



Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

Bispo Primaz

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Pastoral Letter from the House of Bishops to the people of God of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil (IEAB) Easter of the Lord, 2009

“Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ... They stood still, looking sad.”

(Gospel of Saint Luke 24:13-17)

As someone once said, *one day, we too will find ourselves on the road to Emmaus.* We have often sung: *“In the hour of trial, Jesus... the night will soon fall, night in Emmaus...”*. In fact, the “stranger” was recognized but his presence quickly vanished from the sight of the disciples. The gathering, the conversation, and the revelation were blessed, unexpected, touching, and truthful.

One might say that many times over the past few years in our experience as members of the IEAB, as citizens of our country, and – not least – in remembrance of our own personal and family life... we have been “*looking sad.*”

As Brazilians we suffer from widespread and almost always unpunished corruption. “*Misery exists only because there is corruption*” sings [rap singer] “Gabriel o Pensador”. We agonize under the contradictory conditions of a social reality that could be much better, fairer, healthier, and more promising. Millions of Brazilian families suffer the class apartheid that we know all too well. Our youth yearns for opportunities that, unfairly, they may never get. The political reality is increasingly disappointing. In the past few decades, more-than-reproachable professional politicians are not only reelected but impair the health of a democratic process that we as citizens could harness. Health and education, both of which are required for people’s full dignity, have been giving up space to sleek advertising and official imposture. As Saint Luke says, we are “*looking sad.*”

In the life of the IEAB and its dioceses and parishes, we have also been perplexed by missteps in our way of being and acting. These adversities are found in other church traditions as well. The scarcity of resources does not seem to be the primary cause of a dramatic problem but it makes it much more difficult to overcome obstacles. In any event, “*looking sad*”... we find ourselves on the road to Emmaus. In our meeting of the House of Bishops, we heard sorrowful reports but at the same time were heartened by the sharing of much Good News that the Father has bestowed on many dioceses. The people of God of the IEAB have matured in their faith, but they have been through sad times and life-changing events. The Bishops thank God for the voice and wisdom of the laypersons who spoke at the meeting of the House. The road to Emmaus therefore shines, in this time of Resurrection, as the force of life transformation that we so need. Sadness does not need masks, which may be

why it knocks us down and reinforces us so, not by our own courage but by the blessed presence of the Risen Lord at our side.

Adversities and suffering are schools that teach us to see and understand things that before we could not fathom. Through the crises, we pray for more mature discernment in the experience of faith. On the way of the cross, captivated by the Crucified One, we are sustained by the communion and by the hope revealed to us as people of God, in view of Christ among us. But the ancient faith inherited from our forefathers must also witness the contemporary situations of indifference, injustice, despair, impoverishment, and a yearning for much more life. The Easter season reminds us that we are not orphans. We are not alone. The Church is not us, but God with us! The real meaning of faith in the Resurrection for us is a full understanding that changes must or could occur. It is through the light of the presence of the Risen One among us that we feel capable of changing and transforming. Rejection and death do not have the last word. The Risen Lord is the source of abundant, courageous, and healing life. It is through the light of the Easter of the Lord that we see our structures more clearly as a church of God. We love many of them. We recognize that they need healing and remodeling. We love the church even more but we do not confuse it with structures that should stay in their own time. Many of these forms no longer speak to our generation and to the way our people live. This is when adoration reappears as the most central fact of life and faith. Without adoration first, not even mission is justified.

We must urgently let go of much of the noise inside us, in fear of silence. Quietly listening to the Father's wisdom and beginning a life of personal piety, without losing emphasis on liturgy and pastoral practice, we envision, as in Emmaus, the semblance of the Risen One to encourage us. The entire IEAB, beginning with its bishops, all the clergy "and the congregations confided to their care," in this time of commemoration of the Resurrection face a serious call to seize the opportunity for *metanoia*, a radically new life of witness in mission. The mystery of the Resurrection of Jesus, which transformed so many generations before us, is now before us, patiently revealing new paths and opportunities. Easter calls us to experience the holy fermentation of renewed life. By participating in holy mysteries of the Bread and the Wine, we receive the gift of forgiveness and making amends.

Meeting in Porto Alegre from 30 March to 3 April, the bishops of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil (IEAB), in expectation of the week of the Lord's Passion, prayed and interceded for our revival as a paschal people that overcomes death, announces hope, and seeds encouragement, and for our personal and ecclesial rediscovery of that which Christ teaches and reveals to us in Emmaus.

"If with sore affliction thou in love chastise; Pour thy benediction on the sacrifice: then upon thine altar freely offered up, though the faith may falter, faith shall drink the cup." (Hymn 258)

Note: The House of Bishops, meeting in Porto Alegre from 31 March to 3 April, unanimously decided to postpone the Synod and the National Conference of Church Leaders of the IEAB due to the 2010 commemoration of the 120th anniversary of the IEAB (and remembrance of the 200 years of the British Chaplaincy in Brazil). This transfer will not only allow us to better prepare for the events and the celebrations, but it will also give us more time to continue our work of collecting and analyzing information. It is also possible that His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams may be with us on such a special occasion, side by side with other invitees and visitors we are expecting.

Porto Alegre, 03 de abril de 2009

Dom Maurício Andrade, Primaz e Brasília

Dom Almir dos Santos, Oeste

Dom Jubal Pereira Neves, Santa Maria-RS

Dom Orlando Santos de Oliveira, Porto Alegre, RS

Dom Naudal Alves Gomes, Curitiba, PR

Dom Sebastião Armando Gameleira Soares, Recife, PE

Dom Filadelfo de Oliveira Neto, Rio de Janeiro, RJ

Dom Saulo Maurício de Barros, Belém, PA

Dom Renato da Cruz Raatz, Pelotas, RS

Dom Roger Bird- São Paulo, SP

Dom Clovis Erly Rodrigues, Emérito

Dom Luiz Osório Pires Prado, Emérito

Dom Glauco Soares de Lima, Emérito

[¹](#) Hymn 258 of the IEAB Hymnal of 1962. (Adapted from hymn 334 of The Hymnal (of the ECUSA), 1940.)