

Rev. Anthony Harvey  
570-20th Avenue, unit 5  
Deux Montagnes,  
Quebec J7R 7E9  
(450-974-4358)  
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To the Anglican Network in Canada,

I feel compelled by recent events in the Diocese of Montreal to tender my resignation as a member of the Anglican Church of Canada.

I refer to the appointment as Dean of our Cathedral, a man living in an intimate relationship with a person of the same sex. The clear, unambiguous reading of Holy Scripture from beginning to end, affirmed by the tradition of the church, and upheld by most of the world-wide church today, is that these relationships are contrary to God's holy law and therefore unholy, unclean in His sight.

My new primary vocation as a priest is to bear witness before the world to the holiness of God. Hitherto I have felt called, as do many of my brothers and sisters, to bear that witness within the Anglican church of Canada. However, there has been increasingly born in me a fear, a foreboding, which I can only attribute to God's Spirit that when we follow the practice of old Israel and enshrine unclean practices at the heart of our common life as in our cathedral, the glory of the Lord, the manifest presence of the Lord, will depart our midst.

This is what happened in Ezekiel's day when unclean practices caused the departure of the glory of the Lord from the temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel chapters 8 to 10). I call for discernment together in this matter. This precedent shows that it is perfectly possible for our life and worship to continue outwardly as before, as did the business of the temple of Jesus' day, but for the glory of the Lord to be gone. Our concern must always be that of Moses when his people went astray in the desert "if your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth" (Exodus chapter 33 verses 15, 16). But the continued presence of the Lord with them was contingent upon their repentance for their unclean practices (Exodus chapter 33 verses 4-6).

In taking this stand I want to say I am not a homophobe, that is having a prejudice against those of homosexual orientation. I myself am a man of unclean lips, a sinner saved by grace, who has been guilty in the past of many unlawful sexual practices. Also as a prison chaplain for 15 years and currently a volunteer working in prisons, I have befriended and counseled many of homosexual orientation. God is my witness that I have wept with them for the pain and rejection they have experienced in a prejudiced

world. I count myself blessed to be considered by some to be their friends. One such greets me with a holy kiss as I continue to visit him regularly. And I pray for their healing because that is what I believe is on offer in Christ's great salvation. Indeed I believe we all stand in need of some degree of healing in our sexual beings, as Holy Scripture frequently illustrates. Praise God that I have heard people of homosexual orientation bear testimony to Christ's substantial healing of this condition, including a former priest of this Diocese (see also the witness of the Zacchaeus Fellowship). A severe criticism of the process of discernment which this Diocese undertook over recent years is that this possibility of substantial healing was never allowed to be given free expression.

That healing is a witness to the restoration of the divine order and likeness of which heterosexual marriage is a necessary sign. As T.S. Eliot puts it in "East Coker", (lines 28-32)

“see them dancing around the bonfire  
The association of man and woman  
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie-  
A dignified and commodious sacrament.  
Two and two, necessary coniunction,”

Yes “necessary” because together they reflect the conjunction of the masculine and the feminine in the Godhead.

So I take my leave of the Diocese without regret for ‘I delight to do your will O my God, Your Law is within my heart’ (Psalm 40 verse 8). Nevertheless, I will miss the fellowship of so many I have loved and respected in our churches. But our fellowship remains with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (First John chapter 1 verse 3), and with all who have "conquered by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" - which is ultimately the testimony to the Holy love of God as manifested in Jesus Christ our Lord (Revelation chapter 12 verse 11)

Yours in Christ

Rev. Anthony Harvey.