

Post Synod July 2008 letter from the Bishop of Willesden

Dear Colleagues,

I'm just back from General Synod, where of course the focus has been on the decisions concerning the legislation to permit women to be consecrated to the episcopate. As you'll know, I'm a wholehearted supporter of women bishops, so at one level I'm cheered and excited as I see the gifts and callings of women being recognised in our Church, and the huge opportunities for developing the ministry of women in the service of Christ.

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TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

At another, however, I recognise that our processes for taking this forward have made it very painful for those who cannot in conscience accept the consecration of women, and that the motion passed makes no concessions to those opposed along the lines of the transferred/delegated/extended arrangements for which they were asking. This has led to many questioning their future in the Church of England, whereas as you know I have consistently wanted to insist that the promises made to opponents in 1992/3 must entail us making continuing separate arrangements for their pastoral care and oversight. To those reading this letter who are feeling that they have been sidelined and rejected, I want to say three things:

1. The House of Bishops is keenly aware of people's concerns and hurt (we do, of course, include within our number several bishops of traditional catholic integrity). Yesterday's decision is only the beginning of a process of legislation, during which not only a code of practice, but also more structural solutions, such as transferred oversight, can and will be brought back on the table. The way forward is still up for grabs, and I would urge all those disconcerted by the Synod decision to stick with the process and not to make hasty decisions about their future in the Church of England. Watch and pray, and please don't disengage.
2. Bishop Richard will be writing an *Ad Clerum* within the next week in which he will address the issues in the Diocese of London as a whole and plot a way forward. We need as a diocese to look at our disagreements soberly, in the fellowship of the bonds of peace.
3. I am still personally committed to trying to hold us all together, and will want to work with the Bishop of Fulham in ensuring that all of us keep talking, communicating and praying together. I'm happy to talk to any of you, both those in favour of women bishops and those against, at any time, in order to ensure that you have a place where you can work through the inevitable questions that many will have.

With prayers for all of you whether you finding yourselves rejoicing or grieving at last night's (Monday 7th July, 2008) decision.

+ Pete Broadbent
Bishop of Willesden