

Bishop's Address to Synod

Rochester, New Hampshire

September 30, 2011

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Blessings to you all as we gather for this, our annual synod. Please take the time to enjoy our time together. In a very few short hours, we assemble for worship, for prayer and to transact the temporal business of God's church. We will also have time to socialize, to break bread together and grow in the knowledge and love of God. It is in the coming together as the church that God's work is truly done.

Some of us have returned from our national synod in Belleville, Illinois. By all accounts it was a joyous time and we accomplished a very great deal. And the church should offer its profound thanks to the dedicated delegates who traveled to the wilds of Illinois to do the work of the church. Would those weary travelers stand and be acknowledged by synod? Many thanks to you who have traveled to serve the church on both the national and, now, the diocesan levels. We are all grateful for your service.

The past year, indeed the past several years, have been very interesting and challenging for those of us in the church. But, God never promised us an easy time of it. As Christians, we should be

challenged by our faith. Living the life of a faithful Christian is often the most difficult challenge anyone can undertake. We would like things to be easy, at least some of the time. But who would have thought that unity would be so difficult to achieve. I believe it is so difficult for us because we want it all now; we want to be at the end, at the finish line before we have done the necessary work that we need to do. And that means loving God fully, heart and soul and mind, and loving others as we love ourselves. Unity will not happen immediately; it will happen slowly, step by step. But it can only happen when we approach unity in a spirit of love and a great generosity of spirit.

But we have made small steps. Our General Synod, which concluded last Saturday, approved a communion agreement with the Anglican Province of America. This is a largely symbolic agreement because, in point of fact, we have never been out of communion. The ACA and the APA are virtually identical. Our holy orders are derived from the same source, we use the same prayer book and Missals, we have nearly identical canons. And while this agreement will change little about how we worship and govern ourselves in the Anglican Church in America, the symbolism of our coming together in this way is truly a step toward unity. Furthermore, this step in no way diminishes our other attempts at unity. They will continue. They will come to pass. And that must surely be left in God's hands. It is our task to determine what steps we must take as faithful servants of God's holy church.

Our General Synod accomplished many other tasks as well. I

expect that a review of our synod activities will be reported in detail on our [website](#). But I should give you a brief overview. In addition to the communion agreement with the APA, synod passed a realistic budget. It is worth noting that the national church lives within its budget and has a good surplus. I encourage all parishes and missions to apply for the advertising grant. These grants are available to all churches that have less than 30 communicants. The good news is that no parish has ever been turned down for these grants.

Synod discussed leadership issues within the international church. Both the House of Laity and the House of Clergy passed resolutions requesting that Archbishop Hepworth step down after nine years in office. He has some serious personal issues that he needs time to address. He will need our prayers.

Although there were several serious issues that came before synod, such as diocesan boundary changes, the upcoming election of a Bishop Suffragan for the Diocese of the Eastern United States and the emphasis on evangelism, we also had fun, too. Anyone who has voted on changes to our Constitution and Canons will know precisely what I am talking about.

The Diocese of the Northeast was well represented at General Synod. The DNE made substantial contributions to the success of our national gathering. Jeanne Moody prepared excellent booklets for the proposed canons. These helped streamline the discussion and voting process of our canons. Father Owen Williams was voted registrar of synod. And Archdeacon – and full colonel - Alan Koller

was appointed to serve as Endorser and supervisor of our National

Chaplaincy program.

Now, let's focus on our own diocese. This year, we have several new clergy in our midst, as well as postulants and candidates in our midst. I would ask that the postulants and candidates stand and be acknowledged. We have two new postulants since last year: Mark Black of St. Joseph's in Brooklyn, New York and David Koller from St. Elizabeth in Tuxedo, New York. Now, would the new clergy please stand and be recognized by synod? Father Joseph Bizimana was received earlier this year and is currently serving the parish of St. Augustine in Old Orchard Beach, Maine. Father Amos Mukiza Mihanda is our most recently licensed clergyman. He is currently serving St. Paul's Anglican Church in Portland, Maine. Pastor William Alvarez has requested admission to the diocese and is currently completing his studies for the diaconate.

Our newly ordained clergy include Father Frank Bartlett and Deacon Merrill Perkins. And, if it be God's will, Deacons Dale Bove and Art Bennett will be ordained to the priesthood tomorrow morning. Please stay and celebrate this important occasion in the life of these two men – and of God's holy church.

There are many people to thank for this synod. We certainly thank Trinity Pro Cathedral for its hospitality in hosting this synod. For Father Williams and his staff. For the vestry. Oops. This is a cathedral. Does anyone know what a cathedral vestry is called? Right, it is a cathedral Chapter.

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We also thank Allan Wylie for preparing the reports booklet that helps us do the business of the church so efficiently. We thank Ed

Pacht for producing another edition of our outstanding diocesan publication, *The Northeast Anglican*.

It is now time for us all to turn to the important task of conducting the business of our diocese. May we approach this work in a spirit of joy, of love and of appreciation for each other. Let us always try to discern God's will in all that we do. It is certainly a great truth in the history of Christianity, that the great councils of the church, meeting together in prayer, with the presence of the Holy Spirit, accomplished the work that God gave them to do. May we, too, in this small corner of God's holy church, do our best to live up to the great purpose God has given to us.

Today's gospel reading from St. Matthew included this phrase: “Let your light so shine before men, that they see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Let us take that as our rule and guide for this, our twentieth annual synod.

Let's do the work of the church!