



GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION ADDRESS

The Revd Claire Robson

Diocesan Director of Ordinands
Assistant Area Dean Bellingham
Rector of the Society of Catholic Priests
Durham & Newcastle Chapter

I am grateful to The Revd Canon Ian Flintoft and The Revd Canon Dr David Kennedy for proposing and seconding me for re-election to General Synod.

Inclusive Church

I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality. We are still some way from resolving the issues raised by the full integration of women into the ministry of the church. We have yet to resolve our differences over the full inclusion and equality of LGBTQI+ Christians whilst society looks on in bewilderment and lives continue to be deeply and painfully affected by the delay. We must ensure that the Church of England remains open, forward looking and inclusive in all these changes, so that our welcome is for all.

Clergy Discipline Measure

I am involved in the campaign to revise the Clergy Discipline Measure. At the last meeting of General Synod we pressed for the complete replacement of the CDM in light of the recommendations of both the Ecclesiastical Law Society and research led by Sheldon and Aston University. We remain concerned that many of the fundamental injustices of the measure are yet to be recognised and addressed. If re-elected I would continue to play an active role in ensuring the replacement Clergy Conduct Measure is fit for purpose.

For the Parish

Addressing criticisms that the call for 10,000 lay-led church plants would undermine the parish system and that clergy are a limiting factor to church growth the Archbishop of York has stressed his commitment to the parish system and he has affirmed the need for more vocations saying, "That is my prayer: priests to serve a priestly people." Nonetheless the parish system is facing unprecedented challenges which have left many clergy feeling exhausted and disheartened, and concerned that we are becoming narrower in our focus and less broad in our churchmanship or appeal. I too am deeply committed to upholding the parish system to ensure that we continue to serve the whole nation in our mission and ministry.

Background

I was born in Hartlepool and was ordained over 20 years ago following a career teaching in church schools. I've served in a wide variety of dioceses and contexts – from county town to both rural and inner-city deprivation, from cathedral and greater church, from anglo-catholic to charismatic evangelical. My deep affection for the gloriously and occasionally maddening Church of England has remained constant despite the tensions of deeply held and sometimes bitter divisions. I delight in our shared inheritance of faith knowing that we are called beyond the comfort of our convictions to search for the common ground and purpose of our faith "for the love of God is broader than the measure of our minds." As a result, I am committed to an inclusive model of church, in which all are welcomed into the scandalous equality of God's love.

I am willing to be a strong and confident voice for those who are rarely heard in the debates in General Synod, ensuring that the clergy and people of this wonderful diocese of Newcastle are neither forgotten nor under-estimated. I would be honoured to represent Newcastle Diocese for a second term of office and seek your vote in this election.

I would be very happy to discuss any matter which you may wish to raise and can be contacted by email on DDO@newcastle.anglican.org or on 07741 849651.