

# **RESPONSE TO THE FORMAL QUESTIONS**

by

## **THE VEN. KATHRYN OTLEY**

### **1. PERSONAL FAITH**

**How did you come to trust in the Triune God? How do you maintain your faith in daily life? How would you communicate this faith to others?**

a) I learned to trust in God from an early age. I am a cradle Anglican I attended church each week with my family, participating in Sunday school, junior choir and youth group. I grew to know and to love God. Through difficult losses in our family, I was always surrounded by the love of God. As I grew older, Jesus accompanied me as friend and confidante and the Holy Spirit my prayer companion. As a teen, I took part in the Diocese of Montreal's 'Diocesan Youth Committee,' planning and holding youth events throughout the diocese. Coming to Ottawa to study at Carleton University, I walked to Trinity Church on Bank Street and taught Sunday while studying. I married and then raised my family in Nepean, taking on a variety of parish roles at Christ Church in Bells Corners. It was there I felt a call to serve God in a new way, which eventually led to ordination. I continue to learn and grow in understanding, fulfilling the promises made at my baptism in this life-long journey of faith.

b) I maintain my faith daily through prayer and meditation on the scriptures. Prior to attending St. Paul University for theological studies, my prayer life was sporadic, with occasional bible studies, book studies and attempts at regular prayer. In seminary we were required to participate in daily morning prayer and regular evening prayer. This formed my daily discipline of prayer. After ordination, caught up in the business of parish life, there were times my daily practice slipped. I quickly renewed my devotions because without daily prayer, exhaustion and lack of focus ensued. I begin reacting to situations drawing only my own energy, rather than being grounded in the strength of God. Now, each day begins with morning prayer and a journalled reflection on scripture. I write out a verse and carry it with me through the day. At the end of each week, I pray an Examen and reflect on those verses. The preparation for preaching at Sunday and mid-week Eucharists keeps my study and reflections current and relevant. On my Sabbath leave, I chose to focus on prayer with a goal to strengthen my evening prayer practice and develop my contemplative prayer skills. These daily disciplines of prayer and reflecting on scripture, alongside setting healthy boundaries of time for relaxation, time with family and friends, are essential for me to maintain (and grow) my faith and to keep up the pace of work required in ministry without becoming overwhelmed.

c) I share my faith in a variety of ways, guided by the words of our baptismal covenant: "Proclaiming by word and example the good news of God in Christ." My faith is expressed in how I live my life in relation to those around me, respecting the dignity of all people - those well known, and those who are strangers.

More formally, I share my faith through preaching. I take the time to craft homilies which interpret the gospel in today's context - sharing faith that is timely and relevant. I am passionate about communicating faith through teaching and do so in different settings: book studies, retreats, sessional university work, and workshops.

I proclaim the gospel by example as I address issues of social injustice such as homelessness, food scarcity in our local and the wider community. I also express solidarity with ecumenical and interfaith partners on matters of social and ecological justice by meeting with them and writing letters of support when they are victims of racially motivated attacks.

Informally, I regularly prepare children's talks- there is nothing like distilling a message of faith for the very young to engage people of all ages! I enjoy sharing and reflecting on my experience of God in a variety of creative ways including story telling, needle art, bible art journalling, and sharing the wonder and enjoyment of the outdoors.

## **2. LEADERSHIP AND GIFTS**

**What do you consider the core functions of a bishop? How do your gifts align with these functions?**

The core functions of a bishop are captured in the meaning of the Greek word for 'bishop,' episcopo: "oversight: looking over, inspecting, caring." The promises a bishop-elect makes at their ordination and consecration uphold this meaning with the imagery of both shepherd and steward, responsible to nurture and to govern.

**Leadership in faith** - Be obedient to Christ, faithful in prayer and the study of scripture. Live out the joy of service, proclaim and interpret the gospel - be a teacher and continue to learn. Lift up vocations: ordain priests and deacons; sustain and take council with fellow presbyters and deacons Guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Anglican church. Work collaboratively with archdeacons, senior staff, Diocesan Council, various committees, and community partners. Develop new partnerships with those who share our values.

**Chief pastor:** guide, challenge, comfort, encourage, inspire, and strengthen all the baptized. Celebrate the sacraments and provide for their administration. Support clergy wellness. Foster healing of relationships and ensure safe, respectful places to work, worship, and carry out mission.

**Represent our Diocese:** take part in the leadership of wider church; provincial, national and global. Work with ecumenical and interfaith partners.

**Renew the ministry of the church:** ensure our diocese continues innovating in its work of nurturing the baptized, inviting the seeker, advocating for, and serving vulnerable and marginalized populations.

How do my gifts align with these core values?

**Leadership in Faith:** I have experience in a variety of leadership roles: Diocesan Council, Regional dean(rural), and archdeacon of both a rural/suburban deanery, and a suburban/urban deanery. This experience has developed a gift of understanding our diocese with a wide perspective. A gift of stepping back and opening to a wide, inclusive understanding of the many facets of our diocese: rural, suburban and urban, prosperous and struggling, sparse or densely populated. This gift is vital to our response to the changes we face at this time.

An archdeacon advises and works collaboratively with their bishop. This has gifted me with a familiarity with the realities of the bishop's job as together we address issues of employment, governance, finance, pastoral matters, property issues and contextual mission.

I have a gift of recognising leadership qualities in those around me, clerical and lay. I raise up leaders, supporting and empowering them in their ministry.

I have a gift of creating space while working in collaboration. I encourage others to bring forward new ideas, share feedback and I recognize their contributions. Giving credit to others and celebrating their amazing gifts highlights the rich diversity of gifts in our diocese and gives hope through a focus on the abundance of God's grace working through us.

**Chief pastor:** The pastoral offices are close to my heart. Years of visiting, preparing with parishioners for baptisms, marriages and deaths, have developed my gifts of listening, presence, prayer, and support. My pastoral support of parishioners and colleagues is a gift I offer and key skill in navigating the many changes and challenges we face together.

As a leader I often address conflict in parishes and must carry out complex decisions, make hard choices. I listen and learn as much as I can, reflect with others and then carry out the decision with compassion and firmness. I take responsibility for my decisions and actions. When I make mistakes, I learn from them, reflecting with others and responding with greater understanding moving forward.

**Representing our Diocese:** I served as a diocesan representative to the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario for 18 years and I am presently serving the National church as chair of the Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice Coordinating Committee. Serving in these roles, I developed a gift of connecting with other dioceses, bishops, clergy, and laity. I received the gift of experiencing our role as a diocese in the wider church and learning how best we can contribute and lead at this level of governance through advocacy and action. I share that gift and the experience I have of topics including theological education, social and ecological justice (water safety, competing human

rights, homelessness, creation matters), encouraging vocations, eldercare crises, the theology of disability, ways to engage in affirmation and inclusion, developing respectful indigenous relationships and working towards reconciliation.

Partnerships are crucial in our changing context - I have worked with non-profit organisations, with ecumenical and interfaith partners, with businesses in the for-profit realm as well as municipal and federal organisations. I offer my gift of experiences in negotiating, communicating clearly our Anglican perspective, identifying our shared goals, listen to and learning from their experience and generous sharing our own.

**Renew the ministry of the church:** As a leader I offer the gift of humility - not coming forward with something completely new, rather renewing the church by continuing to build on the initiatives we are developing with approval and direction of council and synod. Starting with the Bokan Report, continuing with Embracing God's Future and the Roadmap of our strategic priorities and practices, we engaged with the Shape of Parish Ministry Consultation. We created parish profiles, shared and reflected on them together and focused on four priorities with specific tasks and expected outcomes. I want to continue building on the incredible work we have done together and to this end I offer my gifts of facilitation, evaluation, refinement of proposals and raising up ideas and leaders, as together we renew the ministry of the church.

### **3. DEMOGRAPHICS, DIVERSITY, AND VISION**

**Demographic shifts within our diocese reflect broader changes taking place across Canadian society, in both its cultural and spiritual makeup. What is your perspective on these shifts, and how would you lead our diocese as we navigate the reality of social change?**

The changes taking place across Canadian society, both culturally and spiritually are reflected in the shifts within our own diocese. Primary among these changes is an aging and dwindling foundation of faithful Anglicans who give generously to support both the upkeep of the parish and its outreach/mission.

Secondly, the family structure, upon which our traditional leadership roles in the parish were based, has changed from one parent working and one at home, to both parents working, single parent families and singles working long hours at multiple jobs.

In addition, many events and activities take place in the traditional time set aside for worship and faith formation. Families, couples, and singles have busy weeknights and weekends participating in activities that they feel add healthy meaning to their lives. Some are disillusioned with the church for its historic wrongs. Other cultures see our lack of diversity and do not see a place for themselves on our community. Fewer newcomers and young people recognize our church as a place to find meaning in their lives; a place that offers them an opportunity to explore their spirituality, to exercise their desire to be generous and to make a positive contribution to their community and the world they live in.

As we pray and consider our path forward in this time of declining numbers and the other challenges listed, I offer the image of a compass. A compass points the direction of true North; it points the way but does not push or pull us there. Our compass is the Triune God - pointing us in the direction we must go. Our 'trail guides' are scripture, tradition, and reason. We must determine the route to take and how we are to travel it together. The promises of our baptismal covenant directs how we live together and holds us accountable for our decisions and actions, reminding us of our promises to God as we move forward on this journey.

Navigating the reality of these changes calls us to continue the tasks as directed by synod for this triennium: easing financial strain on parishes, supporting parish leaders, guiding parishes facing major changes. We will achieve this by prayerful and faithful reliance on the rich and diverse gifts people offer, creating innovative and collaborative solutions. We will continue to build and refine the Learning Commons, responding to the feedback we receive as we use and explore this resource.

It is important to honour the traditions supporting faithful longtime parishioners, who created many of the parish and community ministries our diocese currently offers. It is also important to honour the new and creative ministries realised through the contextual mission and new worshiping communities initiatives. These are not competing ministries. It is not a case of either traditional ministry or new ministry. Both are necessary for the continued vitality, the thriving, of our diocese.

One of the key factors in driving change is effective communication both amongst ourselves and with those around us. We need to improve our knowledge of each others' ministries, programs, challenges and solutions and share our inspiring stories or hard-won learnings. Until we can effectively communicate to each other who we are and what we are doing, we cannot hope to connect with those in our community who are not members or reconnect with those who have left the church. Helping seekers discover faith and experience the hope of God's grace, can only take place if we can communicate clearly that we are a safe, affirming place that will welcome them to 'Come and See.'

In recognizing the exhaustion of long-time volunteers and the desire of newer members to begin taking on tasks without being overwhelmed, we need to address our traditional ways of organising parish roles/tasks. We need to account for different patterns of attendance and availability. Where possible, this calls for a restructuring and reimagining of various parish roles into several discrete tasks- spreading out the responsibilities to match the time and volunteers available.

Supporting clerical and lay leaders with training is essential to the diverse and challenging issues we encounter as we hold up our values of faithful service, welcoming, and inclusivity. We need to explore and understand both our capacity and our limits. One way to accomplish this is through the resources of the 'just released' Learning Commons.

Inviting people from diverse cultures to join us in worship, faith formation and service involves more than including a piece of music or a few prayers from a different culture or posting a sign saying we are an affirming parish. We must continue the work of Anti-racism training for all clergy and laity and add training to raise awareness of the obstacles confronting people who are marginalised in our communities.

In short, while this is a very different time that many of our long-standing clergy and laity have experienced, it is not a bad time. It is a new opportunity renew our churches and continue to thrive.

#### **4. FAITH AND COMMON PRAYER**

**Anglicanism is rooted in a tradition of common prayer, but it also encourages local expression in worship. As bishop, how would you guide the Diocese in maintaining a balance between common prayer and local expression?**

Our Anglican common prayer forms us: *lex orandi lex credendi* - 'what we pray is what we believe' and 'what we believe is what we pray.' Our worship both shapes us and reflects who we are as Christians and reveals our Anglican identity. It should be sensitive to the needs of those who attend every week, those who attend occasionally and those seeking meaning and a place to belong. Throughout time, our expression of prayer has changed, and it will continue to change as it reflects our growing understanding of ourselves as Anglicans and Christians.

We are blessed with a huge variety of Anglican resources in Canada and around the world from our Anglican Communion. I would encourage both the use of these resources, especially our Canadian prayers and liturgies including: the Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Alternative Services, supplemental prayers, prayers and liturgies already created for specific days, seasons (creation), inclusivity (language, culture, gender identity and affirmation) and especially those reflecting our relationship with Indigenous peoples of Canada.

I have taken part with clerical and lay colleagues, both within our diocese and across our Ecclesiastical Province, crafting liturgies for youth gatherings, Provincial Synod, Remembrance Day, and Freedom Sunday. There are many opportunities reflect in our prayers our local and lived reality.

I would form a liturgical committee to develop an ADO Eucharistic prayer, reflecting our location in the nation's capital, and the breadth of our geographically diverse diocese.

#### **5. MINISTRY TO PEOPLE WHO ARE VULNERABLE**

**Our Diocese is committed to meeting the needs of the vulnerable, through both our community ministries and our parish life. Under your leadership, how would you help both parish and community ministries flourish in this calling?**



**Parish Ministries:** Using the deaneries as a gathering focus, we can connect in a Deanery Forum to share, inspire, and brainstorm opportunities and creative solutions to the challenges encountered as we minister to those in need in our local context. Different parishes would bring unique experiences to these gatherings.

Some parishes will have a long history of offering services such as food banks, cooked meals, pre-owned clothing and household items, affordable housing, or refugee sponsorship. At the forum, these parishes could share their stories, offer creative solutions to challenges, tell of recent innovations and their learnings along the way.

Those parishes who have received a Future Fund grant and are offering new and innovative ideas for parish ministry, can share their experience of getting a new program off the ground in today's context, their struggles and triumphs and new ideas for partnerships in community.

Parishes to who would like to begin a ministry can be inspired with new ideas, receive concrete support on how to discern what the needs of the community are through listening to lived experience and connecting with service organisations in the area. After identifying a need, they can determine whether they join a project underway or can create the capacity to initiate and sustain a new ministry.

This is an opportunity for every parish to be engaged, to think outside the walls of their building, learn from each other and reach into the community to serve those in need.

**Community Ministries:** One of the strongest aspects of my call to ordained ministry was to be a leader in a diocese making a measurable impact on the lives of those who the most vulnerable in our society, whether rural or in urban settings - ADO is that diocese. Over time, I have worked on the board of, been chaplain to, volunteered serving meals with or otherwise supported all the Community Ministries of our Diocese. Over the last ten years I have focussed my action on addressing the affordable housing crisis through advocacy, raising awareness, and action - being a leader in the team creating Hollyer House, acting as a resource to other groups in our diocese, sharing our learnings in ecumenical and interfaith forums, and taking part in the many learning opportunities, studies and collaborations across the country as we address this issue. Peter John Hobbs transformed the Community Ministries the 12+ years he served as the Director General. As we welcome Victoria Scott to this role, I would listen to her vision for these ministries and collaborate with the directors and boards of the ministries, as together we address the issues facing those in need in our diocese.

I would like to explore the creation of an advisory panel to raise awareness of the root causes of the increasing need we see in our diocese. Working with our Anglican, ecumenical, and interfaith partners, some of whom already have such study panels, we can collectively advocate to various levels of government for compassionate and effective action to address these root causes and decrease the number of people in desperate need in our communities.

## 6. TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

**Our diocese is deeply engaged in the journey of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Why does this matter to you, and how would you bring your own passion to this ministry of reconciliation and justice?**

The journey of Truth and Reconciliation matters to me both as a Canadian, and an Anglican. I am keenly aware of legacy of the residential schools and our church's part in their promulgation. My faith and values call me to listen, learn and act, guided by the Indigenous peoples of our country and those locally in our diocese.

I have had a passion for justice for indigenous people since I read the book *The Defenders* (Ann McGovern) while still a teenager. In my Anglican Studies class at St. Paul University, I chose to write about the first attempts of the Anglican church to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples and how those initial learnings were discarded. Instead, the Anglican church initiated and participated in the residential school system resulting in abuse, oppression and great spiritual harm to indigenous children and their families. Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I committed to raising awareness (my own and others) by daily reading a 'Call to Action' and a section of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People as we celebrated bi-weekly online morning prayer during and after the COVID pandemic. While serving on the Council for our Ecclesiastical Province, I advocated for continuing action on Call to Action #60 regarding education of clergy and people on the history and legacy of residential schools. I continue to study, listen, and learn about Indigenous self-determination through the 'Covenant' and 'Our Way of Life' documents. In my present parish we display the Survivor's Flag and begin each service with a Land Acknowledgement. I helped facilitate a connection with the Inuit community at Embassy West and St Margaret's Inuit congregation. They now offer a bi-monthly online service in Inuktitut to those at Embassy West. I will continue to support the work of All My Relations locally, and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Persons (ACIP) at the National level; listening to Indigenous guidance on how best to support them on their healing journey, always walking towards continued reconciliation.

## 7. CALL AND DISCERNMENT

**What is exciting, and what is challenging, about the prospect of being Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa?**

I am excited to offer the experience and gifts I was given the opportunity to develop as I served in different roles in our Anglican church. It is an honour to offer these gifts in service to God as a bishop in our church, particularly at this time in our history. The many years of demanding work by all the people of our diocese, the discernment, planning, and actions have resulted in new initiatives made possible through Future Fund grants, new worshipping communities, the Learning Commons and more. What a blessing to be nominated to lead our diocese as these initiatives bear fruit! "The joy of the Lord is your strength," (Nehemiah) - it is my joy to offer lead as shepherd and steward while we navigate the time before us by driving the change together.



Ironically, in this time of so much social media, news media, and artificial intelligence - effective communication is a challenge. We need to communicate with each other, telling our stories and we need to communicate all we offer to our local communities: who we are, welcoming and affirming, a safe place to explore faith and find hope, and experience meaning in service to others.

Encouraging vocations is a challenge. As a college of clergy, we need to share why we responded to God's call, share the joy and the hardships of this vocation and encourage people in our communities to open their hearts to hear God's call and discern whether it is a call to ordained ministry.

I have lived in Ottawa for over 46 years, serving as teacher in church school, on altar guild, as a eucharistic administrator, and in mission and outreach ministries. I then responded to call to ordained ministry and have served in a variety of places, in different roles for the past 20 years. I have experienced firsthand the diversity of gifts across our diocese. As I listen to my colleagues at clergy gatherings, I certainly hear their challenges. However, I also hear that new people are attending services, new and exciting programs and stewardship ideas abound this encourages my hope and is inspiring.

It is an immense responsibility to lead as a bishop and that is challenging. Drawing on the strength of the Holy Spirit I find that challenge energizing, knowing that the bishop leads a team of staff, clergy, lay members, and partners to respond creatively to the issues of the time we are in.

This is an exciting and challenging time in our life as the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa. Let us move forward with joy and energy in the power of the Spirit and:  
Live as people worthy of the call you received from God, humble, gentle, patient, accepting with love... trying to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us together." (Ephesians 4)