



## More than I could ask or imagine...

January 15, 2015

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)*

I met with the clergy of the Avalon Archdeaconry yesterday morning at St. Thomas' Church. There were 20 or so there and it was a helpful get-together focusing mainly upon two matters: the relationship of our church to the world around it, and pastoral care at Her Majesty's Penitentiary. Although I don't normally attend such gatherings of clergy as I feel the clergy need some time together without the Bishop present, I was pleased to be able to be with them to listen to their concerns and insights, and to share my own thoughts on their ministries.

And what varied ministries they are! It did my heart good to listen to them speak of their work and in particular to feel their passion for God's mission in our world. I was impressed with the ways in which they spoke about finding new ways to be the church today. The discussion was about growing and reaching out, touching on everything from affordable housing to crisis intervention. I left the meeting feeling good about our church and its ordained leadership. The Anglican Church in Newfoundland and Labrador has produced some pretty fantastic pastors with a heart for people over the years and it was clear to me that the tradition continues.

I gave my life to this church a long time ago. By the time I was 20 I knew this would be my life's work. What few people know is the real reason I became a priest: it was an exercise in imagination. I simply could not imagine doing anything else. Faith came easy for me and I would have always supported my church no matter what I did to earn a living, but the decision to become a priest was very much about imagination for me. It helped that some other people saw in me a vocation and encouraged me at the time. However, at the end of the day it was my pondering of the future and realizing that I could not really envision being/doing anything else. From the moment I said yes to God the journey really has been more than I could ever ask or imagine.

It will soon be a year since I became a bishop. In that time I have been able to see this great church with fresh eyes from a new perspective. I see a church rich with creativity in so many places as it seeks inspired and innovative ways to respond to God's call. God never changes, but our response to God's call must sometimes change to meet the needs of a world God loves. In order for that to happen people of faith and courage and imagination need to come together. I spent yesterday morning with one such group and was inspired by them. I told them so when I thanked them for their gifts and vision and most especially for just being themselves.

Please take a minute to thank your priest or deacon or parish leader for their ministry and for the gifts and imagination they bring to their work. Sometimes they really do need to hear that. And because the community of God's Church is always needing to be replenished by new leadership in every age, if you know someone of faith and vision who you think would be good in this work tell them that.

After all, you never know where a little encouragement and a bit of imagination might lead!

Blessings,  
**+Geoff**