Representatives met in discussion groups throughout the week to consider three central questions:

- What should a diocese be?
- What should a diocese do?
- How should a diocese finance its work?

The results of these discussions formed the basis of the motion laid before conference by the Standing Committee on the final morning.

What Synod said Page 4

**INSIDE SCENE@SYNOD**

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Around the diocese P7  Partners P9  
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**DON'T BE CHURCH-HARDENED, BE "IN CHRIST"**

Bishop Michael's recipe for Our Common Life

**Gospel-hardened? News-hardened? Church-hardened?**

Bishop Michael's presidential address urged Synod to look behind the headlines - be they in news bulletins or the Bible - as the diocese seeks to define its "common life". He warned that short-hand titles and religious terminology can dull us to the narrative behind a headline, or to the wonder of what God actually does - "in Christ".

"In Christ," he said, "is a phrase St Paul has for describing the Church...that thought ought to be a starting point for this year’s Synod and any consideration of our common life."

He compared St Paul’s "diocese" embracing multiple communities and countries - Thessalonica, Philippi, Galatia etc. - to his similarly diverse one in Cyprus and the Gulf.

"Christians," he said, "are not just adherents of a religion...they're not just who they are locally...they are together in Christ. That's the Church."

He reminded Synod that Paul and his congregations did not have the Bible to guide them. "They were living it."

And by teaching them to know they’re in Christ, Paul was alerting them to the indivisibility of the Church. "Our common life as the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf...must be authentic to what the Church is [and decide] what the diocese should be before considering what it should do."

"In this synod," he concluded, "may Paphos rejoice in Abu Dhabi. May Dubai be encouraged by Limassol. May Baghdad pray for Aden. May those who work across the whole diocese never forget and always listen to the fears and worries, but also the delights and celebrations, of specific parishes and chaplaincies; and may those chaplaincies and parishes know that together, in common, knowing and therefore trusting one another more than we're accustomed to, we shall live most truly in Christ."  

*Address in full P2*
OUR COMMON LIFE: PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Bishop of London from the end of Queen Victoria’s reign to 1939, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, is remembered for some hair-raising remarks he made in the Great War about Germans and what to do with them. He ought to be remembered for warning Christians never to become gospel-hardened. By that, he meant “utterly untouched by the most moving facts” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by virtue of hearing them so often. It’s a danger, now as then.

Perhaps short-hand titles and religious words dull us to the wonder of what God did and does in Christ. "The announcement" is the gospel of grace and risk: of God’s taking a chance that a single, very young woman would say yes to what he intended to do, while giving her the space in which to make her answer. "The incarnation" is the gospel of closeness and fragility: of God’s coming among us as a dependent child and as a wounding, killable adult. "The crucifixion" is the gospel of passion, compassion, and identity: humans die, and Christ was fully human. "The resurrection" is the gospel of starting to see, of light dawning: God is life, and Jesus was fully divine. "The ascension" is the gospel of trust, that heaven and earth are one. "Pentecost" is the gospel of release: of our being empowered to be who we really are. All this is the Gospel, and Winnington-Ingram warned us never to become gospel-hardened but gospel-filled.

There’s another sort of hardening. With the rest of the world we can become news-hardened, and perhaps in this region and in these parts more than most. Headlines on BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, and CyBC dull us after a while to the content of the stories. "ISIS", "Iraq", "Syria", "Gaza", "West Bank settlements", "Houthi rebels", "southern secessionists", "Al Qaeda": even "economic crisis" and "eurozone woes": unless we ourselves are in these stories, we regularly hear the headline but don’t often feel the narrative.

Christians hardly need reminding that, far from being distant from the Gospel, these situations, these stories, this news, is just where the Good News is most movingly proclaimed and most truthfully lived. Risk, fragility, threat, wounds, passion, and death are there in abundance; but, since God in the Gospel undergoes all those things in Christ, so too are the other constants of the Gospel: grace, intimacy, compassion, trust, hope dawning, and, even in the midst of what looks like collapse and failure, the empowerment of the Spirit. Come to Aden, come to Baghdad, come to a labour camp, come to a women’s refuge, if only in imagination and prayer. God’s there. He’s never news-hardened. He invites us to be with him, in Christ.

"In Christ" is a phrase St Paul has for describing the Church. I wonder whether we’re in danger sometimes, indeed often, of becoming Church-hardened - capital C. As a description of the Church of his day, Paul could of course have proudly and justifiably listed all the geographical locations where congregations now existed in his rapidly though sometimes erratically spreading mission area, his (I think we can use the word) diocese - rather as we do on the website. And he was very specific indeed in his detailed encouragements and admonitions, and in his visits, to named fellowships in particular places with individual and sometimes multiple problems and joys. But he never forgets their truest identity and he takes care to raise their sights. Christians are not just adherents of a religion: they’re in Christ. They’re not just who they are very locally; the church at Thessalonica isn’t confined by Thessalonica, and Philippi and Galatia and Corinth don’t gather, worship, and exist solely as Thessalonica, Philippi, and Galatia; but together in Christ. That’s the Church.

By teaching Christians to know that they’re in Christ, choosing that phrase so pointedly, St Paul alerts the congregations and fellowships to the indivisibility of Church and Gospel. Remember: there was no Bible, no New Testament, when Paul wrote; they were living it. Christ is the Word, and we are the Body of Christ. The Church must still live it - live in him, live him. We’re not to be Church-hardened, precisely because of what the Church is.

That thought, which is not mine but Paul’s, ought to be a starting point for this year’s synod and any consideration of our common life. Our common life as the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, with due allowance for the tradition and traditions we inhabit as well as the countries we serve and the conditions of our times, must be authentic to what the Church is, in Christ. You will see that, in discussion groups, we are asking what a diocese should be before before considering what it should do, and then how it can and should do it, and finally the shape of the way ahead; and that’s the right order.

It’s a special pleasure to have the Very Reverend Hosam Naoum, Dean of St George’s Cathedral, Jerusalem, to lead our spiritual reflections. It’s a joy to welcome Archbishop Mouneer Anis, Primate of our Province and my brother in episcopal ministry, and also Bishop Julius of our link diocese of Thika in Kenya. Exeter Diocese, our other particular link, sends warmest greetings. Bishop Azad of Iran, who is also our honorary assistant bishop for Urdu-language congregations in the Gulf, is unable to be present but assures us of his prayers. All this is very Pauline; all this is very New Testament: not a book, not books, but the new covenant, and the Church, in Christ.

And we ourselves, the ones on the diocesan list, representatives and observers, people and clergy, in all our diversity, encounter one another, either again or for the first time. I hope we shall do so both familiarly and freshly and in Christ. In this synod, may Paphos rejoice in Abu Dhabi. May Dubai be encouraged by Limassol. May Baghdad pray for Aden. May those who work across the whole diocese never forget and always listen to the fears and worries, but also the delights and celebrations, of specific parishes and chaplaincies; and may those chaplaincies and parishes know that together, in common, knowing and therefore trusting one another more than we’re accustomed to, we shall live most truly in Christ.
DEALING WITH A “DANGEROUS” DEFICIT

MONEY MATTERS

EURO CRISIS PROMPTS PAY REVIEW

The diocese has undertaken a review of clergy stipends in Cyprus in the wake of the Euro’s collapsing value against the pound.

Clergy pay rates are set to reflect the earnings they could expect to receive if they were still working in the country in which they were previously ministering. But a dramatic decline in the exchange rate has had a seriously adverse effect since rates were last assessed four years ago.

The value if the Euro against the Pound Sterling has dropped by over 13% since 2010 and currently stands at a seven-year low.

This means that some clergy in Cyprus are now €3,000 a year worse off.

The results of the review are to be sent to church councils and new recommended rates will apply to all incoming recruits. However the Standing Committee report to Synod expressed a hope that it could also include existing incumbents.

A shortfall in parish payments, plus higher than planned costs, have left the diocese with a dangerous deficit.

Finance Director John Banfield told Synod that, in 2014, expenditure exceeded income by €165,000.

And he warned that cash reserves in the diocese had fallen to €280,000 – enough to keep the diocese going for no more than a couple of months. “It’s too low,” he said.

Other factors include the failure of plans to create a separate budget for ministry training.

Looking Ahead

Presenting his budget for the two years ahead, Canon John predicted an operating deficit of €20,000 this year.

“The diocese is like a family,” he said. “Somebody has to go out and make a living.”

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The value if the Euro against the Pound Sterling has dropped by over 13% since 2010 and currently stands at a seven-year low.

This means that some clergy in Cyprus are now €3,000 a year worse off.
The discussion groups that considered the Synod theme had a central role in determining the resolution put before them on the final day.

Each of the ten groups supplied a list of bullet points to Standing Committee summarising their suggestions and it was from these that the resolution was drawn up.

Here is a digest of the submissions.

**QUESTION 1: What should a diocese be?**
- The body of Christ / Household of faith / Anglican family
- A known structure of authority / a skeleton on which the body can grow
- A vehicle for learning and sharing
- An instrument of unity within diversity / continuity within a legal framework
- Responsible and accountable offering spiritual leadership and clear, shared communication
- A resource for mission, pastorally focused

**QUESTION 2: What should a diocese do?**
- Provide effective connection between the local and the wider/global Church/community
- Select, train and resource church ministry and leadership (including CMD)
- Develop canon law clarifying the roles of parish members (wardens, PCCs etc)
- Foster unity among congregations
- Provide pastoral support
- Promote financial stewardship and good governance
- Encourage best practice

**QUESTION 3: How should the diocese finance its work?**
- Encourage generous/sacrificial giving by all church members
- Engage with governments and other outside agencies/organisations with a view to deliver programmes through partnership
- Develop a fundraising team
- Sell the vision of diocese more effectively to chaplaincies/parishes
- Communicate Synod decisions/policy more clearly

The motion that emerged, and which was accepted unanimously, recognised, commended, received, requested and affirmed five fundamental principles behind the concept of 'diocese':

**Synod:**

- **recognises** Our Common Life as a legitimate expression of Anglican identity in this diocese. It asks Standing Committee to continue to revise the document so as to include some of the images and understandings, such as the concept of a family of parishes and congregations, that have emerged from the discussion groups; and to regard the document as a viable basis from which a new diocesan constitution may emerge in due course;

- **commends** the view that the parishes/chaplaincies and their people are the diocese, and that the diocese, thus understood, can be more than the sum of its parts;

- **receives** the results of discussion on the question: what should a diocese do? It asks Standing Committee to take account of these results in its future strategic planning;

- **requests** that Standing Committee gives urgent attention to the development of a diocese-wide stewardship initiative, and to seeking external sources of finance and support;

- **affirms** the principle that Synodically agreed costs should be met through a sharing of those costs fairly throughout the chaplaincies.
**FINDING WAYS FORWARD**

Changes to the way the Anglican churches in England and Wales accredit ministerial training courses have hampered efforts in Cyprus and the Gulf to finalise plans for ministerial training. But a solution is in sight.

Presenting the Ministry Report to Synod, Archdeacon John Holdsworth outlined the progress made since the acceptance of the Ministry Forum recommendations a year ago.

He reported that there are now four Exploring Faith courses running in the diocese, with four ordinands currently in training.

These were formerly accredited by Glyndwr University in Wales. But changes to their course meant it was no longer suitable. Meanwhile, the Church of England has ruled that all ministerial training must be accredited by the University of Durham, which refuses to recognise courses undertaken outside the UK.

However, Archdeacon John revealed a deal had now been struck with the University of Newfoundland, so the process is back on track.

**LIVING IN THE EYE OF THE STORM**

This year’s Guest Speaker was the Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, Jerusalem…

The eye of the storm is a challenging place to be – at once both inspirationally calm but also dangerous and frightening.

And the storm was the metaphor Dean Hosam used for the Christian experience, whether in times of war, loss, stress, disease and whatever else brings turbulence into our lives.

It’s at these stormy moments that we are most likely to resort to prayer; when we ask the most serious, urgent questions.

And the obvious one? Why me? What did I do to deserve this?

Where was God when I needed Him?

Prayer provides an opportunity to seek the divine in troubled times and to try and make sense of where God is. Why does He allow such situations to develop?

The Dean quoted the Ignatian exhortation to “pray as if everything depends on God; work as if everything depends on you.”

And he suggested that maybe it should be the other way round if we are better to understand our true selves and realise that God was there all along – is present at all times.

Nothing, he suggested, epitomises this better than the story of Job. Despite all that happened to him, and despite the rebukes from friends and family, Job never lost patience with God so that, in the end, it is he who is redeemed.

In Job’s case, God was not the last resort but a source of encouragement from the start. And so it should be for us.

*More meditations Page 11*

**MINISTRY: Lending a Watching Ear**

A panel of Vocational Advisers has been set up to encourage a culture of vocation in the diocese.

Their role is to be “astute observers and listeners”, helping those who feel called to ministry to discern the nature of their vocation and help candidates in their journeys towards Selection.

They will also offer counselling to those who suffer disappointment and doubt, as well as excited anticipation.

Archdeacon John told Synod more advisers would be appointed at strategic regional locations. They would need training and a handbook is to be produced to guide them. But the network is already functioning effectively.

A Selection Conference has been organised for March 2015 in Amman, Jordan when four candidates will be considered for ordination training.

Three people have completed their initial training and two will be ordained to the diaconate in June.
GROWING IN SPIRITUALITY
Every day, in every way, the diocesan Spirituality Team is growing bigger...and better.

That was the message to Synod from team leader Canon Paul Maybury, a year after his appointment as Spirituality Co-ordinator.

Canon Paul reported that the team, set up three years ago, now numbers ten people, with 14 people receiving help.

"We are working hard to introduce new, creative forms of worship, liturgy and prayer," he said.

The team has produced a new handbag-size Prayer Guide and is preparing a new lectionary specific to the diocese, which will be available next year.

It is also active in supporting trainee Ordinands and Readers and others pursuing a vocation.

Given enough demand, the team hopes to appoint a spiritual director in every parish.

"Our priority in the year ahead is to develop a capacity to offer greater spiritual direction and a deeper prayer life," Canon Paul said.

The Spirituality Team also runs the diocesan retreat house at Katafiyio in Cyprus, under the eye of facilitator Maggie Le Roy.

She told Synod that the facility broke even for the first time in 2014, thanks largely to the growing popularity of its programme of Retreats in Daily Life – "a sacred space in their regular work life" – of the kind illustrated in the DH Lawrence poem Pax.

Seventy people have taken up the opportunity in the last two years, and people are staying for longer, she reported. And the feedback has been positive:

"A much-needed divine appointment"; "I found a song again to sing in my life"

"It caused me to return ti a relationship with the giver, rather than the gifts."

Revd Gill Nesbitt (Abu Dhabi) said her experience was typical. The numbers visiting Katafiyio from her chaplaincy in Al Ain had grown from nine three years ago to 14 in 2014.

PAX
All that matters is to be at one with the living God
To be a creature in the house of the God of Life.

Like a cat asleep on a chair
at peace, in peace
and at one with the master of the house, with the mistress
at home, at home in the house of the living,
sleeping on the hearth, and yawning before the fire.

Sleeping on the hearth of the living world,
yawning at home before the fire of life
feeling the presence of the living God
like a great reassurance
a deep calm in the heart
a presence
as of a master sitting at the board
in his own and greater being,
in the house of life.

-- by D.H. Lawrence
EYE CARE IN ADEN

Dr John Stanford Smith

One of the founders of the diocese’s pioneering eye clinic brought a first-hand report...

Dr John Stanford-Smith has been performing operations and changing people’s lives since 2002, in which time the number of operations at the clinic has reached over 7,800. He and his 13 fellow doctors have - and continue to - overcome difficult conditions and a challenging political situation to literally give sight to the blind.

“It sometimes feels as though we take two steps forward and then one and three-quarter steps back,” he told Synod.

“We see people whose cataracts have rendered them blind for some time because of the shortage of medical services,” he said. The greatest need - and what we offer - is practical outreach surgery.”

Because standard techniques are too expensive, the Aden team has developed modifications to the process in order to make it possible.

Dr Stanford Smith told contrasting but complementary tales of dedication to duty at work and joyful fellowship in the few leisure moments granted to the multi-cultural team, played out against a backdrop of some of the world’s poorest and most backward neighbourhoods.

BOOK CORNER

Synod representatives had the chance to catch up on the literary prowess of three prominent colleagues this year. New books by Archdeacons John Holdsworth and Bill Schwartz and a third by Canon Andy Thompson from Abu Dhabi were all commended to Synod by Bishop Michael.

DUBAI: The Elephant in the Room

Events at Synod were overshadowed by a crisis in the Dubai chaplaincy, where the senior cleric has been relieved of his duties.

Responding to a question from Michael Cole (Qatar), Bishop Michael told Synod that he had withdrawn the licence of the senior chaplain in Dubai, Revd Dr Ruwan Palapathwala, with immediate effect because of what he called "dysfunctional governance."

"I have been distressed for some time that there seems to have been a breakdown [in relations] between the senior chaplain and the clerical staff," Bishop Michael said.

He added that Fr Ruwan had so centralised the life of the chaplaincy that he excluded others with a contribution to make.

The situation, he said, had existed for a long time. "This has not come out of the blue."

"In the end, I decided to give him notice of termination that would enable him to find another job with honour. But our overtures were resisted; the decision denied. I therefore had no alternative but to terminate his licence with immediate effect.

"I look to clergy to be key colleagues in solidarity," Bishop Michael said. "I look to leaders to lead as first among equals. Fr Ruwan swore an oath of canonical obedience but he has frequently broken it. He is now in denial."

The Archdeacon in the Gulf, Ven Bill Schwartz, had not attended Synod in order to go to Dubai to try and help resolve the conflict. Only one cleric and three lay representatives from Dubai were present in Larnaca.

ALL CHANGE IN S.E. CYPRUS

A major re-vamp of parish organisation is under way in South-east Cyprus.

Synod heard that the church councils of the three parishes in the area have jointly decided that they can only afford to support one minister between them. And so talks about a merger are in progress.

Parish boundaries are the responsibility of Synod, which will be asked to ratify any new arrangements.

But it is hoped that by 2017, the very different churches of Deryeneia, Famagusta and Agia Napa will unite in the new parish of Ammochostos, which is the municipal name for the area. Meanwhile, it is hoped to appoint a new interim part-time chaplain to replace Revd Simon Holloway in Agia Napa.

SEEN @ SYNOD

A new video highlighting diocesan activities during the past year was shown at Synod.

It can be seen on the diocesan website

http://cypgulf.org/seensynod
NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS
The Diocesan Group for the Protection of Vulnerable People

Synod welcomed the news that no incidents had been reported during the year to the new team, led by Executive Officer Jean West.

However, work on implementing the policy for protecting vulnerable people has continued apace, with more and more parishes becoming actively involved.

Chaplaincies reported progress on training for church members, health & safety procedures and the completion of reference forms, local policy documents and mission statements. Feedback from training sessions has been positive.

It is now hoped that all chaplaincies who, for whatever reason, have been unable to adopt the policy in full will have done so by the end of 2015.

SPREADING THE WORD:
Bishop’s plea to Synod representatives

"The very first duty of clergy and representatives at Synod is to get together and work out a strategy for communicating what has happened at Synod,”

Thus Bishop Michael in response to complaints from the floor that decisions made by the diocese and at Synod did not always filter through to church councils and congregations.

"I want the spirit and enterprise shown here not to lose its momentum," the Bishop said. "It is for Synod representatives to be talkers as well as listeners; writers as well as readers."

He reminded Synod that information was readily available via the diocesan website. The regular scene@publications were also circulated electronically to all parishes and could be downloaded and printed for those without access to the internet.

REMEMBERING TREES

The Remembering Trees project, proposed at Synod last year, has been a success beyond all expectations.

Trees across the diocese, from Kyrenia to Kuwait and beyond, were festooned with woollen squares throughout Advent, since when they have been knitted together to make blankets.

The inspiration for the idea, Angela Murray, from Bahrain, told scene@synod: “I have been overwhelmed – I never expected so many squares to be produced.”

1500 squares were produced in Deryneia alone with hundreds more coming from Limassol, Larnaca, Bahrain and other parts of the diocese.

Twenty-one blankets will be donated to the orphanage connected to St George’s Church in Baghdad, one for each of the residents, aged between three and teenage years, all of whom are profoundly handicapped.

A selection of the blankets was displayed during the Wednesday morning session at Synod and they were blessed by Bishop Michael at the Synod Eucharist in Agios Nikolaus.

CHURCH LTD:
A gulf of misunderstanding?

Plans to establish the diocese in Cyprus as a legal entity have been stalled – by the Iranians!

Standing Committee had decided that it did not want the diocese to be known as Cyprus & the Gulf Ltd. And sought to change the name. But removing the ‘Ltd’ suffix required a period of public consultation before the change could go ahead.

But, as Archdeacon John Holdsworth reported to Synod, this process resulted in an objection...from the Iranian Embassy, who insisted it should be called Cyprus and the Persian Gulf.

This unforeseen development has led to a delay in the registration, while the authorities decide whether or not to allow the objection to go forward.

However, progress is now well advanced and registration is imminent.
A POSTCARD FROM IRAQ

In his first address to Synod, the new priest in charge of Iraq’s oppressed Christian community paid tribute to the faith of his troubled flock.

“We are providing regular food rations for 250 families displaced by the Islamic State insurgency,” he reported. IS offers Christians three options: to convert to Islam, pay onerous taxes or leave with nothing but the clothes they are wearing.

“We thank God that no-one has accepted to convert to Islam,” he said. “650,000 people prefer to be refugees and live in miserable conditions than to leave their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Meanwhile, the kindergarten set up in 2011 is now regarded as the best in all Iraq.

The clinic is providing free examinations and treatment for up to 90 families a day, including medical, dental, pharmacy and stem cell technology.

“The situation [in Baghdad] is getting better with the new government,” he told Synod, “and we hope that the refugees from Erbil and in Baghdad will soon be able to return home.”

JEMT UPDATE

A tax rebate beckons!

An internal investigation of the tax affairs of the Jerusalem and East Mission Trust has revealed 35 years of tax overpayments.

The chairman, Archdeacon John Holdsworth, told Synod this had now stopped and that the Trust hoped to receive a refund, JEMT is also cutting its costs with the appointment of new auditors and by bringing the inspection process into an in-house one-stop shop for inspection and maintenance.

Cathedral

A new Liaison Group has been formed to improve links with the cathedral in Nicosia, which has been re-wired with help from a 50% JEMT grant.

Other grants have helped refurbish Hartley College, Kyrenia, which may now be offered for commercial letting, and facilitated repairs following a termite infestation in Limassol.

Meanwhile, the Lukoil contract has been extended and a new arrangement should be in place by Spring 2015.

The next three-way link gathering between the partner dioceses of Cyprus & the Gulf, Thika and Exeter is planned for 2016 in Thika.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Good news too from the partner diocese of Thika in Kenya, where the Namrata Shah children’s home now cares for 40 destitute orphans.

Chairman Louis Kanyonyo reported one of their children was now at university and another eight in high school, funded entirely by donations.

“We enable children to learn agriculture so they can sell produce to top up their budgets,” he reported.

But the need is still great. The diocese is looking to secure more sponsors for their children. “And we need clean water,” he said. “But a borehole costs £4m [Kenyan] Shillings (£29k).

The diocese now has 68 parishes and 177 congregations with new churches being planted, including in urban areas, with 136 staff and 41 evangelists. Bishop Julius Wanyoike has also established a new school of Ministry.
Synod has welcomed the issuing of new guidance notes covering the roles of Church Wardens and Interim Ministers.

The documents, as commended by Standing Committee, offer advice and clarification governing these two important positions in any parish.

**Church Wardens**, the first document says, are:

- officers of the bishop and answerable to him
- responsible for the infrastructure of their church, i.e. all that makes church possible
- responsible for the organisation of sidespeople and the ministry of welcome
- expected to co-operate with their priest and council in all that furthers Christian faith
- expected to set an example of diligence, faithfulness and probity

“To be a Church Warden,” it concludes, “is an honour and great responsibility and should be regarded as such by both clergy and lay people alike.”

**Interim Ministry**, according to the second document:

- represents continuity and stability – reacting to circumstances with best practice
- is preparatory – a John the Baptist ministry – preparing the way for a successor
- is responsive rather than innovative, maintaining pastoral care and service

The document also answers other frequently asked questions covering topics such as remuneration and contracts, status and accountability. And it emphasises the importance and value of interim ministry in a diocese where it can take time to introduce clerical change-overs.

**CONSTITUTION “We need a new document”**

The present constitution in the Dubai chaplaincy needs a major overhaul - it is not an Anglican one, according to one Synod representative.

John Samuels (Dubai) used the annual Open Forum to re-visit last year’s debate, prompted by Standing Committee’s decision that reform was required and asked what had been achieved.

“The one we have in Dubai is rather primitive,” he said. “It was formed many decades ago and is definitely not an Anglican document.” He wondered what constitutional base other chaplaincies were working from.

Bishop Michael insisted the diocesan constitution must be the template for all parishes and chaplaincies.

“We are moving towards a major revision of the diocesan constitution,” he informed Synod.

“Any local customs should be congruent with and subordinate to it.”

**LOOKING AHEAD:**

2017 Synod

There is a “strong possibility” that the 2017 Synod could be held in the Gulf archdeaconry.

Bishop Michael said that past enthusiasm for this idea had not led to a costed proposal.

However, there is now a “promising and partly-costed” proposal on the table from Doha in Qatar.

He said the package needed to match the one offered in Cyprus, including adequate accommodation for guests as well as the conference itself and the that the difference in cost should not be excessive.

Vitally, also, a Gulf venue had to offer the opportunity for convenient and unrestricted worship.

He was also optimistic that the financial arrangements that would enable Cyprus parishes to travel to Doha to attend could be made. “It is likely to happen,” he said.
IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Jesus, food for the world
Dean Hosam Naoum’s second meditation focused on our daily bread - prayer

Our life as people of prayer is shaped by our situation. It can be a time to share anger, and frustration. It is rarely a time for nourishment. And yet, spiritually, it most certainly is.

The Dean used St Mark’s tale of the squall - the storm - on the lake to illustrate his point. Jesus, he said, is concerned for a world where many are hungry, whether it’s for food, peace or justice. But it is Faith that feeds us. And prayer provides the spiritual nourishment for our Christian journey.

Prayer is the eye of the storm. It’s a two-way process that heals, restores and saves us from the challenges we face, trapped in our small space. We are afflicted, but not crushed. Our small space becomes empowering - a place to interact with the Divine.

There will be times, he said, when we understand the storm that rages around us, and times when we are overwhelmed. But do we walk away? “I am the bread of life.”

The Dean compared the human condition to Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. He became hungry himself. But he made himself vulnerable, like us in order to take us where we need to be.

And we, as people of prayer, are entrusted.

We are fed in order to feed others. We feed on the word of God and offer new trust to the world through our intercessions.

Jerusalem and Pilgrimage
“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the LORD.”

Dean Hosam is living Psalm 122. And his final meditation offered some insights into life in Jerusalem for the Christians who live there.

The Holy Land, he said, is the fifth gospel. And it’s a complex and demanding one.

“Jerusalem is a visible symbol of our light and best desires. But it is also a reminder of how this ‘best’ can go tragically wrong.”

This makes ministry in the city unique - a big responsibility for the cathedral and the diocese to bear.

“Here,” he said “the Bible can be visited and walked, ancient stones belonging to the whole world. But the living stones must also be protected and encouraged to stay. Otherwise it becomes Disneyland or a museum.

“Christians in the Middle East are in the eye of the storm. Jerusalem is central to the Christian heritage, the mother city where God chose to be incarnated. Our task is to transform its stones into a meeting place with Him. We cannot abandon this sacred trust.”

And the political upheavals only make this imperative the stronger.

“Christians are charged to seek and pursue peace,” he said. “Peace with justice.”

“Our voice is heard afar, in Iraq, in Syria, where Christians face persecution by fundamentalists.

“Our example of tolerance shows people of diverse religious backgrounds that people can live in harmony. It is our most pressing priority and our efforts must continue

Dean Hosam’s remarks were received with great interest by members of Synod. Here are some of the questions they asked - and the answers he gave

How does the Church counter the radicalisation of young people? Whatever we do is a drop in the ocean. But our institutions and programmes give us authority. We are bridge builders, a voice of moderation.

How are relations with the Israeli government? Generally good. We have to keep a balance and we speak for justice. It’s a balanced relationship - we deal with everyone. But the situation is very delicate.

What is happening at the Anglican hospital in Gaza? It’s a big challenge. It does more work outside than in. It’s the only hospital that is not affiliated politically. But funding has been withdrawn so the diocese has to pay.

How do you find the resources you need for your ministry of welcome? Time is our only restraint. Most pilgrims are very supportive. We are there for everyone who comes and try to be as hospitable as we can.

Is co-operation between churches a continuing process or just the norm? It is a developing process. Now, the surrounding situation is dire in many ways, more than at any time. But if we are not united we will face much bigger problems and challenges.

Q & A
And last but by no means least, scene@synod says a huge thank you on your behalf to Georgia, Anetta & Evangelia, the office dynamos without whom none of this would have happened. Hats off to you!
GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS
A resumé of the motions tabled at Synod, and the votes cast

MOTION ONE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
Synod approves the minutes of the 2014 meeting

MOTION TWO: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
Synod receives and approves the diocesan financial statements for 2014

MOTION THREE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
Synod receives and approves the report from the Standing Committee/Bishop’s Council

MOTION FOUR: CARRIED with 1 ABSTENTION
Synod receives and approves the report from the Director of Ministry

MOTION FIVE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
Synod receives and approves the report from the Spirituality Team

MOTION SIX: CARRIED with 1 ABSTENTION
Synod receives and approves the proposed diocesan budget for 2015/16

MOTION SEVEN: CARRIED with 1 ABSTENTION
Synod authorises Standing Committee to sign loan agreements up to €50,000 during 2015 if required

MOTION EIGHT: CARRIED with 1 ABSTENTION
Synod authorises Standing Committee to approve capital expenditure up to €5,000 during 2015 if required

MOTION NINE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
Synod receives and approves the report from the Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust (Cyprus)

MOTION TEN: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
- Synod recognises OUR COMMON LIFE as the legitimate expression of Anglican identity in this diocese. It asks Standing Committee to continue to revise the document so as to include some of the images and understandings, such as the concept of a family of parishes and congregations, that have emerged from the discussion groups and to regard the document as a viable basis from which a new diocesan constitution may emerge in due course.
- This Synod commends the view that the parishes, chaplaincies and their people are the diocese and that the diocese, thus understood, can be more than the sum of its parts.
- Synod receives the results of the discussion groups on the question: what should a diocese do? It asks Standing Committee to take account of those results in its future strategic planning.
- Synod requests that Standing Committee gives urgent attention to the development of a diocese-wide stewardship initiative and to seeking external sources of finance and support.
- Synod affirms the principle that synodically agreed costs should be met through a sharing of those costs fairly throughout the chaplaincies.
LE ROY IS QUEEN!

She may be the Retreats Facilitator for the diocese, but on the bowling alley Maggie Le Roy is certainly not the retiring type. Despite stiff opposition, and in a tightly-fought contest, she struck home to win the honours at the annual ladies’ bowling night competition.

Scene@Synod congratulates her!

ELECTION RESULTS

Elections were held for various posts in both the House of Clergy and the House of Laity. Members from both Houses are elected for a three-year term of service as House Chairmen, on the Standing Committee, and for a five-year term as delegates to the Provincial Synod. Alternates are also elected. Elections to the Vacancy-in-See Committee, which meets to choose a new Bishop if needed, are held annually.

Those elected in 2015 are listed below in bold.

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<tr>
<th>HOUSE OF CLERGY</th>
<th>HOUSE OF LAITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>STANDING COMMITTEE: re-elected</td>
<td>VACANCY-IN-SEE COMMITTEE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf: Very Rev Chris Butt;</td>
<td>Cyprus: Deborah Graham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyprus: Rev Canon Derek Smith (Limassol)</td>
<td>Christine Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Archdeacons Bill Schwartz and John Holdsworth also serve as ex-officio members of the Standing Committee)</td>
<td>Alternate: Justin Arnott</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternates: Revd Revd Canon Paul Maybury</td>
<td>Gulf: Charlie Lloyd Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revd Tim Heaney</td>
<td>Elizabeth George</td>
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<tr>
<td>VACANCY-IN-SEE COMMITTEE</td>
<td>Alternate: Max Heineck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ven Canon Bill Schwartz;</td>
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<td>Revd Wendy Hough</td>
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AND FINALLY...

Bishop Michael closed Synod by reminding representatives that their first duty was to work out a way of communicating what had happened at Synod to the folks back home. He felt the week had been “hugely encouraging” with an excellent atmosphere. “Coming to Synod doesn’t take your worries away,” he said, “but I hope it puts them in the context of being in Christ. And that’s the spirit that I hope you will go out in.”