

General Synod Election Address.

The Reverend Canon John Sinclair

Standing for Re-election

The Rector of Upper Coquetdale

Alnwick Deanery

Dear Elector and Colleague,

It is a privilege to be able to stand for re-election as a Newcastle Diocesan member of General Synod.

I am indebted to The Reverend Sue McCormack for proposing my nomination and to The Reverend Alison Hardy for seconding my nomination.

It has been a privilege to serve as a Newcastle Diocesan member of General Synod over the past eleven years. During that time, I have gained vast experience in the working of General Synod, as well as serving on the Crown Nominations Commission. I have seen the profile of Newcastle Diocese increase nationally, a great deal. I would be delighted to serve the diocese of Newcastle for a further term and humbly ask you to vote for me, preferably in your top three.

A bit about me

I was born in Newcastle and plan to stay local, all my days. I have served all my ordained life in this diocese which I love. I became a follower of Jesus Christ when I was overwhelmed by the love of God through the ministry of the Church of England in Newcastle during my preparation for marriage.

Since then, I have tried to serve God and share the message of his love for all people.

I first served the church as a busy and committed lay person, including training and ministering as a Reader, before being selected for ordination back in 1989.

Since ordination I have spent my whole ministry working in parishes across this



diocese, including Ponteland, Longbenton, Newburn, The Cathedral and now in Upper Coquetdale. I served as Area Dean in Newcastle West before moving to Central Deanery to take up the role of Residentiary Canon at our Cathedral, while I worked across the length and breadth of the diocese as the Officer for Local Evangelism.

In 2019 I was delighted to take on the role of Rector in Upper Coquetdale, a parish covering some 180 square miles of some of the most beautiful parts of our diocese.

Before being immersed in Rural Ministry I served for ten years as Chair of the House of Clergy of Diocesan Synod, helping to shape our Diocesan Synod agendas.

During the past seven years I have served on the National Clergy Discipline Commission offering the voice of the ordinary members of the clergy throughout our church. There is still much work to do to shape the commission in a way that will best serve the needs of our clergy now and in the future.

Motivation for standing

My motivation for standing for re-election is primarily focused on making sure the Northern province, and especially the voice of Newcastle Diocese is heard. There can be a tendency for the church to have a Westminster focus, which in my view, needs to be informed by the experienced voice of the North. I long to see Newcastle Diocese have the resources we need to enable us to flourish and reach out

with the good news of Jesus Christ in a way that is relevant and culturally acceptable across our diverse communities.

There can be a tendency at General Synod to look inwards when our energy and focus should be elsewhere. I would always support an outward focus when there are issues crying out for attention in the wider world.

Looking back

During my time on General Synod we have been through some challenging and rewarding times. We have dealt with major changes in our church legislation, and I am honored to have been part of the positive process which has opened the way for women and men to play a full part in episcopal ministry without reference to gender. I also bring experience of being a member of the Crown Nominations Commission during the appointment of our Diocesan Bishop.

In my view Synod has become less adversarial over recent years and has developed a greater mutual understanding and respect of difference. I am convinced we need to build on that respect and invite the Holy Spirit's hand to be upon us as we talk, pray, and vote together in the future.

Looking forward

There remain huge challenges as we move into the next group of sessions on General Synod. The way we conduct our business affects the way we are seen within our country and further afield. I know that many will be watching us as we continue discussions around human sexuality. I want people to see a church which is united in proclaiming the unconditional love of God in our diverse communities.

During my service on General Synod, I have found myself challenged by the Church's traditional teaching on human sexuality. My desire is to create a church where all aspects of its life and ministry are open to everyone, regardless of sexual orientation. I look forward to the day when consideration of a couple's gender no longer plays a role in the

preliminaries to marriage. My passion would be to work for a church where even those who disagree with each other would be able to remain united and focus on sharing God's love with the world.

As we engage nationally and locally with Living in Love and Faith, I echo the desire of our Bishops. Hoping that we will speak the truth in love and, with godly discernment, will make right decisions in matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, for "*we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ*" Ephesians 4:15.

In conclusion

Change is always with us. As we move on with the reality of Covid in our lives, there comes both challenge and opportunity. I know we will do things differently, but I will work hard to ensure that we change, in our diocese, in a way that is culturally relevant for us in the North. We have a great diocese and if given the privilege of representing it again at a National level, I will do all in my power to make sure the voice of the North continues to be heard, including the Rural and deeply Rural voice.

I am optimistic by nature and whether you vote for me or not (I hope you will) I look forward to working with you for an inclusive church. I long to see the credibility of the church increase in our changing society as we continue to reach our communities with the transformational love of God. Thank you for taking the time to read this address. I hope you will vote for me.

Please be in touch if you would like further information.



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