

## 178<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Huron Popular Report

The members of 178<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Huron gathered on Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in London at the invitation of The Right Reverend Linda Nicholls, to come and “consider the needs of our whole diocese and to reflect on the theme of “sent into the world”.

Our special Guest was The Right Reverend Marinez Rosa Bassotto, Bishop of our companion diocese of Amazonia. Archdeacon Graham Bland acted as a translator for Bishop Martinez during Synod, enabling us to hear her story of mission and ministry and her passionate words of faith.

She was our guest preacher at the Sunday evening service on the Gospel reading from Luke 10:1-12, 16-20. Like Jesus disciples, Bishop Marinez said, she is called and we are all called to God’s mission; “The faithful giving of our life to God impels us to work in his name, to seek his kingdom, to truly engage in his Church to act in our communities; and then, in his name, we will also be involved in the growth of the Church, committed to the word of God.”

She left us with a lingering image of a statue of Christ broken during the war in Europe that was left with the hands missing and a sign saying “Christ now only has our hands”. She prayed that “we do not let ourselves be carried away by the values of the world; so that we may be able to see in the actions of brothers and sisters the very hands of Christ.”

Bishop Nicholls’ charge to Synod Tuesday morning was for us to look forward using “as our guide, the Five Marks of Mission.” We are to live them out she said, “with love, joy and action.”

Bishop Linda reinforced Bishop Marinez scripture message from Luke 10, where Jesus sends the disciples in mission with nothing but “their willingness, their faith, their courage, in all their frailty, to be those who transmit the Good News of the Kingdom and love“. The purpose of the Church, she said, is “not for self-preservation”. The people of God, like the disciples, are to go where God calls us and not fear or worry about having all the answers or to have an end goal but to see ourselves as “continuing apprentices” in God’s work; a life long journey.

The Bishop called us to celebrate the work already being done in the diocese by faithful people living out the Five Marks of Mission. The Bishop concluded by quoting from a prayer by Oscar Romero that encourages us to keep in mind that “we cannot do everything but we can do something”, that we can “plant the seeds” and we can allow “an opportunity for God’s Grace to enter”.

We began Sunday with the traditional BBQ on the Cathedral lawn but we also honoured the environment with biodegradable serving ware and using refillable water bottles. During Synod, the Justice League’s brought a motion to encourage parishes to reduce single-use plastic products with 2023 as the target date to eliminate their purchase and it was passed.

Bishop Linda and Bishop Marinez together dedicated a 30 foot high Purple Beech tree in front of Cronyn Hall in celebration of the renewal of the covenant and growing relationship between the two dioceses. It will also be a living symbol of the commitment of the Diocese “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth”. Bishop Linda has called on the Provincial Government to reconsider cancellation of its Ontario tree planting program. Bishop Linda is encouraging congregations and individuals to consider making tree planting and advocating for tree planting in Ontario part of their missional work with others in their communities.

Monday, we witnessed the signing of the Covenant between The Diocese of Huron and the Diocese of Amazonia for another five years by Bishop Marinez and Bishop Linda. We will continue working together to: “care for, learn from and teach each other to love Christ in all people...to serve the

poor, the weak and the victims of injustice.” The Regional Deans were given two black rings for their deaneries. They are worn only by Christians in Brazil and they cannot be purchased but were a gift from the people of Amazonia.

The theme “Sent into the World” was evident all through Synod. In the words of one of the hymns, we are called to “sing a new song”. The presentations, reports and Faith witnesses all told of: change and new beginnings; the past we know, the present still in process and the future that we only have glimpses of.

Bishop Linda demonstrated this in her presentation about Old and New Forms of Ministry with the help of special guests: Bishop Cronyn (The Rev’d Canon Nick Wells), Bishop Marinez and Rev. Steve Martin.

Bishop Cronyn immigrated to Canada in 1832 with nothing and built 31 churches in 14 years in the Diocese. He was able to do it by providing clergy and building churches for the growing number of settlers to continue their traditional worship services.

Bishop Marinez is the first female Bishop in Brazil. She endures long and dangerous journeys away from her family do the hard work of planting many new parishes where no other churches want to go.

Rev. Steve Martin was working with the marginalized on the streets of Toronto. Now in Huron, he is still called to the marginalized, the large community of bikers. He gave us a glimpse of new ways to do ministry in taking the Gospel where people need it by having the Eucharist in a Tim Horton parking lot or a Baptism on a front lawn.

We were inspired by four people who told their faith stories. They spoke from the heart about their journey in faith, how Christ worked changed their lives and is using them and their gifts to bring change to others.

The Synod celebrated ministries going back 50-60 years: The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC), Huron Camp, Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), Anglican Church Women (ACW), Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen (BAC), Monica place (originally St. Monica house)...

Bishop Linda thanked them for they are the many “hands of Christ” committed to helping others in their ministries; in the hard work of raising funds; in new projects and outreach to those in need.

The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) began as a cooperative initiative by the churches in Canada to donate \$50 dollars to create a fund that parish could go to when they needed help in building repairs. Today they still do that but also provide funds for clean drinking water, to feed the hungry and house the homeless. They also look to the future, funding new ideas and initiatives of parishes in mission and ministry in Canada but they need all churches to contribute.

Monday morning, a motion from the floor was put to Synod to encourage every parish to add \$50.00 to their annual budgets in 2020 to go to AFC and it was passed.

Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund announced the “Huron Hunger Fund”, which has always been the PWRDF in Huron, will now be known as “PWRDF Huron Committee” with a new logo. They always were and can now be clearly seen as one sent family, the worldwide Anglican Communion and our commitment to our missional call, “To respond to human need by loving service”. A motion was brought to Synod and passed raising the PWRDF Huron Committee target for 2019 to \$350,000

Huron Camp will sponsor this year’s Anglican Church of Canada Justice Camp at St. Clair College, Windsor on August 13-19. The theme will be “respect” of one another and creation.

The Constitution and Canons put a motion to Synod to update language in the relative canons; where the word “congregation” is replaced by “Parish” and “Rector” and “Priest-in-Charge” by “Incumbent”. It was passed.

“Newer groups” showed us what they are doing. The Bridge Builders, who led our two bible study sessions at Synod spoke new ways of telling Indigenous history; from Blanket exercise one place at a time to using media technology, inviting communities to movies about Indigenous history followed by talking circles. To help all of us in our continuing journey to truth and understanding, The Bishop has appointed the Rev. Rosalyn Elm to the new position of Animator for Reconciliation and Justice to begin anti-racism training in the diocese.

A speaker for The Refugee Committee told how he was sponsored as a refugee from Syria and is now completing his MA in social studies, in addition to working full time and helping other refugees.

The College of Deacons built a mountain of 24,300 diapers for their outreach ministry with community partners and shelters to help those most in need.

The Congregational Coaching Team (CCT) demonstrated what they do by example. Kent deanery council meetings were changed for the better when CCT introduced them to twenty-minute visioning exercises before they begin.

The Youth Group challenge to Synod was to “build a barn “. Their novel competition is to raise funds for this year’s CLAY conference in Calgary. It requires and encourages teamwork in each deanery to answer questions in order to purchase “building blocks” for their barn. Last year’s fundraising completion for the Clay Cup was won by to the Deanery of the Saugeens and Church House.

We took time during Synod to honour the work and service of the members of Synod who have passed. We welcomed new clergy, new members to Synod and two new Canons to the Cathedral Chapter of Canons. At Monday’s supper, we celebrated the achievements of members and honoured our new retirees.

Bishop Linda summed up the work of this Synod as recognizing that the world will always be changing and the church will always be “Sent into the World”, “whether ready or not to go as God calls us”. She said we should also celebrate: all that is being done by so many called out to serve in our Diocese, the members witness to Christ in their lives; in new initiatives in parishes reaching out to transform lives and in living out the Five Marks of Mission.

She thanked Bishop Marinez for being with us and inspiring us with her passion and joy in mission. Bishop Marinez was given two "hope bears" from the Anglican Foundation as gifts to her daughters.

The 178th Diocese of Huron Synod adjourned until May 24-26, 2020

**Submitted by Rev. Cheryl Highmore**

**May 29, 2019**