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Words from Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori

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If we are catholic churches (for the whole world), how are we to live within this whole world? I write in the immediate aftermath of a devastating earthquake in Haiti, one of the largest dioceses of The Episcopal Church. This disaster and the ensuing compassionate response of people across the world is a remarkable reminder of what is possible when we think catholically, when we remember that we are indeed the keepers of our brothers and sisters. The entire biblical vision is about a world where all God's children have access to abundant life.

In an age of increasing globalization, the ability of the world's churches to think catholically is of mounting importance. The very word *catholic* means 'toward wholeness' and is intrinsic to modeling, working toward, and achieving wholeness or healing or indeed salvation. Our vision must be like that of the ancient Hebrew prophets, who saw the Lord's temple as a beacon of light, toward which the nations would stream, seeking wisdom and greater life. That is our task as churches, and we cannot do it in isolation. The whole of the Body of Christ is needed to bring healing to the whole world. The whole of the Body of Christ bears greater light than any one portion.

Globalization has brought blessings as well as curses. We know more about both the plight and the joy of peoples across the globe. We find it easier to build and sustain relationships at a distance, relationships ideally nurtured by incarnate meetings as well as electronic ones. At the same time, our global economy is increasingly directed by large and often faceless corporate entities, making incarnate and prophetic accountability far more challenging. A catholic gathering of the catholic churches is far more able to name the need for accountability and energize the people of God in achieving that biblical vision of justice for the poor. Our theological focus on incarnation means that we privilege the needs of those whom Jesus calls the least of these (Matthew 25). Our focus on sacrament means that we privilege created matter in serving those least. Our salvation depends on doing both, for that is where we find Jesus.