



DIOCESE OF ALGOMA

From the Bishop

22 April 2016

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is with a mixture of emotions that I share with you the news that, just as I begin my eighth year in the Sault, I will be leaving the office of Bishop of the Diocese of Algoma in order to take up responsibilities as the Principal of Wycliffe College from 1 August 2016.

My decision follows a period of personal discernment and prayer, as well as a rigorous international search process on the part of the College. I confess that I have earnestly desired that the process might have identified someone else more suitable for the position. But when offered the post I believed it was right to accept. The preparation of solid, theologically grounded leaders is more of a priority in the Church than it has ever been, and Wycliffe College has a strategic mission in this regard as the second-largest Anglican seminary in North America.

I realise that this news may not come as a complete surprise for some. I have had a few careful discussions about the question of Wycliffe's leadership with a number of you. To those whom I have taken into my confidence in this matter, I wish to express my deep appreciation for your support and guidance, while to others I apologise for my evasiveness.

When I was elected bishop, I felt a great deal of trepidation. But I was persuaded that this was God's will, and I knew that I could count on your prayers. And I can say that I have had a wonderful time! What's not to like about such a beautiful and varied diocese full of such interesting people trying to figure out what it means to follow Jesus? A diocese with gifted clergy and laity who work hard at being responsible with his fragile and treasured Church? It is humbling to say that I have never regretted taking on this role, and I can honestly say that I have enjoyed every anniversary, confirmation and potluck! Fawna and I are looking forward to the opportunity to express our deep gratitude in person over the next few months.

Such announcements are often followed, understandably, by both anxiety and hopefulness about the future. I share these both for the diocese and for myself! But I want to assure you of two things.

The first is that we shall follow canonical procedures in events such as these. I intend to honour the customary three-month notice period, and my letter of resignation to Archbishop Colin Johnson indicates my intention to continue to serve the diocese until the end of July. You may expect that the Synod Office and the Executive Committee will be diligent and responsive to the needs of the diocese as we move into the period of transition. I imagine that the Executive will want to discuss plans for an episcopal election when they meet in early June, and so you will be hearing more from them in due course.

The second is this: I am confident that God's promises, purposes and plans are at work in us. I am writing this during the week of the Fourth Sunday after Easter when we call upon our Good Shepherd to 'work in us that which is well-pleasing' in his sight. The reminder that our Church, our world, and our very selves belongs to a loving, corrective and protecting guide whom we can call 'good' should give us strength and comfort as we face the future.

So I invite you to join me in glorifying God, who has blessed us as a diocese, and who has worked miracles in our diocesan family. And let us continue to pray that as this new chapter unfolds for us both, we shall be given faith to see his kingdom taking deeper root, for the welfare of his Church and the good of the world.

Yours in hope of the inheritance to eternal life.

+ Stephen