

The Ven. Antony MacRow-Wood

Overview

Current Post:	Archdeacon of Dorset since 2015
Previous Posts:	2004 – 2015 Team Rector, North Poole Ecumenical Team, Poole 1996 – 2004 Team Vicar, Preston with Sutton Poyntz and Osmington with Poxwell, Weymouth 1992 – 1996 Curate, Parks and Walcot Team Ministry, Swindon
Family:	Married to Dawn, with 3 grown up children



Introduction

I have long been bemused by General Synod – how many other Institutions have a forum that, amongst its members, gathers its extremists in one place and gives them a platform to air their differences so publicly? It has led to some spectacular car crashes but equally, at its best, has shown the nation how to disagree well - which is not to be dismissed lightly in these days of social media and people living in algorithmic-reinforcing bubbles. I think the Church of England's capacity to hold together so many different forms of Christian expression is very precious and something that we must strive to protect and preserve. To paraphrase an expression about free speech - I might disagree with your belief but I will fight for your right to believe it.

If elected

- I will bring 23 years' experience as a parish priest in various parts of the Diocese and 6 years' experience as an Archdeacon as well as a previous career in accountancy and industry. Church and Diocesan finances are not going to get any easier and with many years' experience on our Board of Finance I shall be well placed to speak in debates on Central Church budgets and other financial matters. Also, as Chair of our Board of Education I will be keen to support the place and role of church schools, working for the common good, within our nation.
- As Chair of the Churches Mutual Credit Union, I shall endeavour to help Synod appreciate the value of this relatively untapped resource to support clergy and church employees. Other Institutions with 'employee based' credit unions have generally embraced and supported them to a much greater degree – to the enormous benefit of their staff. This will be part of my contribution to the Clergy wellbeing agenda which is going to feature strongly in the next 5 years. The future of the parish system, clergy numbers and how we grow the church are all be issues that are going to impact clergy wellbeing and General Synod needs to hear from people like me, who deal with these issues on a daily basis.
- The parish system has been the beating heart of the Church of England for centuries, but demographic and financial factors threaten its future. A degree of change is inevitable but the ways in which change is enacted is crucial. It will be very easy to destroy more capacity than we create in ill thought through reforms and initiatives. I will be a constructively critical voice seeking to preserve the best of our heritage whilst embracing reforms which enhance our capacity to witness to our nation in the future.
- Developing and supporting effective forms of witness and evangelism will be something General Synod needs to grapple with. I am less than convinced by the wisdom and effectiveness of various Strategic Funding Initiatives, but I commend the last Synod's resolution for net zero carbon by 2030. This is starting to scratch where younger generations are itching and demonstrates less of a 'come and join us' and more

of a 'can we come and join you in your concerns' approach, which seems to me to be more authentically Christ-like.

- One of the big issues coming up will be the Living in Love and Faith project. I intend to play a full part in the process and hope, with the Church, to come to a greater synthesis of view. Currently I do feel conflicted. I have a close relative who has married his male partner and I can see that he is much happier and more settled for doing so. Against that I feel the force of Jesus words about 'God created them male and female...they shall be joined together...and the two shall become one flesh'. This confident assertion of gender and the place of procreation in marriage is counter-cultural in our modern age. Jesus had the uncanny ability to state the 'general case' of God's intention but equally to be very pastoral in his response to individuals recognising that people don't fit neatly into boxes. This is something our modern age and media make it difficult for us to emulate without the accusation of hypocrisy, but I think it will be essential to recover something of that approach if the Church is to find a way to honour its roots yet minister and witness effectively in our current culture.

Your Vote

Thank you for taking the time to read this address.

I would be most grateful if you would vote for me as your first choice candidate (or if not, please consider making me your second, third or fourth choice).

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Proposed by

The Ven. Penny Sayer
Archdeacon of Sherborne

Seconded by

The Revd Richard Curtis
Team Rector Cannings and Redhorn