

**A Resolution in Thanksgiving to God
for the Episcopacy of The Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE**

Resolved, the 228th Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts express, on behalf of the entire Diocese of Massachusetts, our deep gratitude to God for our bishop diocesan, the Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE, in the 20th year of his episcopacy as our faithful shepherd, guide, theologian and teacher, enlightening and leading minds into a deeper knowledge of the triune God; and be it further

Resolved, that we give deep thanks to God for Bishop Tom as defender of the poor and marginalized, advocating for those neglected, forgotten and shunned, not only within our church but within our Commonwealth of Massachusetts, our nation and our world; and be it further

Resolved, that we give deep thanks to God for Bishop Tom as builder of the church, encouraging lay ministry, building up lay leadership, raising up and nurturing children, youth and young people for mission and ministry in the church, calling and forming clergy and empowering us all to grow into our full stature in Christ as we live out God's mission and ministry in and to the world and empowering all of us to claim and live into the promises of our Baptismal Covenant; and be it further

Resolved, that we give deep thanks to God for Bishop Tom as potter and steward, molding the church and all God's people in eastern Massachusetts and beyond, empowering all to grow into the dignity of our personhood; and be it further

Resolved, that we give thanks to God for Bishop Tom as witness to the transforming power of the Gospel and the love of God made known in Jesus Christ, evangelizing the Good News in word and deed to all who would hear.

Explanation

Bishop Tom, you became our diocesan bishop at a time of turmoil and sadness in our life together. In the midst of deep hurt and pain, you embraced God's call to you to love and guide God's people in eastern Massachusetts. You have prayerfully, steadfastly, generously, calmly and lovingly cared for and led your people in the church and in the world.

Time and again, you have shown hope and faith in response to challenge. Time and again, your response to tragedy and despair has been to remind us of the redeeming, healing love and power of God whose death on the cross triumphed with the Easter resurrection. With the help of God and many others, you have ushered our church into new life through many initiatives and accomplishments that reveal God's continuing love and activity in the world: the establishment of the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center, the support of the B-SAFE program for youth in our towns and cities throughout our diocese, the founding of the Life Together program for young adults, the Together Now capital campaign to support our diocese's mission and ministries and improving and developing relationships and ministries with our brothers and sisters throughout the world. These are just a few of many accomplishments. In 20 years as our diocesan bishop, you have done much to build up the household of God and our witness of God's love in the world. We are so grateful to God for calling you to be our bishop, and grateful to you for discerning and answering God's call to you.

You are above all a man of constant prayer whose deep rootedness and intimacy with God have given you the love, foundation and certitude you have needed for this episcopal work and ministry. With us you have shared your prayerfulness and intimacy with God, inviting us into deeper relationship with God and enabling us to speak more authentically about who and whose we are. Through your example you have reminded us all that the church is not essentially an institution and structure that exists for its own ends but rather an active witness to and conductor of the presence of the living God who made us, loves us, guides us and holds us in being.

You know, Bishop Tom, we will miss you. We will miss your intentionality and your focus. We will miss your dry wit and wily sense of humor. We will miss seeing your bare legs at Diocesan Convention! In so many, many ways, we will miss you. But we know where you live...!

We thank you. And we thank God for you.