



August 7, 2018

Dear Leadership, Clergy, and People of the Diocese of Virginia,

Over the course of the past few months, I have walked with Bishop Shannon and his spouse, Ellen, as they have been in a time of real spiritual discernment about their future and that of the Diocese of Virginia that has led to his decision to resign this autumn as the XIII Bishop of Virginia. While this decision will come as a surprise to many of you, I can assure you that much prayer and many restless days and nights have accompanied his and Ellen's deep discernment. They have done so as people of faith truly seeking to live as God guides and leads them.

Let me join with you in recalling and celebrating the many and varied accomplishments that you and +Shannon have enjoyed during his tenure as Bishop of Virginia. As Presiding Bishop and Primate, I have been aware and deeply appreciative of the leadership of the Diocese of Virginia in strengthening and expanding companion relationships throughout the Anglican Communion. The "Triangle of Hope" fellowship linking Virginia with the dioceses of Liverpool in England and Kumasi in Ghana is but one example of how such companion relationships work to define new understandings of communion and collaboration. Closer to home, +Shannon shared with me his excitement over your new model for episcopal visitations, a model that is creating a more deeply knowing and meaningfully connected relationship between your congregations and the ministries of your bishops. This holds encouraging promises for years to come.

Also, I have spoken to Bishop Shannon on a couple of occasions of my particular awareness and deep respect for the work you and he together have done following the way of love that Jesus teaches - by working together for racial justice and healing in church and society, by genuinely opening your arms as a diocese, like the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross, to welcome and embrace all, and by renewing the spiritual life and vitality of the church in Virginia after the resolution of the property disputes. And I would be remiss if I did not mention that +Shannon's voice in the House of Bishops is one that is listened to and respected for his spiritual insight, deeply formed wisdom, and subtle nuanced humor.

All of this, and much more, when you stop and reflect, is simply a stunning set of accomplishments! You together have indeed borne faithful witness to the way of our Lord Jesus Christ. To God be the glory!

Lastly, I would add on a more personal note, that I shall never forget and always be grateful to Bishop Shannon for his pastoral care for me and my family when I had emergency surgery a few years ago in Virginia Commonwealth Medical Center. He did so quietly and without fanfare even though he was actually on his sabbatical at the time.

I hope you will join with me in celebrating the years of shared ministry that you have enjoyed with Bishop Shannon and Ellen Johnston and wish them the fullness of God's gracious blessings as they embark upon the next phase of their life and ministry. I remain grateful for their ministry among you and for your faithful engagement in God's call through Jesus upon your own lives and ministry.

In the name of our loving, liberating and life-giving God, I remain your faithful servant,

+Michael

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate

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PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE

