

Diocesan Synod of Fredericton
BISHOP'S CHARGE
June 2, 2005



1 BIBLICAL REFERENCE

2 ¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the
3 doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of
4 the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with
5 you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then
6 the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them
7 again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²²
8 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive
9 the Holy Spirit." NRSV

10 In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

11 INTRODUCTION

12 Finding the words to introduce my second charge presented a challenge.
13 It has been nineteen months since our last Diocesan Synod and much
14 has happened in the life of our Diocese, our National Church, and the
15 Anglican Communion. Being a living breathing Anglican in the early
16 twenty-first century is not only challenging but wonderfully exciting.
17 It is within this life and reality that I welcome you to the 128th Synod
18 of our diocese

19 As we prayerfully engage in the business of this Synod we are called by
20 God to be faithful to the covenant we share in baptism and to show forth
21 God's love to a broken world. The Church present, within this social
22 context, finds that its traditional understandings and conventional norms
23 are challenged by progressive thought and action in the midst of a deep
24 longing and hunger for intimacy with God. Discerning God's will for
25 our personal and corporate response in the midst of this tension-filled
26 reality is no easy feat. God is calling for a deep commitment to
27 repentance, prayer, spirit-filled knowledgeable leadership and the fruit
28 of the Spirit manifested in time, talent, treasure and testimony. Our
29 prayerful response ought always to be a commitment to the challenge

438 YOUTH MINISTRIES

439 The extensive work completed and in progress by the youth committee
 440 and the diocesan youth director is reported on pages (D) 25-28. Our new
 441 Christian Education Director is working in close concert with the
 442 Bishop and the Youth Director. Youth leader training, youth ministry
 443 development, and parish youth support are a top priority for this
 444 ministry. I am excited about the number of parishes that have hired full
 445 or part-time youth leadership personnel, while others have entered into
 446 partnerships for shared youth leadership.

447 Since our last synod I have confirmed 283 youth and have started a data
 448 base where it will be possible for the Bishop, Christian Education and
 449 Youth Director to keep in contact for prayerful encouragement, and to
 450 extend invitations for common events that will serve to strengthen
 451 post-confirmation relationships within the diocese.

452 The leadership in parish-based youth mission initiatives is very
 453 encouraging. Youth teams with diocesan assistance are putting their
 454 creative ideas into action by visiting Belize, Cuba, and one parish
 455 planning a trip to Honduras.

456 Music and ministry camps continue to be highly successful, and
 457 leadership continues to be strong. A statement of encouragement from
 458 this Synod supporting the continuation of these initiatives would be
 459 extremely important. God's children deserve nothing less. The work of
 460 Council and the capable leadership of our directors speaks for itself.

461 CONCLUSION

462 I thank God every day for your prayers and encouragement. I have
 463 enjoyed getting to know you better while traveling around the diocese
 464 and meeting many faithful volunteers at every level. On behalf of
 465 Diocesan Council I respectfully submit this work and charge you with
 466 the responsibility to encourage the whole diocese to engage in a process
 467 of prayer and support for the vision and ministry we share in God's
 468 mission to the world. Fear ought not to inhibit us from moving forward
 469 in faith.

63 immediacy. Many people of faith have admitted that there is a major
 64 downside to technology in that we all, to a greater or lesser extent, are
 65 "technologically bound." Our response has been to give our hopes and
 66 desires over to this artificiality. Jean Baudrillard in response to this
 67 cultural phenomena writes "Nowadays one no longer says: You've got
 68 a soul and you must save it," but: You've got a sexual nature, and you
 69 must find out how to use it well." "You've got an unconscious, and you
 70 must learn to liberate it." "You've got a body, and you must know how
 71 to enjoy it." "You've got a libido, and you must know how to spend it."
 72 "Forget Foucault" There may not be a verse in Scripture that we can
 73 quote as to the sinful nature of technology, but there is much said about
 74 the sinful nature of idolatry in culture.

75 As directed by our visioning synods of 2000 and 2001 your council has
 76 taken deliberate steps to make our collective vision a reality. I see this
 77 vision as a call and mandate for change as a positive step to equip the
 78 leadership and the parishes to meet the challenge of ministry in a rapidly
 79 changing context. This is very much a work in progress and I am
 80 delighted with the work that has been accomplished thus far. At the
 81 parish level there are wonderful signs of growth in many areas, yet at
 82 the same time there are many areas that will require prayerful
 83 imagination to address the concerns for the future. Bishop, Synod Staff
 84 and Diocesan Council are focused in their endeavors to facilitate the call
 85 of the Gospel in every task undertaken on your behalf.

86 I am grateful to the Committees of Council for their willingness to
 87 embrace our new model of governance. The seven areas of ministry
 88 serve as umbrella structures enabling transparency, accountability,
 89 evaluation and budgeting. While these several areas are treated
 90 separately they are linked and dovetailed in their overall vision of
 91 mission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for the making of
 92 disciples. These Committees and Ministry areas are listed in your
 93 journal and their work will serve as a starting point for your small group
 94 discussions tomorrow. The results of your time together will form the
 95 basis of Synod's response to the Bishop's Charge.

96 It is not my intent to restate that which is already in your possession by
 97 way of the Council's Report to Synod. I will report only in so far as this

369 PARISH SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

370 The Diocesan Council through the work of the Parish Support and
371 Development Committee has a broad mandate which is both practical
372 and philosophical. Practical in the sense of providing resources and
373 opportunities for parish support in the areas of training and resources for
374 parish lay leadership, and philosophical in the sense of providing
375 encouragement to parishes when distressed by concerns for their future.

376 The Bishop and Council are seeking direction from this Synod in regard
377 to several areas of our diocese that are facing an uncertain future
378 because of rapidly changing demographics and aging infra-structure.
379 Many parishes are threatened by this inevitability. This reality is found
380 in both the rural and urban settings. I believe a diocesan-wide long- term
381 strategy is required to prepare, and, at the same time, sustain in the
382 midst of this foreseeable change. A pastoral consultative and
383 participatory approach will be required.

384 SPIRITUAL FORMATION

385 The words “spiritual formation” are code words that are used to describe
386 a conscious effort to sustain and deepen our relationship with God. The
387 seventeen ministries listed in the Report have this mandate. A mandate
388 to offer every opportunity to our diocese to take part in planned study,
389 training and fellowship activities that draw us closer to God and to
390 encourage us to go forth into the world with a spiritual confidence that
391 God wants others to join in. Our spiritual welfare is primary.

392 Synod’s guidance as to how these ministries may be promoted and
393 enhanced would be welcome encouragement. Again, so much of the
394 success for these worthwhile ministries is dependent on the support of
395 the parishes and willingness to participate.

396 STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

397 This committee has been busy for a number of years sponsoring annual
398 stewardship workshops and assisting the budget process in the
399 development of our diocesan narrative budget. This model of telling our
400 ministry story and the many benefits to God’s mission locally and
401 abroad is a good news story. But it is not only a collective story, it is a
402 personal story. The response to the call of God’s mission in the world

132 Many years ago, just after Mother Teresa had been awarded the Nobel
133 Prize, she was on a Canadian interview show with a biologist who had
134 just won a Nobel Prize. During the discussion, the biologist began to
135 speak of the possibility of creating everlasting life through DNA
136 research. To stir things up, the host asked Mother Teresa what she
137 thought of the possibility of “real” everlasting life as opposed to the
138 Church “fiction.” Mother Teresa replied “I believe in love and
139 compassion.” It prompts the question “Would everlasting life matter if
140 one lived in a world without love and compassion?”

141 I encourage this Synod to see this introduction as a backdrop against
142 which our vision and work in faith may move our diocese forward in
143 response to the Gospel. Hiding behind closed doors because of fear is
144 not the call of the Gospel. Jesus calls us to “go” “go into all the world.
145 And “fear not” for I am with you until the close of the age”.

146 CHARGE

147 It is with much gratitude that I accept on your behalf the reports of the
148 Diocesan Council and its Teams and Committees. These presentations
149 to Synod reflect thousands of hours of prayer and work to enable God’s
150 mission among us. Tomorrow evening we will gather to give thanks and
151 praise to God for his abundant blessings. The vision of this diocese is
152 focused on the “Proclamation of the Gospel for the Making of
153 Disciples” - bringing God’s much needed love to a broken and hurting
154 world, our families, and our community. Our response ought to be
155 motivated by our love and obedience to our Lord’s commission. We
156 witness God’s love as it is returned by our neighbor in response to the
157 love we demonstrate to them.

158 The work of Diocesan Council, its Teams and Committees has been
159 undertaken in a spirit of generosity. Our governance model is much less
160 hierarchical (top down) and more horizontal. A horizontal model
161 requires consultation and broader participation drawing on all talents,
162 gifts and imagination and the sharing of concerns in a process
163 demonstrating prayerful mutual respect for one another. An example of
164 this is your participation tomorrow morning as you participate fully in
165 the response to this Charge. We know that the road to the kingdom
166 begins with repentance and acts of sacrificial love that demonstrate

304 world-wide Anglican Communion levels. The Body of Christ is hurting
 305 and the cries that express this hurt are largely mono logical. Many on
 306 both sides of the issue long to be heard, long to be listened to, but see
 307 their cries as futile in the midst of the present din.

308 I am grateful for the leadership of the Primates of the Communion, our
 309 own Primate and the House of Bishops. As Bishops we are willing to
 310 wait on the process of prayerful discernment that will culminate at our
 311 General Synod in 2007. And we call upon our constituency as
 312 represented by our Synods to support this willingness to cooperate.
 313 Political strategies may serve to deliver up an outcome in keeping with
 314 the desires of some, but as the Church we desire unity in the Body of
 315 Christ, a unity that flows from our Lord's desire for his people in John
 316 17. The Gospel desires the inertia of God's Spirit, not the inertia of fear.
 317 Motivation by fear demonstrates a profound lack of faith. We must
 318 depend on God and God alone - anything less will fall short. We must
 319 place our confidence in the theocracy of the Cross and recognize the
 320 limitations of our democratic structures.

321 I am somewhat disappointed that there are no motions that expressly
 322 call us to action in support of our collective mission. A number of the
 323 notices I consider redundant in light of scripture, our previously stated
 324 position, our canonical process and our Bishop's statements. I pray that
 325 your response to this Charge will consider more carefully my appeal to
 326 resource and sustain those ministries that have a direct bearing on the
 327 proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

328 MISSION AND OUTREACH

329 The Diocesan Council, while having a separate Team for administration
 330 purposes, realizes that all committees are dedicated to Mission and
 331 Outreach. Mission and Outreach reflects the loving heart of God in the
 332 world. The mission of the Church is undergirded in prayer and desires
 333 of the Church a mature Theology of Mission.

334 I believe the definition offered by David Bosch is helpful. "Mission has
 335 its origin in God. God is a missionary God, a God who crosses frontiers
 336 towards the world. In creation God was already the God of Mission,
 337 with his Word and his Spirit as missionaries. God likewise sent his

201 is there for your assistance. This system when fully functional will
 202 eliminate many time consuming manual tasks that diverts resources and
 203 talents from more meaningful efforts. Even the Sabbath rest gets
 204 compromised when the work load is untenable.

205 In a spirit of good stewardship our diocese has responded to the
 206 requirements of government and other agencies that seek to serve and
 207 protect all those entrusted to our care in the life of the church. The
 208 Constitutions and Canons Committee under the care of our Chancellors
 209 and their Committee members have worked countless hours drafting
 210 policies and procedures and still have much to do. In positions of trust,
 211 transparency and accountability are a top priority for institutional
 212 governance. Your prayers and cooperation are encouraged for their good
 213 work.

214 The work of the Diocesan Archives has been extensive, and through an
 215 extended consultation process are proposing a new Combined Parish
 216 Register. I encourage you to support this initiative that is in keeping
 217 with our policy to preserve and protect the heritage of Anglicanism in
 218 this place. I thank you for your response to place parish records in safe
 219 keeping in the Archives. If there are any who have not I encourage you
 220 to attend to this as soon as possible. Our records are invaluable and
 221 should be protected.

222 The Finance Committee summarizes the broad mandate of this good
 223 work under several sub-committees. Your support of the diocesan
 224 budget is that which funds the ministry of our diocese and our mission
 225 contribution to the wider church. I thank you for your support. Parishes
 226 share with me on an ongoing basis their struggle to meet local
 227 commitments and at the same time respond to diocesan requests. This
 228 is a chicken and egg situation - without the parishes there is no diocese,
 229 and without the diocese there are no parishes. We are one in Christ's
 230 Body - the Church. As St. Paul says "If all were a single organ where
 231 would the body be?"

232 I thank you on behalf of the whole body for your response to the budget.
 233 The story of the good work that we are about is told in the narrative
 234 budget that was shared diocesan-wide prior to Diocesan's Council

30 of our baptismal covenant in our present context. Let's be frank - as
31 God's church, we find ourselves in an uncomfortable place these days.

32 Morris and Olsen in a little book titled "Discerning God's Will
33 Together" remind us that "Today is an in-between time for the church,
34 between the past, when the church was firmly established in
35 Christendom, and an unclear future for the church. Today is the time
36 for redefinition; it is a time for the church to listen to its stories, to talk
37 about its direction and identity, and to patiently discern the shape of its
38 future life and ministry. Yet people are weary from church business as
39 usual, from church gatherings that do not connect with the deeper
40 meanings of their life and faith. The church must draw on its best
41 traditions in faith and practice in order to find new ways of interacting
42 and deciding. The process of prayerful spiritual discernment draws on
43 the best of the church's practices and offers a depth of faith and life
44 uncommon in the church today."

45 A new social structure, that is yet to be defined, or its impact measured,
46 will have its way, because it is driven largely by a new ideology that, as
47 Walter Brueggemann suggests "is at least indifferent if not hostile to
48 every social structure and institution that is indispensable for a
49 functioning human community." "Hope For The World"

50 The Church in our Anglican context and reality is challenged during the
51 'in-between' time, and at the same time all indications are that 'the
52 faithful' understand our presence as Brueggemann would suggest as
53 'indispensable.' If this be the case then, in the midst of chaos, confusion
54 and bewilderment, we are called to transformation. Our church has
55 been slow to respond to the needs generated by this rapid change and
56 at the same time being true to God's mission in the world. This change
57 can be labeled as 'evil incarnate' and we react by waging a battle that
58 seeks "winners and losers" or to respond by demonstrating God's love
59 and compassion in a spirit of obedience and faithfulness to God's
60 mission in Jesus Christ.

61 The tension between the world's agenda and God's mission is
62 intensified and driven largely by artificial images and a culture of

470 To the clergy, both active and retired, and our retired bishops, I thank
471 you for your faithfulness in your calling to serve. May God bless each
472 member of Synod as we partner in his service. May this Synod be a
473 blessing to all and that you may witness his abundant love over the next
474 three days and always. AMEN.

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

Notes

98 good work serves to guide and direct our way forward. As you may well
 99 appreciate since my installation the learning curve have been very steep.
 100 But your prayers and support have been a wonderful blessing to Sharon
 101 and me. My sincere intent for the episcopal administration of our
 102 diocese over the past nineteen months has been guided by a prayerful
 103 discernment process that seeks to respond to the need of our diocese and
 104 the wider Church with pastoral sensitivity. I have discovered in my
 105 travels to the archdeaconries that this diocesan community is a
 106 community reflecting God's love in a very real way. We are called to
 107 grow together as the inter-and co-dependent Body of Christ. We are
 108 called to listen not only to God and each other but to the very words that
 109 come from our own lips. It is these words that others hear and to which
 110 they respond. It is our own words that are capable to building up or
 111 tearing down.

112 The strength of our relationships depends on the health of our prayer life
 113 and our obedience to God's word as manifested in the person Jesus
 114 Christ. Our reaction to fear, real or imagined, in our present cultural
 115 context to a very large degree serves as our motivation. Jesus
 116 understands this human trait. Fear motivated the disciples to seek safety
 117 and security behind closed doors. In spite of locked doors and solid
 118 walls Jesus appears in their midst and the disciples are overjoyed. It is
 119 the same Jesus that is in our midst by the presence of his Holy Spirit.

120 The fear that motivates our culture has invaded the Church on many
 121 fronts and in many places we have endeavored to build our security at
 122 the expense of others. As fellow brothers and sisters in Christ we have
 123 not sought out the Christ in others, rather we have taken the easy road
 124 of judgement. Fear must be put in perspective. If perfect love casts our
 125 fear then it is faith cast in this perfect love that must serve as our
 126 motivation. We have souls worth saving and life everlasting is what is
 127 desired for us by a loving God.

128 Our changing social context driven largely by technology and avarice
 129 seems to promise a better life, perhaps even eternal life. In spite of our
 130 embracing the promise there is little evidence that our fears have
 131 dissipated.

403 begins in the individual heart and the depth of the relationship we have
 404 with God. God's heart is a heart of abundant love. We cannot
 405 experience or respond with a spirit of generosity if we do not accept his
 406 call to love others as he loves. Stewardship is seen as a negative word
 407 because we perceive it as a word that is going to ask something of us
 408 that we are ill prepared to give. Giving should always be in response to
 409 the Giver. "God so loved the world that he gave". His mission is to love
 410 us. Our mission ought to be to show him love in return. God never
 411 hoards what we give him and we ought not to hoard for ourselves or on
 412 his behalf. Every blessing in God's world is to his honor and glory and
 413 is to be shared for the benefit of every creature great and small.

414 Our greatest asset is the relationship we have with God. And to help us
 415 understand this important truth the Council has directed the Bishop to
 416 pursue the opportunity to partner with our national church for a full-time
 417 stewardship and parish development officer for our diocese. I have
 418 submitted an expression of interest under their invitation to the diocese
 419 for a pilot project in stewardship development. I am encouraged by their
 420 early response. This pilot project is designed not simply for our benefit
 421 but for the benefit of the whole church. Under the terms of the
 422 partnership on-going resources and learnings would be shared with
 423 parishes, other dioceses and our national church.

424 If this grass roots initiative titled "Letting Down The Nets" under the
 425 guidance of our national church is to succeed it will require the full
 426 support of this diocese and the support of each and every Anglican
 427 across the Canadian Church. I am excited about the possibility that
 428 God's mission will be advanced in this part of the kingdom and beyond
 429 by these efforts. Your thoughts and concerns are welcomed by the
 430 Team. Our commitment must reflect that of sacrificial love. With
 431 anything less, we will not see our vision for mission realized.

432 I sit as a member of the Financial Management Team of the National
 433 Church and as a member of the Financial Development sub-committee.
 434 I am privileged to be part of this exciting work. The membership of this
 435 committee is a wonderful group of highly skilled and knowledgeable
 436 folk that seek to do God's will on behalf of the whole Church. Please
 437 keep this good work in your prayers.

167 God's love for us in the giving of his Son Jesus Christ. God loves us and
 168 understands fully our disobedient and prodigal ways, yet he patiently
 169 waits for our return.

170 Your Bishop and Diocesan Council through the work of the Teams have
 171 been very busy since the November 2003 Synod. The cooperative
 172 prayerful support of our parishes and all the faithful have enabled much
 173 to be done. I sense however that we are just getting started. In the midst
 174 of this new beginning for our diocese, Church life locally continues to
 175 be challenged by wider issues that require additional resources and
 176 energy. Globalization is driven by a culture of immediacy and we are
 177 driven to react instead of taking time to reflect and seek God's direction.
 178 We must seek God's Spirit to enable God's agenda, not our spirit
 179 enabling our agenda.

180 Our governance and administrative model opens up opportunity for all
 181 voices to be heard. A new Diocesan Council will be elected at this
 182 Synod. I thank all members of Diocesan Council and Chairs and
 183 members for their good work and look forward to our new Council
 184 continuing that which has begun.

185 ADMINISTRATION

186 The reports submitted under Administration are found in Section (D)
 187 pages 6-11. The work of Council with respect to administration is
 188 extensive. Diocesan administration personnel are stretched to the limit
 189 in response to council's directives. As our vision for ministry is
 190 developed, it only stands to reason that as expectations rise,
 191 management and administration increases. To meet the challenges we
 192 have looked to the benefits of technological tools to assist with the day
 193 to day information and communication that is required to keep each
 194 Anglican in New Brunswick informed as to the life and work of the
 195 diocese.

196 The new Diocesan Information Management System has had much to
 197 do with the production of the statistical returns that are included in the
 198 convening circular. This new system in a few weeks will be interactive
 199 with all parishes who have internet access. For those few parishes who
 200 do not, I encourage you to seek ways of participation. Your synod staff

338 incarnate Son into the world. And he has sent his Spirit at Pentecost.
 339 Mission is God giving up himself, his becoming human, his laying aside
 340 of his divine prerogatives [power] and taking our humanity, his moving
 341 into the world, in his Son and Spirit." Cray Lecture

342 Further Jurgen Moltmann writes; "it is not the Church that has a mission
 343 of salvation to fulfill in the world: it is the mission of the Son and the
 344 Spirit through the Father [and] that includes the Church." Cray Lecture

345 David Bosch continues; "Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God
 346 is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of
 347 mission...there is mission because God loves people." And to respond in
 348 a spirit of servant-hood "is about finding out what God is doing and
 349 joining in." Cray Lecture

350 The mission and outreach committee is challenged to find the balance
 351 between mission at home and abroad. A great portion of our recent
 352 initiatives are led by our youth. They want to make a difference and in
 353 doing so have shown us how we can partner with them. There is more
 354 detail provided in the Youth report of Council.

355 I have been approached by a number of dioceses from around the world
 356 for Companion Relationships. At the present time we do not have an
 357 official companion relationship but thank God for the prayers and
 358 companionship with the Diocese of Recife, our former companion
 359 diocese. A new companion relationship is under consideration.

360 There is a call from the committee for the support of this Synod in the
 361 area of refugee sponsorship. A coordinating individual or body is
 362 required to develop and resource this ministry. The appointment of a
 363 new PWRDF Diocesan coordinator has given this ministry new life.
 364 Workshops are planned for the fall, and much help is needed from the
 365 parishes to promote this work. I am encouraged that our diocesan camps
 366 will be considering "mission" as part of the program for campers at our
 367 camps. This Synod should embrace the opportunity to make a difference
 368 by finding creative ways to partner in this ministry.

235 approval. There seems little let up as to the increasing costs for ministry
 236 and infra-structure maintenance and ministry. Many of our church and
 237 hall facilities, and rectory buildings require upgrading or replacing.
 238 Bishop's Court and the Synod Office require much needed capital
 239 expenditures. Our aging facilities have inhibited in many ways our
 240 effectiveness in the wider mission of the church. Clergy positions are
 241 threatened in some parishes because of the inability of parishes to meet
 242 regular stipend costs. We have central payroll but the diocese depends
 243 fully on the parishes for payment of clergy remuneration and benefits.
 244 There is no pool of diocesan funding to cover stipend shortfall.

245 There are many encouraging plans and initiatives at the parish level -
 246 from renovation projects, new churches and parish re-alignments. All
 247 must be undertaken with conscious thought as to the financial impact
 248 not only in the parish, but the diocese and the wider Church. Tradeoffs
 249 are a commitment to standing still, not moving forward. Increased
 250 financial and leadership commitment at every level are required to
 251 further the proclamation of the gospel at the parish, diocesan and
 252 national levels. We are called to "Let down Our Nets" in faith.

253 I must commend however those parishes that are working diligently
 254 under part-time clergy with a view to returning to full time or seeking
 255 creative models of cooperative ministries with adjoining parishes. This
 256 is but one way in which imaginative strategies must be employed in a
 257 changing context. The sharing of resources at every level of ministry is
 258 part of the vision of our National Church in developing a framework
 259 "for a common journey in Christ." The initiative of "letting down the
 260 nets" places our common task as developing a strategy that will resource
 261 and sustain our shared ministry in the gospel. However, any vision of
 262 ministry must see itself first as a response to God's mission to the
 263 world, to bring God's people back to him, while showing his
 264 compassion and mercy to the faithful.

265 Our capital campaign, "Building Faith For a Lifetime" is a stewardship
 266 initiative that will add greatly to the faith formation of our younger folk.
 267 Our young folk are our greatest resource and Jesus said "help the little
 268 to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of
 269 Heaven." I encourage everyone present to prayerfully consider signing

270 your pledge before you leave. The seven Bishop's Dinners at the
 271 Archdeaconry level offer an opportunity for you to encourage others to
 272 be involved. This wonderful opportunity to share in God's mission to
 273 our children and the children of our communities depends on your
 274 prayers and leadership.

275 EPISCOPAL MINISTRIES

276 As your Bishop there are many ongoing tasks and responsibilities that
 277 require daily episcopal attention. These ministries are not more or less
 278 important than any other, however, they exist because of our polity and
 279 tradition. They include: the appointment and support of Clergy; Retired
 280 Clergy; Staff; Seminaries and Seminary Training; Vocational
 281 Discernment; Chaplaincies; Matrimonial Commission; Lay Reading;
 282 Faith and Worship; Provincial and General Synod; House of Bishops;
 283 Episcopal Visitor to the Church Army; and, National Church
 284 Committees to name a few. Many of these ministries are shared with
 285 ministry teams and I am grateful for their support and encouragement.

286 The two ongoing major issues in the life of our Canadian Church have
 287 to do with Residential Schools and the Blessing of Same Sex
 288 Relationships.

289 With respect to Residential Schools, I thank God for our assuming part
 290 of the collective responsibility for our Church's commitment to the
 291 funding of the partnered settlement with the federal government. At the
 292 beginning many in our diocese thought it someone else's problem. But
 293 in true Anglican fashion the Anglican Church responded with a
 294 unanimous decision to embrace the opportunity to repent and seek
 295 forgiveness and reconciliation, so that those wronged by a well
 296 intentioned educational program for aboriginal youth might see the love
 297 of God in action.

298 Seven of our thirteen notices of motion that we will be considering at
 299 this Synod have their genesis in the "blessings of same sex
 300 relationships" debate. This debate has been ongoing for many years but
 301 has been intensified by the unilateral actions of the ECUSA and the
 302 Diocese of New Westminster. The results of these actions have strained
 303 relationships at the Parish, Diocesan, National Church and the