

Arijun Swarup Seeking Election to General Synod

I believe that the Church is in a very real sense the Bride of Christ and that all Christians belong in the Church to worship in communion with one another. The Church is an essential place for Christians to receive the Body of Christ and should serve as an institution that seeks to build community centred around the teachings of the Gospels. Although church attendance in the CofE has historically fallen over recent years, I believe with conviction that this trend has no reason to continue. I believe that the Faith really is for everyone and that deep down in modern culture there is a yearning for the boundless wisdom and truth that the Gospels offer. It seems to me that we are in a time where disillusioned young people are desperately looking for the Church. It is our job as stewards of the Faith to welcome them, and others, in with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I do not think the conversion of all souls will happen overnight – we must be prayerful in our evangelisation, careful not to misrepresent the Church as something she is not, keeping her as the sanctuary that unites Heaven and Earth. We must therefore be prudent to uphold the teachings of the Church with intellectual rigour and honesty, being clear of the expectations and consequential ardours that the spiritual journey necessarily demands from us as Christians and look to be earnest disciples of the Lord.

A convert of two years, I am trying my best to navigate my life through an Anglo-Catholic expression for the Faith. For me, this means seeking to spread God's love in my practice as a Maths teacher, being faithful and reverent in my position as an Altar Server at my parish Church, finding opportunities for prayerful retreat and pilgrimage during my holidays and volunteering with outdoor activity camps that seek to spread the Faith. I list some areas that I believe are of particular importance:

Tackling social justice:

We must help the poor and marginalised in society. Through prayer, mission and giving we must ensure we are doing our best to actively provide help for those who need it. We must ensure that we are doing this prayerfully in a way that is guided by the Spirit – it is not necessarily just the case of finding the capital to make change, although obviously important. In addition, if able, we must be prepared to come in person to share the Spirit and authentically spread our joy. This may demand sacrifice of time and resources but this charity was forthrightly taught for us to imitate by our Lord.

Upholding teaching whilst respecting differing expressions of the Faith:

The CofE has always had the admirable quality of being able to cater for a wide range of expressions of the Faith and this is something that it must continue to do. Seeking unity rather than division is paramount but can only happen with different churches recognising and being in dialogue when it comes to difference in opinion. These dialogues must continue to happen, guided by the Spirit, so that we can truly boast our diversity as our strength.

Outreach:

It is surely important that the churches 'puts themselves out there' in order to attract parishioners. Whilst of course true, we must do this in a way that prioritises the salvation of souls and seeks baptism for those joining the Faith. Parishes should look to continue being creative, as they have been, in organising activity for fellowship and community outside of worship, making use of digital spaces where appropriate.

Addressing the climate crisis:

Climate change continues to be an issue of crucial importance, so we as Christians must continue to do our best to treat our planet in a way that respects Creation. As churches we must lead in looking to find efficiencies in reducing energy usage and waste.