Yr Eglwys yng Nghymru : The Church in Wales

Mainc yr Esgobion : The Bench of Bishops

*Explanatory Note*

*concerning the Code of Practice following the Canon to enable to the ordination of women as bishops.*

By the promulgation of this Canon at the September 2013 meeting of the Governing Body, the Bench of Bishops was charged to agree without delay a Code of Practice to make provisions such that all members of the Church in Wales, including both those who in conscience dissent from the provisions of the Canon and those who affirm it, may have a sense of security in their accepted and valued place within the Church in Wales. Beyond this, the Canon provided no further indication of any requirements for content, and entrusted the task to the Bench and the Bench alone.

In the period since the Canon was passed, the Bench, through written submissions, open diocesan meetings and a consultative session at Governing Body in April 2014, has consulted widely about the possible nature and provisions of such a Code and has taken careful note of all the submissions made. Having regard to these and drawing upon what they consider to be good practice from elsewhere in the Anglican Communion the Bishops have agreed first a number of principles which they believe are fundamental as the foundation for the Code , and secondly the Code itself.

The Code explicitly affirms that any woman becoming a Diocesan Bishop in the Church in Wales becomes such on exactly the same terms, and with the same jurisdiction, as any other Diocesan Bishop in the Province.

A clear outcome of discussions of the matter of women bishops at the September 2012 meeting of the Governing Body (and reaffirmed in September 2013 and April 2014 in discussion) was that members expressed a strong preference by an indicative poll for pastoral rather than structural provision for those who dissent in conscience from sacramental ministry of a women bishop, and the Bishops have had due regard to this.

The Code acknowledges that we are still in a period of reception, and therefore we do not believe that we can exclude from consideration for ordination those who in conscience cannot receive the sacramental ministry of women in Holy Orders.

The Bishops are not persuaded to provide for specific alternative episcopal ministry for members of the Church in Wales who are unable in conscience to accept the ministry of a woman bishop. Such alternative ministry could not be in full communion with a future Bench of Bishops which included women and as such would not serve the unity of the Church. The Code does, however, make specific provision for such members both to request and receive alternative sacramental provision.

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