

My name is Michael Bailey and I am the Vicar of St Stephen's, Lewisham. I am 45 years old and have been a parish priest for ten years. I believe the parish is the heart of our Church of England and central to our mission. I am greatly dismayed by the quasi-managerial language that still hasn't been shown to work, and by initiatives that divert resources from the parishes without expanding our outreach. I am a Unite Faith representative and I long to see a culture in the Church which is genuinely open to diversity - no narrow talent pool, but an ocean of people resourced and inspired by the work they do and the ministry to which they have been called.

It is, I believe, important for me to be clear about where I stand. The debates around human sexuality, LLF and PLF have, and continue, to fracture and disrupt our mission. I am a gay man and a supporter of equal marriage in the Church as well as the state. I am also a traditional Catholic, and I am troubled by how the debate has gone thus far. My "group" is either silent or worse, officially opposing PLF, and I want to challenge this. We need a Church and a Synod which are honest, alert to Jesus' intolerance of religious hypocrisy, and focused on the inclusive breadth of the Gospel: this should be good news for all, not merely for those who think like us or who conform to our agenda.

As an Assistant Area Dean and ADO I rejoice in the opportunity to work across the breadth of the Church. Mutual flourishing is a principle I feel very strongly about, and I rejoice in working alongside a supportive and inspiring female Area Dean, whose ministry and dedication are amazing. As a Deanery, we are as mixed as all of the Church of England, but we work on the ground together and deal with the rich tapestry of the kingdom in practical ways. I believe that genuine inclusion means a commitment to working together as far as possible, being generous with each other, and finding in our different theological understandings reasons for hope rather than excuses for division.

General Synod is a fractious battle ground and feels distant from our vision for a Church whose call is to serve the whole nation. I would love the opportunity, through serving on General Synod, to help build bridges that enable us to regain that vision and re-discover our mission.