



Press Release

This morning in Hamilton Ontario Canada the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara – **passed** the following motion:

“That the Bishop grant clergy permission to exercise their discretion in blessing the relationships of gay or lesbian couples who have been married civilly, once they with their congregations have petitioned the Bishop for permission to be a ‘Blessing Community’”

This motion was **carried** with a 67% majority of the assembly. Details of the discussion can be found at this link:

<http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/synodniagara2004/index.cfm>

There are two items to which you can refer: *Blessing of Same Sex Unions and Blessing of Same Sex Unions – Part 2*

Please note the following: (contained in part 2) – The Bishop **withheld** his consent to this legislation with the following words:

“As the bishop I hear the will of the house. I am inwardly torn. I would have personally voted with those in majority. The role of the bishop is unique in our tradition. I am the bishop for all people - and try to keep unity with the rest of the church. It is with certain personal pain - but it is my responsibility. *I am not able to give my assent to this legislation and hence will not.* This is the first time the synod has voted on this issue. My expectation is that you go back to your parishes - and any parish that has not had the conversation about this - should be challenged. Many parishes in our midst have not yet talked about this issue. I grieve with the gay and lesbian community. I am close to them and understand what my actions mean to them. However, I am the bishop of this entire diocese with a responsibility to the wider church. I know that those who opposed also believe that they are doing so in concert with the Spirit of God. I pray that we will continue to discuss this matter at a future synod - It *will* come back at next synod. I thank you for your honesty and clarity in this matter.”

For further information (on Monday) please contact:

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Saturday, November 13, 2004

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