

Third Ordinary Session of the 51st Synod of the Diocese of Sydney: October 2019

Presidential Address

Delivered by Dr Glenn Davies, Archbishop of Sydney, on Monday 14 October 2019.

Members of Synod, sisters and brothers, saints of the Most High, welcome to the third and last ordinary session of the 51st Synod of the Diocese of Sydney.

As we gather in the presence of God, I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet. In his wisdom and love, our heavenly Father gave this estate to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. Upon this land they met for generations until the coming of British settlers. As we continue to learn to live together on these ancestral lands, we acknowledge and pay our respects to their elders, past and present, and pray that God will unite us all in a knowledge of his Son, in whom all things were created, in heaven and on earth, whether visible or invisible—for all things have been created through him and for him.

The Office of Bishop

The apostolic letters to Timothy and Titus, which are often referred to as the Pastoral Epistles, have been a regular source of comfort and instruction to me as a minister of the gospel for nigh on 40 years, but more especially as a bishop in the church of God these past two decades. While Paul's letters to his fellow workers, with their trustworthy sayings, clearly have application to all believers, they have particular application to those entrusted with the authorisation or ordination of the next generation of pastors, teachers and evangelists. It is not accidental that we find the qualifications for appointing overseers (or elders) and deacons only in the Pastorals. Paul is coming to the end of his ministry, but knows that the apostolic mantle does not pass from one generation to another, in similar fashion to the transmission of the Spirit from Elijah to Elisha. For the apostles are limited in number, unique in their role, along with the New Testament prophets, in providing the foundation for members of the household of God, with Christ Jesus the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). There is no apostolic succession by way of a personal, authoritative inheritance in the New Testament. Rather the concept of apostolic succession properly applies only to the faithful transmission of apostolic doctrine. Paul therefore did not prepare Timothy and Titus to become apostles as his successors, but he did charge them 'to entrust to reliable people who will be qualified to teach others' (2 Timothy 2:2); 'to teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine' (Titus 2:1); to 'preach the word, being prepared in season and out of season; [to] correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction' (2 Timothy 4:2). As apostolic delegates, they were directed by Paul 'to appoint elders in every town' (Titus 1:5), as Paul and Barnabas had done in the Province of Galatia (Acts 14:23).

Episcopal leadership, to a large extent, is a continuation of the roles of Timothy and Titus, servants of Christ to whom the responsibility of selecting and ordaining belongs, a specific application of passing on the gospel to the next generation. If there were a biblical precedent for Anglican episcopacy, it would be Timothy and Titus. While I am not of the view that the New Testament mandates a form of church polity beyond overseers and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13), I do believe that episcopacy is a form of polity which is consistent with the teaching of the Bible. One of the difficulties in translating the New Testament office bearer, who has responsibility for pastoring a congregation, is that both Luke and Paul use the terms *episkopos* and *presbyteros* interchangeably (Acts 20:17 & 28; Titus 1:5 & 7). *Presbyteros* is almost universally translated as 'elder', while *episkopos* is translated 'bishop' in the KJV and the RSV, whereas later versions, such as the NIV and ESV, prefer the translation 'overseer'. No doubt, this choice was made to avoid confusion with the contemporary, ecclesiastical use of the word 'bishop', who is not the pastor of local congregation but one with oversight of a group of congregations.

As Timothy and Titus appear to have a special portfolio of guarding the faith (1 Timothy 4:6; Titus 2:1), theirs was the responsibility of ensuring that those whom they selected and appointed as elders in the church of God were men of faith, godliness and ability, or as we express it for today's ordinands, persons of conviction, character and competency. In the Ancient Church, the office of bishop developed as a reflection of the same responsibility that was given to Timothy and Titus. Anglican polity retained this ancient office of bishop as a means of guarding the faith, entrusted with the responsibility of ordaining, licensing and appointing ministers to serve the body of Christ. As guardians of the faith, bishops are charged to

Be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word; and privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same.[Ordinal, BCP]

As the Doctrine Commission's excellent report on 'An Evangelical Episcopate' expressed it:

The first priority of the Archbishop of Sydney is to be a **guardian** of 'the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3).

This is true of all those who hold office as a bishop in the church of God.

Bishop of Bathurst

It was therefore with great delight that I learned of the election of the Reverend Mark Calder to become the eleventh Bishop of Bathurst. I have every confidence that Mark, currently the Rector of Noosa on the Sunshine Coast, will exemplify the role of bishop as guardian of the faith. Synod will remember the decision that we made, by a very large majority last year, to provide financial assistance to the Diocese of Bathurst for 2019 and the next five years. This was a risk that the Synod took, not knowing who would lead the Diocese of Bathurst into the future. Many of us prayed fervently for the outcome of the election and I am sure we all thank God for his answer to our prayers. Mark Calder is an able servant of Christ, a faithful minister of God's word and sacrament, who has demonstrated significant leadership in the parishes of Roseville and Noosa, ably supported by his wife, Susan. Both parishes experienced significant growth under Mark's leadership, and his participation in the Brisbane Synod has won him wide respect. He has demonstrated his ability to work among ministers of different churchmanship, while being a firm advocate for the reformational truths of Anglican theology. He will be an asset to the Diocese of Bathurst and to our Province. Mark will be consecrated in our Cathedral Church of St Andrew on Thursday, 21st November and installed in All Saints Cathedral, Bathurst on Saturday, 23rd November. We pray for him and Susan as they commence this new ministry in Central and Western New South Wales.

A New Bishop for New Zealand

Regrettably, not all who are elected bishop are capable of being guardians of the faith. As Anglicans, we recognise both the merits and the risks of electing bishops to exercise oversight of the church of God. What happens when bishops fail to act as guardians of the faith? This is not a new problem. In the sixth century BC Ezekiel prophesied against the shepherds of Israel conveying a stinging rebuke from God.

I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my sheep. I will remove them from tending my flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them. (Ezekiel 34:10)

Similarly, the apostle Paul warned the Ephesians elders in his farewell speech in Miletus —

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (*episkopoi*). Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

(Acts 20:28-30)

Bishops must be held accountable for their guardianship of the faith. We have seen too many around the world over recent years succumb to the false values of the world with a revisionist agenda to reinterpret Scripture to their own destruction, and the detriment of the flock of God.

By way of contrast, I am therefore delighted to have Bishop-elect Jay Behan of Christchurch, New Zealand with us this afternoon. He, like Mark Calder, will be a guardian of the faith. I am also grateful for the Dean's motion, now passed by the Synod, which effectively endorsed Jay's election as the first Bishop of the Church of Confessing Anglicans of Aotearoa New Zealand. We heard this afternoon of the sorry tale of the departure of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia from the teaching of Scripture, when their General Synod passed legislation last year, authorising bishops to allow the blessing of same-sex unions in their dioceses. If one knows the recent history of the Anglican Church across the Tasman, then this outcome

was no great surprise. For years the province has not only tolerated, but also affirmed, senior clergy living in same-sex unions or marriages. It was sadly inevitable that they would choose to proceed to legitimise the blessing of same-sex unions, in contravention of Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, as it will be inevitable that over time the solemnisation of same-sex marriages using Anglican rites will also become acceptable in New Zealand, as it has in North America.

So what do faithful Anglicans do when their bishops betray God's word, as did Israel's shepherds of old? How do you remain Anglican when you have no bishop? How do you hold onto the time-honoured ministry of bishops as guardians of the faith and doctrine, when your own bishop is no longer a worthy shepherd?

Just as Canon David Short chose to leave the Anglican Church of Canada when his Diocese of New Westminster approved of same-sex blessings, Jay Behan and his congregation, along with eleven other congregations and their ministers, decided to leave the established Anglican Church. But what next? They could have each become an independent church community, but they did not. They could have formed a fellowship of independent churches, but they did not. Instead, they wanted to continue owning the faith as expressed by the Anglican formularies of the Reformation. So they asked for help. They looked to the Gafcon Primates and to Australian Anglicans, who gladly assisted them with resources to establish an extra provincial diocese. In many ways, this is new territory for Anglican polity. Similar precedents exist where existing dioceses have left their province, such as the Church of England in South Africa (now known as REACH, the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church) and the Anglican Church of Brazil. Yet these developments were not quite like the fledgling remnant of churches that have gathered to form a new diocese in New Zealand. The Confessing Anglicans of Aotearoa New Zealand have no remaining property to call their own. Their members have walked away from their church buildings, and their clergy have foregone their residences and security of tenure, leaving behind the infrastructure that the established Anglican Church has accumulated since the days of Samuel Marsden. Yet I venture to say that the Reverend Samuel Marsden would not recognise the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia of today as being the same church that he founded two hundred years ago. Jay Behan and his fellow clergy are now the true heirs of Samuel Marsden's heritage – his theology and his faith.

It is therefore our privilege and delight to offer Bishop-elect Behan the right hand of fellowship this afternoon and to recognise him and his diocese as authentically Anglican. It matters little that the Archbishop of Canterbury is unlikely to recognise this new diocese as part of the Canterbury Communion. What makes it authentically Anglican is, as our Constitution expresses it, its allegiance to the Bible as 'the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation', whose teaching is confessed in the 39 Articles and given liturgical form in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Next Saturday, three of my assistant bishops along with Bishops Paul Barnett and Peter Jensen, the Bishops of Armidale, North West Australia and Tasmania shall join me and other bishops, including two Archbishops of the Global South, in laying hands on Jay Behan as he is consecrated a bishop in the church of God. The Archdeacon for Women's Ministry, the Dean of Sydney, the Diocesan Registrar, the Principal of Moore College and other clergy from Sydney will also be in attendance. While I have been accused of breaking fellowship with the National Church, by joining in a consecration with a church purportedly not in communion with the Anglican Church of Australia, I plainly declare that my communion with the Church of Confessing Anglicans of Aotearoa New Zealand is the *koinōnia* of the Holy Spirit, as defined by Scripture. Moreover, our Constitution only declares that we 'will remain in communion with the Church of England in England and with churches in communion therewith, so long as communion is consistent with the Fundamental Declarations contained in this Constitution.' It is silent as to churches that have arisen since 1961, who may not be in communion with the Church of England, yet who share our belief in the supremacy of Scripture and the doctrine of Christ, as the Church of Confessing Anglicans of Aotearoa New Zealand do. It is clearly arguable, if not obvious, that the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia have departed from the ultimate rule and standard of faith as expressed in Holy Scripture. Even our General Synod Standing Committee has recognised this when they declared last year that 'this step is contrary to Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference and is not in accord with the doctrine of Christ (Matthew 19:1-12).' Moreover, the Standing Committee also declared its 'support for all Anglicans who have left the ACANZP, who will feel the need to leave, and those who remain yet struggle because of this change.' It is therefore our honour and our duty to offer our support for the Church of Confessing Anglicans of Aotearoa New Zealand and Bishop-elect Jay Behan.

The Bishop of Wangaratta

If one were to think of bishops breaking fellowship in the National Church, sadly one need not look very far. Six weeks ago the Diocese of Wangaratta, with the full support of its Bishop, passed a regulation that authorised a liturgy for the blessing of a couple married in accordance with the *Marriage Act 1961*. That sounds

innocent enough, and when no authorised liturgy exists for a particular service, the *Canon Concerning Services 1992* allows a Synod to make regulations for such a service, so as to authorise it for local use. However, the intention of this regulation was clear, it was to accommodate and facilitate the blessing of same-sex marriages. Unintentionally, it also authorised the blessing of *any* marriage solemnised under Commonwealth law, including marriages, which would be in breach of the provisions of the *Matrimony (Prohibited Relationships) Canon 1981* or the *Marriage of Divorced Persons Canon 1981*, which the Anglican Church could not sanction, let alone solemnise.

However, the more serious breach of fellowship within the Anglican Church of Australia is the explicit and cavalier endorsement of same-sex marriages, which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and the doctrine of Christ. Apart from the repudiation of Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, our General Synod and our own Synod have frequently affirmed that marriage is between a man and a woman, an exclusive and permanent union—'forsaking all others...till death us do part'. You will see that the Bishop of South Sydney and the Dean of Sydney have a significant motion in our papers that is germane to this topic.

Yet our view of marriage is not a popular one in Australia, nor is it consistent with the definition of marriage under the amended *Marriage Act 1961*, after 60% of the population endorsed, by postal vote, a change to the Marriage Act, which would permit same-sex marriages. Nonetheless, God's intention for marriage has not changed. We honour him when we abide by his instruction. We cannot bless same-sex marriages for the simple reason that we cannot bless sin.

I am grateful for the Primate's intervention by referring the decisions of the Wangaratta Synod to the Appellate Tribunal. He also requested that no clergy in the Wangaratta Diocese use the new service until a decision had been reached as to whether or not the use of such a service to bless a couple in a same-sex marriage is consistent with the doctrine of our Church.

This Primatial action was timely, as the Bishop of Wangaratta had previously advertised the fact that within weeks of the Synod's anticipated passing of the Regulation, he would use the purportedly authorised service for the blessing of two priests in his diocese, who had announced their intention of being married to each other under the *Marriage Act 1961*. However, this did not stop the Bishop from attending a service of Morning Prayer where the two priests were conspicuously present at the service in celebration of their marriage.

While we await the outcome of the Appellate Tribunal's determination on this matter, notice has recently been given of a motion in the Newcastle Synod, which effectively replicates the endorsement of a similar service to that purportedly authorised by the Wangaratta Synod.

Friends, we have entered treacherous waters.

I fear for the stability of the Anglican Church of Australia. These developments have the potential to fracture our fellowship and impair our communion. I have stated this on numerous occasions at the annual National Bishops' Conference, but sadly to little effect. If we return to the Pastorals, Paul predicts the decay, which will threaten the church in the last days.

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

(2 Timothy 3:2-5)

Next year the General Synod will meet in a special session to confer on the issue of same-sex blessings and same-sex marriage. It has been planned by the General Synod Standing Committee as a consultation, with no opportunity for making decisions. However, the time has come to take action and make decisions, and these recent events have made it all the more imperative to do so. The General Synod must make a clear statement about the teaching of the Bible on the sanctity of sex within the marriage bond of a man and a woman, so that marriage is held in honour among all and the marriage bed is not defiled (Hebrews 13:4). My own view is that if people wish to change the doctrine of our Church, they should start a new church or join a church more aligned to their views – but do not ruin the Anglican Church by abandoning the plain teaching of Scripture. Please leave us. We have far too much work to do in evangelising Australia to be distracted by the constant pressure to change our doctrine in order to satisfy the lusts and pleasures of the world.

Mission 2020

Our vision is to see Christ honoured as Lord and Saviour in every community. We adopted this vision five years ago and it has been a helpful reminder of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his unchanging commission to make disciples of all nations. We also adopted a Mission statement, referred to as Mission 2020.

We commit ourselves afresh, in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, to glorify God and love our neighbour by proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ, calling people to repent and living lives worthy of him.

Bishop Lin will provide an update on the progress of Mission 2020 during this session. While one might have assumed that Mission 2020 will conclude next year, the Strategy and Research Group has recommended to Standing Committee that we continue using the vision, mission, values and priorities of Mission 2020 for the foreseeable future. While the mission of the Diocese is never the personal fiefdom of the Archbishop, the opportunity for the next Archbishop to provide leadership in any suggested changes to Mission 2020, in consultation with the Strategy and Research Group, is a sensible way forward. What may need tweaking is our measurable goals. One of the clear advantages of Mission 2020 has been the manner in which we can assess our impact on society through itemised measures available through the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) statistics. The number of newcomers, for example, or the growth in number of those who have invited someone to church are all easily quantifiable. I commend to you the recent research on newcomers, initiated by the Strategy and Research Group and conducted by Dr John Bellamy of Anglicare's Social Policy & Research Unit. It is a valuable resource for assisting rectors in ways to improve the attraction and retention of newcomers in our churches.

Some mission goals have been achieved, others have not been reached, and some may have been more aspirational than realistic. The projected number of 15 new churches in greenfield areas or the expectation that we would have two new churches in each Mission Area by 2020 have fallen short. Yet, we have made progress in establishing new churches in greenfield areas and seen new churches planted in Mission Areas. I believe that we have a heart for mission across the Diocese. The Synod's reaffirmation, for example, of agreeing to a land levy of 2% of each parish's net receipts has been a wonderful illustration of sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom. I am also delighted to see the ongoing work of New Churches for New Communities (NCNC), who have raised 4.6 million dollars over the past four years, plus a further \$300,000 in pledges. The commitment of many parishes and individuals to donate funds through NCNC for the provision of buildings on the land purchased by the Mission Property Committee, has enabled the current construction of Stanhope Anglican Church and in a few months the construction of a larger building for Hope Anglican Church at Leppington. These buildings will only enhance the tireless efforts of the respective church planters and their congregations to be bearers of light and grace to the new communities springing up in the northwest and southwest sectors of Greater Sydney. The establishment of the Anglican Church Growth Corporation, which will be highlighted during this session of Synod, is another welcome development in the coordination of land, buildings and church planters for the growth of the kingdom of God.

Yet we need more church planters, and Evangelism and New Churches has been critical in identifying and mentoring such persons. We also need more rectors. Members of Synod will be aware of the unprecedented number of parishes with vacant incumbencies. The Reverend Gary O'Brien, Director of Ministry Training and Development, and Mr Peter Mayrick of Moore College's Centre of Ministry Development have created an excellent program of support for new rectors, including coaching and mentoring. Yet I fear that many assistant ministers are too comfortable in their present positions and do not see the opportunities that exist to lead a congregation in the ways of the Lord, maturing disciples and making new disciples. I hope that the added protections for assistant ministers that we have made in the *Assistant Ministers Ordinance 2017* have not enticed them to stay put! It is also possible that the growth of the 5M model of ministry that seems to have captured the imagination of some rectors has unintentionally prevented assistant ministers from reaching their potential in exercising their ministry to the whole congregation, rather than a segmented ministry to some, or a quarantined exposure to only one form of ministry. Rectors have an important part to play in the professional development of their assistant ministers, especially presbyters, who should be encouraged and trained to become rectors themselves.

However, we should not be discouraged. It is easy to see all the problems without seeing the blessings of growth among us. We have this year a record number of six provisional parishes seeking full parish status. This is exciting, and I am so glad that it is our custom in Synod to celebrate these achievements of gospel growth.

It is also heartening to see the regional missions taking place across the Diocese next year. A couple of years ago the Wollongong Region joined together in a regional mission under the banner of 'Jesus is...' with great

success, under God. Next year the Wollongong Region is doing a reprise of this mission endeavour. The Georges River Region has already begun a year of prayer and preparation for a John 3:16 mission for 2020, with the hope that every member of every congregation will be able to recite John 3:16, and also commit to using it as a way of sharing the gospel with unbelievers. The Northern Region is similarly preparing for mission in 2020, as are the churches in the Hills in the Western Region, climaxing on Easter Day – the day of resurrection.

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep... Therefore my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:20, 58)

The Public Sphere

The past twelve months have seen significant developments in the life of our nation and our State, particularly in the areas of legislation relating to sex discrimination, religious discrimination and most notably, abortion. If we are to be salt and light in our world, then we must not be silent on public issues where they concern the common good and the honour of Christ. While we shall, I fear, become increasingly subject to forces within our society that seek to marginalise not only the Christian voice, but all faith traditions, our engagement with these issues must not be based upon seeking to preserve ourselves or the privileged status we currently enjoy. Rather, our concern ought to be for the glory of God in following his paths. Since he has given us our charter for the care of God's world and its inhabitants, this should be our prime concern. 'Doing the good', as the apostle Peter puts it, ought to be part and parcel of our Christian DNA. We are the true benefactors for the world. We not only have a gospel to proclaim, which will affect the destiny of every living person on the planet, including the unborn, but we have God's charter for humanity, as Walter Kaiser describes Gabriel's words to Daniel. God has told us what to do:

He has showed you, O Man, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you but to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

We know that God's laws are good for humanity. We should never be ashamed of presenting God's ways to our fellow Australians as that which will bring harmony and peace within the world. Of course, we shall be opposed, or perhaps worse, misunderstood, as the media so frequently portray our views. The furor caused by a joint letter signed by the majority of our Anglican School Heads last year bore testimony to the deliberate misinformation and scurrilous misrepresentation of the entirely appropriate and reasonable desire to operate our schools in accordance with the doctrine, tenets and beliefs of the Anglican Church. I am grateful for the courage and boldness of our Heads, who suffered significant opposition and personal attacks from alumni and the public. Much time and energy were spent in the course of this public debate, and it was pleasing to see the Government refer the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* to the Australian Law Reform Commission, rather than attempting to make *ad hoc* changes to the Act, as both the Greens and the Labor Party sought to do in the Senate.

Since the federal election, the Government has now released an Exposure Draft of a Religious Discrimination Bill. This is a significant piece of legislation, which will have far-reaching consequences for the landscape of Australian society. While there is much to be applauded in the Bill, we have identified a number of features, which will be detrimental to those who hold a religious belief, and damaging to the promotion of a harmonious multi-religious society, including those of no faith. I am grateful to Bishop Michael Stead whose energy and acuity has, along with others, provided a robust critique of the Bill for the consideration of the Attorney-General. From our early conversations with both Government and Opposition leaders, we are optimistic of a bi-partisan approach to the Bill and of the adoption of some of our recommended changes. Yet this should drive us to pray for our politicians, especially Christians on both sides of politics, that we might 'live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness' (1 Timothy 2:2).

The sudden appearance of a Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill in the Legislative Assembly provided another opportunity for public engagement. It was regrettable that although Mr Alex Greenwich had given notice of his intention earlier in the year, that the Government were prepared to allow a private member's Bill to be debated and voted upon within 72 hours of its being tabled. This was unprecedented. Such was the outcry from both religious leaders and politicians that the Premier intervened and delayed consideration of the Bill in the Lower House. As we all know, the Bill finally passed after numerous amendments in both houses,

and the Bill was fittingly renamed, the Abortion Reform Bill 2019, as there was nothing in the legislation that pertained to reproductive health care. On the contrary, the Bill was aimed at terminating the lives of those conceived in their mother's womb. As I have written elsewhere on the defects of the Bill, I shall not rehearse those details now. However, I do want to draw attention to the mischievous mantra of its proponents that the Bill was all about decriminalising abortion. This was and is simply not true. The *Crimes Act 1900* only made it a criminal offence when a mother or another person '*unlawfully* uses any instrument or other means...to procure a miscarriage'. The lawful administration of abortion was not a crime, as Judge Aaron Levine's ruling in the District Court in 1971 declared, when he defined circumstances where an abortion was not unlawful. Moreover, both the original form of the Bill and its final form continues to make unlawful abortion a criminal offence, where it is not performed in accordance with the Bill. So much for honesty and transparency.

However, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all Anglicans in Sydney, the Illawarra and the Blue Mountains who signed petitions, contacted their local members, and prayed for those who were deciding the Bill's final form in both houses of Parliament. Some of you heeded my invitation to join the rally in Hyde Park last month. People came from Campbelltown, the Blue Mountains and Western NSW, as well as the Central Coast. Some churches even re-arranged their evening services so that members of their congregation could join the remonstrance. I know this took you out of your comfort zone! It is not the done thing for Anglicans to parade themselves with placards and make a public protest! But why not? Are we ashamed of our faith? We should never be ashamed of speaking out for the love of Christ in advocacy for the voiceless, unborn image bearers of God, whose lives will be terminated by the provisions of this Bill. We should at all times pray – but there comes a time when we also need to shout from the rooftops! So thank you for your support. Your labour has not been in vain. While the final form of the Bill is still less than it should be, the Bill was significantly improved. We are grateful to God for the courage of members of parliament from both sides of politics who advocated for the rights of the unborn child as well as the welfare of the mother.

We live, however, in a fast moving world where the revisionist agenda of the world is making inroads into the accepted Judeo-Christian norms that we have enjoyed in this country since the Europeans arrived. Legislation for euthanasia has been passed in Victoria and is under parliamentary discussion in Western Australia. Changes to birth certificates have been legislated in Tasmania.

The next issue we need to face is the troubling issue of gender identity. Two years ago, we considered and endorsed some Principles of Engagement, developed by the Social Issues Committee for use by our churches, organisations and schools. The plan was to have ready for Synod this year some more detailed work in this area. However, this has proved to be difficult for two reasons: (1) the conflicting medical advice and medical research that has arrived at no firm conclusion as to whether transitioning for young persons is either in their best interests or a form of child abuse; and (2) the changing landscape of the legal position in both State and Federal jurisdictions. Yet we are experiencing an increase in the occurrence of gender dysphoria in our churches, our organisations and our schools. I have had many discussions with the Chairs and Heads of our Anglican schools over the past few years, and we all fully realise the complex pastoral situations involved, and the need to proceed with wisdom, compassion and love, informed and undergirded by the love of Christ. I also recognise that the responsibility of developing detailed policies for our organisations and schools lies with those separately governed entities. However, we can, and should, affirm what comprises the doctrine, beliefs and tenets of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney. This is one of the purposes of our Synod.

Bishop Peter Hayward will therefore be bringing to this Synod for its consideration a Doctrine Statement on Gender identity, as well as Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Organisations and Schools and a practical set of Guidelines for churches, since they come more directly under the governance of the Synod. Part of the proposal is to encourage each Diocesan Organisation and each Anglican School to adopt their own policy on Gender Identity, which aligns with the Doctrine Statement. The plan is that the Archbishop-in-Council will provide schools and organisations with some material to assist them in this enterprise, but the responsibility must lie with each separately governed entity.

The purpose of the Doctrine Statement is to make it clear not only to the public but also to our congregations, clients, customers and constituency, what the doctrine of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney is on this matter. Previous respondents in court cases have discovered to their disadvantage that unless one can identify a publicly available doctrinal position, which is adhered to by all those who claim to belong to that religious group, then the community expectations on issues of morality will prevail. A doctrinal position that expresses the doctrine, tenets, beliefs and teachings (to quote the Draft Religious Discrimination Bill 2019) will be necessary for the protection of our religious freedom, as well as providing protection from future charges of discrimination that may well be brought against the Church or its organisations and schools. This is an important issue, and I trust Synod members will give it their careful consideration.

The Election of an Archbishop

Many of you will be aware that this will be my final Synod as President. My age was much publicised during the lead up to the last archiepiscopal election, as I turn 70 next September. Some members of Synod kindly remembered my birthday last month —and I am grateful to both of you! I am also grateful to the Standing Committee for extending my term of office by two years, which is a provision of the relevant Ordinance, where a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of both the clergy and lay members so decide. However, a September birthday brings with it problems of timing. If I were to continue until my 70th birthday, the Synod would ordinarily meet in October next year and then again in November for an Election Synod. This seemed an unreasonable impost upon Synod members, so I have decided to resign from my office a little earlier than my birthday, namely on 19th July 2020. I have informed the Standing Committee of my intention and the dates for the Election Synod have been set for the week beginning 10th August next year.

Last year the Synod asked the Standing Committee to propose changes to *The Archbishop of Sydney Election Ordinance 1982*, following the Doctrine Commission's Report on 'An Evangelical Episcopate'. The proposed changes to the Ordinance, which we shall consider this evening, reflect the adoption of paragraphs 44-50 of that report as the Diocese's definitive statement on the role of the Archbishop of Sydney. This is an important development for our Diocese, that we so codify our expectations in what is arguably one of the most important pieces of diocesan legislation as it relates to the election of the Archbishop. It is always good to review this Ordinance before a new Archbishop is elected, as it will give the Synod opportunity for reflection upon what will take place next August.

I am also grateful that the Northern Regional Council took the initiative of proposing amendments to the *Synod Membership Ordinance 1995*. This is the first time that a motion, let alone an ordinance, promoted by a Regional Council has come before the Synod, despite the opportunity for Regional Councils to do so in accordance with the Business Rules. The Amendment Ordinance proposes a number of changes, most noteworthy is a clarification of the term of office for parochial representatives elected under Part 5 of the *Synod Membership Ordinance 1995*. The advice I have received from my Chancellor is that parochial representatives elected at next year's AGM in each parish comprise the members of the Synod under Part 5, as and from the date their election is notified to the Registrar. Accordingly, those elected in the first quarter of next year will be those who will be members of the Synod that elects the next Archbishop, as opposed to the current members of the 51st Synod. Since the existing regime lacks some uniformity and might give rise to a degree of confusion about the date of commencement of membership, it seems appropriate for the Synod to create a certain provision for the expiry of membership for persons elected under Part 5. The present proposal is to determine that those elected for any particular Synod hold office 'until the day before the first day of the first ordinary session of the next Synod.' There is a parallel amendment to Nominated Laypersons under Part 8. If Synod passes this ordinance, then those currently elected under Parts 5 or 8 will, unless a vacancy occurs, be members of the House of Laity at the Election Synod next year. My only advice is that the Synod decide this question, not out of self-interest, but out of a sense of good governance.

Two other changes to the membership of Synod are proposed. The first relates to the inclusion of representatives of Heads of Schools. This change is overdue and needs to be made. Under the 1902 Constitutions, the Synod is not just comprised of parochial representatives, but is a Synod of members of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney. Apart from the mission field that our Schools comprise, with over 40,000 students and 3,500 staff, this Synod has regularly imposed conditions upon the governance of Diocesan Schools, yet there has been no elected representatives of Heads of Schools to express their views or contribute to the debate. I trust the Synod will see the wisdom of this change.

The other amendment brought by the Northern Regional Council is in my opinion of even greater import. It relates to making it a requirement that all lay members of Synod sign the Declaration of Faith as reflected in the Synod's Governance Policy. This only applies to lay members, as clergy by virtue of their ordination and licence are required to make solemn promises of a higher order than the Statement of Faith. It has always seemed strange to me that the Synod, the highest level of governance within the Diocese, has no criterion for its lay members other than they are communicant members of the Anglican Church of Australia and not a member of any other Church. We require this Statement of Faith to be signed by those who govern our Organisations and our Diocesan Schools, but we have not considered the anomaly of not requiring it of ourselves. The Synod should be a model of theological orthodoxy and integrity. This is all the more important as we approach an Archbishop's Election. Since we have agreed in principle, and will decide tonight, that the Archbishop must be a guardian of the faith, those who elect him should likewise be committed to the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Final Remarks

Well this final address to the Synod has exemplified our oft-repeated maxim that we are 'episcopally led and synodically governed'. The length of this address has certainly demonstrated the former, as will the remainder of this session demonstrate the latter, when my contribution will be restricted to presiding over your deliberations!

I must say, however, that the Synods over which it has been my pleasure to preside have been happy Synods. We have had robust debate to be sure, and strong disagreement at times, but also unanimous agreement at other times, such as the amalgamation of ARV and Anglicare. I consider the candour of speeches has been imbued with love and respect.

It has been a distinct honour and privilege for me to serve in the office of Archbishop these past six years. As many of you will know, I did not seek this office, but found it thrust upon my shoulders by the will of the Synod, under the leading of the Holy Spirit — and I take neither aspect for granted. It is an onerous office in many respects, but I have actually enjoyed serving the Diocese in this capacity. I have sought to discharge my office with integrity, transparency, courage and humility, conscious of the weight of responsibility, conscious my own inadequacies, yet also conscious of the grace of God and the abundance of prayers from so many people that have been offered to God on my behalf. I could not have administered this office in my own strength.

Seven years ago, our diocese was polarised by the early announcement of two nominees for the office of Archbishop. This proved to be an unhealthy aspect of our diocesan life, regrettably fuelled by many unrestrained comments on social media. I believe we have matured as a Diocese and especially as a Synod through that experience. I do not detect the kind of angst that was apparent during the lead up to the next election, nor the similar expressions of anxiety and factional friction that the two previous elections exhibited. Rather, I do detect a growth in our love for one another. While it is proper for members to propose names for the Synod's consideration, I am hopeful that more than two names will be proposed. More to the point, it is my prayer that Synod members will not come to the Election Synod with their minds made up, but carefully and prayerfully listen to the debate as part of their discernment of God's will. Hopefully, some members will nominate more than one person. For the Synod does not vote on 'candidates' for this high office, but rather vote on 'nominees' for Archbishop. We should not wish for a person who 'campaigns' for office, nor should we want him to! Rather, making nominations is a way in which we bring names of qualified persons to the attention of the Synod for their consideration, as to whether they have the gifts to exercise an 'evangelical archiepiscopate'. Those who have worked with them in the past or know them well, will inform the Synod at the proper time so that their gifts and skills, their character and convictions might enable the Synod prayerfully and wisely, under God's leading, to elect the next Archbishop of Sydney.

We have been blessed in the past with good and godly men who have been nominated for this high office. We should not take that for granted. Nor should we encamp ourselves in factional groupings seeking to dispel the strengths of alternative nominees. There is a number of people who are capable of becoming Archbishop, and we should thank God for the richness of his gifted servants he has given us. We should therefore pray that God will enable the Synod to make a wise and godly choice when the Synod meets next year.

If I now return to the Pastorals one last time. Paul was blessed by having faithful co-workers such as Timothy and Titus, let alone the others he mentions by name in his letters. Paul was not a loner, apostle though he be, for he was collaborative in his ministry, always seeking the glory of God through the proclamation of the kingdom of God and the lordship of Christ with others by his side. I too have been blessed with the support, encouragement, wisdom and, at times correction, of my senior staff. All five of my regional bishops have been a delight to serve alongside. Ivan Lee was consecrated a year after me, and we first met when we shared classes together in 4th Year at Moore College. His resilience since being diagnosed with cancer four years ago has been a testimony to the grace of God in his life and an encouragement to me in so many ways. Likewise, my co-workers, Peter Hayward, Chris Edwards, Peter Lin and Michael Stead have shared the joys and challenges of episcopal ministry, and I could not have wished for a better band of brothers than these, in our united shared ministry. Malcolm Richards has recently become my Bishop for International Relations and he has already proved himself a worthy successor to Peter Tasker, with his knowledge, experience and skill in cross-cultural contexts. Our weekly senior staff meetings begin with Bible study and Archdeacon Kara Hartley has also been an invaluable member of our senior staff, whose theological commitment to complementary ministry has been exemplified in so many ways among us, enriching our fellowship and strengthening our ministry. Doug Marr has also been an invaluable support in his role as Registrar, whose administration of, and improvements to, the Registry have increased efficiency and greatly assisted the work of the Archbishop's office. He has been ably supported by the long-serving and highly competent Deputy Registrar, Mrs Catherine Rich, who has served us for 25 years. Similarly, Mrs Blossom Vickers has been a dedicated Personal Assistant,

whose tireless energy and commitment has supported me in so many ways. Russell Powell has been a superb media officer in helping me navigate the terrain of media involvement and has also managed to prevent me from making gaffes with his wise counsel. As Paul commended the lawyer, Zenas, so I thank God for the wisdom and counsel of my Chancellor, Michael Meek SC and also my Deputy Chancellors, Robert Tong AM and Michael Easton.

Finally, my wife, Dianne, has been unfailing in her love and support of me, not only in this office, but also throughout our forty years of marriage. I thank God for her with all my heart.

Now I commend you to the work of this session of Synod, and may the words of Paul to Titus steer our path, as we seek to do what is pleasing in God's sight and will bring honour to his name.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:11-14)

Amen.

Dr Glenn Davies
Archbishop of Sydney

14 October 2019