



The Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario

The Anglican Church of Canada

The Most Reverend Anne Germond
Metropolitan

Sunday 21th April, 2024

Dear friends in Christ,

In these Eastertide days the good news of the empty tomb continues to be heard throughout the church as we rejoice that the one who is risen is the Good Shepherd who knows each one of us by name and who loves us with a love that holds nothing back. In a world of loneliness and increasing polarization it is a beautiful thing to be known and loved by God. God is love.

In Sunday's Gospel we hear Jesus' affirmation that he knows his own and his own know him. There is a beautiful unity of *hearing and doing* in these words that binds the sheep to the shepherd. As living members of the body of Christ we are similarly bound to Jesus in a lifelong relationship with him in our own vocation or calling. A vocation has been described as a 'path of love' with each of us on a unique and distinct path of love in life.

Whatever path we follow, whether it be in marriage or the single life, in a profession or volunteerism, parenthood or grandparenting, humanitarian work or ministry within the church we are offering our lives to God in the service of love.

We see the transforming love of the Good Shepherd in our church as faithful followers are raised up to bear witness to the love of Christ in their own vocation.

Some of the Good Shepherd's followers are called to lead holy lives by serving in various lay ministries within the Church. Others are called to ordained ministry, serving as deacons or priests to be living, sacramental images of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, devoting their lives in a particular way to the service of God's people. We are so grateful to God that they have answered God's call to ordained ministry and serve our church with passion and dedication. They are faithful and gifted leaders and like the good shepherd serve in a way that "holds nothing back". Thanks be to God for their leadership in our church.

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As we continue on the path of love I invite you to join with me and Christians everywhere in offering this prayer for vocations in our church.

A Prayer for Vocations

God our hope, your risen Christ commissioned leaders
to make disciples of all nations and baptize them to serve
as a living testimony to his presence.

Raise up in this Province vocations to holy orders,
individuals who will love you with their whole hearts
and gladly spend their lives making you known;
Quicken wisdom in those charged with ministries
of discernment or mentorship;
and equip theological schools and faith communities
in which vocations are encouraged and incubated,
so your Church, devoting itself to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
the breaking of bread and the prayers,
may live as a faithful sign and instrument of your Reign,
drawing the world to the One who is Lamb, Gate, and Shepherd,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

In a time when there is a very real clergy shortage in our church the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario has named vocations and formation for priestly ministry as a priority this triennium. There are many ways in which you can pray for vocations in our church. First, for those within our dioceses who are discerning a call to ordained ministry and are beginning their theological studies for formation, education and training in lay or ordained ministry, and for those graduating this year. Pray for those who will be mentors, offering guidance and support to those who are seeking to be faithful in answering God's call in their lives.

Pray also for theological schools and universities as they continue their important work of preparing students or enriching them for ministry in the church and that they will be 'lively centres for sound learning and the pursuit of wisdom'. In particular pray for Wycliffe College, Trinity University College, Huron University College, St. Paul's University, Thorneloe University, Renison College, the Niagara School for Missional Leadership and the Bishop Thomas Corston School for Ministry.

Finally, pray for your own parish that it will be a place where new vocations are encouraged and nurtured and where the clergy model the priestly life in a way that raises up new aspirants for ministry.

Know that you remain in the bishops' prayers as we strive to be faithful to our calling and vocation – the path of love.

Yours in Eastertide joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Germond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol above the first letter 'A'.

The Most Rev. Anne Germond
Bishop of Algoma and Moosonee
Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario