

## **MINISTERIAL COVENANT**

**June 1991 - July 1996**

### **The Diocese of Spokane - Diocese of Sololá**

#### **PROLOGUE**

The Risen Lord Jesus sent forth his apostles to the ends of the earth to announce the Good News of God's reign. During the past two millennia the apostles and their successors have given of their lives to carry forth this mandate. They have brought the Gospel and the Catholic faith to distant cultures and lands.

Our local churches, the Diocese of Spokane and the Diocese of Sololá, have been the beneficiaries of the apostolic zeal of many faithful disciples of the Lord from foreign lands who have established the faith in our midst. They have led us to the present moment of ecclesial communion. As we have received, so we are called to give. As we have been ministered to, so we are called to minister.

Under the leadership of Bishop Bernard Topel, the Diocese of Spokane responded in 1959 to the appeal of Pope John XXIII for the Churches of North America to lend pastoral assistance to the people of Central America. A special relationship was born between the Diocese of Spokane and the newly-founded Diocese of Sololá, shepherded then by Bishop Angelico Melotto. The Church of Spokane began to share its spiritual, material, and human resources with the Church of Sololá. For more than three decades the Diocese of Spokane has sent its priests, prayers and economic support to help Bishop Melotto and now his successor, Bishop Eduardo Fuentes, build in the Maya-Quiche area of the Sololá Diocese a church family that is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic: a Church faithful to the traditions of its ancestors and devoted to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Through the zealous work of many priests of the Diocese of Spokane and the Women Religious of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of Charity of New York, much has been accomplished for the benefit of the people of God in the Diocese of Sololá. The Diocese of Spokane and these Religious communities, likewise, have been deeply blessed by the faithful in Guatemala: their love and witness to a faith first brought to them in 1600 has deepened and enriches our missionaries' faith and sense of communion.

#### **COVENANT**

We, the Church of Spokane and the Church of Sololá, commit ourselves to a covenant relationship of support and assistance in the apostolic work of proclaiming the Good News to the poor, offering sight to the blind, and announcing freedom to the captive and the oppressed (Luke 4:16-21).

In fulfillment of its part of this Covenant, and as a visible expression of its fraternal love for the Church of Sololá, the Diocese of Spokane commits itself:

- to encourage its own people to support the church of Sololá in prayer and thanksgiving, especially in parish celebrations of the Eucharist.
- to make available to the Bishop of Sololá the voluntary services of at least one of its priests placed under his direction.
- to provide financial support to the Church of Sololá for the pursuit of its apostolic work.

- to encourage and maintain "Sister-parish" relationships between particular parishes of the Diocese of Spokane and particular parishes and/or special programs of the Diocese of Soloáa.

- to welcome representatives of the Diocese of Solola to share testimony about its faith and apostolic work with the people and parishes of the Diocese of Spokane.

As a visible expression of its covenantal love for the Church of Spokane, the Diocese of Sololá commits itself:

- to encourage the Church of Solola to support the people of the Church of Spokane in prayer and thanksgiving, especially in its parish celebration of the Eucharist.

- to welcome into its presbyterate priests sent by the Diocese of Spokane; to assign them to serve according to needs determined by the Bishop; and to provide for their spiritual support and pastoral guidance.

- to sent representatives to the Diocese of Spokane to share testimony, the pastoral vision and special needs of the Diocese of Sololá.

## **CONCLUSION**

We ask God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to bless this covenant and our local Churches with the grace of apostolic zeal, unity, communion, and true holiness in the years to come.

May the grace of peace of the Lord be with us!