



The Rt. Rev'd Dr. Claude W. Miller, Bishop of Fredericton

Diocese of Fredericton 115 Church Street, Fredericton NB E3B 4C8

Phone (506) 460 0525 Fax (506) 460 0520 E-mail claudemiller@anglican.nb.ca <http://anglican.nb.ca>

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

My vision, as your bishop, is to see a restoration of the historical holy order of deacon in the Diocese of Fredericton. My hope is that this ministry would increase so that a deacon is available to all parishes sharing this vision.

To that end, I have established a Commission on the Diaconate, formed in April 2007. The Commission is charged to implement the vision, establishing procedures for individual and parish discernment, education, communication and oversight of this ancient and important expression of ministry among us. The educational component is in place, the process of discernment leading to ordination now includes a Parish Discernment Committee process ([Directive 7.1](#)) which recognizes the ministry of deacons and, [Directive 8.3 The Deacon in the Parish](#) gives specific direction on the role of deacons in parish life. It is my hope that parishes, deaneries and archdeaconry greater chapters will invite members of the Commission to be involved in opportunities for sharing information and discussion.

The ministry of deacon is not one of leading the Church but rather one of embodying and enabling servanthood. Deacons have very specific liturgical duties which help to express and focus their ministry on the servant role of the Church. They are to engage, empower and encourage the laity to meet these challenges in the communities in which the Church exists.

Deacons are 'raised up' from the local congregations. The Priest has a vital role in the discernment process, and is the one who actually initiates this process. See [Directive 7.2 Discernment Leading to Ordination to the \(vocational\) Diaconate](#) for information on the role of parish clergy in this regard. The cooperative ministry of priest and deacon will assist the Diocese to move forward in new, challenging and exciting ways. The enclosed pamphlet, "[The Ministry of Deacons](#)" will provide more information about the ministry of deacons.

I ask for your prayers and support of this ministry.

Sincerely in Christ,

Claude, Bishop of Fredericton

CWM/gmh