

The Bishop's Charge
To the
164th Synod of the Diocese of Huron
Second Sunday after Pentecost
May 25 2008

Happy are they who trust in the Lord! (Psalm 40:4)

Welcome to the 164th Synod of the Diocese of Huron.

Our first Synod in early July of 1857 saw the election of the Rev'd Benjamin Cronyn, Rector of this Church of St. Paul, as our first Bishop of Huron. Bishop-elect Cronyn travelled to England and was consecrated in the Chapel of Lambeth Palace on October 28th of that year by the Archbishop of Canterbury with co-consecrators being the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop of Nova Scotia and the Bishop of Sierra Leone. His return to what we now call Canada saw him arrive in time to preach his first sermon as Bishop on Christmas Day in this sacred space – our Cathedral Church.

Now 150 years and 5 months later we gather in worship to glorify God and to be strengthened to be the pioneers of the church in these early years of the 21st Century. The theme for our sesquicentennial celebrations was 'Light and Life' – Jesus Christ the light and life of the world. We give thanks to God for the inspiration behind the many projects and programs and the Diocesan service of celebration and thanksgiving held at the John Labatt Centre with 9,200 people present on October 28, 2007 – one hundred and fifty years to the day of Bishop Cronyn's consecration.

Looking forward with courage and confidence we are reminded by the Psalmist "Happy are they who trust in the Lord!". If we Christians are bound together in family love, we are bound together in trust. We have, or should have, a fundamental trust in one another, across our different liturgical styles and our theological conversations and

disputes. Our love and our trust for one another has permitted us to survive our differences. And, I can't keep myself from adding, that our own diocese has been less troubled than some others. I like to think that it is because our relationship is well grounded in love and in trust: we trust in God and so we trust the Church and we trust each other. And happy are they who trust in the Lord.

Imagine Huron – Building the Future Together

We continue to be grateful for the many laity and clergy who gifted our diocese with their imagination enabling us to discern God's Will for the future. Synod received the Imagine Huron report and we entered Phase 2 with an Imagine Huron Implementation Committee. Much has been accomplished and our structures and programs look different in the present than they did in the recent past. Since last Synod we have three new leaders – i.e.:

- The Rt. Rev'd Ed Leidel, Congregational Coach;
- The Rev'd Eleanor Caruana, Gift Planning and Stewardship Consultant;
and
- The Rev'd Sue Malpus, Diocesan Children and Youth Co-ordinator.

In addition, various deaneries have moved forward to improve communications by moving through a self assessment process of identifying who they are and how they see their ministry. This process included developing and using better communication tools to share information about deanery events; diocesan council decisions and local parish initiatives. A "Gift, Skills and Interests" questionnaire was distributed across the diocese for clergy and laity to share their interests in furthering the work of the diocese. This tool is a first step and more initiatives in this area will follow. Further accomplishments and plans in which clergy and laity will play a key role will be highlighted in the Imagine Huron report on Monday.

As a diocese we will now move to Phase 3 – Imagine Huron, Building The Future Together". A committee of some returning members and new members to be

named, will deepen our transition and reformation to be the Church of today and tomorrow. Their work will be supported and undergirded by the final report of “Who is my neighbor”, under the leadership of Myrlene Boken. She has already met with many of you and minimally has been in contact with all others. Let us enthusiastically embrace the conversations that she leads.

We go to doctors for a “physical” and as a diocesan family this work and conversation of “Who is my neighbor” is our diocesan or church physical. We need to fully understand who we are – our strengths and our weaknesses – and that report and the report of Imagine Huron will become the basis of future activity for us to be the Body of Christ.

Our Mission or Purpose Statement

Approximately twenty years ago we developed a mission statement. Every new generation must do this. A mission statement or purpose statement can be described as our DNA. It is unique, it is us and it is our way of telling the Church and the world who we are and the ministry to which God is calling us.

I am asking this Synod to support a process which will enable us to have a new purpose statement for the Church of tomorrow. With the new Imagine Huron Committee (Building The Future Together), with the report of “Who is my neighbor”, with a new purpose or mission statement we will have the tools and the focus to move forward in love for one another and love for our world.

Primate's World Relief and Development Fund/Huron Hunger Fund

Many of us will remember the news from Springhill, Nova Scotia in October of 1958 of a tragic mine disaster with the loss of many lives. Canadians from all walks of life wanted to respond with financial help for the families in need. In September of the following year the Anglican Church of Canada meeting at General Synod, established the Primate's World Relief Fund, that we now call the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. Our own Huron Hunger Fund has been in partnership over the years with the Primate's Fund or PWRDF. Since records were kept of donations to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, I am pleased to share that the Diocese of Huron has raised almost eleven million dollars (\$10,962,412), from 1960 to the end of 2007. This is significantly higher than any other diocese in the Canadian Church. This extraordinary generosity by the people of Huron is cause for considerable celebration.

The Primate's Fund (PWRDF), is embarking on a 50th anniversary program with four priorities:

- i) to increase awareness – it is estimated that only about 30% of Canadian Anglicans are aware of the Primate's Fund (PWRDF)
- ii) to educate – that we may understand our church and our world locally and globally and the necessity for relief and development that every person may achieve their potentiality
- iii) to celebrate – anniversaries are times of celebration and the Anglican family in Canada will have opportunities to celebrate this milestone anniversary
- iv) to encourage financial support – those of us who already donate to Huron Hunger Fund or the Primate's World Relief and Development need to be encouraged to continue to do so and perhaps to give more and hopefully attract others to share in this outreach ministry.

I am asking that the Diocese of Huron embrace this anniversary and embrace all four of the goal areas.

Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relationships

Southwestern Ontario is blessed with a rich tapestry of spiritual traditions. As the Church embraces native or First Nations spirituality it strengthens all of us on our journey. We are in full Communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and that relationship continues to find new expressions of this wonderful new reality. Bishop Bennett is a member of a renewed committee engaging in dialogue between the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada. The ongoing relationship between London's two Cathedrals – St. Peter's Roman Catholic Cathedral and St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral is cause for us to celebrate. The crozier I am using tonight was a gift from Bishop Ron Fabbro and the Diocese of London to mark our friendship and in thanksgiving for our sesquicentennial year. We rejoice that we are increasingly able to interact with other faith communities and assemblies throughout southwestern Ontario.

Our relationship with other world religions is significant as well. At the recent convocation of our seminary at Huron University College the local Imam presented a citation for Rabbi David Rosen of Jerusalem on the occasion of his being awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree (*honoris causa*). There are interfaith occasions of worship and gatherings around significant moments of a civic nature, etc. There is much more than can be done and in highlighting what we are already doing and improving and extending our hand of fellowship to all we can be a model for others.

I am asking that we as a Synod encourage our members and congregations to initiate and be proactive in encouraging and supporting ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and relationships.

Appointments

This evening we honour four outstanding members of our Diocesan family by presenting them with the Order of Huron

- . **Jim Kelso, St. Mark's, Brantford**
- . **Dr. Ramona Lumpkin, St. Luke's, Broughdale, London and Huron University College**
- . **David Palmer, All Saints', Windsor**
- . **Pamela Walters, St. John's, St. Thomas**

Synod 2008 – In Conclusion

I want to express my personal thanks to my colleague and friend in Episcopal ministry, +Bob, for his tireless work on behalf of the well being of the diocese. I also wish to thank the staff at Huron Church House who do not see their work as a job but as a ministry of service and support to the people and congregations of the Diocese of Huron. Tomorrow and Tuesday morning we the clergy and lay members of Synod will gather to learn from presentations, to debate difficult issues and to make decisions, to govern ourselves to be the Church God wants us to be. All will be well when we trust in the Lord. We will live out our trust in the Lord when our conversations are marked by respect for one another, an attentive and listening ear, especially for those we may not agree with. We will be the people of God and for that God will nourish us with the holy food of this sacred meal that was instituted by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the book “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets” by J.K. Rowling, we read: “It is not our abilities that show us what we truly are: it is our choices.”

My brothers and sisters, let us rededicate ourselves as we choose to follow Jesus Christ,

let us choose to pray for one another and for our congregations in Huron and in the Church universal and let us pray for our world and all humanity,

let us choose “to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God”
(Micah 6:8)

and finally let us choose to trust God, trust one another and trust in the future.

May we all experience that happiness when we trust in the Lord.

May God bless us all.

The Right Reverend Dr. Bruce H.W. Howe
11th Bishop of Huron
May 25th 2008