

Sunday October 21, 2012

Bishop's Statement regarding (substitute) Synod resolution B-3
"Concerning the Blessing of Same Sex relationships"

The intent of this piece is to give Synod members (and any others interested and/or concerned) the substantive points made by the bishop both before and after the lunch break at Synod on Sat. Oct. 20, 2012.

The text of the (final) resolution B-3 after it amended Resolution B-9 of the 2008 Diocesan Synod:

Resolved that this Synod request the Bishop to allow clergy, whose conscience permits, to bless the relationship between same-sex couples whose union has been duly solemnized and civilly registered, where at least one party is baptized, in parish churches whose members have, by resolution, authorized such ceremonies to take place; and to authorize rites for such blessings.

1. Synod has clearly and decisively spoken its mind on this resolution. It passed with a majority of 78%. This resolution comes to us building upon other resolutions from our Diocesan Synod in 2006* and particularly in 2008.* The result of this discernment needs to be honoured. (* See resolutions on next page)
2. Other dioceses in the Canadian Church are also discerning how best to respond to this same issue.
3. As local decisions can affect the wider Church, consultation needs to happen beyond our Diocese.
4. There are different ways of understanding the implementation of the blessing of same sex unions in the life of our Church. How it is to be understood is of critical importance and needs to be determined before it could be implemented.
5. I have been grateful to God and to the leadership of our Diocese for the growing level of trust, willingness to listen, and desire to walk together as a Diocesan community over the last several years, and as evidenced in the quality of the debate on the Synod floor. We must take great care to honour and work with this still-tender new life. We don't want anyone to be left behind, or to strike out alone.
6. Therefore, as a pastoral response, I will consult within our diocese as well – particularly with those for whom this is a critical issue in their spiritual lives – both for those who would be challenged by it, and those who have yearned for it.
7. Therefore, to be faithful to all of the above points, and particularly to the disciples of our diocese that lie behind the above statements, I am withholding concurrence on this resolution – at this time. This decision does not defeat this resolution – it places it in suspension – to allow for the actions outlined above. This is not an attempt to stall or delay this work. I will be consulting with the National House of Bishop's this week. In the following week, I will begin consultation within our Diocese and, as needed, with members of the Provincial House of Bishops. While I cannot commit to a particular date at this time, the schedule outlined above is intended to show that I will work on this as expeditiously as possible.

2006 Diocesan Synod

Resolution B-5 That this Synod affirm that same sex relationships based on long term, monogamous commitments should be treated with respect, care and support.

2008 Diocesan Synod

Resolution B- 8

RESOLVED THAT this Synod affirms:

1. That gay and lesbian persons in our society should continue to receive full protection under the law with respect to the fundamental principles of equity and justice.
2. That gay and lesbian civil unions be fully supported by the Church.
3. That committed gay Christian relationships receive the maximum recognition, ministry, and support this Diocese can provide compatible with our desire to remain a part of the Anglican Communion.
4. That this diocese assure those members of the Church who struggle with homosexual desires and believe them to be wrong, or at least incompatible with God's original design, that they will not be marginalized within the life of the diocese nor their witness dismissed.
5. That we assure both our own national church and other churches within the Communion that in these as in other matters we wish only faithfully to hear the testimony of the apostles and prophets and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to embrace the great and central doctrinal commitments of the past, and to obey Christ in seeking the common good.

Resolution B- 9

MOTION: RESOLVED THAT this Synod request the Bishop, upon the passage by General Synod of an enabling doctrinal resolution, to allow clergy, whose conscience permits, to bless the duly solemnized and registered civil marriages between same-sex couples, where at least one party is baptized, in parish churches whose members have, by resolution, authorized such ceremonies to take place; and to authorize rites for such blessings.