

## **Bishop Doyle's Address on Racial Justice – Council 2020**

Isaiah 58, which we read last night, comes to mind immediately, that if you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger and the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light, as Bishop Ryan reminded, shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be light. Like the noon day, the Lord will guide you continuously and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong and you shall be like a watered garden. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt, and you shall rise up from the foundations of many generations and you shall be called the repairer of the breach and the restorer of streets to live in.

We are invited into God's narrative where God is the primary character and where we may become a different kind of community than the community of the world - God's community, a different kingdom, a different Lord, and a different understanding about what it means to be kin and family together.

The third initiative that I want to talk about today, the final initiative, is about racial justice. I believe that we live in a time where our public discourse and conversation, or lack thereof, on race is actually really disappointing, disappointing to most of us. As I talk and visit and listen, I find that most people would like to continue to make strides forward. Most people want and desire a positive outcome on race, but we feel most often powerless and mired in 17 other people's conversations.

We're struggling to make sense of the past, and while we want a different future, one that better resembles the kingdom of God, we're not really sure how to get there or even where to start. I want us to make a renewed start on this. We're dreaming about this world. In so doing, mending and repairing the past, walking into the future in new ways, supporting what is already happening on the one hand and engaging in new creative ways on the other. Today, churches from Austin to Marshall, from Waco to Tyler, Houston to Matagorda, big churches like Good Shepherd, Austin, middle sized churches like St. James', Conroe and small churches like St. Phillip's, Hearne and everything in between are engaging and understanding the nature of race and our story and what we might do to bring justice into our communities.

People are taking pilgrimages to lynching memorials such as the lynching Memorial in Alabama. There are conversations brought about as people gather in their context and visit together in their own community, like Trinity in Marshall, and do amazing work. And they're not just doing the work inside of the congregation. They're engaging the wider community and bringing together diverse leaders for a unified conversation that is hopeful and for the future. We might look at the work that the people of St. Phillip's in Hearne have done; they have literally told and retold a story that has been in their myths forever but not heard by the people.

What we need to do as the Diocese of Texas is capture the momentum of the work that you're already doing. Our positive and hopeful belief is that we can be a more diverse, more unified, more transformative Church by leaning towards one another on this issue, rather than away

from one another. This will mean a continued effort to shift our understandings of racism and white supremacy and how institutional racism affects us. We will find our solid ground of mutual ministry and mission when we engage not partisan philosophies but Godly theologies. We must engage a solid doctrine of creation that God has made each of us and that God intends us to be in community together. We must have a robust soteriology, a theology of anthropology and sin that explains why it is we engage so easily and readily in sibling rivalry and scapegoating one another when it comes to conflict and fear and anxiety. We must remember that we are covenant people, that we are to undertake what we do in the framework of God's covenant with the people of Israel that is characterized by faithful passion, that mixture for an internalized sense of identity, kinship, loyalty, obligation, and responsibility for each other.

The first commandment tells us that what we do draws us closer to God. And the second commandment tells us that what we do draws us towards our neighbors, the people we live with. We understand that like the parable of the Samaritan, when we see people in our community who are hurting, we actually have a sense of compassion that is faithful towards them and that we give of ourselves and our own resources to assist in mending and repairing the wounds that they suffer. We see this clearly in the bodies of the immigrants and the migrant workers, but we also must see this in the personhood of black bodies, so wounded from years of inherited poverty and wounded from slavery.

What we do about this today prepares us for a diverse mission in perpetuity. We are one human race, and the Gospel is for all people. As I looked for guiding principles to help me understand the kinds of characteristics needed in such an initiative, I turned specifically to the work of Richard Cellini, founder of the Georgetown Memory Project. The first principle is that these efforts need to be voluntary. They need to be voluntary, and I hope that you'll discover as I roll each initiative out that I, and others involved in the project and in this work, have undertaken it willingly as an act of collective responsibility for our past and for our future. But we also want to engage in continued voluntary participation, inviting others to join with literally the hundreds of people in the Diocese of Texas across 40 congregations to do this work. The second value is proportionate. While we are just beginning, the project that we are about to reveal to you has scope and duration and it is attentive to original wrongs which we didn't have any part of, but we benefit from.

We imagine a hopeful future, that it's remedial. Then our goal is to support people in communities and to be attentive to the injuries of the past. It should be equivalent. That means it's not just hugs, but money and finances we well. Money that may have been withheld or taken from communities in the past. It must be inclusive. That means developed in collaboration with injured parties.

While I spent the last few years working on this project and visiting one on one with people, along with some 200 individuals that have participated with me and imagining what we could do on racial justice together. I then invited 38 representatives of our historic black churches to meet with me and to begin to think about how we, together, may roll out this work in the year to come. They are committed to working with me. And together we're going to create a process

and board to oversee and help promote the initiative, which was coordinated and designed to reinforce and amplify what we're already doing. I've sought to undergird this work with the best practices, theological principles, and practical ideas in the present moment of our Church.

And finally, I want to draw on Pauli Murray and her quote, that I think we must be focused on that deep theology of equality as God's people, a mutuality of community. That God invites us into reciprocity where we understand that God wants us to share what we have. These principles affirmed the richness of individual diversity, but also the value of community ties that bind each of us. Now, before we continue, I want to affirm some historic memory because I was saying sometimes as we look at the past and because we're the Diocese in Texas, we've done some really amazing things, but sometimes in the highlighting of those amazing things, we don't always tell the whole story. I just want to tap into a few pieces of one.

It is true that the diocese of Texas and her Bishops post-civil war were lauded for early efforts to multiply black churches in the South. It is also true though that our first Bishop was enabled to do his ministry because he, himself, owned household slaves. And it is true that our first church was erected by slaves and that it was paid for from the labor of slaves. It is true that we set about planting our historic black churches and even appointed a missionary dean for the Texas black mission. This was really early on, but it's also true that our overall history shows fewer dollars given to the project of mission maintenance and ministry of those historic black churches and Afrocentric mission over the years. It is true that clergy and laity alike spoke out against slavery and racism and even courageously stopped lynching in some of our communities like Columbus, but it is also true that other leaders including Bishop Greg defended slavery, white supremacy, and were silent. And we believe that some leaders in the 19th century and early 20th century participated in lynching. They certainly were silent about it.

It is true that we were early to desegregate our separate but equal campus facilities in schools and Bishops Hines and Richardson called us prophetically to a transformation on issues of racism early on in the South, both for our Church, but also to our leadership in our cities. It is also true that we have, at times, used the notion of self-determination and freedom to shirk our mutual responsibility for one another's life. This is not a full telling of our history. The times that we fell short nor of the times when our community stood tall against the powers and principalities. But naming those things without fear or anxiety helps us to understand the complexity of this issue in our own life and community. And I hope you will see how each of the following announcements fits into the overall work that we can do and hope to do together to repair, heal, and imagine together and step into a different future for the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

Now, as we looked and had conversations with leaders, the first two racial justice gifts have been made to support current and ongoing projects. The first is a gift from the Episcopal Health Foundation. It is a commitment over the last few years, they have engaged with us in doing the work of racial justice through their congregational engagement arm, and they have pledged \$1 million over the next 10 years to continue that work to continue to support our congregations as they do this work. They've already spent over \$300,000 for the programs, but they have also

spent time and energy toward this work. The Episcopal Heath Foundation has agreed to continue that funding for 10 years. So, the first gift is \$1 million gift for continued work.

The second gift is for the Reverend Pauli Murray Scholarship Fund at the Seminary of the Southwest. Both the Bishop Quin Foundation and Church Corporation have given \$500,000 each to further endow with a \$1 million gift. This scholarship fund, which helps students of color pay for electricity, bills and food, and those basic needs around seminary attendance. We hope that these efforts, both of them, will dovetail with other initiatives in order to continue our capacity building around racial justice.

The next gift is the John and Joseph Talbot Fund for Racial Justice. The Episcopal Foundation of Texas and the Episcopal Heath Foundation have both committed \$1 million each to the John and Joseph Talbot fund. They were slaves owned by Matthew Talbot, who was one of the founding members of Christ Church, Matagorda. In 2003, Evelyn Talbot a descendant of the Talbots, visited Christ Church of Matagorda and the Reverend Hoss Gwin who is the vicar there, met her and understood that she was looking for her ancestors. These are two baptized slaves mentioned in our baptismal book and she had returned there to give thanks for her own Christianity. Evelyn came to find where the gift of Jesus and the Gospel had come from. She and Hoss talked, they connected with the Talbot family who are still there. They had a meal and they worshiped together. And, so, the John and Joseph Talbot Fund. John and Joseph Talbot are examples of a very complex history and story and the fund named after them will be held in the Church Corporation. It will help to educate internally, with goals of eventually working with the equal justice initiative, the lynching Memorial in Alabama for pilgrimages to support work like The Beloved Community or One Human Race to enact local Memorial pilgrimages to sites of lynchings in our own diocese, to bring churches and seminary students and community members together to hear and know our past story and to imagine a different future together. The grants will be given by the board that I mentioned a minute ago, which will be created by Episcopalians of color from across the diocese representing the historic black churches.

The next gift is the Henrietta Wells Scholarship Fund. \$1 million has been given by the Bishop Quin foundation. Henrietta Wells was an Episcopal lay woman who attended St. John's, Tyler during her time at Wiley College where she was also a member of the "Great Debate" team, which a movie was made about. Henrietta was baptized originally at St. Clement's Episcopal Church in Houston, which is now St. Luke's, and ended her life ministry at St. James', Houston. This, too, will be part of the Church Corporation, and annual gifts will be drawn from this endowment and used to provide scholarships for students from historic black churches attending historic black colleges and universities in the Diocese of Texas: Huston Tillotson, Prairie View, Texas College, Texas Southern, and Wiley. The scholarships may be given to churches to work with students in those colleges who want to sing in the choir or assist in ministry. Perhaps because many of these schools are teaching universities, they might engage in teaching internships, scholarships of local schools or Episcopal schools, while continuing their education.

The next gift is for the Reverend Thomas Cain Fund for Historic Black Churches. In perpetuity, 0.2% will be set aside annually from the Great Commission Foundation for the mission program and or maintenance for historic black churches of the Diocese of Texas. In 2020, the first grant is estimated to be made in the amount of \$250,000. In 2021, that will increase to \$275,000 and so on. The Reverend Thomas Cain was born into slavery in Petersburg, Virginia and served at St. Augustine's in Galveston. He planted churches in eastern central Texas and was first priest of color in the Diocese of Texas. He even represented the Diocese of Texas at General Convention in 1886. He was made deacon and priested by Bishop Whittle, a Bishop of Virginia that was in charge of St. Philip's Church for Colored People in Richmond, Virginia. Before coming here, he transferred to the Diocese of Texas in 1888 and was placed in charge of St. Augustine's. He had graduated in the first class of Bishop Payne Divinity School, now part of Virginia Seminary. Cain died in the Great Galveston Flood of 1900. This fund is held in the Church Corporation and overseen by new board. The program aims to grow capacity within existing black congregations. It may be spent every year or portions may be allowed to grow, as the board sees fit. The program will not prevent those historic black congregations from participating in other programs and partnering, multiplying, and amplifying their money. Under my Episcopate, this commitment will bring in \$3.5 million in gratitude to the Great Commission.

The next gift is the Reverend David Franklin Taylor Endowed Scholarship at Seminary of the Southwest. We felt like it was important not only to support the ongoing efforts of scholars, but to set aside \$1.5 million by the Bishop Quin Foundation, to support the academic scholarships at our Seminary of the Southwest. Reverend David Franklin Taylor was the first priest of color raised up by historic black churches in the Diocese of Texas in 1904. Bishop Kinsolving licensed him as a lay reader at St. John the Baptist's Chapel in Tyler. He was ordained in 1906 and served as deacon in charge. And then, after being ordained priest, he was sent to St. Augustine's in Galveston. We thought it was fitting to honor his memory and legacy as our first priest of color raised up.

The last piece of the initiative is the Dr. Bertha Sadler Means Endowment for Racial Justice at Seminary of the Southwest. This is a \$3 million grant from the Bishop Quin Foundation. Dr. Bertha Sadler Means is a founding member of St. James', Austin. Though she was very young at the time. She was a community leader, political advocate, activist, businesswoman, inspirational trailblazer. In 1945, she graduated from Huston Tillotson College and earned her master's degree in education from University of Texas. She had a long career in education before retiring from Austin Independent School District. She was, and is, an inspiration to young men and women alike. She received the Charles Akins African American Heritage Award in 2002. She is known for her exemplary character, leadership, and community service— both in our congregation and outside. This endowment is at the Seminary of the Southwest and seeks to fund, in perpetuity, ministry to support visiting black scholars' research in Texas slavery and racism, teaching racial justice formation for empowerment of black leaders, encouragement for Episcopal black ministries, and the Diocese of Texas and the wider Church. The Episcopal Foundation of Texas is committed to a follow-up gift to Seminary of the Southwest outside of its initial racial justice gift, ongoing annual support, and capital campaign

support. They hope that they will in 2022 be invited to make another million-dollar gift to support this developing ministry and the Diocese of Texas.

So, if you look, then, at this next slide, you'll see that the Diocese of Texas is setting aside \$13 million over the next decade to do the work of racial justice. I am grateful. I am grateful to our foundations, for the early adopters in our congregations, for seeing a transformational tipping point moment for us. I have gotten nothing but support for doing this work. People are desperate for positive action, and it is our work as the Diocese of Texas to step forward as a leader. We have always done this, step forward as a leader and example, to invite others to follow. They imagined with me the potential that we have to make a positive impact and a hopeful healing impact on the issues of race within our diocese that will affect us and the wider community of Texas. You're being handed out at this time a special message that was given to you from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, as he has been praying for us in the last three days as we approach this announcement. I'm grateful for my friends across the Diocese, especially in the historic black churches who have taught me so much and have been patient friends. I'm proud to walk this walk with all of you and I'm grateful for your honesty, your vulnerability, and your courage. Thank you for entrusting me to lead our common work. I'm grateful to my friend bishops who have been conversation partners and I'm grateful to the Presiding Bishop's kind words and support of me.