



# Diocese of Toronto

## Anglican Church of Canada

### EPISCOPAL 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, *Swanee Theological Review*, (40:4)

The Diocese of Toronto will soon be electing two [three] Bishops Suffragan who will each have oversight of an episcopal area. This will require each member of synod to discern God’s call for the Church. As with all spiritual discernment, this process will involve prayerful reflection, thoughtfulness, and insight. This document sets out the gifts required to carry out the roles and responsibilities of this important ministry. Please use this document to help you prayerfully prepare for the upcoming synod.

### Bishops Suffragan to the Diocesan Bishop

There are three orders of ordained ministry in the Church: bishops, priests, and deacons. The suffragan bishop emerged in the Western Church during the Middle Ages when diocesan bishops were frequently absent from their dioceses on state business, or when they became infirm. Formal recognition of this role was provided for in the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). It was, however, stressed at that time that “there should not be two heads in one church and that the vicar (i.e., suffragan) is to be obedient to the bishop in everything.” In 1534, at time of the Reformation, this role was provided for by an act of the English parliament.

Today suffragan bishops are used throughout the Anglican Communion. One of the models for the deployment of suffragans that has gained a measure of support is through the area system. This approach suggests that in a diocese with suffragans, each suffragan bishop should have a territorial area, a sphere of community life, and representation in the House of Bishops. This is the model used by the Diocese of Toronto. It is to be emphasized that the bishop suffragan always stands under the authority of the Diocesan.

## **Bishops of the Toronto Diocese**

The Diocese of Toronto is led by the **Diocesan Bishop**, the Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson, Bishop of Toronto, working through a democratically elected synod (with its committees and area ministries) supported by a College of Bishops, the College of Presbyters, the Community of Deacons, diocesan staff, and volunteers.

There are four **Suffragan Bishops** in the diocese who work with and under the direction of the Diocesan Bishop to exercise the ministry of a Bishop. Each Suffragan Bishop is assigned oversight of an episcopal area and forms the primary episcopal relationship with all clergy in that episcopal area. As bishops suffragan, each is given responsibility for the welfare of the whole Diocese and contribute through their particular gifts to the ministry beyond the boundaries of their geographic area. Each also contributes to the ministry of the wider church beyond the diocese.

Every Bishop, whether the Bishop of the Diocese or a Bishop Suffragan, 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
- 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. (Book of Alternative Services, 636)

The **College of Bishops** is the leadership group through which the exercise of pastoral and ecclesiastical authority is coordinated. The College of Bishops is comprised of the Diocesan Bishop and the four Suffragan Bishops, assisted by the Archdeacon of York as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Diocese and the Diocesan Executive Officer.

## **The Bishop Suffragan as an Area Bishop**

The diocese's Canons provide for the Diocesan Bishop to divide the diocese into geographical areas and to "designate a Suffragan Bishop, to be called an Area Bishop, to exercise episcopal office within an Area. An Area Bishop shall execute such matters pertaining to the Episcopal office as the [Diocesan] Bishop may delegate." (Canon 43)

The role of the Area Bishop is an organizational one, created so that the diocese could operate more effectively. As an alternative to the often-used model of splitting into multiple small dioceses, the Diocese of Toronto created episcopal areas within a single diocese to minimize diocesan infrastructure while ensuring pastoral care and missional oversight.

When the Synod created the role of the Area Bishop, the Diocesan Bishop delegated certain episcopal duties and authorities, which normally reside in the role and person of the Diocesan Bishop. For example, while in other dioceses where there is a Diocesan Bishop and there may be one or more Suffragan Bishops, the primary working relationship of the clergy is with the Diocesan Bishop; in this diocese, the primary working relationship of the clergy is with their Area Bishop.

The Area Bishop never acts in isolation of the Diocesan Bishop or the College of Bishops, and has concern for the welfare of the whole diocese as well as the assigned area. The Bishops Suffragan reflect the diversity of this diocese and participate in its episcopal leadership as part of a collaborative ministry. Each contributes to the development of the theological consensus that is expressed publicly by the Diocesan Bishop, modelling the particular Anglican value of Unity in Diversity. The diocese looks to the Area Bishop to fulfill many important roles and exercise authority devolved from the Diocesan Bishop in their Area:

- To be the primary interpreter and teacher of the faith
- To ensure that all teachings of the church are informed by scripture, reason and tradition
- To provide liturgical oversight

- To ordain
- To appoint, oversee and coach clergy
- To provide pastoral care for clergy and support their personal development in their ministry
- To provide care and oversight for other people involved in ministry throughout the Area

- To be a visionary leader
- To develop ministry

- To act as a link between the Area, the diocese and the wider church

- To provide for the care of all churches in the area
- To visit parishes in order to nurture and support the development of parish ministry.
- To baptize and confirm
- To make interventions with the parish as necessary

- To be a partner in the College of Bishops in its episcopal leadership of the diocese.
- To provide individual episcopal leadership to the diocese

**It is important to underscore that in creating Area Bishops, this diocese created a different way for a Bishop to function, not with respect to order, but with respect to jurisdiction.**

The Area Bishop carries out an important role in the development of strategy for mission and ministry in the Area. The Area strategy is developed within the context of the diocesan strategy and, therefore, is used to implement the diocesan strategy for ministry and mission locally.

We will now explore the gifts and strengths essential to an Area Bishop's ministry.

### **Bishop as Guardian of Faith, Unity and Discipline**

**This derives from the function of the Bishop as the apostolic proclaimer of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

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

The Bishop:

Inspires clergy and laity to live out their baptismal covenant.

Helps clergy deepen their understanding of their role as theological leaders in ministry.

Has a good grasp of scripture, history, tradition, and theology and is able to transmit the traditions and teachings of the Church.

Exhibits concern for the broader aspects of mission and ministry that exist within and beyond the diocese.

### **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 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, transnational and provincial context with the local and builds relationships with international/national, ecumenical and interfaith leaders and civil society

Acts as an agent of God's work of reconciliation in the world.

### **Bishop as Leader in Mission and Church Renewal**

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

The Bishop:

Understands and expresses the missional context of the diocese

Engages in ongoing learning and skill acquisition.

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 senior lay leaders and an administrator of the area.*

The Bishop:

- Shares in the care for the whole Church
- Works with clergy in assessing their gifts and abilities
- Challenges clergy to develop their abilities.
- Fosters collegiality and community among clergy and lay leaders
- Provides for appropriate pastoral care and counsel to the clergy.
- Works with parish selection committees 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.
- Understands the canons, policies and procedures of the Anglican Church
- Is attentive to administrative issues so that programs 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.