

Responses to Questions for Nominees for Election as Bishop Ordinary
Bradley Smith

1. Describe your understanding of the Bishop Ordinary's ministry.

The ministry of the Bishop Ordinary is both universal and contextual. It is universal in the sense that the ministry of all bishops is the same. This is reflected in the vows that a new bishop takes upon ordination: faithfulness in prayer and study of Scripture, proclaiming the Gospel, encouraging and supporting the faithful in their gifts and ministries, celebrating the sacraments, guarding and transmitting the faith as it has been received from the apostles, sharing in the leadership of the whole Church, and being a servant of all, especially the poor and defenceless. It is contextual in the sense that the Bishop Ordinary lives out their vows in a dispersed ministry that serves chaplains and lay members of the AMO and their families. In this context, the Bishop Ordinary serves a constituency that is spread over a vast geography and is not located in place the way a diocesan bishop's ministry is. Although laity experience this as well, the dispersion is especially challenging for chaplains. While the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service and the Canadian Armed Forces endeavour to build shared identity around service to Canada, the role of the AMO and, in particular, its Bishop, is to build both a shared identity and a ministry rooted in our Anglican and Lutheran traditions. In a milieu where Anglican and ELCIC chaplains are very often working as the only one of their tradition in a team (and often the only chaplain in a reserve unit), it is vital that they have access to a spiritual well that replenishes their vocation. I see the Bishop Ordinary as one who, while fully supporting the RCChS ethos to care for all, provides a link for Anglican and Lutheran chaplains to the faith tradition that sustains them. This is lived out particularly in the Bishop's pastoral's presence and their prayers for the members of the AMO.

2. Describe your Christian faith.

My Christian faith is a gift that has been nurtured in me for my entire life, beginning at my baptism as a one-year-old. As a child, faith was a sense of the love of God in the profound feeling of belonging in the parish I grew up in, of being surrounded by people who were interested in my well-being and thriving. This sense of belonging continues as an essential part of my faith, but I now understand it to be a sign of something much deeper. It is a manifestation of the body of Christ: how we are called through the Holy Spirit to be a people united in our belief that Jesus is the Word made flesh come to dwell among us and that we are empowered to be his people in the world, working together for his coming reign. As St Paul wrote, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member, but of many" (1 Cor 12:12-14 NRSV). Belonging to the body has introduced me to the diversity of the people of God and this, in turn, has informed how I practise my faith. I am particularly drawn to the message of the prophets and of Jesus that God is interested in love and justice. Calls to justice such as the one found in Isaiah 58 or the practical application of loving God as found in Matthew 25 animate my ministry as a disciple of Jesus. These Biblical injunctions form the foundation of the ethics by which I live. Being a Christian has led me to be more loving, more joyful, more prayerful, and more inclined to serve. It shapes not only what I do but who I am.

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

The first way that the Bishop Ordinary would support chaplains in garrison and on deployment is in constant prayer for their ministry. I believe that a sustained prayer life, especially one that prays for God to strengthen common ministry, is the foundation of all fruitful work. In my experience, both as a parish priest and as a chaplain, the demands of daily ministry can often feel overwhelming and one of the things that becomes secondary is regular prayer. This is especially tempting in the military context, where chaplains are expected to function within a culture that prioritises operations and data-driven decision making. Prayer does not easily fit into either of those categories. So, as Bishop Ordinary, I would encourage chaplains to maintain a regular prayer life and I would make a significant part of my ministry intercession for chaplains and AMO laity, their families, and the members they work alongside and serve.

One of the things that I have particularly learned in my ordained life is that the Anglican Church values ministry that is incarnational, that is, ministry that embodies the mission of God as expressed through Jesus Christ. A ministry of presence is in our DNA, and, of course, is a vital part of the ministry of military chaplains. As the Bishop Ordinary, I would seek to practise that same ministry of presence to chaplains, through in-person visits when possible, and through other means such as email, phone calls, and Zoom/Teams meetings.

Finally, support of the chaplains also means support of their families, especially when chaplains are deployed. Leveraging the many contacts I already have and ones I would hope to make as the Bishop Ordinary, I would, where desired, endeavour to create connections with local parishes and bishops to provide prayer and practical support and, to the extent possible, use the influence of the office to advocate for the needs of chaplains and their families to the RCChS and CAF.

4. How would you connect and support AMO laity across Canada?

In the same way that I would root my support of chaplains in prayer, I would also make intercession for the laity of the AMO. And, just as I would endeavour to practise a ministry of presence with chaplains, I would also do so with the laity. To me, the form that this would take is to be a convenor, to be one who gathers together. Of course, in a dispersed entity such as the AMO, gathering in person is often difficult due to the vast geographies, multiple time zones, and financial constraints that exist. One of the blessings of the pandemic was the normalising of virtual meetings. I have pondered opportunities for the Bishop Ordinary to convene AMO members online for worship, Bible study, and gatherings that might resemble a synod, where issues in the life of the Ordinariate might be discussed. While the relatively new system of regional deans has not lived into its fulness yet, regional gatherings from time to time might be supported through the presence of the Bishop Ordinary when visiting bases and regional exercises.

Through such interactions, I would hope to deepen relationships with members of the AMO such that I could do work similar to that which has informed my entire ordained ministry: "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). As the chief pastor, the Bishop Ordinary could explore with the laity opportunities to identify spiritual gifts and calls to ministry and then coordinate formation and training leading to a more robust priesthood of all believers where laity find joy and satisfaction in living out their baptismal vocation in their daily work.

5. How would your ecumenical, interfaith and intercultural experiences inform your ministry as Bishop Ordinary?

The longest experience of ecumenical, interfaith, and intercultural engagement was the seventeen years I spent as a chaplain, working with chaplains and CAF members from a wide range of spiritual and religious traditions and cultures. I was very proud, when I was 33 CBG Chaplain, to recruit the first woman imam into military chaplaincy, a result of conversation around how Muslim members might respond (both positively and negatively) to this disruptive moment. I am grateful for the learning that military chaplaincy provided concerning the needs, practices, and beliefs of a multitude of traditions.

In my civilian ministry, I have considerable experience working alongside other Christian denominations for liturgical observances (e.g. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, World Day of Prayer) and other churches and faith groups for service work (I chaired the Human Trafficking Committee of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in Kingston and coordinated meal and outreach ministry at One Roof Community Centre in Peterborough). When I was among the Kanyen'kehà:ka, I was invited to be the only non-Indigenous member of the Seven Generation Justice Circle. And, although this was not explicitly asked in the question, as a gay person, I have lived in the tension between sexuality and spirituality for most of my life and know the intense hurt caused to 2SLGBTQIA+ people by the Church as well as the power to heal that the gospel holds.

Taken together, these experiences would inform my ministry as Bishop Ordinary as sources of understanding, empathy, and humility. One of the words associated with the ministry of bishops is 'pontifical' (from *pontifex*, a bridge builder). The experiences I described here have given me the skills and character to be one who can build bridges between people of different cultures, faith traditions, and experiences, and, through that facilitation, lead to outcomes that benefit all.

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

First, the most practical (but not necessarily most important) aspect of the Bishop Ordinary sitting on the ICCMC: being involved in the process of recruiting new Anglican and ELCIC chaplains to the RCChS. Being able to interview and assess the qualifications of potential candidates allows the Bishop Ordinary to create connections with other bishops across the Waterloo Declaration churches and to ensure that the CAF receives the best chaplains from their traditions. With the declining proportion of Anglican and ELCIC chaplains in the RCChS, an Anglican seat at the table ensures that the particular needs and concerns of AMO chaplains and the churches that send them continue to be taken into account.

Second, the Bishop Ordinary can advocate for spiritual care for those members of the CAF who wish to receive it according to a particular tradition as a means to mitigate the increasingly possible outcome that spiritual care might be made so generic as to be unhelpful or be eliminated altogether. In the forum of the ICCMC's advisory role, the Bishop Ordinary can articulate a counterargument to the voices of secularisation that wish to apply the Saguenay decision in such a way that all officially sanctioned religious/spiritual expression is eliminated. The answer to both pluralism and secularism in Canadian society in general and the CAF in particular is not the eradication of religious/spiritual expression but the creation of space where members are free to practice their tradition according to their understanding. The evolution of the public prayer policy is one place where the voice of the Anglican Church of Canada as

articulated by the Bishop Ordinary can add to the conversation about how to respect the views and practice of those who do not practice a religious/spiritual expression without restricting those of members who do. The work done by the current Bishop Ordinary in making space for humanist chaplains is an example of how military chaplaincy should care for all by making space for all, not reducing care to the point of providing nothing.