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INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN LITURGY

Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

The issue of inclusive language in the liturgy is one which occupies a goodly portion of the agenda of several Churches. It is an issue which is hotly debated and which sometimes generates more heat than light! While we are in the midst of this theological reflection, I have struck the following guidelines on this issue of the use of inclusive language in the liturgy within our Diocese:

1. I expect the use of the baptismal formula, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", in baptismal liturgies in the Diocese of Nova Scotia. This accords with ancient tradition and practice, Reformation rites and modern Anglican Liturgies.
2. An Anglican, using an official authorized liturgy of the Anglican Church, is not at liberty to change the text of that liturgy. The authority to change liturgy resides with the Bishop of the Diocese.
3. In the use of our official liturgies (BCP and BAS), I grant permission for officiants to be inclusive in the language of people, so that the practice of a gender free language can take place when and where desired. I am not prepared, however, at this time, to grant the same permission with respect to the language for God. The language of an alternative formula, "God the Creator, God the Redeemer and God the Sanctifier", in my judgment, although eliminating gender, is not sufficiently explicit in its Trinitarian emphasis.