



"Cast our anxieties on Christ," Archbishop says

The Archbishop of Canterbury has urged the Church of England to stop infighting ahead of a pivotal year.

In his presidential address at the opening of the General Synod in Westminster, Archbishop Welby noted that 2020 was a significant year, with the publication in the summer of material from the 'Living in Love and Faith' project, followed by the Lambeth Conference.

In a nod to the recent row over the pastoral statement on civil partnerships, the Archbishop acknowledged:

"As a Church, Anglicans — all Anglicans but particularly the Church of England — always have been and always will be prone to shoot ourselves in the foot, quite often while the foot is firmly in the mouth.

"So much of the furious internal politics and division in the C of E was driven by anxiety and fear, and resulted from a failure to "cast our anxieties on Christ."

Quoting 1 Peter, ("your enemy, the Devil, who prowls around like a roaring lion"), and recalling a recent visit to Kenya, Archbishop Welby warned churchpeople not to misidentify their own brothers and sisters as the enemy, "not biting and snapping at one another.

"Your enemy the Devil; not your enemy the people who disagree with you, not those who troll you on Twitter, not those who say nasty things in Synod, not your enemy because they are of a different form of churchmanship."

The "lion" could be climate change, gender justice, poverty, modern slavery, or even "how we encounter those who are LGBT.

"Then there are other animals, shadowy ones in the dark, whose noise we hear, and we're beginning to distinguish their shapes but we don't yet identify them. We can't just assume them to be the face of the lion."

The Archbishop listed scientific advances, with a question of how they might be used by a future government.

“Shepherds who spend all their time arguing how best to protect the sheep or what a sheep is, will find the flock has been eaten, not hearing the lion that was stalking,” he cautioned.

The transcript of Archbishop's presidential address as delivered at General Synod is [here](#).