

## R. Parker – Part Three:

Q: Describe your understanding of the Bishop Ordinary's ministry.

A: My understanding of the Bishop Ordinary's ministry is multifaceted. First and foremost, the Bishop Ordinary supports the ministry of Anglican, ELCIC and any other full communion chaplains in the Canadian Armed Forces. Equally important is the support provided to these chaplains' families. I have experienced this in my own career; my spouse is also a member of the clergy, and the Bishop Ordinary would often reach out to the Bishop of the Diocese we were going to be posted to, providing an introduction not only for me but also for Rachael.

Additionally, the Bishop Ordinary serves as the Anglican representative on the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy. One of the responsibilities of this committee is to present Anglican and ELCIC candidates for recommendation to the Chaplain General's Office for endorsement as Canadian Armed Forces chaplains. This may also involve taking a leadership position within the ICCMC during the tenure as the Bishop Ordinary.

Furthermore, the Bishop Ordinary is a member of the Canadian House of Bishops and takes on their share of the wider church's work as directed by the Primate.

Within the Anglican Military Ordinariate, the main focus of ministry is the pastoral care of chaplains and their families. The shift to a more pastoral form of ministry would be a much-anticipated and welcomed aspect for me, as the last several years have been mainly focused on team and personal administration.

Having worked on a variety of bases across Canada, I recognize the value of the Bishop Ordinary's presence at regional and national events, as well as the time taken to visit bases throughout the year. These opportunities allow for relationship building with the wider community, chaplains, their families, and the laity associated with those bases.

Q: Describe my Christian Faith.

A: I am a cradle Anglican, raised in the Book of Common Prayer. In my early teens, my father discerned a call to the priesthood, and my family moved to Saskatoon so he could study at Emmanuel and St. Chad's College. During his time there, the Third Canadian Rite was being tested, and the College was using it exclusively. So, one could say that although I was raised on the BCP, I was formed by the Book of Alternative Services.

Due to my upbringing, my Christian faith is centred on shared values and participation in the church communities in which I was raised. The consistent presence of prayer and a determined appreciation for ongoing discernment in understanding and recognizing the very real presence of Christ in my life and work, and the parallel seeking of the work of the Holy Spirit and its call on my vocation, decision-making and relationships, has allowed me to continue to strive for a more mature and grounded sense of the Trinity for my sense of self.

It is very difficult to define one's Christian faith narrowly in a short paragraph or even in conversation. Our faith is something that is experienced, honed, and shared through ongoing relationships. We cannot be islands unto ourselves, and we must live out our Christian journey with others.

Q: What would be most important for you when supporting Chaplains stationed at bases across Canada and deployed internationally in areas of conflict?

A: At the 2025 General Synod, it was noted that the role of the National Church is to Connect, Communicate, and Convene Anglicans across the country. I believe that these three C's are equally important for the role of the Bishop Ordinary. While the financial realities of the Canadian Armed Forces have minimized the opportunities for the Ordinariate Chaplains to convene, the Bishop Ordinary has the unique opportunity to bring the wider Church to the Chaplains. Participating in exercises, visits to bases, chapels, and wider communities allows the Anglican and full-communion partners to connect and communicate through the Bishop's participation and presence.

Communication is an equally important aspect in supporting chaplains at home and abroad. In my own military ministry, I have appreciated the regular communication opportunities that the present Bishop Ordinary instituted during his tenure. In addition to maintaining this tradition, I would implement a regular communication strategy using electronic and social media. In the past year, I have been formally studying web development with aspects of graphic design and communications. This provides an opportunity to establish regular, easily accessible forms of communication for chaplains and laity alike.

These forms of communication naturally lead to connecting the chaplains, laity, and communities across the CAF and to the wider Anglican communion. I firmly believe in developing and maintaining relationships with the Ordinariate, laity, families and the wider CAF community. An important aspect of these connections is the greater possibility of sharing the Good News, the good news of the Ordinariate chaplaincy and the strengthened opportunities for recruitment.

Having served for twenty-two and a half years, I have personal appreciation for the support and encouragement my family and I have received from the Bishop Ordinary. This role cannot be underestimated. It supports the troops and contributes to the strength behind the troops.

Q: How would you connect and support AMO laity across Canada?

A: Current times have called for a very different approach than we have been used to in the past. The level of uncertainty has reached a point where the process and way of doing things no longer have any relevance, and it seems as though we are scrambling to find anything solid to hold on to. People are feeling more isolated than ever. Communication and dialogue are ways to combat the feelings of isolation and fear. As the Bishop Ordinary, I will make it a primary mission to expand our lines of communication through print, electronic, and social media, as

well as in-person meetings, as often as possible. The laity has the means to be the primary source of support for those who care for CAF members. By expanding these lines of communication with the laity and ensuring they are as informed as possible, the AMO will be encouraged, fortified, and prayed for in ways that may never have been thought possible.

Anglican CAF members who are deployed need specific pastoral care, which can be provided by their deployed chaplains. The Bishop Ordinary can have a specific role in supporting those chaplains and, by extension, the deployed laity. We must also recognize the spiritual needs of the family members. By establishing regular lines of communication and visits, the Bishop Ordinary could also have a significant pastoral presence for those waiting at home. With the intentional creation of networks of Anglicans through the support of base-side chaplains, encouraging laity participation in Bishop Ordinary visits, Bishop's padre hours, town halls, worship, and community time, a culture of community can be developed and maintained.

Q: How would your ecumenical, interfaith and intercultural experience inform your ministry as Bishop Ordinary?

A: After working as a CAF chaplain for many years, both Reserve and Regular Force, and happily living through the years of the Chaplain General's Interim Policy on Public Prayer, for the first six months of retirement, I felt lost. Living and worshiping within a single denomination rather than in the diverse world of the Chaplain Service, I found myself craving the dialogue, social life, and camaraderie of a multifaith chaplain team.

As Bishop Ordinary, I believe I would spend most of my time pastoring and working with a predominantly Anglican base (clergy and laity), but would also have the opportunity to work with those on the ICCMC. I also believe that my time in the Chaplain Service has prepared me extremely well for that duty.

From an intercultural perspective, my numerous deployments to Africa, South America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East have given me a broad perspective on the lives and faiths of others. This will allow me the unique ability to empathize with chaplains and laity of the CAF who have experienced the difficulties of both deployment and redeployment phases of military life. This would also include the number of culturally diverse chaplains whom I had the privilege of mentoring during my time in the CAF. I learned a tremendous amount from those chaplains who were new to the Canadian context.

While my direct interaction with ecumenical and multifaith individuals may be limited in this role, I feel strongly that my previous experience will put me in good standing and foster positive working relationships when opportunities arise.

Q: What is important about the Bishop Ordinary's role as the Anglican Church of Canada representative on the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy?

A: Quoting from the Canonical Prescriptions of 2019, “*The Bishop Ordinary is also called upon to serve as the Anglican representative on the ICCMC. The Bishop Ordinary contributes an Anglican perspective to this committee, and is able to offer Anglican insight when this committee deals with issues of a pastoral, liturgical, ecclesiastical or administrative nature.*” With twenty years of ordained experience, both within the chaplaincy and the wider church, I feel that I have a strong and considered voice with which to speak to these issues with integrity. One of the gifts of the Anglican Church is our ability to navigate between the denominational differences of the Roman Catholic and Protestant parties in any given conversation. As Anglicans, we walk the via media, and I have found that this position works well in diverse dialogues.

This would allow me, as the Bishop Ordinary, to share with the House of Bishops the ecumenical and interfaith insights that the Church, Dioceses, and parishes are engaging in our current cultural setting.