

GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION ADDRESS – ALEXANDER BECKETT

I am 25 years old and a congregant of Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, where I serve as Head Server and represent the parish on Chelsea Deanery Synod. I work in financial services in the City of London and hold a first-class degree in French and Philosophy from the University of St Andrews.

I am fortunate to be part of a thriving parish church, with a strong tradition of music and liturgy and, above all, a real sense of community. It has been exciting to see our parish growing in number and in confidence: welcoming new people, deepening its common life and discovering afresh what a parish church can be.

That experience is why I am standing for General Synod. At a time when we hear a great deal about the challenges facing the Church of England, I also see enormous reasons for hope. I want to bring that same energy and enthusiasm to Synod, and to argue for a Church that has confidence in its parishes, confidence in its inheritance and, above all, confidence in the Gospel it exists to proclaim.

I grew up in Northern Ireland as a Presbyterian, in a family with Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic roots. That background has given me a lasting respect for different Christian traditions, a belief in serious theological debate, and a conviction that disagreement need not prevent us from recognising what we hold in common.

FLOURISHING PARISHES

The parish is where the life of the Church is most immediately lived: where people pray together, serve one another, encounter Christ and find a community that can hold them through the whole of life.

Yet many parishes face considerable financial and practical pressures. I believe General Synod must keep the health of our local churches at the heart of its work. We should be strengthening parishes, not managing their decline, and ensuring that national and diocesan structures enable rather than inhibit local mission.

Our church buildings are part of this. They are an extraordinary inheritance, but they are not simply monuments to the past. They should remain living places of worship, welcome and community for generations to come. We need to be ambitious and imaginative about their future and realistic about the resources required to sustain them.

CONFIDENCE IN FAITH AND MISSION

We are living through an intriguing moment. Countrywide, there are encouraging signs of renewed interest in faith, meaning and belonging, not least among younger people. The Church should meet that curiosity proactively and with confidence.

Our churches should be places where people are welcomed, loved and served, but also places where people encounter Christianity itself. The fundamental purpose of the Church remains the proclamation of the grace of God and the salvation offered to the world through Jesus Christ; we should not be embarrassed to say so. Synod's guiding principle should be to facilitate as concretely as possible local churches' fulfilment of this fundamental mission.

SERIOUS AND GENEROUS DEBATE

The breadth of the Church of England is one of its great challenges, but also one of its strengths. General Synod should be a place where difficult questions can be debated seriously without disagreement becoming destructive. We need members who have convictions and are prepared to express them, but who are equally prepared to listen, to test their own assumptions and, when necessary, to change their minds.

My own Christian background has taught me that no single tradition possesses the whole Church. I want us to be confident about our Anglican inheritance while generous towards those whose traditions and convictions differ from our own. We should seek truth rather than victory and refuse to allow our disagreements to obscure the faith we share.

WHAT I WOULD BRING

My professional work requires me to analyse complex information, weigh evidence and competing arguments and exercise independent judgement. It has also given me experience of leadership and of navigating complex administrative and regulatory responsibilities. I would bring those skills to Synod alongside my experience of parish and deanery life and a willingness to listen carefully and engage constructively.

I would furthermore bring the perspective of a younger lay Christian who, God willing, expects to be part of the Church of England for many decades to come. The decisions being made now about our parishes, buildings, resources and mission will shape the Church my generation inherits — and, in time, the Church we hand on.

If elected, I would seek to represent the Diocese of London rather than simply my own views. But my priorities would be clear: **flourishing parishes; confidence in the Christian faith; the preservation of our churches as living centres of worship and community; and a Synod capable of serious and generous theological debate.**

General Synod necessarily deals with structures, legislation, finance and policy. But none of these is an end in itself. They matter because the life of the Church is lived elsewhere: in parish churches where people worship, children are baptised, marriages are celebrated, the dead are mourned, communities gather, the lonely find companionship, the searching find faith, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

That is the Church I have been fortunate enough to experience. It is the Church I want to see flourish. And it is the Church I would work for on General Synod.