

Faith, Worship, and Ministry

GIFTS FOR EPISCOPAL MINISTRY

Background

This project stems from directions given by the *Final Report* of the Primate’s Commission on Theological Education, Formation, and Training for Presbyteral Ministry, contained within the text of resolution #A40R1 of General Synod 2013. The principal work of that Commission was to produce a competency based framework for those involved in preparing candidates for ordination to the priesthood, and to guide initiatives in lifelong learning. Amongst other things, the resolution directed that work be done, in parallel fashion, for the diaconate and the episcopate.

Bishop Linda Nicholls (then of Toronto), as a member of the Faith, Worship, and Ministry task force, took on the task of consultation to determine what sort of document would be most helpful in the formation and education of bishops. Good support was expressed within the House of Bishops that something be undertaken, but it was not clear what sort of tool would be appropriate. The episcopate is not something for which one is educated, trained, and formed for a lengthy period prior to ordination.

At the same time, another project in development within the House of Bishops. Led by the Metropolitans, a series of educational orientation sessions were organized for new bishops, in conjunction with the regular House meetings.

Bishop Nicholls, who has been one of the adjunct faculty in the *Living Our Vows* program of The Episcopal Church College for Bishops, , continued in research and consultation through a survey with the House of Bishops, and produced *Gifts for Episcopal Ministry*. It draws on work done through Theological Education in the Anglican Communion and the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, among other sources. One of the affirmations of the House of Bishops focused on the need for a resource for diocesan discernment in preparation for episcopal elections.

What is presented here is not so much a set of competencies, but a description of the gifts necessary for living out episcopal ministry in the office of bishop. The FWM committee commend it as a resource for bishops, and especially for dioceses to assist them in their processes of discernment towards episcopal elections. Search/discernment committees may find it helpful in educating the diocese about what a bishop is called to be and to do, as there are occasionally misunderstandings of this office. It might help to shape the personal discernment of candidates. It might also be a source to support the crafting of questions for candidates’ profiles, as well as for crafting the diocesan profile in relation to the particular leadership needs.

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A bishop in God's holy Church is called to be one with the apostles in proclaiming Christ's resurrection and interpreting the Gospel, and to testify to Christ's sovereignty as Lord of lords and King of kings. You are called to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church; to celebrate and to provide for the administration of the sacraments of the new covenant; to ordain priests and deacons, and to join in ordaining bishops; and to be in all things a faithful pastor and wholesome example for the entire flock of Christ. With your fellow bishops you will share in the leadership of the Church throughout the world. Your heritage is the faith of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and those of every generation who have looked to God in hope. Your joy will be to follow him who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

(BAS Ordinal)

Episcopal Gifts of Ministry

The Church throughout the ages has been called by God to select an overseer and pastor to both lead and protect the Body of Christ. (See Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and Acts 20:28.)

“As a chief missionary, the bishop shares with the apostles in providing oversight for the Christian community while at the same time advancing and challenging the Body of Christ to move forward into an unbelieving world.”

— Ian T. Douglas, *Sewanee Theological Review*, (40:4)

In selecting a bishop for this ministry the following qualities, gifts and skills are a framework for the work of a bishop in the church today. No single person will be able to fulfill all of those listed however the synod will need to assess the balance of gifts that will best serve the context of the diocese. At the very least an awareness of these aspects of episcopal ministry need to be known by the candidate.

For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

Bishop as Guardian of Faith, Unity and Discipline

A knowledge of and respect for the teaching of the Church in the areas of theology, scripture, liturgy, and spiritual development.

The Bishop:

- Demonstrates a personal devotional practice and discipline that involves daily prayer, reading of scripture, and study of theology and modern thought in openness to God’s Spirit.
- Inspires clergy and laity to live out their baptismal covenant.
- Helps clergy deepen their understanding of their role as theological leaders in ministry.
- Is well informed in Anglican doctrine and liturgy, aware of Anglican diversity, with a potential to become a focus of unity in a diocese and beyond.
- Welcomes Anglican tolerance and a degree of diversity, within the boundaries of Anglican formularies canons, liturgies, and traditions.
- Has a good grasp of scripture, history, tradition, and theology and is able to transmit the traditions and teachings of the Church.
- Has sufficient experience of presbyteral ministry (as required by diocesan canons)
- Exhibits concern for the broader aspects of mission and ministry that exist within and beyond the diocese.
- Is able to take active responsibility for maintaining the apostolic faith and ecclesial unity and order, within a proper balance between unity and diversity.

Bishop as the Ambassador of Christ

The ability to foster a sense of common identity within the Church and to represent that identity to the larger community.

The Bishop:

- Represents the Church in the local community, relates to civic and neighbourhood groups, and cooperates with ecumenical and interfaith projects.
- Is alert to ecumenical and inter-faith issues as they may affect the diocese and as these arise in the global context.
- Is a prophetic voice speaking out for the poor and powerless.
- Expresses ideas in ways that build commitment and generate enthusiasm.
- Actively works at building relationships with other faith communities.
- Reveals the Church's genuine care, respect, and love for people and its concern for justice and equity in all aspects of their lives.
- Integrates the national and provincial context with the local and builds relationships with national and ecumenical leaders.
- Acts as an agent of God's work of reconciliation in the world.

Bishop as Leader in Church Renewal

The ability to be adaptable and to manage change while seeking new and creative ways to proclaim the Gospel.

The Bishop:

- Engages in ongoing learning and skill acquisition.
- Has a heart of compassion and be sensitive to diversities of contexts (urban, rural, rich, poor, politically delicate, or with known difficulties from the past), and capable of exercising ministry across the range of diversity
- Makes decisions based on the broadest possible view of the situation.
- Motivates church leaders to think strategically and plan for the future.
- Knows congregational development theories and is aware of the social needs and demographics of the diocese and area.
- Learns and adapts quickly when facing new problems and challenges.
- Deals comfortably with risk and uncertainty.
- Effectively manages multiple and potentially conflicting priorities.
- Manages group process effectively.
- Consults with others in decision-making.
- Understands and contributes to the strategic management process of the diocese.
- Deals effectively and equitably with all people.

Bishop as Pastor and Administrator

The ability to be a pastor and guide to the clergy and effectively administer diocesan structures.

The Bishop:

- Provides pastoral care and counsel to the clergy.
- Fosters collegiality and community among them.
- Works with clergy in assessing their gifts and abilities.
- Challenges clergy to develop their abilities.
- Works with parishes to appoint the most suitable candidates.
- Provides clear direction and feedback to individuals.
- Treats clergy and staff members equitably.
- Acts decisively, consistently, and objectively in dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- Delegates effectively and is comfortable sharing responsibility and accountability.
- Works collaboratively in planning and decision-making.
- Respects the ideas and opinions of others.
- Is attentive to administrative issues so that programmes and policies are carried out.

Bishop as Wholesome Example to the Flock

The ability to acknowledge limitations and balance demands so that all can see that s/he is a child of God.

The Bishop:

- Adheres to and lives out his/her baptismal covenant so that people see congruency between what is professed and the bishop's actions.
- Is widely trusted; is seen as direct and truthful; takes responsibility for his/her own mistakes.
- Manages time effectively so that there is a healthy balance among the demands of self, family, diocese, and community.
- Is attentive and open to his/her own spiritual pilgrimage and that of others.
- Acts prudently in relationships and maintains confidentiality, demonstrates maturity, stability, and an awareness of appropriate boundaries.
- Respects the ideas and opinions of others and interacts effectively and equitably with all people.