you are doubtlessly aware there is much interest within the diocese and beyond about this upcoming Clergy Day at St. James. It is doubtful that anything (or anyone) can measure up to all the expectations which have been placed upon it—regardless of whether one is positively or negatively disposed toward my leadership. Nevertheless, to alleviate whatever unnecessary anxieties that may be out there, I thought it best to give you a glimpse into my thinking about the day and lay out at least the format for our gathering. Please know several things as we anticipate our time together—and it may be helpful to know that some are in response to expressed concerns which have come to me:

- You will not be asked to make a decision or vote on any resolution at this meeting. This is not a legislative gathering, nor even primarily a meeting to vet resolutions.
- I envision our time together as an opportunity for me to lay out before the active clergy of the diocese the gravity, but by no means the totality, of the challenges that lie before us; and in that context sketch out in broad strokes, (as clearly as I am able to see, define, and articulate it) the direction I believe we are called to go in the weeks and months ahead. Flannery O'Connor once wrote in defense of the bizarre nature of her stories—that "To the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures." I trust that you are neither.
- It is my hope, even expectation, that this will be a meeting that will initiate a more robust and expansive conversation within this diocese and, even more importantly, set out the principles that will enable us to begin a broader and more active engagement with the challenges we face.

Here is the intended format for this Post-Convention Clergy Day:

10:30—11:00 a.m. Worship (Hymns and the Great Litany)

11:00—12:30 p.m. Bishop's Presentation and Questions of Clarification

12:30— 1:30 p.m. Lunch in Deanery Groups for response to Bishop's Presentation

1:30— 2:30 p.m. Response and Respectful Conversation and Challenge

As always you and the Diocese of South Carolina remain constantly in my thoughts and prayers as we seek to follow faithfully in the path our Lord has called us by his grace to walk in.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+Mark Lawrence

Bishop of South Carolina