

It is a great privilege to address you today as we begin our Conference Synod and as we welcome our partners Bishop James Almasi and the Rev. Canon Geoffrey Monjesa from the Diocese of Masasi in Tanzania, Bishop Barbara Andrews from the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior in British Columbia, and our ecumenical guests who have graciously joined us. While we gather from our own parts of the Diocese and of the Anglican Communion, we can celebrate the unity we have in Jesus Christ. We are all one Body serving the living God who has called us to be the Church in this time and place!

Je vous souhaite la bienvenue au nom de notre seigneur Jésus Christ, en qui nous formons un seul corps. Même si nos défis, nos forces et nos faiblesses diffèrent, nous sommes tissés ensemble dans la foi que nous partageons et par l'esprit saint qui nous anime. Il est important de se réunir en synode pour témoigner notre désir d'approfondir notre relation en Christ. Cela nous permet de saisir l'opportunité de se connaître d'avantage et d'exprimer notre unité. Nous ne sommes pas seulement des membres de petits lieux de cultes sacrés sans aucun lien ni appartenance. Nous sommes des disciples de Jésus Christ et ensemble, nous sommes appelés à sa mission et responsable à l'ensemble du diocèse. Lors de ce synode, nous pourrions nous ouvrir à ce que l'esprit soit en train de nous dire.

Depuis notre dernier synode, nous avons eu beaucoup de changements au niveau du personnel et du leadership diocésain. Une période d'ajustement s'impose. The Diocese has seen much change this year with a new Executive Archdeacon, a new Pastor of Lay Readers, a new Director of Lay Education, a new Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College, and a new Bishop! Some parishes have also had changes in their clergy and lay leadership. Working well together means learning to appreciate one another's ways of speaking and working and doing

ministry. I am grateful for the richness of leadership in this diocese and for the gifts and institutional knowledge of many who have invested so much love and hard work over the years and who continue to do so. We each bring our gifts to the service of God; the strength of the Diocese and the wisdom of those who have experience is a vital component.

In January, Bishop Barry Clarke and Diocesan Council agreed on the need for a new strategic plan for next five years in our Diocese and a process of review and consultation was begun. While the work was paused to allow the new bishop to come on board, some preliminary results from the survey show the strongest interest in Community Missions (35%), Faith Development/ Discipleship Tools (36%), Equipping Lay people for ministry (39%), Young adult ministry (42%) children's ministry (45%), and Youth ministry (49%).

These areas all fall under the first two of the Five Marks of Mission:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.

I believe that these are compelling areas in which we must work and probably the hardest ones for many of us to attempt. How many new believers have we had in our churches this year? How do we proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom? If we are not sure, then we need to spend some time thinking and praying about it and perhaps getting some training.

The word 'mission' has migrated in meaning from the expression of our call in Christ to thinking that it only means reaching out to those less fortunate, or standing up for the environment or against injustice. I believe the Mission of the Church encompasses all of these things and that reaching out to the community is

not limited to helping those who are poor and isolated. It is the Anglican Communion's expression of the church's "common commitment to, and understanding of, God's holistic/integral mission." Many in the church find it much easier to address the other three Marks of the Mission of the Church: "to respond to human need by loving service"; "to transform unjust structures of society" "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." Our unique ministry as a church is to express the Good News of God in Christ and to help people to grow into strong disciples. It's what defines us and why we are set apart as Christians.

Notre plan stratégique diocésain s'est orienté autour de les Cinq Marques de Mission. La mission de l'Église est celle du Christ. En écoutant les priorités exprimés dans les réponses au questionnaire concernant ce qui semblait important pour les prochaines cinq années, nous avons relevé les défis de :

1. proclamer la bonne nouvelle du royaume de Dieu
2. Instruire, baptiser et encourager les nouveaux croyants

C'est le travail clé de l'église de Jésus Christ, d'incarner notre foi et notre espoir en le partageant. Nous avons un rôle fondamental de formateur de disciples et je crois que c'est notre facteur critique de succès. Or, les trois autres marques de la mission de l'église sont souvent plus faciles et moins gênant et les besoins dans notre monde sont toujours urgents et interpellant.

3. Répondre par amour aux besoins humains.
4. S'efforcer de transformer toutes structures injustes de la société, confronter toutes violences et rechercher la paix et la réconciliation.
5. Œuvrer pour la sauvegarde de l'intégrité de la création et soutenir et renouveler la vie de la terre.

It is imperative that we find ways to reach out in mission and in faith to those who have not heard the Good News. It is not enough to tell ourselves how friendly our churches are while the attendance stays stable – or worse. We need to be praying for opportunities to invite people into a relationship with Christ and then be on the lookout for the person God sends. When new people come to our churches, we need to offer the kind of hospitality that Christ has offered us. This is more than handing them a bulletin and ignoring them. Who is that PERSON that Christ has sent to you today? How can your parish serve them? If your parish can't do it, help them find a church that is willing to do so! Making disciples, growing disciples, and equipping lay people for ministry will make it possible for the other marks of mission to flow. As people animated by the Holy Spirit, we can count on God wanting to work through us. If we teach others how to live with Christ, more can happen.

I am aware that some congregations are very tired and that there are limited resources. The model that we have been using is not working for everyone. That is why I suggest that the leadership of each congregation prayerfully consider taking on one new thing and letting go of one thing. What if we were to spend the next year keeping track of our opportunities to teach, baptize and nurture new believers? What if we were to reach out to the people around our churches and invite them to Messy Church or an Alpha Course? What if you were to set yourselves an audacious goal centered around the first two Marks of Mission? I hope to hear from you and to be able to share stories about the 'One Thing' you took up and the 'One Thing' you let go of. Both are really critical!

Mission and discipleship are two sides of the one coin. We can only be a missional Diocese when we intentionally disciple people in our parish churches. The early church was full of Christian entrepreneurs; disciples who never accepted the status quo, and creatively found new ways to evangelize. How might we find 'new ways' to tell an 'old story' in our incredibly beautiful, vibrant and innovative Quebec?

The early history of the Diocese tells of people coming to this area to reach out in mission to the people who already lived here and to those who were settling here. These clergy and catechists were largely focussing on the first two Marks of Mission. Along the way, they also visited the poor and conducted literacy classes using the Book of Common Prayer! While we need to be sensitive to the arrogant overtones of becoming missionaries in our own surroundings, we cannot neglect to share what is life-giving to us. Let us keep asking God and ourselves how to do better at being the Church. The epistle reading tells us that all this can happen because we have the Holy Spirit in us. In our Gospel reading, Jesus tells us not to worry, and not to be afraid. That is only possible if we nourish ourselves in a profound relationship with God and if we invest our lives in God's kingdom. Our hearts must treasure our life in Christ.

Before he left, Bishop Barry shared with me that he had an audacious idea of a church plant pilot project. He encouraged some people to attend a Vital Church Planting conference and the idea continued to take shape. While it is still waiting for some approvals, we hope to be able to tell you more soon. We believe that this idea is God's idea and we are excited about it!

There is much important work being done in our parishes and at a Diocesan and National church level that expresses the other three marks of mission and some of it is outlined in our Synod reports. Nonetheless, everything that we do as a church must reflect back to the foundation of our baptismal covenant and our identification in Christ.

The service of Consecration was a wonderful event and most of you were present. It was a time of committing ourselves to our ministry together and the liturgy was beautiful and inspiring. I want to thank you all for coming and to thank Dean Paul Kennington for working so hard in putting the service together. Thank you to the Cathedral Staff, the choir and musicians and dancers and servers and greeters; to the Synod office staff for their welcome to me and their hard work in preparing for

the celebration and the reception; thanks especially to Maria Abate, (my secretary who has changed her name back to the Italian version!), for managing the giving out of tickets; Archdeacon Bill Gray who managed so well between bishops and has been a great resource and help to me; to my family, especially my husband Mark, for their openness to the Holy Spirit, for their hard work preparing for the move and unpacking in our new home; and to those of you who encouraged me to pray and ask whether the Holy Spirit was calling me to come back to Montreal. I also want to thank the other candidates who prayerfully let their names be on the ballot. Placing oneself into the will of God is a supreme act of trust.

Many people have worked hard preparing for this Synod gathering: the planning committee has been meeting for the whole year. The Synod Office staff have given generously of their energies and I especially want to thank Sophie Bertrand, Nicki Hronjak, Mark Dunwoody and Ardyth Robinson. This conference synod is focused on exploring the theme of partnership. Indeed collaboration is central to who we are as Christians. The elements of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit all work in harmony. Every relationship we have, whether in our family, our church, our society all depends on an element of partnership. As Christian disciples, we are called to a radical partnership with one another which is expressed in Ephesians 5 as “mutual submission out of reverence for Christ.” I am encouraged to hear of the partnerships between congregations that are being worked on in our Diocese and of the regional ministry in the Laurentians that seems to be flourishing. Be assured that as your Bishop, I will be journeying with you all as we work courageously for the kingdom in Christ’s name. Yes there are and there will be challenges. Yes, there is sometimes fear as we step out in faith. Jesus tells us not to worry and not to be afraid and to invest in his purposes.

We are all one Body serving the living God who has called us to be the Church in this time and place!

Lastly, I want to thank God and this Synod for the privilege of serving as your bishop.

## **Luke 12: 22-34**

### **Do Not Worry**

<sup>22</sup> He said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! <sup>25</sup> And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? <sup>26</sup> If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? <sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you – you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. <sup>30</sup> For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

<sup>32</sup> “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.