

Courage and the reconciling action of God's Holy Spirit at the end of the House Of Bishops meeting



This is a story where I witnessed courage and the reconciling action of God's Holy Spirit at the end of the House Of Bishops meeting.

After a long week of fellowship, prayer, deliberation about the difficult headwinds that all churches face, and worship, the Bishops of the Episcopal Church had one final dinner together. That congenial time with co-workers and friends was followed by a final evening of informal fellowship and visiting. In one corner of the room, a card game was started. Using at least three decks of UNO cards, a crowd of newer and older bishops gathered around a tiny table to play a hilarious game.

Between rounds, one Bishop dashed around the corner and brought back two of our Spanish-speaking Bishops from among several groups still visiting. She reasoned that one did not have to speak English in order to play the game. The new members gamely squeezed onto the sofa. At least four other bishops, who were fluent in Spanish, were present, and so many instructions on playing the game were delivered at once in several languages. Then the game began, and to me, it was a true Holy Spirit moment.

For context, non-English speaking bishops have a team of interpreters who assist in all meetings and even at meals, and everyone has a set of headphones to listen in their own language. It allows everyone to have a voice and share their thoughts at length. There were always multilingual chats going on as folks walked together between events. But that was different from entering into fun and play together. During that last evening, we got glimpses of each other's personalities that had not been revealed before. It was a joint and joyful endeavor.

There was courage in those who had the idea of reaching out to others and in the Latino Bishops who came over to try this game. We will greet each other in a special way when we meet next. Most of all, there was a sense of unity and joy, which are the hallmarks of the Kingdom of God. That it took place over a game of UNO is a sign of God's efficiency and humor.