

February 7, 2008

My dear friends:

As we begin one of the holiest seasons of the church year, a season that takes us from the ancient sign of ashes to the all inclusive love of Christ on the cross, word reaches us that at least one parish in our diocese has called a meeting to consider leaving our diocesan family and the Anglican Church of Canada. That causes me immense sadness, particularly because this diocese and our National Church have shown, at numerous synods and in a whole host of ways, that while we sometimes find ourselves disagreeing with each other, we have the capacity to remain one family in Christ.

If a meeting of this nature is to be held, however, I want to assert that the Bishop and the Diocese have a role to play in that debate and need to be represented. As your Bishop, I would require notification of any such meeting and I expect to be invited to send a personal representative who will make a statement on behalf of the Diocese of Niagara and be available to answer any questions. An informed decision can only be made after hearing all sides of a very complex issue.

I would also like to reaffirm my strong commitment and willingness to uphold the best interest of our diocesan family in the wake of any action a parish may decide to take in this matter.

I echo the words of our Primate in his letter to the other Primates of the Anglican Communion that acknowledges with gratitude and great respect, that while conservatives struggle with the issues that face us at the present time, many have indicated clearly that they intend to remain within the fellowship of the Anglican Church.

I am constantly uplifted by all of your prayers. Please continue to pray for the Archbishop of Canterbury; for those responsible for planning the Lambeth Conference and for the fellowship we share in Christ, in the Diocese, our National Church and the world wide Anglican Communion.

Faithfully yours

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Coadjutor Bishop of Niagara
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