

Comment by Revd Mike Claridge after the General Synod vote to reject the “Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure”

Today’s rejection by the Church of England of legislation that would have enabled women to be ordained as bishops leaves me heavy hearted.

Hundreds of parishes up and down this country can bear witness to the vivacity, insight, inspired leadership and pastoral care of priests who happen to be women. Hundreds of parishes have been enriched by their leadership and service. Today would have been a chance to enable their God given gifts to be shared with the wider church. Dioceses, as well as parishes, need those gifts in their episcopal ministry. Today’s decision means that, for seven years at least, that will be unable to happen. It can only be imagined what contributions to the episcopal life of the Church of England will be lost because of today’s decision. It may well prove over time that those are seven years worth of gifts and leadership we could not not afford to lose.

My heart is no longer in the Church of England. I will continue to draw it’s stipend because I need to, and also because I am privileged to serve in a Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Methodist Church. When the time comes to move, as it will it good time, I will be looking to serve wherever I can remain in partnership with that church, a church into which I have been welcomed and affirmed and without which my ministry would be empty of hope or direction.

Mike Claridge
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