

# *Video Transcript:*

## *The Rev. Canon David Harrison*



In preparation for our upcoming Electoral Synod on June 9, the Nominations Committee has invited nominees to respond to three questions. The first two questions were given to the nominee 10 minutes before their recording; the third and final question is a surprise to the nominee. Each nominee will have two minutes per question, for a total of six minutes.

### **Question 1**

The following is an excerpt from the Pastoral Statement issued by the College of Bishops on the 29th of September 2017:

"As Bishops we endorse unequivocally the principle that the Diocese of Toronto must honour and safeguard the diversity represented in its parishes and clergy, including those holding to an historic understanding of Christian marriage, so as to maintain the highest degree of communion possible, and together participate in the mission to make the crucified and risen Christ known in the world. We are personally committed to continue the face-to-face conversations that will foster this. This diversity will continue to be reflected in the selection, ordination and appointment of clergy, and in the lay and clerical membership of committees and councils of the diocese. It will also include the honoring of clergy conscience in the celebration and blessing of marriage."

**As we know, in 2019 General Synod will vote on second reading of the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon that were passed on first reading in 2016. In the event you are elected, how would you seek to be an effective and supportive Bishop for those clergy and laity who would not have voted as you will vote on this motion?**

### **Answer**

Well the first thing I'd say is that I'm committed to that statement and the spirit of that statement. I was part of the roller coaster of General Synod 2016, and the moment that stays with me is at one particular moment when I was really despairing about the result, and someone as part of our delegation who has a different point of view came and just took my hand and provided amazing pastoral care and support without a word said. And I think that's the spirit in which I engage this question for the Church. That statement talks about face-to-face conversations. Coming from General Synod in 2016, there are some overall, some overarching conversations that are happening in every diocese, but I made a recommendation to the Archbishop that below that we actually need to foster conversations, and I called this "grassroots conversations." And the Archbishop engaged with this idea. We gathered about 20 or 25 clergy together, some whose points of view we knew, some who we didn't. And we asked them simply to engage in coffee conversation with others. I did that myself with someone who has a different point of view, and it was an enriching experience for me. I learned and I grew. I think it actually is about relationships. The Church will make the decision it makes, but I think that fostering those relationships and that sense of openness and trust is important. And I think a leader has to be clear about his or her point of view. I'm on the record in

terms of my vote at General Synod 2016 and I'd vote the same way in 2019. But I think it's about relationships. I'm proud that amongst those who nominated me are those who see this issue differently, and that's because I have a relationship with those people. A leader needs to be supple, needs to be vulnerable, but also clear about his or her position. And our relationship as Christians starts face to face, and I'm committed to that.

## Question 2

As Diocesan Bishop, you are being called to:

- Lead 54,000 Anglicans on the Diocese of Toronto's parish rolls;
- Supervise and see that pastoral care is provided to four Suffragan Bishops, 583 clergy who are canonically resident in the Diocese, and staff members at the Diocesan Office;
- Oversee the stewardship of real estate with an insured value of approximately \$980,000,000; and
- Manage an annual budget of approximately \$8,000,000.

**What administrative gifts do you think you bring to managing the stewardship of the time, talent and treasure God has entrusted to this Diocese, and how will you make hard decisions when it comes to safeguarding one over the other?**

## Answer

I actually love leadership. I don't love every day and every moment of leadership, but I love the art of leadership, and I think it is an art. And a leader needs to be able to move – and this isn't my image, it's someone else's – between the dance floor and being part of all of the moving parts, and the balcony, to be able to see the larger picture. In such a complex Diocese like this, which is so richly resourced, the leader needs to spend a lot of time on the balcony, looking and seeing how the moving parts are moving together. At the same time, the leader needs to be connected. I see the Diocese not as a triangle, where the Diocesan Bishop is at the top of a summit. I actually see and have a vision for the Diocese being inverted, so the episcopate, bishops and all of the structures around the bishops are there as roots to support parish life. And that's the vision that I want to see moving forward. There's an ancient way in which the bishop is connected to the college of presbyters and also to the deacons and to laypeople. The bishop stands or sits in the apse of a cathedral around all of the priests, and there's a collegiality there I think we need to restore and give that life. The deacons also have a role, a direct role in supporting the bishop, and deacons are good at advocating and nipping at our heels and moving us forward to advocate for justice in the world, and I want the deacons to nip at my heels too. As a Diocesan Bishop, I want to spend a lot of time with clergy, with lay people, with deacons. I want to be studying with them, praying with them, I want to be there. I don't want to be the summit of an organization, I want to be part of the roots that feed the life of the parish. Making hard decisions? Sometimes you have to make a hard decision as a leader. That's difficult. I think you have to make it prayerfully, you have to make it with a sense of God's peace, and you have to be willing to say, "I was wrong" or "I now need to reconsider that." There has to be a vulnerability in leadership, in making any hard decision. A clarity, but also vulnerability, and that's the kind of leader that I aspire to be, and I'm still a work in progress as a leader.

### **Question 3**

**What are the qualities you like least and most in your parents?**

#### **Answer**

Well, my dad is dead, but my mother is alive and well. The most in my parents? They have a strong sense of advocacy and justice, and I see that flowing through from my mother to me to my children. An ability to speak the truth sometimes, a care for truth, for justice, for clarity, and those are things that are dear to my heart. It's a very hard thing to think about what one doesn't like about one's parents. And I'm really stumped to say that. I think we're all shaped by our upbringing. As a parent myself of two 20-year-olds I know how I've shaped their lives, for good and probably for bad as well. But there's nothing about that, having this question put to me on the spot, I could say is something I don't like about my parents.