



BISHOP OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF OTTAWA

June 7, 2023

A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Shane concerning Pride Season

Dear Friends,

As you know, in Ontario and around the world, there is an alarming increase in offensive or hateful words, actions, and political posturing directed at the [2SLGBTQI+](#) community. As followers of Jesus, we are rightfully concerned and vigilant when we see any individual or group being unjustly targeted. In the Baptismal Covenant of our Church, we vow “to seek and serve Christ in all persons; to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being.”

In Canada, [Pride Season](#) refers to a range of events that take place from June to September. It is a time that lifts and affirms the resilience and value of 2SLGBTQI+ individuals. Not everyone or every parish in our diocese participates in Pride events, but each of us are called to participate in making a safe, loving space for 2SLGBTQI+ people, and to build meaningful connections with one another.

Much of the current anti-2SLGBTQI+ rhetoric in Canada and across the globe is made under the pretext of religion. I commend to you the [Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives](#) and its [safeguarding principles](#) (attached).

I am a signatory to the [Commission’s 2020 Declaration](#) (also attached), and conclude this note by urging everyone to take its words to heart:

Declaring The Sanctity of Life and The Dignity of All

- *We come together as senior religious leaders, academics, and lay leaders from around the world to affirm the sanctity of life and dignity of all.*
- *We affirm that all human beings of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions are a precious part of creation and are part of the natural order.*
- *We affirm that we are all equal under God, whom many call the Divine, and so we are all equal to one another.*
- *We, therefore, call for all to be treated equally under the law.*
- *We recognize with sadness that certain religious teachings have often, throughout the ages, caused and continue to cause deep pain and offense to those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex.*
- *We acknowledge, with profound regret, that some of our teachings have created, and continue to create, oppressive systems that fuel intolerance, perpetuate injustice and result in violence. This has led, and continues to lead, to the rejection and alienation of many by their families, their religious groups and cultural communities.*

- *We ask for forgiveness from those whose lives have been damaged and destroyed on the pretext of religious teaching.*
- *We believe that love and compassion should be the basis of faith and that hatred can have no place in religion.*
- *We call on all nations to put an end to criminalisation on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, for violence against LGBT+ people to be condemned and for justice to be done on their behalf.*
- *We call for all attempts to change, suppress or erase a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression - commonly known as "conversion therapy" - to end, and for these harmful practices to be banned.*
- *Finally, we call for an end to the perpetuation of prejudice and stigma and commit to work together to celebrate inclusivity and the extraordinary gift of our diversity.*

Yours in the expansive and indestructible love of Christ,



The Right Reverend Dr. Shane Parker
Bishop of Ottawa

SADP/hnp
2 Attachments



Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives

Valuing the sanctity of life with dignity of all

PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD LGBT+ LIVES

- 1. EMPOWERMENT** We believe all individuals are made in the image of God, whom many call the Divine, and should be free to live a life of dignity consistent with their sexuality and gender identity within their faith communities without fear or judgement.
- 2. PREVENTION** We believe that we have a duty of care towards all LGBT+ people and so we commit ourselves to listen to the experiences of our LGBT+ members in order to identify and eradicate any harmful practice that inhibits the flourishing of us all.
- 3. PROPORTIONALITY** We recognise that for too long the needs of our LGBT+ members have often been ignored and side-lined, and so we commit to ensuring that LGBT+ people are always given fair voice.
- 4. PROTECTION** We recognise that many LGBT+ people face significant discrimination, rejection and hatred, and so we commit to work to protect all LGBT+ people from harm, wherever it occurs in both religious and secular contexts.
- 5. PARTNERSHIP** We recognise that for too long those of us who are LGBT+ have been excluded from decisions that impact our lives and so we commit to always work in partnership so that together we can prevent, detect and report spiritual abuse.
- 6. ACCOUNTABILITY** We believe that no one is above the law and that there must always be transparency in all areas of safeguarding and so commit to work with our LGBT+ members to regularly monitor progress.



Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives

Declaring the Sanctity of Life and Dignity of All

16th December 2020

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