

**The Diocese of Fredericton
RE The Meeting of Primates**

01 March 2005

From our Bishop ...



My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

On Thursday, Feb. 25, meeting in Newry, Northern Ireland, the Primates of the world-wide Anglican Communion asked the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, (ECUSA) to voluntarily withdraw their members from the Anglican Consultative Council until 2008 and observe a moratorium on the blessing of same-sex unions. The Primates also asked that bishops throughout the church refrain from offering alternative oversight in order to neither encourage nor initiate cross-boundary interventions.

These suggestions were precipitated by the blessing of same-sex unions in the Diocese of New Westminster and the election of an openly gay bishop in the Diocese of New Hampshire.

I welcome the statements from the Primates and consider them a positive step, pushing us toward resolution of the church's dilemma regarding issues of sexuality. I await the further response of the Archbishop of Canterbury and our own Primate as to their interpretation and recommendations for implementation and/or adherence to the Primates' requests.

The unity of the Church is a chief concern of all bishops. It is impossible to expect to have world-wide communion if our own Province, the Anglican Church of Canada, is divided on this issue. We need to put our own house in order if we expect to continue to

be recognized as in communion with the Anglican Church world-wide.

The Primates urge us to continue to keep this issue before us and work toward resolution. As we consider their suggestions, according to constitutional processes, they also request we respond, through our relevant constitutional bodies, to the questions specifically addressed in the Windsor Report and consider our place within the Anglican Communion.

The meeting of the Primates also offered words affirming the responsibility of the Church to be always conscious of the gospel call to be with those who are, for whatever reason, marginalized. "We also wish to make it quite clear," said the Primates, "that in our discussion and assessment of the moral appropriateness of specific human behaviours, we continue unreservedly to be committed to the pastoral support and care of homosexual people. The victimization or diminishment of human beings whose affections happen to be ordered towards people of the same sex is anathema to us. We assure homosexual people that they are children of God, loved and valued by him, and deserving of the best we can give of pastoral care and friendship."

I echo the concern of the Primates that "A positive outcome of our current disagreements is that it has brought a discussion about sexuality out on the table. Although it is an important discussion, it cannot be allowed to destroy our mission first and foremost to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be a church in service to the marginalized."

Claude W. Miller
Bishop of Fredericton