

A GREAT RESIGNATION

My friends in Christ,

This will be my final word as editor of the *Gazette* and communications missionary for the Diocese of Quebec. I recently informed Bishop Bruce of my intent to step down from my responsibilities this summer.

For the last few issues of the *Gazette*, I've struggled to produce an editorial that I think is any good. I've never thought it essential to include an editorial message, so I haven't thought of this as a crisis. And yet I've also felt the impulse to write, met by great difficulty in expressing myself—not a common problem for me. For many writers, a creative block is a mystery to be solved. In my case, there was no mystery.

In large part, my struggle to write has been borne of the changes and challenges the last year has brought me. Among these have included the birth of our daughter, estrangement with a family member, a new job for my wife, and a war in one of my ancestral homelands. The most stressful and most damaging incident, however, was my departure from the *Anglican Journal*. By now, you may be aware of why I quit my position as editor in 2021, whether you've read about it in the *Journal*, secular media, or on ACCtoo.ca's website. My reasons for quitting are now out there, and I see no reason to rehash them in this space. I do see reason to reference them, however. My departure from my work with all of you could raise questions, and it's important that you hear from me that no questions are needed.

My resignation from the *Journal*, and the controversy that has since ensued, has been an awful experience for me and my family. Fortunately, the Diocese of Quebec has almost no connection to this crisis within the national church, aside from the support so many of its clergy and its bishop have offered to ACCtoo's open letter and to survivors of sexual misconduct. That does not change how tired I am. My health demands that I spend time healing from this experience.

I therefore cannot continue this work, but

not because of your diocese or bishop. On the contrary, I remain impressed with the dedication that I see in so many of you. When I first arrived as a journalist profiling the Diocese of Quebec, I became convinced that the future of Anglicanism can be found in the small and shrinking congregations that have, by accident of history, found themselves deep within French Canada. I still believe this is true. I have watched your bishop make considerably better decisions than many of his counterparts on all manner of subjects, offering the sort of conscientious leadership that comes with knowing the surrounding society doesn't trust the church—and that it has valid reasons for that mistrust. In so many other parts of this country, the church has not come to that realization yet: that the vast majority of Canadians do not care about the Anglican Church of Canada, will not join an Anglican church under any circumstances, and would be happy to see the church brought to public account for its mistakes. As I leave ecclesial work, I find myself hoping that the church everywhere can be held accountable in a way that sets it free to truly embrace the Gospel.

Lots of statistics now show that the Great Resignation is a real phenomenon, though its causes are hotly debated and are likely myriad. I do not view my departure from the Diocese of Quebec as part of the Great Resignation, but I do hope that it is a great resignation. I leave this role with deep respect for the bishop, clergy, and parishioners of the diocese, and I hope the feeling is mutual. I feel grief over quitting, and I have cried about the decision. In a world where so many partings are marked by bitterness or apathy, I feel joy in my sadness. I think that's pretty great.

I love you all, and I hope you'll stay in touch.



Matthew Townsend

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