



THE DIOCESE OF SAN JOAQUIN

ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

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June 29, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of San Joaquin,

Last Saturday the College of Bishops elected Bishop Steve Wood of the Diocese of the Carolinas as our third archbishop. He was elected after a great deal of prayer, discussion and more prayer. One of the blessings of being in the ACNA is that, while not 100% unified, the College of Bishop is unified in supporting one another in pursuit of fulfilling the mission of the ACNA - “To Reach North America with the Transforming Love of Jesus Christ.”

Bp. Wood is a self-described lover of Jesus in the Charismatic Evangelical tradition. It is very clear to me and the college that Archbishop Wood is a leader who is not afraid of conflict.

In a desire to allow the diocese to know him better, I asked him a few questions in order to begin a conversation and to help us all avoid speculation. Below please find his answers to the questions along with a preamble of sorts.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with your folks. I appreciate it. Hopefully, the below will provide what you need to address some of the more pressing concerns of your clergy & people.

As you read through my answers, please know that there is one overarching framework to understand some of what I’ve written below. And that is, the church measures time in centuries, not days or months. I am fully committed to having grace-filled conversations with the College of Bishops and, where appropriate, across the province as we engage the theological/ecclesiastical challenges that we face. However, some of these challenges may not be worked out in the immediate future. In light of that, honest, respectful conversations in which we assume the best of one another must be the norm.

Q: Please clarify what your position will be on Holy Orders as the Archbishop.

As the Archbishop, I am an Archbishop for the whole of the church. I am not a party man, I am a churchman. I look first to Scripture and second to our Formularies and the Great Tradition (in conversation with my colleagues) as I seek to discern the leading of the Lord. Philosophically, I hold to a biblical anthropology expressed in Genesis 1 and 2.

Fundamentally, good people hold differing views, yet those views need clarifying. As we wrote in the Victoria Statement, we need to endeavor to “grow in understanding the mission and ministry of all of God’s people.”

To that end, I am committed to gathering the bishops early in my tenure to continue the conversation we began in 2017 in Victoria, BC. Our Victoria Statement is a sound document.

As part of our conversation, we need to consider what we mean by ministry, how we understand Holy Orders, and how those understandings/commitments shape our understanding of the diaconate and the priesthood.

As we begin to re-engage these conversations, I have asked my Suffragan and Assisting bishops to perform the ordinations in the Diocese of the Carolinas.

Q: Please clarify your position on Geographic Dioceses as the Archbishop.

Geographic dioceses are the norm for Anglicanism and should be the goal of the ACNA. As we know, non-geographical dioceses are a consequence of the Anglican realignment in North America and reflect our early days. Already, we are seeing movement toward a more geographically organized Province as some bishops have given over some parishes. Having said that, like the varying understandings of Holy Orders, the resolution to the challenge of overlapping jurisdictional boundaries will take time and conversation to resolve.

Q: How do you foresee communicating both with the Province Vision & Mission of the ACNA but also the problems in the ACNA?

With a mixture of boldness and humble honesty. Boldness because of our confidence that the Bible is God's Word, offering salvation to a fallen world. Humble honesty because we know that as individuals, and a collective body, we are far from perfect.

Q: Please describe the role of the sacraments in the ACNA. What is your sacramental worldview?

I hold to the teaching articulated in the Articles and our Catechism. Namely, there are two sacraments ordained by Christ, Baptism and Holy Eucharist, that are "generally necessary to salvation."

Other rites and institutions also called sacraments include confirmation, ordination, marriage, absolution, and the anointing of the sick. While not commanded by Christ as essential for salvation, they are blessed by God and are means of grace.

Q: There are great opportunities and great challenges ahead for us. What are your initial thoughts on that?

I am optimistic about the opportunities and challenges we face. I am optimistic because I know the hearts, minds, and willingness of my fellow bishops to work through the matters that have arisen over my 12 years in the College.

Q: What spiritual gifts do you feel you bring to this position?

Strictly speaking, from a biblical list (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Peter 4): serving, teaching, leading, acts of mercy, and cheerfulness. From a broader point of view, patience, listening, and being fairly hard to offend.

Q: What is your take on the Global Anglican realignment?

The Global Anglican Realignment has been a great blessing for me personally and the Church as a whole.

The greatest blessing has been the formation of the ACNA, a church that embraces and proclaims a biblical orthodoxy informed and shaped by the Great Tradition. Other blessings include new partnerships, both foreign and domestic. Ecumenical relationships have been established and continue to develop (a partial fulfillment of Christ's command that we all be one). Also, as reported at this week's Provincial Council meeting, God has blessed us with growth.

Yours in Christ,

+Steve

