

NEWS FROM PETERBOROUGH DIOCESE

Saturday 1 October

Diocesan synod votes in favour of women bishops

The Peterborough Diocesan Synod today voted in favour of the General Synod's draft scheme to facilitate the ordination of women of as bishops.

Although General Synod has already agreed in principle that there is no theological objection to women bishops, it has asked all 44 Church of England dioceses to vote on a specific motion as part of the consultation and legislative process. Only if a majority agree to it can the process continue towards a final vote next July.

During the 90-minute debate, which took place in Peterborough Cathedral, the Bishop of Peterborough, the Rt Revd Donald Allister, said that he was cross that the Code of Practice, which will spell out in detail how those who are opposed to the ordination of women will be treated under the proposed legislation, had not been produced so that the package could be considered as a whole.

However, he affirmed that if the proposed Measure is passed, "I will be included in consecrating women as bishops." He also said that he would be "as generous as I possibly can be to those who disagree."

A number of people who spoke in the debate expressed concern about the uncertainty of the arrangements that would be made for churches and clergy unable to accept the ministry of a woman bishop. Proposing a following motion requesting a specific appointment of a "traditionalist" bishop for such people to be included in the legislation, rather than arrangements being delegated to the diocesan bishop, Mrs Veronica Heald feared that "I will become effectively unchurched."

Other speakers called for love and trust to prevail. Revd Nick Wills from Kettering said, "We have the chance to enact a miracle to a polarised society and show that we can hold together difference."

The Ven. Christine Allsopp, Archdeacon of Northampton reminded the Synod that the General Synod had voted for women bishops on five separate occasions and that the Measure being considered had already "made considerable compromises to be generous to those who cannot in conscience accept women as bishops."

A full report of the debate will appear on the diocesan web site in due course. The wording of the motions and the voting figures are below.

Further information: Derek Williams, Diocesan media adviser, 01858 432709 / 07770 981172

Motion and voting

"This synod approves the proposals embodied in the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and in Amending Canon No. 30", the motion having been referred to the Synod under Article 8 of the Constitution of the General Synod.

Voting was by houses: Bishops for 1, against 0, abstentions 2.

Clergy for 37, against 10, abstentions 2

Laity for 30, against 14, abstentions 5

The motion was carried.

Following motion and voting

“This Synod

1. Desires that all faithful Anglicans remain and thrive together in the Church of England and therefore
2. Calls upon the House of Bishops to bring forward amendments to the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure to ensure that those unable on theological grounds to accept the ministry of women bishops are able to receive episcopal oversight from a bishop with authority (ie ordinary jurisdiction) conferred under the Measure rather than by delegation from a Diocesan Bishop.”

Voting was by houses: Bishops for 0, against 1, abstentions 2

Clergy for 9, against 35, abstentions 3

Laity for 20, against 27, abstentions 2

The Motion was lost.