



Ad Clerum

Shrove Tuesday, 28th February 2017

Dear Colleagues,

Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow

I invite you to join with Christians around the world and through the ages to keep a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

Pray - Praying Together Lent 2017

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian life, consciously placing ourselves in the presence of God. *Praying Together Lent 2017* is a simple way for us in the Diocese of Salisbury to read the Scriptures separately but together in ways that lead us to Reflect, Pray and Act. It is based on a version developed and piloted last year by the Revd Ian Cowley and Canon Tom Clammer and has been developed by The Pray Forum chaired by Bishop Michael Perham.

I will launch *Praying Together* tomorrow on Ash Wednesday in the Cathedral with Bishop Michael for use across the diocese. In his sermon, Bishop Michael will say:

We have been given a most wonderful resource, *Praying Together, Lent 2017*. Look what this treasure of a book provides. Lent invites us to read and meditate on God's holy Word. *Praying Together* gives us a short bible passage to read and a thought on which to pause and reflect for a longer or shorter time. *Praying Together* encourages us in a section each day to think a little about self-denial, about fasting, about acts of charity, not big dramatic gestures, but simple disciplines that feed the soul.

But then there is the prayer and that's where our particular emphasis is this Lent. In *Praying Together* we have given ourselves some beautiful and helpful prayer. Something practical each day, something inviting us a little deeper into a sense of God's presence.

I want to say that I believe that we need the fasting, the prayer, the abstinence and penitence, the spiritual reading and the solemn music more than ever, probably the prayers most of all! An age where there is more food on the supermarket shelves than ever before needs to learn the wisdom of fasting. A world where we rush from one excitement or another, or one duty to another, needs space and silence that leads to prayer. A culture of indulgence needs abstinence. A society that has lost its moral certainties needs repentance. A generation that communicates by sound-bites

needs spiritual reading. A Church that celebrates a friendly, accessible, compassionate God needs music that pulls us up short before the majesty and the holiness of God. And a time of political turmoil, of international instability and of fear for the planet needs fasting, prayer, abstinence, penitence and much more in generous measure.

Praying Together has been produced at no cost to the diocese. It is in three formats: as a booklet with 25,000 copies distributed; the PDF version of the booklet is available on the Diocesan website from where it can be downloaded and printed; you can download an app for phone or tablet; and you can receive the prayer points in an e-mail which will arrive in your inbox every morning. We hope you will enjoy using it and this Lent will become a joy and feast that leads us to Easter.

All the information you need to receive the prayers in the format you wish is on the Diocesan website and can be accessed via the link www.bit.ly/prayingtogether.

We will also be re-launching the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer. Again, the prayers will be available each day on the Diocesan website in a variety of forms. In his sermon Bishop Michael will say,

These daily prayers invite us to develop a deeper commitment to one another as we pray for one another across the churches, parishes, schools and communities of the diocese, holding up each to God in prayer, supporting one another, naming one another, being thankful for the ministry of each. The evidence is that we haven't made as much as we might of this diocesan cycle of praying and have thus missed some opportunities and Ash Wednesday might be a fresh start day. A whole diocese in common prayer for one another each day. It's a powerful thought. Better still, a powerful reality. And it is all about praying together.

Serve - Lent Appeal for the South Sudan

As a diocese we have been linked with what is now the South Sudan for 44 years. It is a part of the world in which there has been relentless conflict. After the hope of independence in July 2011, they have fallen back into violence and there is great suffering. Some 3.4 million women, men and children are displaced from their homes. The economy has collapsed, malnutrition has soared and hunger has taken a firm hold. At least 100,000 people are now facing starvation and a further one million are on the brink of famine. We cannot do nothing and I am appealing to the diocese for urgent help for our brothers and sisters.

You might have seen reports that Archbishop Justin and Pope Francis are considering a joint visit to the South Sudan at the request of the South Sudanese Council of Churches. If they go, they will want to know that we will be behind them with prayer and practical assistance. This is an urgent time and much is needed of us.

Our link began with prayer so that informed prayer would lead to financial giving and the development of a partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This Lent I invite us to rediscover the joy of this: giving generously to those who are in great need.

Our Lent Appeal will be given to Christian Aid's crisis appeal for the South Sudan so that we are part of the coordinated and local response where there is greatest need. Please find ways individually and together to collect for humanitarian aid to feed the people of the South Sudan in this present crisis.

You can donate **online** through JustGiving at
<http://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/sdbf/southsudan2017>

You can give by **text message**. Send "SSUD17 £10" to 70070 to give £10 via text message.

You can make a **cheque** payable to Salisbury DBF SSA. Send to South Sudan Appeal, Church House, Crane Street, Salisbury, SP1 2QB.

Grow - Ministry Matters

Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow includes a strong focus on growing disciples and increasing the number of vocations to lay and ordained ministry.

Confirmation

There are definite signs that the confirmation project in the diocese is beginning to shift the wheel and the number confirmed last year was very slightly up on the year before. Confirmation is a great way of growing people in the way of Jesus Christ. We are seeing candidates from more parishes and chaplaincies including some where there have not been confirmations for years. The encouragement of new people is, of course, good for the whole Church.

The diocesan confirmations at the Cathedral are wonderful occasions at which candidates visibly grow in the gift of the Spirit. Do bring people to them both for their own confirmation and to support others. Again, it is good for the whole Church. The bishops are also willing to confirm locally but it takes a bit more organising with episcopal diaries.

If you want help in thinking about how to get confirmation going again, make contact with Neil Larkey, our Young People's Confirmation Project Worker (T 07469 855525 | neil.larkey@salisbury.anglican.org) who is running with this project for us.

If you are looking for great new ideas for leading confirmation groups, want to be inspired by hearing stories of how confirmation can be transformational and go away 'fired up' and excited at the possibilities, you can book on to the day course ***Rethinking Confirmation*** on Friday 24th March (10.00am-4.00pm), details of which can be found [here](#). As well as Neil Larkey being on hand to advise, we are very excited to be welcoming the co-writers of the book *Reconnecting with Confirmation*: Susie Mapledoram (Youth Work Officer, Manchester Diocese) with all her experience and connections to the Finnish Church and Pete Maidment (Chaplain, Lord Wandsworth College) who brings many years' experience of being a youth worker and now a chaplain.

Vocations

There has been considerable success in encouraging people to explore their sense of vocation to lay and ordained ministry. It is early days but with 14 people going to Bishops' Advisory Panels this year, it looks very likely that we will have the 50% increase of those beginning training for ordination that we are looking for in each year for the next ten years. The future also looks promising. More than 90 people are currently

working with Benny Hazlehurst, the Diocesan Vocations Adviser, and others. Our Young Vocations Champions and our Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme house in Poole are developing a growing number of young vocations. This is an answer to prayer and very good news. It can only happen with deaneries, benefices, parishes and chaplaincies developing disciples, bringing people to confirmation and encouraging people to think about vocation.

New Opportunities in Training for Ordained Ministry

The implementation this year of Resourcing Ministerial Education across the Church of England is introducing changes and opportunities. There is greater flexibility for us as a diocese in the way we train candidates. Whilst we will continue to train ministers in the best and most appropriate way for each candidate, the new funding arrangements mean it is more likely that those who are over 40 will train non-residentially.

With Sarum College, we are developing two very exciting new opportunities. From September, there will be a rural training pathway as part of a growing commitment in this diocese to rural ministry. We also have agreement from Ministry Division for a two year training for older candidates from September 2018. These will be people who are well formed and priestly in character and whose vocation is to Associate Ministry. They will be selected in exactly the same way and by the same criteria as all other candidates for ordination.

Making use of this increased flexibility, we will be extending what is currently the normal age limit for those with a vocation to Associate Ministry to 62 years at the time of potential ordination and to 58 years for those for incumbent status ministry. There has been no change to the selection criteria nor a reduction in the high standards expected from those offering for ministry.

Ordained Ministry beyond 70

At its meeting in February, General Synod agreed changes to the licensing of clergy beyond the maximum retirement age for clergy. It will take some time for this to work through and I expect to issue new guidance later in the year.

It continues to be normal for stipendiary clergy to retire no later than at aged 70 years, though when a priest is in good health and is exercising a lively and fruitful ministry, with the agreement of the churchwardens I continue to be willing to consider extending a licence for a further two years and then by an additional year.

We depend a great deal on those who exercise Associate Ministry. For the time being, and again for the sake of parity, we will continue the practice introduced two years ago that Associate Ministers who wish to continue exercising ordained ministry beyond the age of 70 years, with the agreement of their incumbent, will normally do so with Permission to Officiate. When this was introduced two years ago, there was a three year transition period and it seems to be working well. So, when requested by the Associate Minister, with the agreement of the Incumbent I am willing to continue considering extending a licence beyond 70 for two years with the possibility of an additional year.

Clergy Wellbeing

Thank you very much for completing the clergy wellbeing questionnaire in October. Having this as an online exercise seemed to work well and we had a high level of response from both stipendiary and associate clergy. We try to conduct this survey every four years. This is in order that we may have up-to-date information on the state of wellbeing of the clergy and the effectiveness of the support and resources that we currently provide. We see clergy wellbeing as a priority, and are constantly looking at ways that we can enhance and improve what we do. Your responses have now been collated and written up as a report that will be sent to all clergy. The report will play a key part in our planning and strategy for this coming year.

The Development and Support of Lay Ministry

As well as new encouragements and changes for ordained ministry, the diocese is committed to the development and encouragement of Lay Ministry. There is now a dedicated support group co-ordinating the work of our LPAs, LWLs, and LLMs chaired by Bishop Karen, which brings together archdeaconry officers, with Judy Anderson (Vice Warden of LLMs), and those with diocesan responsibility for Lay Ministry. Training for and promotion of authorised and licensed Lay Ministries is being overseen by Debbie Orriss. Debbie is working with the vocations team and trainers as part of her discipleship work to encourage all forms of lay ministry across the diocese and ensure there is good local training for those (teams and individuals) who require it.

And finally

You will have seen and heard reports of the debate at General Synod which did not take note of the Bishops' report on *Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations*. From everyone's point of view we got the tone wrong and I apologise for that. It is not that LGBTI people are to be welcomed, they are already here and included in the life of the Church. However, the debate was in many ways helpful and, although feelings ran high, it took place very much in the spirit of the 'shared conversations' leading to it. As we know, there are strongly divergent views held in good faith.

In the immediate aftermath of the debate the Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote to General Synod members. Their letter can be found here <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/02/letter-from-the-archbishops-of-canterbury-and-york-following-general-synod.aspx>

In the light of what happened at General Synod, the Archbishops have set an agenda for the next phase of our discussions. As requested, I will be calling a meeting of our General Synod representatives and will include those from this diocese who took part in our 'shared conversations'. Meanwhile, in terms of Church discipline, nothing has changed and we continue to be governed by the Church of England's Canon Law and published guidelines. Bishops Karen, Edward and I are always willing to engage with clergy about particular issues of pastoral care where help is needed with understanding and interpreting the guidelines so that we retain a common practice and make best use of what is possible and most appropriate in loving service of those in our care.

The last time I wrote, it was about lay distribution of the Holy Sacrament. In response there were some questions of clarification which have now been answered in the revised guidelines that are now on the Diocesan web site here – <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/whos-who/registry/communion>.

I look forward to our being together for the renewal of ordination vows in the cathedral on Maundy Thursday. Meanwhile, I thank you for shared ministry and pray that you are fulfilled in your calling. I hope that you and the people in your care will have a holy and joyful Lent.

In Christ,



+ Nicholas Holtam

The Right Revd Nicholas Holtam
Bishop of Salisbury