



The Right Reverend John H. Chapman  
Bishop of Ottawa

Son Excellence Monseigneur John H. Chapman  
Évêque d'Ottawa

Episcopal Office, Diocese of Ottawa  
Anglican Church of Canada

Bureau épiscopal, Diocèse d'Ottawa  
L'Église anglicane du Canada

*With God's grace, the mission of our ministries  
is to enable people to know Jesus Christ,  
to live and share the good news,  
to grow in faith and to serve God's world.*

## A Pastoral letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of Ottawa No. 1

From: The Rt. Rev. John H Chapman, Diocesan Bishop  
Date: Feast of St. Mary the Virgin, 2009

Dear Sisters and Brothers in ordained ministry

I do hope and pray that each and every one of you has found the opportunity to take sufficient time for yourselves this summer to regenerate, rest and enjoy. I embraced the holiday spirit with vigour this year and I am pleased to tell you that it paid off – I feel wonderful and ready to begin another full and exciting year with you in the diocese.

Now, having completed two years in ministry with you as your Bishop, I feel sufficiently comfortable to write my first "pastoral." It takes time to experience the fulsome breadth of the diocese. Having circumnavigated the Diocese, in many ways more than once, I feel comfortable enough to write to you regarding a number of issues that have come to my attention these last couple of years.

I will discuss with you matters that include the following:

1. Episcopal visits including general practices as well as liturgical practice at the Holy Eucharist, baptism and confirmation
2. Clergy weddings and funerals.
3. The liturgical role for Deacons at the Eucharist and Pastoral Offices
4. Inductions
5. Con-celebrations
6. Intinction
7. Communication with the Episcopal Office
8. The Matter of Same Gendered Blessings
9. The role and function of the Executive Archdeacon
10. Small church coaches
11. Interim clergy – function and responsibilities
12. Special celebrations for parishes, clergy and laity
13. The Bishop's Clergy Conference
14. Clergy Performance Reviews
15. Some concerns regarding pastoral practice in your communities

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## 1. EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS

### **General Comments:**

The regular pastoral visitation of all parishes and worshipping communities of the diocese is among the principle responsibilities of my ministry among you. It is also one of the great delights of the Episcopal Office.

It is my desire for Episcopal visits to be at once business as usual *and* a special occasion in the life of the parish. While in our tradition an Episcopal visit is special, I am not a visitor or guest no matter how infrequent the visit as a result of our Diocesan geographic and numeric size. And, while it is always pleasant to be greeted, my preference is that you do not use language of welcome. Such language tends to imply that I am an alien from some foreign place and not the chief pastor of the diocese. I am not a guest.

### **The Day of the Visit:**

While many of our parishes include multi-point congregations, I expect that one congregation will be selected to host the liturgy for the remaining congregations. As well, I will attend only the main liturgy. If our ministry of evangelism bears much fruit and one liturgy time cannot accommodate all worshippers, then I will happily revisit this policy.

I will gladly take time to greet and be with children. The children's "sermon" does not really allow for this properly so if it were parish practice to provide a children's sermon, I would expect the priest or other appointed minister to assume this responsibility. Alternatively, I would enjoy time with the children either before or after the liturgy.

I will make every effort to arrive no less than 30 minutes before the service. During this time I will go over the liturgy with the parish clergy and musicians, make any necessary alterations and as well, use this time to meet as many parishioners as possible before we begin the celebration.

On almost every occasion, I will remain for any planned social event, Q & A, or time with your Council and Wardens. It would be wise to confirm this with me because sometimes my schedule will not allow for this interaction.

Please note that Catherine does generally travel with me, which I welcome and will never take for granted. I enjoy her company on the road and it gives us a great opportunity to "connect" after a busy week. She enjoys these visits very much. She is a "people person" and finds these visits a joy and not a burden. If I may be so bold as to speak for her, she would appreciate it if someone is available to greet her, guide her as to where she is suppose to be seated, introduce her to a few folks and perhaps someone assigned to sit with her in the pew so she is not seated alone. On a few occasions she does not accompany me and this is not to be interpreted as a reflection on the parish. These are usually those occasions when she may be visiting one of our three children, all of whom live away.

Unlike in olden time, I do not expect to be greeted at the drive and some stocky lad assigned to carry my bag. I do however expect the incumbent to be present when I arrive, and prepared for the day. While my natural demeanor and style tends to be

casual, I am not casual about the role and function of a Bishop in the Church. Rather, I take the office and all that is expected of my position very seriously. For this reason, out of respect for the people of God gathered, and the Office, formal introductions to the parish are expected such as Bishop Chapman or Bishop John.

**The Liturgy of the Day:**

I anticipate that all visitations will be celebrations of the Holy Eucharist unless previously discussed and arranged. Typically, these celebrations are taken from the BAS but this is not universally the practice, which is fine.

The Proper of the Day will be used even in the event of baptism or confirmation. These Propers will include readings from the revised common lectionary unless previously discussed with me.

The liturgical colour will be the colour of the day unless ...

- Baptism – White
- Confirmation and Baptism – White
- Confirmation only - Red

The Episcopal Office will prepare all certificates so please ensure that correctly spelled names, and dates of baptism for confirmation candidates, are given to Ms. Jude Green no less than four weeks before my visit.

Locating some parishes requires my using a GPS (wonderful invention!). Could you please make sure that Jude Green has the street address of the Church hosting the celebration?

I would appreciate an acolyte assigned to me throughout the liturgy to hold my crozier, books and mitre. I will discuss the acolyte's function when I arrive so it is important to have the acolyte arrive at the church in plenty of time.

For confirmation, I will stand or sit whichever is the custom of the parish. Candidates must bear a nametag somewhere visible to my aging eyes.

Typically, the incumbent will announce hymns, set the Altar, read the Gospel, do the ablutions and make any necessary parish announcements at the time in which these are typically done. I will celebrate, preach and anything else left undone.

The Paschal Candle will be lit and available for baptism but not confirmation.

**2. CLERGY WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS**

Typically, clergy planning to marry will of course plan their wedding in a manner of their own choosing. If it is a second marriage, clergy are required to meet with me first prior to making any arrangements.

If clergy would like me to perform the wedding or otherwise take part in some manner, I would be delighted. The same is true for clergy funerals. I will do my absolute best to be present for all clergy funerals. This is extremely important to me.

### **3. THE LITURGICAL ROLE FOR DEACONS AT THE EUCHARIST AND PASTORAL OFFICES**

The Diaconal role at any celebration of the Eucharist will include: reading the Gospel, preach if this has been previously arranged, set the Altar, and dismiss the people. Deacon's may if circumstances require, conduct a funeral liturgy and officiate at morning or evening prayer.

Deacons will not celebrate a "Deacon's Mass." Deacons will not conduct a marriage liturgy unless accompanied by a priest who will offer the blessing of the couple.

### **4. CONCELEBRATIONS OF THE EUCHARIST**

Unless a concelebration is somehow reflecting the unity of the church such as the Bishop concelebrating with the newly ordained or at an induction liturgy, concelebration should be avoided. On those rare occasions when a concelebration does occur, the principle celebrant only will read the prayer and engage manual acts.

### **5. INTINCTION**

It is my intention, as sensitively as possible to eliminate this practice in the diocese immediately and I ask for your help in this. It is a practice that is liturgically weak and unsanitary. Those who do not wish to share the common cup will be asked to receive in one kind. Current practice of sharing the common cup may come under discussion in the near future in light of our current flu epidemic. I will keep you informed in the months to come. I am sure that the Canadian House of Bishops will be discussing this matter at our next meeting.

### **6. COMMUNICATION WITH THE BISHOP**

As you know, I make every effort to be accessible to you! If this has not been your experience I need to know about this. You have my phone numbers and in the event of an emergency, all of the Archdeacons have my cell number – don't hesitate to ask for it if the need arises.

Regarding email communication, general email to me should be addressed to [bishopsoffice@ottawa.anglican.ca](mailto:bishopsoffice@ottawa.anglican.ca). Confidential email correspondence (my eyes only) should be addressed to [bishop-john@ottawa.anglican.ca](mailto:bishop-john@ottawa.anglican.ca).

### **7. INDUCTIONS**

I will continue to induct first time incumbents and clergy new to the Diocese. Otherwise, the regional Archdeacon will conduct the induction service on my behalf. I have asked the Doctrine and Worship Panel to examine and make any necessary changes to the current induction service. I expect the new "rite" will be released sometime in 2010. Until such time as this new liturgy sees the light of day, the following needs to be observed:

The new incumbent will join in the procession but be seated in the front pew until such time as she or he is inducted.

- The new incumbent will concelebrate the Eucharist with me (or the Archdeacon).
- The new incumbent will select the propers and preacher for the service.
- The new incumbent may wear choir habit or alb and stole and with cope or chasuble if that is your custom.
- The new incumbent will put together and print off the liturgy.
- Items to be presented will include only those items suggested in the liturgy. While other items for presentation may seem appropriate to the new incumbent at the time, this practice is discouraged. The induction liturgy is for the Church and about the Church – it is not about you individually, therefore it is appropriate that only those items that typically symbolize the ministry and leadership of the ordained will be allowed. These include: water, bread and wine, bible, keys, oils, prayer books, and CBRs.

## **8. THE MATTER OF SAME-GENDERED BLESSINGS**

This matter is currently under discussion with our Doctrine and Worship Panel and they have yet to make a recommendation to me regarding any further action. The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Ottawa stands prepared to begin the practice of blessing same gendered couples civilly married if that is the recommendation to me and permission extended. Strict limitations apply. Permission would only be granted with the understanding that we as a diocese are still struggling to discern the mind and heart of the Church on this matter. Their role would be to help all of us further our discernment “experientially.”

If you are asked by a same gendered couple to bless their relationship, you are required to inform them that this practice has not yet been sanctioned in the diocese. May I suggest that you direct them to an alternative liturgy that is not only appropriate but also elegant. That is, the “Blessing of a Family” which is contained in the Canadian Book of Occasional Celebrations pages 144 – 148. I believe that until we sort ourselves out on this matter, this liturgy provides an appropriate and sensitive pastoral response. Alternatively, you may wish to suggest the practice of Eucharist with appropriate prayers as outline in the Canadian House of Bishop’s Guidelines 2007.

## **9. THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE EXECUTIVE ARCHDEACON**

In short, the Executive Archdeacon is my right hand. He assists me in almost all but liturgical work in the diocese. More specifically, the Archdeacon gives a significant portion of his time to matters related to human resources and human resource management. As well, the Archdeacon functions as the principle executive in the Diocese. He chairs by virtue of his position the Appointments Panel as well as a number of other committees and panels as need arises. The Archdeacon is my advisor, my support and my confidant. We generally consult regarding almost any and all major decisions that are made in the Episcopal Office. However, personal conversations between Bishop and Priest stay between Bishop and Priest only.

The Archdeacon shares with the Dean of Ottawa the role of Commissary during my extended absences from the Diocese (e.g. vacation)

## 10. SMALL CHURCH COACHES

We had a wonderful clergy day on this topic and I wanted to let you know that the idea is not lost. As soon as I can find a way to free up a budget to support the venture I hope to proceed. Until such time ...

## 11. INTERIM CLERGY

Interim clergy are just that, interim. Their function is predominantly liturgical except for those duties and responsibilities that have been agreed upon between the priest and the corporation of the parish. In some cases, Interims are named priest in charge. This usually occurs if the vacancy requires a longer than usual interim. Typically, a priest in charge does hold, temporarily, the same authority as an incumbent.

Interim clergy or "priests in charge" may under no circumstances "apply" for the position of incumbent of the parish being served. While there have been one or two occasions when this practice was "loosely interpreted," pastoral considerations were a factor. My future practice will be to hold to the policy that an interim or priest in charge will not be able to apply for the position of incumbent of the parish they are currently serving.

## 12. SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS AND ANNIVERSARIES FOR CLERGY OR PARISHES

Milestones are important. I would be delighted to receive invitations to all quarter century milestones (e.g. 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup> etc.) for clergy and parishes. In order for us to look ahead in hope and confidence it requires a good look back every once in a while. These events are healthy, fun and give us confidence in God's presence and mercy for our future. With proper notice I will do everything possible to attend these events. Please do recognize that my calendar is "crazy." Sometimes I may need to ask the Executive Archdeacon, Territorial Archdeacon or Dean to go in my stead but generally speaking, with sufficient notice, I ought to be able to attend and do what you ask of me.

## 13. THE BISHOP'S CLERGY CONFERENCE

You have already deduced that this event is a priority for me! Throughout my 30 years of ministry this is an event that I always welcome and value. It is time for us to all be together – those who share a common faith, life and vocation. It is a privilege for us to be together in prayer, laughter, sacraments and learning - if the speaker is good – bonus. If not, well we had time with our peers and that is good.

As you know, in any large industry or corporation, it is essential that the leaders have time to gather, share, learn and support each other. It is no different for our College of Clergy. I find no fault in expecting a fulsome response from the clergy of the diocese to be present with each other and me. My affection for you all runs deep and I want to be with you and you with each other in companionship, support, encouragement and care.

Typically, only clergy exercising permanent full time or permanent part-time positions are extended an invitation and are expected to be in attendance.

## 14. CLERGY PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

May I remind you that performance evaluations are a normal requirement in this Diocese. Your Archdeacon will approach you once to arrange a time to do your evaluation. If you

are obligated to defer the exercise, it will be your responsibility to follow up. Clergy who have not completed annual evaluations will not be considered for moves and will not receive salary increases above cost of living. I have not exercised this policy until now. I wanted everyone to have time to adjust to a climate of regular accountability. I do want you to know that effective this autumn, this policy will be in place and exercised.

#### 15. A FEW VARIOUS AND SUNDRY CONCERNS

In my years as a Seminary Dean and recently here in Ottawa as your Bishop, I have noticed a growing trend that concerns me. It is imperative, as you obviously know, that getting to know each and every one of your parishioners intimately is absolutely critical. Yet, parish visiting among clergy is taking up less time now than it once did. I find this disturbing and there is no reason for it. Our work now is the same as it has been for centuries; teach the faith, preach the gospel, nurture the vulnerable, bind up the wounded, evangelize the faith, care for the people of God and pray always.

I have had opportunity to visit different and varied parishes for many years. I can say to you without question, that the parishes that are healthiest are those in which the clergy leadership is intimately familiar with the families, their homes and their place of work. Yes, in our current culture, work visits are often more helpful and appreciated than home visits - makes sense these days. I have noticed and experienced that clergy leaders are able to resolve conflict, introduce change, receive calls from those in crisis far more effectively when the people trust you and know you well – visiting helps. I have actually witnessed one or two of our clergy trying to resolve a serious parish conflict using email as the primary means of communication. While, unprofessional, this is also not who we are. What I am trying to say to a few of you and a reminder to all, with all respect, “step away from your computers and get into the vineyard.” I speak pointedly I know, but the matter is important to me and I know it is important to you as well.

Another matter that concerns me is hospitality (I know – broken record). While complaints received by the Bishop’s Office and me personally are few (congratulations), a common theme on those rare occasions includes, “no one greeted me or spoke to me when I attended parish “X””. I know that this is not your problem alone. It is a parish problem that seems to be unrecognized by many. Could I encourage you again to make sure that the practice and ministry of hospitality is a standing item on your parish council agenda. As you know, this is a denomination wide problem and I would like to tackle it at home at least.

Friends, thank you for your attention to this “Pastoral.” Please know that I keep you all in my daily prayers asking God to keep you safe, filled with joy in your homes and in your ministry.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "+John." with a flourish underneath.