

**The Venerable Edward Simonton OGS
M.A. (Hons), M.Th., FRAI, FRSAI, FSA Scot
Archdeacon of Saint Francis
Secretary General of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd**

Archdeacon Simonton was brought up in the southern United States. His mother's family are from Savannah, Georgia, while his father's, descended from Ayrshire Scots, are from outside Atlanta. At a young age he left home to attend all-male Anglican boarding schools in New England after which he moved to Scotland where he lived for a decade. For three years he worked with the Anglican order of Franciscans ministering to the homeless and the terminally ill. He spent ten years at university reading for degrees in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh and in England reading towards a Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge where he was a member of Peterhouse, the university's oldest college. During this time he studied history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, theology, ethics, ministry, pastoral care, and counselling. He was elected a fellow of three academic societies, two founded to study history and one anthropology. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in ministry and has already taken courses in scripture, early church history, theology, modern expressions of the church, and homiletics.

The Archdeacon is a professed brother of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd. The Oratory is one of the oldest Anglican male religious communities, being founded at University of Cambridge before the Great War. This large international community has brethren in Australia, Africa, Europe, and North America. Its main focus is on prayer, attentiveness, and the labour of the mind. It has counted some of the most distinguished Anglican theologians of the 20th century amongst its members. Since the Second World War, it has had a reputation for church administration as many of the brethren have served as bishops, deans, and archdeacons. Professed brothers take traditional solemn promises of simplicity, celibacy, and obedience to the will of the brethren. The Archdeacon currently serves as the Secretary-General of the Oratory and as such, with the Father Superior, administers the worldwide community. Bishops and priests of the Oratory, in common with many religious communities, are traditionally referred to as 'Father'.

Father Edward was sponsored for ordained ministry by the current Archbishop of Canterbury. Taking scriptural guidance from the verse "not my will, but thine, be done," he has never held a position that he was not sought out to fill. While working for the previous Archbishop of Canterbury at the Lambeth Conference of 1998, he met the Bishop of Cariboo who requested that he come to Canada to work in a remote mission parish in the Rocky Mountains. After three years, the Bishop of Montreal asked him to take up ministry in Quebec. He stayed in this position for a decade until the Bishop of Quebec sought him out to minister in the Eastern Townships.

Except for brief ministries in a parish in Edinburgh and Chaplaincy at the University of Edinburgh, Fr Edward has ministered in rural areas. As such he has been a constant advocate for rural ministry at all levels of the church. In 2006, after two terms as Regional Dean of the Laurentians, he was appointed the Archdeacon of Saint Andrews. This large rural archdeaconry covers the area north of the Island of Montreal.

For most of his ministry Fr Edward has been engaged in Youth Ministry at the parish, diocesan, provincial and international levels. He served as Youth Chaplain for the Diocese of Cariboo, the Province of British Columbia and the Yukon, Youth Chaplain for the Diocese of Montreal, and was the Canadian Co-ordinator for Youth Leaders International. He has been a Governor of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College since 2003.

As Diocesan Liturgical Officer for Montreal, Fr Edward was able pursue his special interest in liturgy. He is currently one of the twelve members of the Liturgy Task Force of the Anglican Church of Canada. This group holds the mandate to review and revise the liturgy of the Canadian Church. He is the Convenor of the group dealing with the propers of the church year and the liturgical calendar.

As Chair of one of three Standing Committees of the Diocese of Montreal he has been heavily involved in the production of administrative tools for the Church such as Mutual Ministry Reviews, Episcopal Reviews, HR policies, and the production of the Diocesan Clergy Handbook. He is also a facilitator of the 'Fresh Start' programme for leading clergy and congregations through periods of transition. As well as parish and diocesan administration, Fr Edward has overseen large restoration projects, parochial reorganisation, and has a reputation for sound financial management.

He reads and writes widely on theology, philosophy, history, anthropology, art, poetry, literature, current affairs, and popular culture. For eight years he wrote a monthly column for the *Montreal Anglican* for which he was awarded best columnist by the Anglican Editor's Association in 2008. Besides reading and writing his main interest is travelling. He has travelled extensively and in 2012 spent a four month sabbatical working with the ancient indigenous church in India.