

SATURDAY ADDRESS

This is a very important moment for our diocese. During the last two years, we have worked together on the Diocesan Review and the Proposed Policy and Action Plan. It has been a very collaborative effort. What we have produced is a comprehensive plan which will enable our Diocese to move from decline to growth. Why have we done this? Because times are changing. Because society is changing rapidly. Because we could see that our structures and processes were creaking a bit.

So we're not changing just for the sake of it. We're changing because what we had before wasn't working very well. And it seemed difficult to change it piecemeal - so we've taken the root and branch approach of attempting to change everything at the same time.

WHAT ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO DO TODAY

At its simplest, you are going to be asked to move from holding the Proposed Diocesan Policy and Action Plan to holding the Diocesan Policy and Action Plan. We want to move out of the phase of talking about possibilities to attempt to implement change.

That's a big shift - and quite a difficult one. Synods like things very cut and dried. In that sense it would have been easier to present you with a revised Diocesan Constitution. But that's not where we are. The Policy and Action Plan charts a direction and, at this stage, we do not have answers to many of the questions which arise - questions which I and other people have been asking about how bits work and fit together, how representation is managed and so on. Those answers will have to come from consultation with the diocese - but you need to be in the 'real situation' for much of that consultation to feel right.

If I can be personal for a moment. ... this is a time when I might say just 'Trust me. But that is not adequate. I see it as my role to offer leadership. As some of you know, when the crunch comes, I push very hard to encourage people to make the decisions which are necessary. But I do not short-cut things by simply making decisions at the centre and letting people find out about them afterwards. That style of leadership is simply inadequate for today's world of participation and transparency.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT

There is a great deal of material here. But it is actually two policies in one. The key element so far as congregations are concerned is the Casting the Net document. If a priest or Vestry says to me, 'What are we being asked to do?' The answer is 'Work with the Casting the Net document and, in particular, the

Nine Marks of a Healthy Mission-Shaped Church.' It is that document - which I think we should see as a natural successor to MYCMI, which will encourage our congregations to think about their mission and to explore the spirituality of every aspect of their life and ministry.

The second document is much bigger, more complex and more specific. It tells us how the diocese will look when it is organised to support congregations in mission - that's why it deals with training and support, with young people.

WHAT ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO DO TODAY?

We thought long and hard about how to plan today's Synod. And what we decided to do is this. At the end, there will be a Resolution put to Synod. There will be time to debate it in Plenary.

Before that, we shall attempt both to inform you about aspects of the Policy and Action Plan - and to attempt to enthuse you by showing you that many of our congregations are determinedly moving ahead in ways which are entirely consistent with the Casting the Net document. There will then be time for you to talk in groups before we move back into formal session with the Plenary.