



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FLORIDA

Dear beloved members of the Diocese of Florida,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As you know, a formal objection to the diocese's second bishop election has been filed and is currently being considered. I am confident that the leaders who oversaw the election will carefully address the process concerns it raises in good order. If my election to be the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Florida receives the required consents, I will strive mightily, as I am striving even now, to reconcile and unify all the people of our diocese without reservation in keeping fully with the wider Episcopal Church.

This process is revealing to me, clearly and deeply, the mandate for our developing work together. The experience has shaped a compelling picture for our Diocese as we steward our present circumstances together in grace. Time and time again, I find myself remembering my visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. In that holy place, one of my most profound moments was ascending to the rock of Calvary and touching the very spot where Jesus was crucified. Placing my hand in the square hole that held the foot of the cross forced me to fall to my knees and literally crawl under the altar table.

There is no other way to touch Calvary but by a physical action of humiliation on your knees. It was one of the most transformative experiences of my life. To this day, I relive that moment every time I pray the Prayer of Humble Access with the Rite I Eucharist.

I cannot think of anything else in my life that has forced me to my knees to crawl under the altar of Calvary as this process has done. It has been a true humiliation in every sense of that word. The Lord is drawing me closer and deeper in ways that I was not expecting, testing my faith, my assurance of God's abiding love, and the strength and endurance of my character and apostolic calling. Equally, the process has given me a profound sense of compassion and pastoral sensitivity to people who have experienced their own feelings of long-suffering and isolation.

Discernment of the calling of God to any ordained office, especially that of bishop, is both a challenging and a humbling teaching process. While it has shown me the breadth of our love and potential, it has also shown me the depth of hurt and frustration in our diocese's membership. With that revelation, I can say unequivocally there is no divide in this diocese that God cannot heal, no future where we will not see new life from the dead. In humility and grace, our opportunity is to see realized a remarkable community of unity, discipleship, and missionary service.



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In the words of our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, “To love, my brothers and sisters, does not mean we have to agree. But maybe agreeing to love is the greatest agreement. And the only one that ultimately matters, because it makes a future possible.”

As the consent process moves forward over the next several months, I intend to assure bishops and Standing Committees that we in the Diocese of Florida are and will be faithful Episcopalians who long for the Holy Spirit to bring us into closer relationship with our friends in Christ across the church and to be witnesses to the reconciling love of God our Father that sustains us all.

Like all dioceses, the Diocese of Florida has its challenges. We will face them together and never forget who we are as instruments of grace and peace. We are the unified body of Jesus Christ made up of many diverse members all with vital roles to play. So, let us speak well of one another and remain reverent toward the beloved and holy Church of Jesus Christ of which we are all called to be a part.

Be encouraged and be of good cheer, confident knowing that the Lord is our strength and courage.

Faithfully yours in Jesus Christ our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Holt+".

Charlie Holt+

Bishop Coadjutor-Elect