



DIOCESE OF ALGOMA

From the Bishop

13 July 2016
Richmond Hill, Ontario

Dear Friends,

By now, most of you will be aware of the reversal in the decision of the General Synod with respect to changing the canon on marriage. In essence, it appears that a single vote in the order of clergy had been misattributed to the order of laity. It was the one vote necessary to meet the required 2/3rds majority for passage. In reassigning that vote, the motion was declared to have passed in all three orders, and now the resolution will be sent to the next General Synod, meeting in Vancouver in 2019, for final ratification.

In the meantime, the matter will be referred to dioceses and provinces for consideration. I regret that I shall not be here to be part of this process, but I will pray for your Executive Committee and new bishop as they direct these difficult discussions in the months to come.

Much of what I said in my pastoral letter still stands in these new circumstances. We are still sad. We are sad that, having caused such hurt and grief to one part of the body, our lack of carefulness has wounded another part. We are sad that the events of the past few days have caused us to see just how deeply we are divided. We are sad about the possible negative consequences in our ecumenical and Communion relationships. We are sad that some may feel that they have no choice but to leave our fellowship.

In the days that follow, I would call on all of us to be careful in how we speak of these matters and in how we treat one another. The political and adversarial context of our debate has already generated a polarised discussion between 'winners' and 'losers'. Your own delegates, whose voting is now a matter of public record, are especially vulnerable. We agonised over this decision. We who voted against the resolution are not haters; we who voted in favour of the motion are not betrayers. And I believe that each of us have the humility to admit that we may be wrong in the views we hold, if for no other reason than our

understanding of the complexities of God's ways and our human nature is so limited.

As I wrote yesterday, the most powerful witness that we can offer to one another and to our world in the aftermath of the Synod's decision is to remember that we have all been chosen by God, and that our future is in his hands. May he grant us both charity and hope.

+ Stephen