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There are many important items being discussed and voted on during the next term of General Synod (GS). After much prayer, reflection and advice from clergy and laity, I felt motivated to stand in order to represent the diocese.

I started ordained ministry in the Plymouth Deanery, serving my title across many parishes, including Shaugh Prior on the edge of Dartmoor, The Ascension in suburbia of Plymouth, and the city churches of St Aubyn, Devonport and St Andrew with St Luke, Stoke Damerel. I now serve the people of the market town of Holsworthy and the surrounding villages. During this time I have been a chaplain to the RAF Cadets, the British Legion, Town Council and Holsworthy Livestock Market. I'm a Diocesan Assessor for potential ordinands and a member of the Devon Churches Rural Forum. Most recently I have been part of a focus group looking at the Governance of the CofE and have given talks to the Praxis Southwest Colloquium. I work with a great team of retired clergy, all of whom are happy to support me in such a way as I feel I can give time and energy to this important role.

It's important that people who stand for GS are not standing predominantly for one reason, but are able to contribute across a broad number of matters. Below are some of the most important issues coming up for debate and decision.

The Parish Church

Parish ministry is our greatest way to reach out and share the Gospel of Christ. I'm passionate about parish ministry. The church is continually evolving and we need to continue to do this in a way that will be there for all people. Archbishop William Temple said, "The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members". Churches in this diocese, and elsewhere, are under many strains; resources are stretched and many clergy are feeling the pressure of this especially having lived through a pandemic. If I am elected I will do my best to represent the day to day parish minister, the bread and butter of the CofE. Particularly as decisions are made about a new Mission & Pastoral Measure and 'Emerging Church'. Many reforms are being tabled and voted on under the new 'Vision and Strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s', including how we continue to be Christ centred, humbler and simpler. If elected I will seek, on the floor of GS and in committees, a fair sharing of resources for parish ministry, church plants, pioneer ministry and chaplaincy across rural areas, large towns and cities, that takes account of socio-economic factors.

Five Guiding Principles

We are all part of the one Body of Christ. Different stances and convictions are part of our Anglican character. Our diocese has parishes with resolutions and different convictions. I have first hand experience of this. I worked with one of my parishes to ensure adequate resolutions were in place to protect their theological convictions, so that they could continue to flourish whilst having a female Rector. This is working well. This is the reality of parish life, and I'm able to speak to it at GS.

Social Justice

Jesus was there for those on the edges, the marginalised, the poor, those who had no voice. The Church of England follows this example, and it is paramount that we continue to do so. Our country has a shortage of housing, food banks and community fridges are increasingly being relied on, there is an ever increasing need to take in and look after refugees. GS has recently voted in support of looking at how we can help to remedy the national shortage of housing. I fully support this, and if elected, I will seek out opportunities to steer discussions and decisions to ensure that we keep following the example of Jesus and that we remain and become a more proactive church when it comes to being there for the marginalised, the poor and those with no voice. Other ways that we can do this is by engaging with Living in Love and Faith and addressing Climate Change.

Living in Love and Faith

Another significant item in this next term of GS is 'Living in Love and Faith' (LLF). I often challenge myself by the following questions; 'am I washing the feet of all of God's beloved children?' and 'am I following the command to love one another; am I loving some and not others?'. In answer to these questions I felt it important to run the LLF for the Holsworthy Benefice, and did so during Lent 2020. I have also contribute to the CMD sessions about how to run the course. During the course we gained a greater understanding of tradition, we studied the Holy Scriptures and listening to each others stories, thoughts and feelings, we prayed together and sought to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church. I came away with a greater understanding of how the church wants to be able to wash the feet and love all people, and I would like to take that to GS.

Fifth Mark of Mission

Climate change and the Fifth Mark of Mission will thankfully be featuring very highly on the GS agenda in future years. The poorest in the world are suffering significantly due to climate change. We have a chance to make a difference and lead the way in how to steward God's creation until Christ comes again. This is no easy task, especially difficult for churches with limited resources and less than environmentally friendly ways of operating. I will do my best to represent this diocese realistically, and with a heartfelt need to find ways in which we can be church without damaging our planet.

If you would like to talk about any of this please do be in touch. I would be grateful for your support in the election; for your first preference or high preference vote which will enable me to represent parish clergy of this diocese.

Elizabeth