

A MESSAGE TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

This afternoon I have informed the members of Diocesan Council that, after many months of prayerful discernment, I am asking Diocesan Synod to concur with my request for the election of a Coadjutor Bishop for the Diocese in the middle of next year. I will step down from my role as the Metropolitan of Ontario at the next Provincial Synod in October 2018 and concurrently as Bishop of Moosonee. More importantly for our Diocese, I plan to retire as Bishop of Toronto at the end of December 2018. The Bishop of Ottawa, who is the next senior bishop of the Province, is now in receipt of my letter of resignation. A Coadjutor Bishop is elected by Synod to assist the Diocesan Bishop prior to his retirement and to succeed the Diocesan Bishop immediately on the Diocesan's retirement.

I have now served the Diocese of Toronto for over 40 years of ordained ministry. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life, and it has not been an easy or quick decision to bring it to a conclusion. By the time I retire I will have passed my 66th birthday and have served as bishop for over 15 years, with an additional 12 years in the Bishop's Office as the Executive Assistant and Archdeacon to my esteemed mentor and predecessor, Archbishop Terence Finlay. In each of the three parishes I served before that I have learned more and more from the people of God, how to be a faithful pastor and priest. There is so much that I am thankful to God for in this great Diocese: the tremendous richness of our diversity, the remarkably gifted clergy and strong faithfulness of our laity, the breadth of the resources we have been given, the new opportunities we are afforded to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Over the past decade and a half, we have done some remarkable things: developed a growing team of high capacity diocesan volunteers to work as coaches and facilitators with parishes, completed a very successful Our Faith-Our Hope: Re-imagine Church campaign to resource our ministry, intentionally focused on being missional as a diocese, increased our commitment to intercultural ministry, and renewed our witness to social justice both in our advocacy work and our direct compassionate service. There have been many challenges that we have faced together, including declining numbers and closing churches. But we have also named and faced our challenges squarely in the context of our Christian faith. We have a new strategic plan, aptly named *Growing in Christ*, to direct us in the next few years.

I am enormously grateful to God for the privilege of serving and leading this Diocese, and especially for the opportunity to work and minister with such gifted and generous people as you. I am not retired yet. There is still much to do and I look forward to continuing to work faithfully over the next year to reach our goals.

May I ask for your prayers for our diocese, and especially for Ellen and me, as we prepare for this transition.

May God bless and keep you in his love,



Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist September 21, 2017