

General Synod Election Address 2021

VENESSA PINTO, CA

Standing for the House of Laity of General Synod

Proposed by Sian Margaret Rigby, Reader (LLM) (City of Leicester Deanery)

Seconded by Kat Gibson, Intercultural Pioneer Minister (City of Leicester Deanery)



Who am I?

- A faithful Anglican, deeply committed to the Church.
- Have fully engaged with church ministry life since being a teenager and was brought up in a multicultural home in the Netherlands and moved to the UK in 2006.
- Enthusiastic and energetic contributor to the Church of England's mission and ministry.
- Have substantial experience of working with rural and urban based churches.
- Church Army(CA) Evangelist and active member of the Archbishop's College of Evangelists. Leadership role in the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to Guildford, September 2021.
- Intercultural pioneer minister establishing Roots, a vibrant new intercultural worshipping community in Leicester. Read more here on CofE's website: [New Church begins](#).
- Current member of City Deanery Synod and of Diocesan Synod. Previous member of Diocesan Synod in Aberdeen & Orkney (Scottish Episcopal Church).
- Contributed to development of diocesan BAME vocations strategy.
- A previous presenter for Church of England's 'Faith at Home' resources for families.
- Able to relate well to people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures. Have served and worked in various church denominations and have substantial experience in working ecumenically.
- Sit on diocesan well-being working group and initiator of diocesan BAME staff wellbeing group. I am passionate about wellbeing with professional experience as teaching assistant in SEN schools and Health Care worker for elderly people with dementia.
- I bring a global perspective to mission, and an unaffected, natural approach to evangelism.

These experiences give me a realistic understanding of the issues faced by the Church of England, and what can be achieved in a changing world. I am committed to the spiritual development of all ages and generations in the church. My theological, spiritual and leadership insights arising from my personal experience and rich cultural identity provide an invaluable resource for the church locally nationally and internationally, particularly in encouraging and enabling global majority leadership and inter-cultural mission in the CofE.

Why vote for me?

Although my mission and ministry are mainly urban based, if elected, I will ensure that I will listen to and value the majority voices in our rural diocese. Also, as a 26-year-old, Black woman, I represent a demographic that is 'missing' from many of our churches and can give voice to the concerns of a generation whose voice needs to be heard if we are to respond strategically and creatively to the demographic challenges of the coming decades. I believe I would bring a vital voice to General

Synod, not least a deeply constructive vision of the work of reconciliation and justice necessary to heal the Church of its institutional racism and enabling the current and next generation to actively engage with racial equity, climate change and mission.

What will I bring to General Synod?

Racial Justice: Racism continues to be a significant issue across our society, and we are far from immune. The Lament to Action Task Force Report and the work of many others present us with a context for moving forwards in a way that honours all people. If elected, I will encourage the Church to take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of Global Majority people across the Church as well as help the Church understand issues of Global Majority Christians.

Environmental Issues: Responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to be stewards of God's creation. I welcome the commitment by General Synod to become carbon net zero by 2030 – the challenge now is how this will be achieved. We need to listen and ensure that every decision is taken with due regard to its impact on our faith and on creation. We cannot function in our faith passively and so we cannot live on the earth without due regard for God's creation.

Mission: I truly believe that we are at a critical time in the life of the church, when decisions made now will determine whether the Church of England will truly be able to flourish both in parishes and missional communities. Inclusion in its widest sense is linked to our success in evangelism. If people feel that they are fully included and valued regardless of their sexuality, gender, disability, mental health, or ethnicity, they are more likely to be able to hear the message of God's love.

Endorsements

Ven Dr Peter Rouch, CEO, Church Army UK & Ireland writes: *“Venessa has impressed me with her commitment to the Church's mission, and also with her ability to reflect deeply and contribute thoughtfully in discussion. Vee, listens well to others and brings perspectives that it is important for us to hear. I commend her to the people of the diocese as an excellent candidate for General Synod and look forward to her contribution if, and I hope when, elected.”*

Pam Rhodes, familiar face of BBC's Television's Songs of Praise, writes: *“It's rare to find a young woman like Venessa Pinto, who rolls up her sleeves to act upon and brilliantly articulate the challenges of her generation now and in the future - but to all her extensive knowledge and experience, she brings a maturity that comes from a deep and compelling Christian faith. She's not just a voice for the young. She's a voice we all need to hear.”*

Kat Gibson writes: *“Venessa would be an excellent candidate for General Synod, bringing a fresh perspective. Her love for God and her passion for the Gospel will encourage and inspire others within General Synod, and she is unafraid of raising challenging questions. Being a commissioned Church Army Evangelist, her insights in relation to outreach could prove very useful. She has a deep passion for justice and is keenly aware of some of the issues facing young people today, which could be exactly what General Synod needs at this crucial time.”*

I would be grateful for your prayers and for your first preference vote as I commit to serve in this role. If you would like to discuss any issues that I have raised then please feel free to contact me:

Email: Venessa.Pinto@LeicesterCofe.org Mobile: +447376615263 **Thank you!**