

*The Right Reverend William James Ray
Bishop of North Queensland*



2nd October 2007

Ad Clerum – October 2007

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Appellate Tribunal:

By now you would have heard that the Appellate Tribunal has cleared the way for the consecration of women as diocesan bishops.

Some people have asked how quickly would this happen? Two comments: first, at the last Bishops' meeting in February of this year, it was agreed that if the Appellate Tribunal ruled in favour of consecrating female priests as bishops, the bishops would not proceed to consecrate until they meet again next April. Second, there are no vacant dioceses at the present time.

While some rejoice with this news, others are concerned or distressed. I am conscious that within the Diocese there are cultural groups that will find this news unsettling. I want to assure everyone that as your bishop I will certainly make sure that all people are ministered to in an appropriate manner. Please be assured of my prayers.

General Synod:

General Synod meets from the 20th to the 26th of this month. Most of the delegates will travel to Canberra on the 19th. There are a number of important issues to be discussed and therefore I ask you to pray for the meeting of General Synod.

Please pray for the Primate as he presides, our diocesan delegates who are:-

Bishop Bill Ray
Bishop James Leftwich
Bishop Saibo Mabo
The Ven. Canon Chris Wright
The Rev. Ian McAlister
The Rev. Christian Ford

Mrs Deane Bray
Mr Michael Fellows
Mr Allan Spinaze

and for the Synod as it addresses issues that face our Church.

I invite you to use the following prayer from APBA:

Almighty and everliving God,
give wisdom and understanding,
to the members of the General Synod of our Church as it meets from the 20-26 October.
Teach them in all things
to seek first your honour and glory.
May they perceive what is right
have courage to pursue it
and grace to accomplish it,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Ministry Funding:

I will be leaving the Diocese a few days before General Synod to attend meetings as a part of the National Home Mission Fund. I am seeking several sources of funding to maintain our current level of ministry. I ask for your prayers.

Contact:

While I will be physically away from the Diocese, I can still be contacted by mobile phone. By then I hope to be able to work out the Blackberry, so I should be able to forward emails as well!

When I was in Parish ministry and after I left the Parish I took the Parish Roll and prayed for each family each day. Likewise, I will be doing the same for each parish or ministry community while I am away.

Inductions & Ordinations:

Sunday 14th October at 6.00 p.m., The Reverend John Simons will be inducted as Priest in Charge of St. John's Cairns. We welcome both Fr. John and Mildred to the Diocese. I know John will provide a valuable ministry both to the Parish and at the Diocese level.

On Saturday evening 3 November at 6.30 p.m., I will be ordaining The Reverend Jeff Coop as priest at All Saints' Gordonvale. The retreat conductor and the preacher will be the Archdeacon. The liturgical colour will be white and the Propers will be for All Saints.

On Friday evening 30th November at 7.00 pm I will be ordaining The Reverend Maggie Kirby as priest at St. Mary Magdalene Walkerston. The Propers are for Saint Andrew and the liturgical colour is red. The Reverend Jan Deaves will conduct the retreat and preach. I am pleased to report that Jan is in good health. We welcome her back to the Diocese.

General Manager:

The committee appointed have undertaken their work with care and diligence. There were five excellent applicants. The position has been filled, but I can not make an announcement until the end of the month. The new General Manager will commence on Monday the 3 December, 2007.

Principal of St. Mark's College – James Cook University:

Details are on the Diocesan website. Please let your people know.

Reflection:

It was six months ago last weekend that I was consecrated Bishop and installed as your Diocesan Bishop. It has been a wonderful six months. I have learnt a lot. Robin, James and I have met so many wonderful people. There are a number of creative and exciting

ministry activities taking place and seeking to glorify God. As I have said before, being a Bishop brings its own challenges. I am hopeful that a number of legal issues will be resolved before the end of the year.

There are two ministry matters that I believe we need to address. They are; stewardship, and developing our mission. In regard to stewardship, we give in thanksgiving to God for the blessings we so freely receive. Stewardship is not about meeting a budget, but expressing our thanks to God.

Life continues to change, sometimes at a rapid rate and it is important that we seek ways to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is not easy, but it is important we work together to support and encourage each other as well as to learn from each other.

Ministry reviews are a part of our Canon and it is important that I review my ministry so that I serve both God and the people of the Diocese faithfully. I will be asking Fr. Ian to oversee the process. A form will be forwarded to parishes for their feedback. I am hopeful that all stipendiary clergy will undergo a review within the next three years. It has been my experience that reviews can be very affirming as well as providing the participant with important ideas and opportunities. Not only is it important to review our ministries, it is important that we be involved in activities of in-service to upgrade our skills and knowledge. At this stage I am planning to go to England late January for a week to attend a training school for "new" bishops. I am sure I will learn a great deal. I should hear shortly if my application has been successful. I know I will be overseas twice in a year, but January is a quiet month and the visit is being partly funded.

Personally:

About two weeks ago Robin was awarded her Ph.D. from La Trobe University. The topic of her thesis is "Socio-connective trust, the essence of social support for informal caregivers of individuals living with Motor Neurone Diocese." Last week Robin and I became grand parents, and James an uncle. Our son-in-law has to travel to China for work, so Robin will be with Kirsti and baby Ryan for about a month.


Following General Synod I will go on to Melbourne to meet Ryan in person. Also I will be visiting the specialist who performed the surgery I underwent before I was consecrated bishop. I am very confident that everything is 100 percent, in fact I feel very well. It is important we all keep a check on our health.

Next Ad Clerum:

Due to General Synod and other commitments, the next Ad Clerum will be available in the second week of November.

Please be assured of my prayers

God bless

+ Bill, N.Q.


The Right Reverend William (Bill) Ray
Bishop of North Queensland