



## The Rev'd **James Edward Mowbray**

Priest in Charge of St. Mary the Virgin, Kettering

### **General Synod Address**

*Proposer – The Rev'd David McConkey*

*Priest in Charge – All Saints Northampton*

*Seconder- The Rev'd Rob Parker-McGee*

*Priest in Charge – St. Mary Magdalene Geddington*

Thank you for taking the time to read this address, I write to ask for your vote to send me to the General Synod to represent Peterborough Diocese. I have served as Parish Priest to St. Mary the Virgin Kettering since March 2014, moving from a large parish in north Kent. I have been ordained for 12 years, so despite my relative youth, I have a wealth of parish and pastoral experience, including a stint serving on Rochester Diocesan Synod and Board of Education, prior to our move to Kettering.

I am 37 years old, married to Sarah who works as a Funeral Arranger for the Co-Op, and we have two children, Grace (9) and Ria (7). Aside from parish work and family, my interests include reading, cooking, snooker, falconry and dog walking.

From day one of my curacy I have served in Parishes in deprived areas. I am acutely aware of the need for quality mission and evangelism in poorer areas, and the positive difference it can make to people's lives. I am active in all of our local schools, and enjoy a particularly good relationship with our local Church School. I believe passionately in passing on the faith to children and young people, these being key areas in Church growth. Aside many and varied parochial duties, I am privileged to serve as Chaplain to the Kettering Branch of the Royal British Legion, and recently as Mayoral Chaplain, I firmly believe we should not underestimate the great chances for ministry in the wider community.

So if you were to send me to Synod, what are the issues that I see as key, and where do I stand on them?

**Mission and Church Growth** – I am really pleased to serve in a Diocese where the desire for growth is manifested from the very top. Whatever our Churchmanship might be, we all need to work hard to bring more people, young and old to the faith we all hold dear. We have many opportunities in which to engage with people, and must ensure we do the most to make the most of them.

**Priests in every Parish** – I feel that the parish system as we have it in the Church of England is an opportunity, not an albatross. We need to be honest, however, about how we resource this. Priests need paying for, which is something we all accept, however this is not something every parish can afford. We need to radically re-think how this happens, which of course will lead to asking challenging questions as regards existing staffing and structures across all dioceses. This leads on, of course, to promoting vocations. I have, across the last few years, been privileged to be involved in several vocation initiatives; we must be unafraid in encouraging priestly vocation, particularly among the young.

**Human Sexuality** – This appears to be a key debate for the Church moving forward. This is an issue that must be dealt with prayerfully and sensitively, mindful of the changing mind of wider society, but with equal faithfulness to the teaching and faith of the Church as upheld by the recent statement by the House of Bishops on the matter.

**Women Bishops and the Five Guiding Principles** – The nature of the debate on this over the past twenty years has been profoundly damaging to the Church. I believe that the current legislation now offers a way forward for supporters and dissenters alike. We must all now work together for that ‘mutual flourishing’ of which the guiding principles speak. We find ourselves in a unique position to promote unity amid diversity, which is a message I feel the world, not just Kettering needs to hear.

**Church Schools** – I feel that these are one of our best resources for ministry and outreach, as well as being centres of educational excellence. In the current climate of growth across our nation we need to be active and strategic in where we seek to plant new Church Schools and use them to promote Gospel values.

**Supporting Poorer Parishes** – I believe that there is a discrepancy in support and deployment in poor parishes where there is great need for ministry. It is true that money makes the world go round, but we need fresh strategic thinking about fair resourcing for parishes who have less than those who have more. I am fortunate in my current parish that the priestly ministry is part funded from an outside charity; were this not the case, the parish would not have fulltime ministry. I believe it is a matter of great importance that we re-visit how we resource parishes who are on the financial margins in areas of great need.

As a relatively young clergyman, I feel that it is now time for the younger generation to step forward and make its voice heard, while at the same time being able to listen and reflect on what has happened in the past.

**In the election I hope that you will consider giving me your first or high preference vote.**

I will work hard for a Church of England that will be confident as well as fair to all in its ministry and proclamation.

Should you wish to speak to me about any of the issues, please contact me via email: [frjames78@gmail.com](mailto:frjames78@gmail.com) or telephone: 01536 233489

Thank you for your time reading this.