

## Report to Diocesan Synod March 2023

What have your General Synod reps ever done for you? Believe it or not there was more than just LLF discussed at General Synod!

Your reps made three interventions on your behalf before we got to LLF!

1. Resourcing Ministerial Formation – the way training for ministry is changing – in a good direction, **but** it looked like it may affect 3 of our current ordinands who we hope to train full time, but the change in funding seemed to leave a gap in funding during the transition. I spoke in this debate, and also made contact with the lead Bishop on this project, and have since received assurances by email that Canterbury Diocese should get the support we need so these ordinands can receive the full time training that would be best fit for them.
2. Draft Parochial fees measure – putting a cap on the increase in fees for weddings and funerals – your treasurers have I'm sure already updated their wedding and funeral fees for the second time in 2023! Archdeacon Darren went out to bat with his maiden speech opposing this change. Against the suggestion from our Diocesan Secretary whose views were printed in an article in the Church Times, the motion was carried, perhaps inevitably after the preceding debate about the Cost of Living, and despite my most fervent voting arm opposing the motion!
3. As an ADDO, I put a question in (number 162 if you're interested!) asking if potential ordinands would be required to assent to the new pastoral guidance as they have until recently been required to do with Issues in Human Sexuality. Bishop Sarah Mullally responded that the new pastoral guidance would not be used in a mechanistic way, but would encourage a meaningful and interactive approach to the pastoral teaching of the Church.

And what about LLF? I'm sure you are all up to speed, but just to summarise: The House of Bishops have synthesised 6 years of work and consultation that I'm sure many of you took part in and brought a motion from the College of Bishops (ie ALL the bishops).

- Apology to LGBTQIA+ people who have been hurt by the church
- Keeping the doctrine of marriage the same.
- Offering prayers for BLESSING of same sex couples in church
- Committing to new pastoral guidance to replace the 1991 'Issues in Human Sexuality'.

This includes protection for those who in conscience are not able to use the prayers of blessing.

Important for you to know about things that happened outside of the debate:

Firstly, there were two separate gravamen brought to try and prevent the debate from taking place. (We had to look up what one of those is – kind of like an injunction!) – one requiring the northern clergy to be present two hours before the scheduled start of synod on Monday and the second requiring the entire house of Laity to be present by 8am on Wednesday morning. Both gravamen were rejected without going to debate.

There were 26 amendments brought to the main motion, 11 of which were brought by a lay member of Synod that had been rebuked by both Archbishops for hate speech against the LGBTQIA+ community on social media.

As you probably know, the chair received a standing ovation at the end of both days, with the whole chamber standing and thanking him for holding the ring so gracefully and with such equanimity.

Panel discussion

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