

ADRIAN HUGHES

Candidate for General Synod



My story...

I am a Brummie born and bred. My introduction to the North-East began in 1975 when I came to study for a degree at the University of Newcastle. I met a local girl from Fenham, who was also a student, and we were married in 1982.

I trained at Cranmer Hall in Durham and was ordained in 1983 in the Diocese of Birmingham, serving my curacy in Shard End, a council estate on the east side of the city. I moved on to be a team vicar in the Solihull Team ministry.

In 1986 we moved back to the North-East in response to that inevitable and inescapable pull that this place exerts. I served for just under five years as a member of the Glendale Team ministry, before moving towards the coast to Belford where we stayed for nearly twelve years. In 2006 we moved to the parish of Cullercoats.

Alongside my parish ministry I have served as an assistant DDO, Area Dean, and the Bishop's advisor on the Ministry of Deliverance, as well as on a number of boards and committees in the Diocese.

Where we are journeying to next...

I have seen many changes during these years, and I remain excited by the challenges which are now before us. We are facing a huge change to ministry in our church, of a scale not experienced for generations. It is a time when wisdom and discernment will be essential if we are to flourish.

Changes to ministry...

I am excited by the prospect of increasing the involvement of lay people in the ministry and mission of the church. We need to assure and protect those churches where such resources are scarce and those who feel threatened by the process.

We also need to ensure that the reduced number of ordained clergy are not expected to do more than they can reasonably sustain, especially in rural and inner-city areas and our large urban estates, where lay resources may be in short supply.

Times of such transition and uncertainty are not easy to negotiate, and as a member of the General Synod I should be eager to ensure that the experience and issues in our Diocese are widely shared.

Diversity... our 'Rainbow of a Diocese'....

I am deeply committed theologically to the Church of England, in all its diversity. As a Diocese we reflect that diversity, both in the various contexts in which we live out our discipleship and exercise our ministry, but also in the wide spectrum of views and theologies we embrace.

As a traditional Catholic I am part of a relatively small constituency among my peers, but I have been enormously encouraged by the way my fellow clergy have accepted and honoured my position, which has enabled me to continue to be involved in so much of the life of our Diocese. I have always regarded this as a living testimony of how we are generous, engaged, and open.

The debate around sexuality and marriage...

The issue of sexuality will play a large part in the life of the next General Synod, and in particular the conversations around the report 'Living in Love and Faith', and the decisions which may follow. I would want to maintain that the Sacrament of Marriage, as in scripture and tradition, a union of a man and a woman.

I am not yet persuaded by the reasons that I have heard that the Church of England is in a position which would require an amendment to our current theological understanding of marriage, as stated in the Book of Common prayer and the Canons.

Our green and pleasant land...

Our society is confronted by increasing and alarming evidence of global warming, as are so many in our world. The pressing need for change is not exclusive to any particular group or generation, but the responsibility belongs to us all.

I am delighted that our Diocese has made a commitment to play a part in addressing these issues, and I keen to ensure we do all that we can to respond appropriately. Those of you who know St. George's Church will be aware that this presents us with enormous issues, but like all churches, we must strive to do everything we can.

The General Synod must continue to encourage us all to respond.

Learning to be simple....

The Church of England seems to be generating more initiatives for us to consider and undertake in each succeeding year and offer more resources than it sometimes feels possible to sustain. I feel we are at a time now when we are being called to become a simpler church, to focus on our core values and to ensure we live them well.

I would want to challenge the wider church to embrace more fully what we have received here as followers of Aidan and Cuthbert and live more visibly as disciples of Christ in our increasingly secular society.

And last of all....

Finally, I think it is important that we elect representatives to our General Synod who reflect the diversity and reality of our life as a Diocese, but who are also sufficiently sensitive to those who hold views very different to their own.

I should be happy to represent you and all of the clergy of this Diocese on General Synod and would welcome your prayers and your support in this endeavour. If you have any questions for me, then please feel free to contact me via email on revajh@virginmedia.com Thank you.