

General Synod election address by Rev Canon Philip Bromiley.

Experience of General Synod

I have served on General Synod for a year after a Casual vacancy election in 2025 and have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It has been a steep learning curve, understanding terminology and the process of involvement in debate. I have greatly enjoyed the emotional engagement of many and the breadth of heartfelt contributions in Synod and, as such, hope to continue my Synodical journey. A stand out moment from the last Synod was a member proposing a Private Member's Motion calling for the Church of England to have a lead Bishop on "children in care". The member spoke from her own personal experience and received a standing ovation. This is an example of how General Synod can uncover signs of real unity and blessing, in the midst of contentions and controversy.

Hopes for the future: Clergy Pensions and Wellbeing in retirement.

My top priority for the next Quinquennium of Synod is to advocate for issues around Clergy Wellbeing, particularly changes to Clergy Pension and retirement. The chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee, Carl Hughes, told General Synod: "Establishing the review has taken longer than the Council hoped and intended, and I am sorry for that. It does not signal any lack of intent. The Council is firmly committed to the review." (Church Times 20th Feb, 2026). The Clergy Retirement Fairness and Dignity Review will come to Synod in February 2027. Questions remain:

- I. Is the amended pension sufficient for all clergy to retire without hardship and experience a dignified standard of living?
- II. Can disadvantaged clergy who have retired from 2011 onwards be properly recompensed and speedily so, in the interests of justice and fairness?
- III. Can we ensure the provision of affordable retirement housing for clergy?
- IV. Is the provision for spouses or those with interrupted service being safeguarded in the new proposals?
- V. Can a national framework for dignity in retirement address apparent diocesan variations for those retiring? For example, some Dioceses pay removal costs for clergy retiring, others don't.

Hopes for the future: Unity and Mission in a divided Church

General Synod has become synonymous with polarity and factions, preoccupied by LLF and issues around sexuality. My hope for the next Quinquennium is that we can move on to other pressing issues in the life and mission of the Church. It is time for Unity to be prioritized above divisiveness. It is clear that these thorny issues remain unresolved. I

agree with the Bishops' recommendation that we enter a time of reflection and continue the conversation and improved understanding, through smaller working groups. In the end, we have to find a way of living together, disagreeing well, praying for one another, seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance and seeking the blessing that comes from Unity. If I were to be elected, I would use my long-standing experience as an Ecumenical Adviser to actively promote Unity within the Church of England, as well as our relationships with brothers and sisters from the Anglican Communion and other Denominations.

The Rural Church in many areas is in or nearing a crisis. Our priorities for the next five years has to be centered around the revitalization of our struggling parishes, so desperately needing support. To do this, more resources must be reallocated in the future from Central Church funds in order to help grassroots clergy and laity, to proclaim the Gospel in every place. I have had 28 years of parish ministry experience, in different contexts, but most of it in Rural Wiltshire, and it is clear that much has changed in this time. We are no longer first port of call for a funeral or a wedding. Expectations of clergy availability vary. I want the voice of the Rural Church to be heard in Synod. As an ADO in the Vocations team, I do wonder about patterns of future ministry that those discerning will have to adopt after training. How sustainable are current workloads on clergy and how does this affect recruitment and retention? As someone with a background in Fresh Expressions, Church Planting and Pioneering, I would also strongly advocate for a Mixed Ecology approach to Mission. Our parishes must give permission, in a safe way, for all God's people to flourish and exercise their gifts wisely.

The Archbishops have called on the Church of England to be "Simpler, bolder and humbler". Has we come close to achieving this? Have we removed red tape, so that ministry and buildings are easier to navigate? Are faithful clergy and laity freed up to proclaim the Gospel of Christ crucified and risen with courage and confidence? Are we able to depend on God's goodness to develop prayer life and spirituality more and more? These are the crucial questions we take forward as we seek to "Make Jesus Known" in the Salisbury Diocese and General Synod.

To bring a voice for a better pension, Unity in the Church, and a heart for mission in its diverse forms, please consider voting for me or including me in your list of preferred candidates.

Philipx.