



Honorifics - Retention of Titles

August 2023

Some questions have arisen recently concerning honorifics and the retention of title upon retirement or relocation. While practices do vary throughout the Anglican Church of Canada, the basics are quite similar across the larger church. The following guidelines are provided to describe the normative practice of this Diocese of Islands and Inlets.

Canons

- In this diocese, there are two categories of canons: diocesan canons, and canons of the cathedral (of which there are 6). Diocesan canons may be ordained or lay.
- The appointment of canons is an internal practice, relating to the diocese, not to the wider church.
- Upon being named, and even before their formal installation, clergy canons are styled “The Reverend Canon So-and-so,” or “Canon So-and-so.” Lay canons are styled “Canon So-and-so.” They need not distinguish themselves as “Canon (lay).”
- All clergy canons retain their title and position so long as they are in active ministry in the diocese, and they retain their title and honorific after retirement. In other words, the title and honorific are internally portable and indefinite.
- Lay canons retain their title and honorific indefinitely.

Archdeacons

- Upon appointment, and even before their formal collation and installation, archdeacons are styled “The Venerable So-and-so” or “Archdeacon So-and-so.”
- Archdeacons who relocate to another region or ministry, where they are no longer the serving archdeacon, relinquish both title and honorific, and normally revert to their title prior to being named an archdeacon.
- Archdeacons who retire while still in office are entitled to retain both the title “Archdeacon” and honorific “the Venerable.”
- By regulation (1.5.04.c), the bishop may assign the title of “archdeacon emeritus” to an archdeacon who has ceased to hold office.

Dean of the Diocese

- Upon the effective date of appointment, the dean of a diocese is styled “The Very Reverend,” and upon installation is called “Dean So-and-so”.
- Deans who move to another parish or ministry relinquish their decanal title and honorific, and revert to their appropriate title and honorific.
- Deans who retire in office may retain both title and honorific.
- By custom, bishops in their discretion may assign the title “dean emeritus” to a dean who has ceased to hold office.

Bishops

- Upon election, a priest may be styled “Bishop-elect,” but does not receive the honorific “the Right Reverend” until consecrated.
- Upon retirement, or relocation to another diocese, bishops retain the honorific “the Right Reverend,” and continue to be styled “Bishop So-and-so.” This is because these descriptors pertain to their order of ministry, and not to the particular office which they held.
- Metropolitans hold the honorific “The Most Reverend,” and are styled “Archbishop So-and-so.”
- Upon retirement in the Province of BC & Yukon, metropolitans who complete their term of office, but remain in active diocesan ministry are once again styled “The Right Reverend” or “Bishop So-and-so.”
- In the Province of BC & Yukon (as well as Ontario and Canada, but not Rupert’s Land) a bishop who retires from episcopal ministry as the provincial metropolitan may continue to be styled “Archbishop,” or the “The Most Reverend So-and-so.”

Practices Upon Removal to Another Diocese

The customs of the receiving diocese will always take precedence. It is best to ask.

In general, however, there are two important criteria to consider. First, are you moving to another diocese to take up another ministerial position? Second, if you a retired priest, are you maintaining “canonical residency” in the diocese of British Columbia? Generally speaking:

Canons

- The title “canon” is relinquished upon relocation to another diocese. This is because one is named a canon of the diocese, or the cathedral, but not of the whole church.
- The exception is when a clergy canon has retired from the Diocese of BC, moved to another diocese without taking up a new role, and maintains canonical residence in BC.

Archdeacons & Deans

- Archdeacons and deans who move to another diocese to take up active ministry relinquish their title and honorific. Again, this is because their archdiaconal or decanal responsibilities pertain to a ministry localized to this particular diocese.
- Clergy who retire as archdeacons or deans and move to another diocese, while retaining canonical residency in BC, may retain their title and honorific, subject to the practices of the receiving diocese.
- Archdeacons or deans “emeriti” who move to another diocese relinquish this particular distinction, because it applies only to their service in BC. However, they continue to hold this title in respect of any dealings they may have with the Diocese of BC.