



ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

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Provincial Office: 800 Maplewood Ave. • Ambridge, PA 15003

Archbishop's Office: Judah Crossing, Building 650 • 367 Athens Highway • Loganville, GA 30052

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to you from the airport in Vancouver, British Columbia following the meeting of our College of Bishops. We met this week, September 5-7, 2017, in order to discuss the report of the Theological Task Force on Holy Orders. As we met, we were deeply aware that North America is reeling from devastating natural disasters: we heard first-hand accounts of hurricane Harvey in Texas and Louisiana, the smoke from widespread wildfires in the Western parts of Canada and the United States filled the air of Victoria where we met, and we followed the latest reports of hurricane Irma in Haiti, Cuba, and the Caribbean. With that hurricane now threatening the southeastern United States, some bishops in the affected areas had to leave early to make preparations in their dioceses and in their own homes. In the midst of these challenges, we gathered to do the important work of discernment that had been laid before us.

I write to thank you for your prayers for our meeting. Each bishop shared his personal position on the ordination of women, and the position of his diocese. We spent time listening to each other and to the Lord. The deliberation was frank and, at times, poignant and painful. We worshiped, prayed, read Scripture, and spent much time in silence, earnestly seeking to hear God's voice and saying often throughout our time together, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20).

Words cannot convey all that the Lord did in our midst, but we leave more unified than ever, and I give thanks for your faithfulness to lift us up in prayer. Below is the statement by the College of Bishops, unanimously adopted.

In Christ,

The Most Reverend Dr. Foley Beach
Archbishop and Primate



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College of Bishops Statement on the Ordination of Women

September 7, 2017

PREAMBLE

In an act of mutual submission at the foundation of the Anglican Church in North America, it was agreed that each Diocese and Jurisdiction has the freedom, responsibility, and authority to study Holy Scripture and the Apostolic Tradition of the Church, and to seek the mind of Christ in determining its own convictions and practices concerning the ordination of women to the diaconate and the priesthood. It was also unanimously agreed that women will not be consecrated as bishops in the Anglican Church in North America. These positions are established within our Constitution and Canons and, because we are a conciliar Church, would require the action of both Provincial Council and Provincial Assembly to be changed.

STATEMENT

Having gratefully received and thoroughly considered the five-year study by the Theological Task Force on Holy Orders, we acknowledge that there are differing principles of ecclesiology and hermeneutics that are acceptable within Anglicanism that may lead to divergent conclusions regarding women's ordination to the priesthood. However, we also acknowledge that this practice is a recent innovation to Apostolic Tradition and Catholic Order. We agree that there is insufficient scriptural warrant to accept women's ordination to the priesthood as standard practice throughout the Province. However, we continue to acknowledge that individual dioceses have constitutional authority to ordain women to the priesthood.

COMMITMENTS

As a College of Bishops, we confess that our Province has failed to affirm adequately the ministry of all Christians as the basic agents of the work of the Gospel. We have not effectively disciplined and equipped all Christians, male and especially female, lay and ordained, to fulfill their callings and ministries in the work of God's kingdom. We repent of this and commit to work earnestly toward a far greater release of the whole Church to her God-given mission.

Having met in Conclave to pray, worship, study, talk, and listen well to one another, we commit to move forward in unity to carry on the good witness and work that God has given us to do in North America (Ephesians 4:1-6; John 17). We invite and urge all members of the Province to engage with us in this endeavor to grow in understanding the mission and ministry of all God's people.

Adopted Unanimously

*College of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America
The Church of Our Lord, Victoria, BC, Canada*