

General Synod – Thursday 9 June

Following the Opening Eucharist, during which the Primus delivered his Charge to Synod, the minutes of the meeting of General Synod 2015 were approved.

Presentations were given on Anglican Communion matters - a report by the Primus on the Primate's Meeting held in March and a report by Mr Alastair Dinnie on the recent meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-16) Meeting. An amendment was made to the Motion asking Synod *to take note of the meeting of the Anglican Primate's in January 2016 and of the terms of the communique (including the Addenda to that Communique)* that added *and support its commitment to walk together*. This Motion was carried.

The Rt Rev Dr Gregor Duncan, Acting Convener of the Faith and Order Board presented the process for discussing alteration to the Canon on Marriage (which will be debated and voted on tomorrow).

The Rt Rev Dr Bob Gillies (on behalf of Dr Harriet Harris, Convener of the Doctrine Committee) launched the Doctrine Committee's latest Grosvenor Essay (12th in the series of Essays) titled *Prayer and Spirituality*, saying "So what are we to make of 'spirituality'? For the early Church, 'spirituality' meant the new spirit-filled life made possible by participating in the body of Christ. This seems miles away from a more private sense of 'spirituality' we might have today. On the other hand, spirituality has become institutionalised outside of the Church: in healthcare, education, prisons, the Armed Forces, and in business, 'spirituality' is looked to as that which focuses on values, connectedness and the meaning of life, and also as something able to calm us in an increasingly anxious world. Growing numbers of people consider themselves 'spiritual but not religious' (SBNRs as they are known), and this Essay explores challenges that SBNRs articulate."

The Rev Dr John McPake, representing the Church of Scotland, brought greeting to General Synod on behalf of the Ecumenical Delegates at this year's General Synod.

This was followed by a presentation from the Convener of the Inter-Church Relations Committee, the Rev John McLuckie, in response to the *Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission* report; the Motion to take note of the Faith and Order Board's response to this report was then carried.

The afternoon session was brought to a close by a video presentation on work of the Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees and a presentation by Dr Alison Strang of Queen

Margaret University's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Network Management Team and Institute for Global Health and Development. In her presentation Dr Strang highlighted six things that refugees have particular concerns, requests or ask about : Safety, wanting to learn English, wanting to learn about how our society works (taxation & benefits to appropriate behaviour on a bus, how to meet local people and make friends, how to be in touch with their own families, how to get a job.

The first day of General Synod ended with Evening Prayer led by David Todd of Edinburgh Diocese and a member of the Liturgy Committee.