

Words of introduction: The Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews

Trinity College University of Toronto Convocation

May 12th, 2026

Archbishop Anne Germond

Chancellor, Provost, members of clergy, Graduating Class, Faculty and Staff, alumni and guests,

It is a great privilege for me to present my colleague and friend, the Rt Rev. Victoria Matthews for the honorary degree that is to be bestowed upon her in the year that our church is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood.

The Bishop Victoria I know would cringe at any flowery oration and so I will do my best to honour this generous hearted, Spirit-led woman whose life speaks volumes, and whose ministry within the Anglican Communion has been marked by wisdom, courage and an unwavering devotion to the Gospel.

When the young priest Victoria was approached about allowing her name to stand for election as a bishop, she thought the idea was absurd and is said to have laughed - a lot. Old Sarah laughed about the possibility of becoming a mother in her dotage, and look what happened to her! It's always a mistake to underestimate the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, because with God all things are possible.

Thirty- three years ago this coming November, Bishop Victoria was elected Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese of Toronto, with her consecration taking place in February 1994. This made her the first woman to be consecrated a bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada, and only the fifth in the Communion.

It has taken from then until now for us to have our first female Archbishop of Canterbury, and over 100 in the Communion. I am convinced some of this due to faithful, fearless women like Bishop Victoria who, over the decades, helped guide the Church through seasons of both promise and profound challenge, bearing witness to a faith that is thoughtful, compassionate, and deeply rooted in prayer. And quietly and steadily showing the Church that a woman's place is indeed in the House of Bishops.

I wonder how many women, teenagers and girls caught a glimpse of what was possible, and are now ordained members of our church today, because of their example?

Over the last thirty-two years Bishop Victoria has served the church with distinction in five dioceses, four in Canada – Toronto, Edmonton, Algoma and Moosonee, and one in New Zealand – Christ Church, modeling what it means to hold together conviction and grace offering a living example of Christian discipleship to clergy and laity alike. Her leadership has been steady, principled, and grounded in a quiet confidence in God's faithfulness. When one thinks of Episcopal ministry one often thinks of the grand and the glorious, but this has not always been the case for Bishop Victoria. She led the Diocese of Christ Church through that tumultuous time following the earthquakes in 2011, organizing home to home visitations of 81,000 homes. On three occasions in the past eight years, I have invited Bishop Victoria to come north to Algoma and Moosonee to help with some difficult pastoral situations. Following the leading of the Spirit and very little arm twisting, she has always said, *Yes*. Not to me, but to God, because she is faithful to her lifelong calling to serve Christ wherever she is sent.

Chancellor, on behalf of the Corporation of Trinity College, I ask you to confer the Degree of Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa* upon the Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews.