



The Anglican Church of Canada / L'Eglise anglicane du Canada

The Primate's Office

80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2

Tel: (416) 924-9192 * Fax: (416) 924-0211

Email: primate@national.anglican.ca

www.anglican.ca

A Pastoral Letter from the Primate to be read on Sunday, March 25, 2012

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our Lenten journey with Jesus takes us to Jerusalem.

Among the many forms of devotion used in Holy Week is The Stations of the Cross. A particularly lovely one written by John Peterson is entitled "A Walk in Jerusalem". It takes us to the very places where it is believed Jesus stopped along the Via Dolorosa, to Calvary and to our place beneath the Cross.

At the last station commemorating Jesus' body being placed in the tomb, Peterson writes,

"We go finally to the small building called The Empty Tomb inside the great Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to lift our prayers...

What other church, what other cathedral, what other basilica in the world hosts an Empty Tomb?

None other does. Such a church is found only in Jerusalem. Our roots stem from this empty tomb...

It makes us all citizens of Jerusalem - not only this earthly city but also the heavenly Jerusalem."

With Anglicans around the world we pray on Palm Sunday for all Christians living in the Holy Land and for the leaders of The Churches in their common witness to the Gospel of Christ Crucified and Risen. I especially ask your prayers for the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani and for his family; for the clergy and faithful in the twenty-seven parishes scattered throughout Palestine and Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

At the General Synod of 2010 in Halifax, Nova Scotia there was a resolution to strengthen ties between our Church and the Diocese of Jerusalem. Since then there have been a number of exciting developments, including the appointment of a Canadian, The Rev. Major John Organ as the next Chaplain to Bishop Suheil. Work has begun on the establishing of a companion relationship between Ottawa and Jerusalem.

A new venture is Canadian Companions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. These are men and women “drawn together in common concern and support for the well being of the Church in the land of Christ’s Birth, Death and Resurrection”. (Terms of Reference approved by the Council of General Synod in November 2011.) They will foster knowledge of the diocese and its multiple ministries, its contextual struggles, and its abiding commitment to co-operative ecumenical initiatives for reconciliation. In consultation with Bishop Suheil, they will fund specific ministries and new initiatives in housing, health-care and education and they will explore opportunities for those who feel a call to serve as volunteers in mission. They will support actions of advocacy for lasting peace in the Holy Land.

My hope, dear friends, is that we will grow the membership of Canadian Companions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem quickly. I am asking that we take Holy Week and The Seven Weeks of Easter as a time frame for initial response. By Pentecost, I hope every bishop will have become a Companion and that they will have encouraged their diocese and parishes to do likewise. As parishes become members I hope individual clergy, lay leaders, and parishioners will also.

In my heart I am convinced that this companionship is of Christ’s will and blessing. In every account of his appearing to the disciples after The Resurrection there is a drawing near, and a walking with, a companionship that is beautiful and abiding. May it be so for us and for our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

In Christ’s love,

I am,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fred J. Hiltz".

Fred J. Hiltz
Archbishop and Primate

For more information on the Canadian Companions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, their terms of reference and an application to join please visit the website at:
<http://www.anglican.ca/jerusalem/companions>