



Diocese of Shreveport

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Office of the Bishop

January 18, 2017

Dear Brother Bishop,

I almost didn't make the first *Gathering for Mission*. There were so many other conflicting meetings for bishops that day that I was not sure if I had even registered.

I chose this gathering because the topic of the meeting was *dialogue*. We speak a lot about dialogue but this was my first professional and practical presentation of the concept of dialogue as a concrete way to enable discussion. From the beginning of the workshop I knew I was in the right place. The distinction between debate and dialogue was for me a new way to guide future meetings where we would be seeking consensus. I was impressed with some of the guidance that was given on how to direct a gathering to consider *MISSION* as a dialogue and not a debate, and how we might move our people from a world of isolation to engagement with the wider world, especially with the suffering and the marginalized. I left the workshop feeling more competent in guiding not only a group dialogue process but I feel I will be better in all my encounters, especially ones that may be more contentious.

The meeting also acquainted me with the larger vision of the *Gathering for Mission*. I am now considering ways to bring about more open discussion in our diocese around mission and evangelization. I recommend this workshop if it is offered in the future.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Michael G. Duca".

+Michael G. Duca
Bishop of Shreveport