

This is my first diocesan report to Provincial Council as last year's report had been written by The Very Revd Michael J Pitts, Dean of Montreal and The Venerable Peter D Hannen, Vicar-General of the Diocese who were Commissaries *sede vacante* at the time reports were being submitted. My thanks to both of them for the work they did while the See of Montreal was vacant; Provincial Council met last year a mere three days after my election, and with the whirlwind that accompanied it, was unable to attend.

The Diocese of Montreal went through some difficult times last year as what we gained in a Primate for the national church, we lost as (Arch)Bishop for the diocese. The Diocese met for its annual synod and witnessed the consecration and installation of their new bishop. At the synod, the diocese, amongst others, passed a motion to establish a new diocesan canon on trusteeship; the purpose of this canon is to provide a framework within which the Bishop exercises his rights, powers and prerogatives, by and with the consent of Diocesan Council, in order to place Distressed Parishes in Trusteeship. The intent is that the Bishop and Diocesan Council will use Trusteeship under this Canon only as a last resort, when other efforts to resolve the Distressed Parish's problems have failed, or when it is urgent to intervene for financial or other reasons. The synod also passed a motion to revise an exiting canon on housing to bring it in line with the actual situations in our parishes, where more and more we find that the incumbent no longer resides in a rectory but rather in their own house/apartment/condo.

We, at the behest of Diocesan Council, have embarked upon a plan of action for our life together. Over the last few months, we have had two two-day workshops on Strategic Planning, facilitated by Dr Peter Richardson of Queen's University School of Business. These meetings brought together about fifty individuals representing both clergy and laity of the Diocese, as well as different age groups, some with diocesan experience (i.e. committee members and such) others complete neophytes. I was deeply impressed by the openness and willingness of the participants to share during these workshops. The aims of these workshops are to develop a shared understanding of the future strategy for the Diocese; to assess our capabilities and culture and determine what needs to change in the future; to develop a five-year plan for the Diocese and an short-term "challenge" to lay the foundation for achieving the vision; and to develop a strong sense of momentum around the proposed strategy. Thirty years ago, there were almost 54,000 Anglicans in the diocese; today, only a third of that number remains. We find ourselves at a time where there is a greater strain on our resources – human, financial, and others – than at any other time in our history. Proverbs 29:18 reminds us that "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Our situation is not as dire as it sounds, but we must equip ourselves now and take the necessary steps in order to ensure the continued existence of our diocese.

In July of this year, we were happy to welcome the delegates of the *Réseau Francophone* or Francophone Network of the Anglican Communion. Theological education in the Anglican Communion and translating key liturgical documents into French were given high priority. Representing approximately 4 million French-speaking Anglicans around the world, the Francophone Network was recognized as an official network of the Anglican Communion at the 2002 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Hong Kong. The conference passed fifteen resolutions, including one declaring that the members of the Francophone Network are

determined to remain in full communion with one other. In addition to the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, the Francophone Network includes the provinces of West Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Madagascar, and the Indian Ocean.

In February, Diocesan Council started the process for consultation on Same-sex Blessings. As GS2007 will be voting on a final motion around the blessing of Same-sex unions, our timeline for consultation within the diocese needs to fit within this framework and be as inclusive as possible.

On June 3-4, the Diocese held an Anglican World Festival. Subtitled "Light the Fire," this first festival attracted some 300 people from all over the Diocese, representing local multicultural communities who call themselves Anglican. Group after colourful group dressed in their native costumes sang, read and prayed as influenced by their cultural backgrounds. A procession around the Cathedral witnessed to the casual downtown visitor the multiplicity of the Anglican Communion. The festival continued the next morning with a day of reflection and discussion about the Communion. Dr. Richard Virr, Diocesan Archivist, spoke on the history of the Anglican Church in Canada and how it has contributed, for good and not so good, to the development of the Province of Quebec. Participants were then invited to select a workshop for the morning and afternoon sessions. Workshops included: HIV/AIDS Education in Rwanda; Women and Social Change in South India; Revisiting Anglican-African Church History; Seychellois Cuisine; Indigenous Justice Issues facing the Anglican Communion; Cowboys and Indians by Bevan Skerratt of Urban Aboriginal Medicine; Canadian mission and ministry in the Caribbean; Haiti: Une nouvelle option pour une Haiti nouvelle/A new option for a new Haiti; Colonialism and the Anglican Communion; and "Jamming in the name of the Lord". Our sincerest thanks to the Reverend Mark Rogers and his organising committee for a truly memorable event.