

HEYWOOD & MIDDLETON DEANERY

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123rd Diocesan Synod

Sat 5th Nov 11

Diocesan Synod Meeting Report held at Canon Slade School Bolton

The 'Big Society' and 'Commission on the Impact of Poverty'.

In his Address Bishop Nigel said that the recent happening at St Paul's Cathedral was a warning to The Church from distancing itself from the heart of Jesus, by pursuing its own agenda; the issues of Women Bishops and sexuality of priests was not in the Gospels, so be vigilant lest other matters lead to the tragic obscuring, to which we all collude, of witnessing to the Gospel and God's love and care for the poor and needy. Bankers are involved with the use and distribution of wealth, but The Church should be concerned with the consequences of this.

Across Greater Manchester there is a high level of poor health, high death rates and child poverty, fragmenting family life and disintegrating neighbourhoods; also in other Dioceses. North Manchester is identified as a priority area. Manchester City Council is having a strategic review. The Faith Sector in Manchester has a great deal to offer to community cohesion, where there are gang cultures, violence, drugs, religious hate crime - could be more proactive to bring communities together in the face of cuts. Borough Deans have been appointed to coordinate voluntary agencies and to engage with Local Authorities to bring greater cohesion. There are opportunities next year in the Diamond Jubilee to bring Faith Communities into action.

The **Big Society** is another opportunity for The Church. Bishop Nigel has had talks with Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities, agreeing that the Faith Sector could partner the Public Sector in caring for the elderly, youth, child poverty, debt counselling, etc. and to identify geographical areas where there is not provision, to focus on the needy, in the light of cuts and constraints.

Bishop Nigel has been approached by Members of Parliament to chair a **Commission on the Impact of Poverty** and long term issues, including poor health and mortality rates, child poverty; this between January and July 2012 to report in September. The Joseph Rowntree Organisation is interested in providing support, to measure poverty, identify causes, to recommend solutions and to challenge groups to implement policies. The Church role will be important, inspired by the teaching of Jesus Christ, motivated by faith, ignoring introspections and ever turning outward to serve God.

Appointments

- **Assistant Bishops**

Through the Instrument of Delegation, Bishop Nigel sought and gained approval for the Right Reverend Geoffrey Graham Dow and the Right Reverend John Nicholls to be assistant Bishops alongside the Right Reverend Rupert W N Hoare, needed for the medium term future.

- **Board of Finance**

Canon Alan Cooper is standing down as Chair of the Board of Finance but will remain on the Board. Bishop Nigel expressed huge gratitude to Alan and he was given a standing ovation for all he has contributed and achieved over many years. He will continue as Chair of the Church House Company. The new Chair of the Board of Finance, nominated by Bishop Nigel, will be Canon Phillip Blinkhorn, formerly Lay Chair of the Diocese. The new Lay Chair was elected by the Laity, Dr Peter Capon.

Financial Report

We were told that there is a financial deficit in the Diocese of £900,000 for 2011, due to a deficit in income from Parish Shares and investments. It is hoped that matters will improve next year and the Diocese will break even, by reducing expenses and parish shares need to be paid, budgeting for a £300,000 increase in Parish share receipts, where parishes need to respond to Diocesan needs. The Board will work with parishes that have not met their contribution for 2011 and will review their existing investments, resources, activities and methods of delivery. The 2012 Draft Budget was accepted.

Annual Education Report

Mr Maurice Smith Diocesan Director of Education gave his 5th Annual Report, saying: The Baton is important, re the Bishop's message, 'Run the Race', last year; Education is a conversation between

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generations. In the past year there has been improved corporate governance, modernisation, discipline of risk registers, clarified training role issues and short-life single issue sub-committees. His role is to promote C of E education, and the teaching of RE, to sustain and grow school places in each local authority, to support school improvement, the RE curriculum and collective worship, also to support leadership and management and the growing number of academies. Bishop Mark, Chair of the Board accepted this report and thanked Maurice.

Young People's Experiences Abroad

Susie Mapledoram gave a presentation assisted by young people and teachers from Crompton House School and St Anne's Academy, 26 of who went on a trip to the Taize Community in the south of France. The young people reported it was a simple life, run by 100 brothers, tranquil, peaceful, to listen rather than talk, amazing friendships formed, spiritual journeys, best experience of their life, life changing. Bishop Mark also went with them and endorsed what a valuable experience this was.

Also a trip by young people of the Diocese to Finland, Tampere where there was a confirmation camp celebrating the church seasons of the year and reading from the Gospel of St Mark. These are opportunities for young people to experience a turning point in their lives. Next year the camp will be hosted in Scargill where the Finnish young people are invited.

Work of Prison Chaplains

Bishop Chris gave a detailed presentation of Prison Chaplains and their valuable work, focusing on newly confirmed prisoners who need to find a church where they will be supported on release. The three Manchester area prisons have multi-faith chapels, where different faiths have services; Bishop Mark has attended 11 confirmation services in the past few years. Prison Week is 20 – 26 November, to think about prisoners, their victims and their families. Volunteers and visitors can support transformation and change. St Mathew 25: 39-40 I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Diocesan Synod Meetings: Frequency and Future Agenda Item

Archdeacon David said the Diocesan Synod Survey found that it was most popular to have three Diocesan Synod meetings per year, in each of the archdeaconries, over a two year period. Trinity High School and Manchester Cathedral were the most popular venues. The Anglican Communion Covenant debate would take place in March 2012.

Bishop's response to the August Riots in Manchester

Bishop Chris reported that the August Riots in different cities provided an all-time high for numbers in prison, but now meetings have led to provisions for the future. It was good that Bishop Nigel was out on the streets of Manchester the very next morning, voicing a great response as our Bishop. His work in the Commission will be central, a vital contribution supported by our churches. Bishop Mark, on the Urban Bishops' Panel, was concerned in making the commitment to a theological, thorough, practical response. Will we listen and respond to the challenge!

Close

The meeting ended with a blessing from Bishop Nigel.

Prepared by Pat Barr