



Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

The Anglican Church of Canada

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My Dear People,

I write to you from the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada in Vancouver, British Columbia. Minutes ago, the synod failed to pass a motion on the Marriage Canon recognizing different understandings of Christian Marriage in the Anglican Church of Canada. That motion provided, I believe, a gracious way forward for all the members of our church on the matter of Marriage Equality, respecting the diversity of opinion that continues among us. I voted in favour of the motion and I am disappointed that it did not pass. The pain among our delegates here tonight is immense.

As you know, I have called a special diocesan synod for September 27 and 28 of this year to discuss Marriage Equality in our diocese. The theme of that synod is inspired by the words of St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians: *"...and the Greatest of these is Love..."* My intention last year in calling a special synod was for the members of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador to reflect upon the decision of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada (whatever that decision would be) and respond in a way appropriate for us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I have been firm since the last General Synod in 2016 that I would respect the authority of that synod and not move ahead on this matter until General Synod met again in 2019. I have also been clear that I would not act outside of the authority of the Diocesan Synod of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. That is why we will meet in September.

A major development in the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador since 2018 when I called for our own special synod this September is that a growing number of parishes have written to me asking permission to move forward with Marriage Equality. Since 2018, nine of our 38 parishes have asked for permission to offer Christian Marriage to all who request the blessing of God upon their relationship. While there may continue to be a debate over this matter in some parts of our church, the debate is now over for many. A number of dioceses across Canada have already granted requests for same-sex marriage "for compelling pastoral reasons" with the blessing of their bishop. At the conclusion of our forthcoming synod in September, following that consultation with our diocesan leadership, I will respond directly to the parishes that have asked me for a decision.

I ask your prayers for the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador as it prepares to meet in September to take counsel for its future as a community of faith.

With my every blessing,
+Geoffrey