

THE REVD DAVID FISHER

Sarum St. Martin

I am David Fisher, and am presently the Rector of Sarum St. Martin. Having been ordained some 43 years ago in Liverpool I served my second curacy in Weymouth and had my first incumbency in Salford. After this I returned to teaching for the next 25 years or so before returning to parochial ministry.

Some areas of our mutual life which will be addressed by the new General Synod

Proclaim Afresh

The Church of God may say of herself, *'Not to preach the Gospel would be my undoing,'* for Christ himself sent us as his apostles and witnesses. The more remote, the more difficult the assignment, the more *'my love of God spurs me on.'* We are bound to proclaim that Jesus is *'Christ, the Son of the Living God.'* Because of him we come to know the God we cannot see. *'He is the first born of all creation; in him all things find their being.'* Humankind's teacher and redeemer, he was born for us, died for us and for us rose from the dead. This is the faith which General Synod must work to uphold and prosper in the new quinquennium, and as Church of England clergy we are uniquely placed to build up the common life in our parishes in this faith. The voice of the parishes must be heard, and parishes need equipping for mission in the modern 'networked' world, with manageable common fund obligations.



Mutual up-building

The Simplification agenda commendably seeks to put funding into disadvantaged parishes, but proposals to 'remove hindrances' to the reorganisation of parishes and deployment of clergy need careful examination to ensure that they do not ride roughshod over the work of faithful church communities. The rights and privileges of parishioners, patrons, clergy and others must not be lost to a centralised bureaucracy.

So that the world may learn

The institutional Church of England must continue to offer support to the grass roots in a number of ways, one of which is found throughout the CofE: the Parochial System. There are fears that the traditional parochial ministry of the CofE may be under threat with new forms of organisation, such as mission areas, where people may find it less easy to relate to their parish church and priest. Allied to this is the support the

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parochial clergy must be given so that the Clergy Discipline Measure represents natural justice. This is missing in the overly slow procedures of the current Measure and that must give way to a more balanced Measure.

Life in abundance

We live in times when the secular world seems to be moving towards a culture of death rather than respect for life, and the Synod is a key forum through which to promote the Christian understanding of 'end of life' issues. We also have some serious theological thinking to do in relation to other faiths, in particular an increasingly confident Islam: engagement is important, as is an honest recognition of difference. General Synod must also receive and discuss 'Living in Love and Faith' in which discussion I cannot support any change in the definition, found in Canon Law and the Book of Common Prayer, of marriage being the union of one man with one woman.

Racism

In April this year the Archbishops' Anti-Racism report 'From Lament to Action' was published. This proposed a suite of changes to change the culture of the CofE. Those changes which require legislation by General Synod will be considered in the next quinquennium. As members of the worldwide Anglican Communion I must support proposals which will end racism at all levels of the Church.

I am in the midst of them

Above all, our efforts must be undergirded by prayer and the physical incarnate worship of the Church at which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments administered. We must resist the temptation to make streamed worship the 'new normal.' Keeping the doors of our churches open is crucial, so that the holy people of God may offer the worship that is God's due, build each other up in the Holy Spirit, and offer the welcome that the Lord Jesus gave to all who sought Him out.

Treasures new and old

To sum up, I would hope to offer Synod some 'extra-parochial' skills: including my time in teaching, my time on the Vacancy in See Committee working collaboratively with colleagues from a different Churchmanship to my own, as well as (and most importantly) twenty years' parochial experience as curate, incumbent and SSM. For pleasure, I read, walk our dogs, cycle, and I am a bit of a Formula 1 motor racing nut. I am Chaplain to TS Salisbury, Sea Cadet Unit.

Please consider giving me your first choice vote, and do call if you have any questions: 01722 320033 or email at benevans002@mac.com