



THE BISHOP OF NORTH CAROLINA

24 October 2010

My Sisters in Christ,

If I told you that Episcopalians in the Diocese of North Carolina could save the lives of 100,000 people, what would you say? If you believed that it was possible I suspect you might say something like, "if we can do it, why don't we?" Well, it is possible, we can do it, and we are by God's grace going to. We are about to launch a *NetsforLife* campaign throughout the Diocese of North Carolina in partnership with Episcopal Relief & Development. Our goal is a bold and daring one. It is to purchase and deliver 40,000 nets. One net representing each confirmed communicant in the Diocese of North Carolina. One net can provide protection for three people from mosquitoes during the night. One net costs only \$12. It is possible. We can do it. And by God's grace, we will.

This will be one more way that we seek to follow Jesus as his disciples by sharing his work. When he began his ministry Jesus defined his mission with the words of the prophet Isaiah.

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (see Luke 4:16-20)

But here the significance of the Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women is important. The theme of your gathering is, **Decluttering Our Life for God: The Benedictine Path of Simplicity**. We welcome the Rev. Dr. Jane Tomaine who will be leading this time. The significance of this theme is found in the truth that as the late Thomas Merton taught us, Christian action grows out of contemplation, service in the name of Jesus is an outgrowth of stillness in the presence of Jesus, the fruit of good works is born of the root of the God who is the source of all that is good. So this year I wrote a collect for the meeting that reflects this truth.

O God, you bid those who would truly follow in your way to learn to be still in order to know that you are God. Grant to the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of North Carolina the grace to dwell in your presence, that from that still place, centered and grounded in you, they may find the courage to witness to your love and discover the way of wisdom that can discern your loving purposes for this world in which we live. May they, as disciples of Jesus, following in his footsteps, faithfully serve you by doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with you our God. This we ask in the Name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Your brother in Christ,

+ Michael B. Curry

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XI Bishop of North Carolina