

DIOCESAN SYNOD – 18TH JUNE 2008
PRESIDENTIAL INTRODUCTION BY THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY
THE RT REVD DR DAVID STANCLIFFE

The diocese has had been training Ordained Local Ministers since 1997, and pioneered some distinctive characteristics over these 10 years.

- OLM recovered a healthier understanding of vocation in which the call came from the church, as a corrective to over-individualised understandings of 'my' vocation
- OLM has modelled collaborative ministry, with lay and ordained people working together in training and beyond, and developing a common vision
- OLM's rootedness in the community during training has developed an incarnational model to formation within the church family. This has given others from parish groups confidence to offer themselves for a variety of ministries, lay and ordained
- OLM has overcome some exclusive models of diaconal and priestly ministry, paving the way nationally for a broader discernment of vocation in the church, and adaption of training to meet the learning of those with particular needs.

What is distinctive here – which we celebrate and applaud – has changed our understanding of ministry and vocation; and I rejoice that this has fed back in three different directions:

- STETS has taken our model of working with a local parish team on board for all in training
- Our ordinations to the diaconate for all candidates are now at Michaelmas: all candidates have a 3 month period of inculturation in the local church as lay ministers before ordination
- It is now taken for granted that all our clergy are working in teams with a variety of ministries and a number of lay people

There are some consequences

- The numbers being ordained is rising: we have 19 priests and 26 deacons being ordained this year, and one consequence is that the bill is going up to over £1m a year – the best investment we can make in our future
- The Regional Training Partnership – see later in the agenda – is hoping to offer a wide set of pathways for clergy and lay to train together
- We have been able to attract a really good field for our appointment of a Vocations Adviser: discerning gifts is not just a matter of more ordinands, but of everyone taking their discipleship seriously
- Next Lent sees our hosting one of our Sarum Canons, Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP, the author of the best-selling *What is the point of being a Christian?* to lead our thinking as a diocese about our discipleship under the title – **Fully Alive**.

There will be more news of this soon, but it is offered as an umbrella for some joined up thinking about discipleship, preparation for the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, and using our gifts in the service of the kingdom. Fr Timothy will speak in both the North and South of the diocese in addition to the cathedral, and there will be material for groups as well as DVD resources.

There are also three matters of more than local concern for your prayers. Two of them touch on underlying issues of the kind that feed newspaper headlines, without adding much light.

- First, our Sudanese partners are here for a fortnight pre-Lambeth, to share our life, have a conference with all our partners and to visit the Deaneries of the Diocese. It is in hospitality and engagement that the concerns of different cultures and our different ways of tackling potentially divisive matters are best shared. These issues – often maliciously exploited to ferment division – need to be worked on together. The emissaries of Uganda were at Archbishop Daniel's enthronement in Juba to try and persuade our colleagues in the Sudan not to come to Lambeth, but Daniel and his bishops had the good sense to say their friends had invited them, and they were coming to listen and to learn. It is our experience that the hospitality of friendship and conversations round the supper table are where opinions can be exchanged and minds changed, rather than in the glare of headline seeking publicity. Here they will meet, among others, the Presiding Bishop of the ECUSA, Bishop Katharine, with our other guests. She is speaking in the cathedral at 6.30pm on Monday 14th July, and you are very welcome to that as well.
- Second, the General Synod will be debating the ordination of women to the episcopate on Monday 7th July. The House of Bishops has offered a lead to the Synod, believing that a basic decision to do what we have agreed to do, accompanied by a code of practice that will be operated universally, is what the Church needs and what the huge majority of ordinary people we are called to minister among expect. While seeking to be generous to those who will be unable in good conscience to accept this decision, what is really important is our mission. And as far as provisions are concerned, do we trust the bishops to provide generously; and if not what is the point of being the church?
- Finally, although there will be opportunity for more of this later, you will want me to say to Bishop Tim how lucky we think Truro is to have captured him, how sorry we are that he is going, and how much we value, applaud and will miss his ministry. We shall say a formal farewell to him and Sian on the afternoon of Sunday October 12th in the cathedral; and I shall need to consult you in a variety of ways to get your mind on whether we think we ought to fill this post, or whether you think that Tim is wholly dispensable; and if you say yes, as to whether we can possibly tune our expectations to make this even a starter!