

## **Bishop Martin's address Diocesan Synod June 11 2016**

Can I once again say thank you to all of you for coming. I realise that this is a huge commitment and for many of you involves a very early start, so I'm incredibly grateful to you for taking this time, particularly on a day when I know a number of us will go from here to the Cathedral or to one of many celebrations to mark the Queen's birthday. Welcome to those of you who are here for the first time – I can imagine how you are feeling, it's still quite fresh in my mind.

A good deal has happened since we last met as a Synod. We have followed our Lord to the Cross, we've then celebrated his Resurrection and Ascension, we've celebrated the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the foundation and animation of all there is in the mystery of the Trinity. Bishop Mike and I have confirmed young and old, we've licensed clergy to new posts, we've blessed windows, rooms, people and indeed all manner of things. And in all of this we have witnessed together the work God among us, through and around us, aware of God's active presence changing lives, healing wounds, bringing joy, instilling courage.

I want to restrict my words right now to just five minutes, because much of what I want to say properly belongs in the second half of the Agenda to do with the Vision and Strategy. But the very important responsibility for me to do now is to ask Synod that we send our best wishes and prayers to Nicholas Edgell. As you will all know, Nicholas has taken the difficult decision to leave his role as Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive. Kidney failure has recently resulted in dialysis and the prospect of a transplant in the near future. We will work out with Nicholas the most appropriate opportunity to thank him for his 20 years dedicated service to this Diocese. But for now what I would like to invite Synod to do is to express its gratitude to Nicholas by passing this motion:

That the Synod of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich expresses its gratitude to Nicholas Edgell for his 20 years dedicated service to the Diocese, and conveys to him our prayers for the restoration of his health, and for Nicola and for James and all his family.

Will all of those who are in favour of that motion please declare so.  
(applause)

Thank you. We will ensure that news of this gets to Nicholas, without relying on Nicola to do that. As I said, there will be an opportunity to thank him, and we need to work out with Nicholas and Nicola how best we do that, depending on developments with his health.

I am grateful that we have been able to appoint Charles Darley to serve as Interim Diocesan Secretary for a period that will probably be between six to nine months while we go through the process of searching for a permanent new Diocesan Secretary. Charles comes with expertise in organisational change from both the charitable and commercial sectors. He will be helping us implement the changes that we have identified over the past year, so that we maintain momentum and those are the changes that are chiefly embodied in one form or another in the Vision and Strategy document that we will consider shortly. I am going to invite him to say a few words. He comes from Norfolk, but we won't hold that against him. I'm going

to invite him to speak a few words so you can identify him and you know who you are talking to when you phone up.

Charles Darley says...

Thank you for your kind words. I'm delighted to see the thanks to Nicholas. Twenty years is a long time running any organisation, it's a heck of an achievement. As a result, of course, there are areas of excellence and also areas for improvement as the world moves on. I want to thank the staff for their resilience over the last 18 months, it's been an extremely difficult and challenging time for them but they have given me an extraordinarily warm welcome, I am grateful for that. I also wanted to express their apologies for a time that has been difficult; if you have been frustrated by a lack of responsiveness on occasions please understand and have sympathy. My job now though is to deliver the changes. We need to deliver some efficiencies in the organisation, we need to deliver some service improvements and need to do so at a sensible cost. As has been said I will lead the change over the next 3-6 months. What is delightful is the staff have input in great detail with enormous engagement for which I am very grateful. By Christmas you should be seeing a difference in how this organisation is run. It won't happen quickly but you will feel it. Thank you for your patience while we make these changes.

Bishop Martin...

Not sure how to interpret me saying six to nine months and him saying three to six months.

What I would also ask the Synod by acclamation to convey their huge congratulations to Bishop Tim Stevens who was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the Queen's Birthday Honours. While the citation read that this was for services to the Church of England and the community of Leicester, we know it was for services to Dunwich. So, no pressure, Mike.

The agenda today falls roughly into two halves. The first is looking at the transitional budget for next year, and the second at the Vision and Strategy that has been agreed by the Bishop's Council. I want to underline that we are in a state of transition as we tackle the financial challenges, but also look to a vibrant future as we respond to all that God is doing among us, through us and around us. The transitional nature means that this budget is about headline figures, not about detail – the budget will need to return in November having been realigned with the Vision and Strategy. That is a process that will happen over the summer. Obviously we couldn't do it the other way round because we haven't received the Vision and Strategy in this body. There are other elements that we will talk about today that are in transition, not yet in the form we would want them to be, but we need to change step by step. This is frustrating, I realise, not least for me, but it means that we can make changes that will have lasting value rather than just be short term in their impact.

At the heart of all of this is our faithfulness. It is how we live more and more deeply into the love of God, giving ourselves in God's service, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, being open to and animated by the Spirit. May that always be so. Thank you.