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'Parliament for The Church of England,' or so it is often described. It is an understandable description with General Synod's governance responsibilities. Of recent years General Synod appears like unto Parliament not only in its governing function, but in its often adversarial and partisan politics. In March's Guildford Diocesan Synod, +Andrew explained synodical governance etymologically, describing it as an effort to find the way together. I believe that rather than adversarial and partisan, it is meant to be a place and process of advocacy and communion. Every Sunday, we Anglicans confess that we 'believe in the communion of saints.' This bold theological conviction, a commitment to synodical governance, and my particular experience bring me to offer myself for your consideration to represent the clergy of The Diocese of Guildford in General Synod.

I believe in the communion of saints. This means that in matters of human sexuality and marriage, I cannot marginalise the millennia of saints that have gone before us, the millions of saints in England around the world to whom we belong, nor the myriad of saints who will come after us. This means two other things. It means that I cannot support a change in doctrine, or practices that would appear to infer such, that millennia and millions of saints have normatively understood and entrusted to our care for the myriad who will succeed us. However, among those millennia, millions, and myriad are those on the margins of that norm who, by God's same saving grace in Christ and the Holy Spirit's indwelling, also belong to this communion of saints that I am, and we are, faithful with.

Therefore, good synodical governance is imperative. What is the way together? If LLF/PLF continues its perceived trajectory, what is the way together for the Church of England? Should there be a change in course on the matter, what then would be the way together? To achieve a resilient and robust way together, proper synodical processes must be honoured. To deviate from due synodical process is to deviate from adequately finding the way together. I believe that a way together is most likely to be found through good synodical governance and through communion and advocacy with a simpler, humbler, and bolder understanding of and commitment to the communion of saints as described above; not adversarial partisanship.

There are also important matters related to safeguarding for General Synod to attend to. We all can agree that there are fewer things closer to Our Father's heart than providing justice for the most vulnerable among us and protecting them from wickedness. These matters must be taken seriously and in simpler, humbler, and bolder terms. Simpler because the weight of administration and process in this and many other important areas of church life is crippling already overstretched and under-resourced parish churches. Humbler because we are not nor will we ever be perfect this side of resurrection. And bolder because even while perfection remains allusive till resurrection, we 'do not run aimlessly, nor fight like one beating the air.' (1 Cor. 9:26) Our safeguarding needs robust theological reflection, clear boundaries within which it operates, effectiveness that works toward appropriate intentions, and a leanness toward wide deploy-ability.

There are, of course, many other matters for General Synod to attend to. There are matters related to funding, lay ministry, training, pensions, Net Zero, justice issues, and more. These matters cannot be considered in an adversarial, partisan, or abstracted/ideological way as can often happen in governance. For the Church of England, these require deep and wide biblical

and theological apprehension that span the traditions and churchmanship we cherish. They also require a missional orientation according to the Anglican Five Marks of Mission. Such orientation demands contextual understanding.

This is where my experience potentially offers a particular value. Educationally, I have earned four theological/biblical studies degrees giving me a depth of biblical and theological reference. I have formally studied across six denominationally different institutions being authentically exposed to finer theological points and practices that distinguish us within the broader theological truths that unite us. My Bachelor's and first Master's Degree were earned in institutional contexts concerned with multi-ethnic, cross-cultural, and urban mission and ministry. Meanwhile, my Doctoral research was concerned specifically with the rural parishes in the Dorking Deanery. Yet further I spent years as a visiting lecturer at Bujumbura Christian University, the Anglican theological training college in Burundi. My belief in the communion of saints embraces and understands the rural and urban, the homogeneous and diverse, the English and the Global Anglican.

Furthermore, like many of you, I have cultivated a breadth and depth of experience in organisational governance. From local church governance, deanery and diocesan synodical governance, school governance, and other charitable governance, I believe I have the sufficient practical experience and competency for the tasks of General Synod. I believe I also possess the appropriate theological and dispositional resources toward effective synodical governance – finding the way together, believing in the communion of saints. I believe General Synod can do this. I believe it can abandon adversarial partisanship toward the advocacy and communion that are rightfully ours. Perhaps one day, as General Synod grows in its health and effectiveness, rather than being spoken of in derisive terms in the public arena, it will become the positive model of what good governance looks like and how it might function. Perhaps that model will be taken up as the standard, and when trying to describe Parliament, one might say, 'It's kind of like General Synod for national politics.'