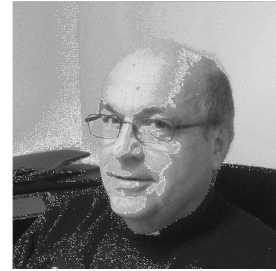


## **Prebendary Robert Harris**

Team Rector of Plympton,  
Plymouth



Thank you for taking the time to read this address.

I have been fortunate in my ministry to have experienced a wide spectrum of life within the Church of England. This has ranged from large inner-city parishes with high levels of deprivation to a small rural benefice with a total population of 35 - and 1,000 dairy cows. It has included areas which have seen massive new housing developments and an isolated coastal town with the associated problems of cultural, financial, social and educational exclusion. Ministry in diverse parishes has also enabled me to work closely with colleagues representing the theological diversity contained within the Church of England. I have come to value the wide range of views and liturgical practice which we have inherited and believe that we are at our strongest when we are prepared to listen and to learn from one another using the best from our different traditions.

I am the vice chair of the Diocesan Board of Education and am passionate in my commitment to the role of our church schools in the life and mission of our Diocese. The work of our schools provides us with an opportunity to influence for good the lives of many young people ensuring that they hear the Good News of the Kingdom. Our schools also enable us to develop strong links with the wider community providing support and developing relationships with those who might otherwise have little contact with our churches.

The development of vocations, both lay and ordained, is vital to the continuing ministry and mission of the Church. It is only through the development of active, committed and effectively trained disciples that we can proclaim the Gospel and build the Church. I have worked as a training incumbent, vocations assessor and on the development of lay training courses. I shall continue to support those who work to develop the ministry of the whole Church.

I believe my experiences place me in a strong position to understand many of the challenges and opportunities facing the Church today, and in particular those challenges which face all who continue to minister within the parochial system.

Plymouth, the largest city in the diocese, is unrepresented among our elected General Synod members, by seeking election I am hoping to redress this omission.

Our church faces a time of turmoil in which some speak of division and the possibility of irreconcilable differences. This isn't something new, either in the recent history of the Church of England, or the longer history of the Church. History has shown that such differences can be, and are, overcome when we seek the will of the Holy Spirit and are determined to listen to one another with humility and a genuine desire for reconciliation.

I offer myself as a candidate who is not standing out of concern about a single issue nor as someone who seeks to represent any particular 'party' within the life of our Church, but rather as someone who pledges to listen carefully, to reflect theologically, to discern prayerfully, and then, to seek God's will - the unity of the Church and the fulfilment of that mission which will draw all people into the life of His kingdom.

I hope that you will feel able to give me your vote.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'R'.