

June 28, 2007
Fredericton

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I return from General Synod proud, encouraged and humbled. Proud of our prayerful and courageous synod delegates who contributed so much to the debate around all the resolutions. Encouraged by the attitude of respect and real love for one another that I felt throughout the whole of General synod. Humbled by the opportunity at a House of Bishops meeting at the end of synod to call for intentional dialogue between dioceses and provinces around the issues of sexuality that takes so much of our time and energy, and to respect the moratorium of the blessings of same sex unions. I believe intentional dialogue and mutual respect at this level will serve to enhance the conversation we plan for our diocese. I was further humbled by my being elected together with Captain Rob Marsh as members of the Council of General Synod for the next three years. And our youth delegate Falen McNulty was elected to the Financial Management and Development Committee of General Synod.

I am pleased to report that several skillful, well-informed and experienced people from across this great country have already offered to help us in this diocese to articulate our own beliefs and effects around human sexuality in keeping with the Lambeth resolution. Our conversations will begin in the fall. The notion of such intentional conversation at the diocesan/provincial level will be discussed at a Province of Canada council meeting to be held here in Fredericton Sept. 27 to 29. With expert help and the examples of Christian discussion modeled at General Synod and between our diocese and the province of Canada, our conversations should be fruitful indeed.

An editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press at the close of General Synod said "Canadian Anglicans took a hesitant, ambiguous step toward expansion of gay rights on the weekend." The editorial attributed our hesitancy to our desire to preserve the unity of a communion that includes "African and Asian branches [that] condemn homosexuality."

I challenge that stereotype. Our African and Asian churches no more speak with one voice than our Canadian church does, or our



own diocese does for that matter. General Synod agreed with the St. Michael Report that blessing same-sex unions does not conflict with core doctrine of the Church and voted against granting permission for each diocese to make its own choice about blessing such unions.

We will continue to struggle with this issue because it is complicated and difficult, but to make it simple would be disrespectful.

At our diocesan synod in early June I said it was time to put the subject of human sexuality on the table and "be brutally honest with one another" as we talk about it.

I pray our brutal honesty will help to create the kind of environment we encountered at General Synod. From my perspective, as a bishop, it was a most difficult and uncomfortable place, yet at the same time it was a wonderful opportunity to witness Anglicanism at its best.

The election and installation of our new Primate Bishop Fred Hiltz, the farewell to our former Primate the Most Reverend Andrew Hutchison and a day with the membership of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada were also highlights that served to build collegiality among the membership and beyond. The Evangelical Lutheran Church also elected a new national bishop for a four year term, the Rev. Susan C. Johnson.

We were given an international appreciation for our common life in the Anglican Communion by The Primate of England, Bishop of York, Right Honorable Dr John Tucker Mugabi Sentamu; the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, the Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon; and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. It was a very busy time.

I pray you enjoy the rest of your summer, and that September finds you refreshed, restored and ready not only to model Anglicanism at its best, but to model for others our Christian love and respect for one another too.

May you always know the blessing of the one true God, even Jesus Christ.

+Claude, Bishop of Fredericton