

## WORCESTER DIOCESAN SYNOD

### Questions under Standing Orders asked and answered at the fourth session of the nineteenth synod 10 November 2025

**From Adam Hadley:**

*To the Acting Bishop of Worcester:*

- (1) *Given that the House of Bishops has essentially ended the Living in Love and Faith process and LGBTQI+ people are more vulnerable and marginalised in the Church of England than ever before, what specific steps will the Acting Bishop of Worcester do to ensure LGBTQI+ people in this Diocese are supported, protected, represented and heard in the ongoing life of our Diocese?*

I know that the reported interim decisions of the House of Bishops have brought a great amount of hurt and dismay to many people in our diocese and elsewhere, not least to LGBTQI+ people themselves. Working with the newly formed 'Together' group in the diocese, I am arranging to meet with some of those affected and understand what we can do to ensure that LGBTQI+ people are supported. I would be delighted to hear suggestions from others in this regard.

The final statement from the House of Bishops on the Living in Love and Faith Process will not be confirmed until later in December. The Prayers of Love and Faith remain commended by the House of Bishops for use but following extensive legal advice and theological work by the Faith and Order Commission, it was felt by the bishops that standalone services and permission for clergy to be in same sex civil marriages needed additional synodical approval.

Throughout his ongoing process I will continue to support the need for change and ensure that LGBTQI+ people in this Diocese are supported, protected, represented and heard in the ongoing life of our Diocese.

These matters will doubtless form part of the business for the next General Synod who will be elected in 2026. It is important that those elections are taken seriously in every parish and deanery so that General Synod represents the make up of the Church of England as broadly and accurately as possible. Deanery Synod members elect General Synod representatives, so APCM's in 2026 have a key part to play!

- (2) *Out of the current list of Bishops working (Acting Diocesan and Honorary Assistant Bishops) in Worcester Diocese who would use the prayers of love and faith themselves and can this list be made public?*

I'm not able to comment on whether other bishops in our diocese would use the Prayers of Love and Faith. However, in appropriate pastoral circumstances, I would be happy to use them.

## **From Sue Adeney**

*In the light of the recent decision by the House of Bishops to stall the progress of bringing the Prayers of Love and Faith to be used more widely in the church for Christian same sex couples, what defence and explanation can you provide about this decision to the faithful people in our diocese,- clergy and laity, LGBTQ+ and straight who trusted in the promises made by Bishops in their previous support?*

No decisions on LLF were taken at the House of Bishops in October. Indicative votes were taken to guide the work of the LLF program board. Proposals are to be finalised in December and brought to General Synod for debate in February.

However, following a leak of information from the House, a press release was issued explaining the likely direction of travel, and that the House of Bishops have indicated that standalone services and permission for clergy to be in same sex civil marriages will need additional synodical approval. This followed extensive legal advice and theological work by the Faith and Order Commission that has now been made available. This has pleased some people but has been deeply hurtful to others. Personally, my support for LGBTQ+ people, whether clergy or lay has not wavered. I am disappointed that the process for using the prayers in standalone services is likely to take even longer.

## **From Kalantha Brewis**

*Noting*

- *the attack on Heaton Park Synagogue in Manchester, the arson attack on Peacehaven Mosque in Sussex, and the apparently racially-motivated rape of a Sikh woman in Oldbury*
- *the increase in racially motivated hate crime of 10% in West Mercia, which contrasts with the national average increase of 2%*
- *the fact that in September, Afghan Refugees living in a property owned by the Diocese had to be rehoused following incidents of deliberate intimidation*
- *that the clergy of Worcester Deanery Chapter, on October 21st, were asked by both Archdeacons not to send a letter to our local press, the text of which had been agreed by Sam Setchell, expressing our concerns about the current situation*
- *the absence of any public statement from the Diocese in relation to these issues*

*What positive and public action is the Diocese taking*

- *to confront the growing intolerance of, and hostility towards, our minority communities, and*
- *to offer public support to those affected?*

Hate crimes, particularly with a racial dimension are on the rise and are indeed a major cause for concern. I spoke directly about these issues in the Cathedral on Remembrance Sunday and have shared that on our website and a related opinion piece with local media. Along with other

colleagues I have been meeting with faith leaders and local political and community leaders in Dudley and have reached out personally to leaders in the Sikh community following the dreadful racist attack on a young woman in Sandwell.

The question asks what positive and public action the Diocese is taking. The Diocese, of course, is all of us, whether here in Diocesan Synod or in every church, Vicarage and PCC across Dudley and Worcestershire. Do let the communications team know what you and your churches are doing. Writing to local councillors and MPs, or even better speaking with them can have a powerful effect, especially if something comes from a whole PCC or a group of clergy.

However, statements in the media need to be carefully thought through, which I think is what my colleagues were trying to do in this instance. Far right pressure groups welcome confrontation with what they call 'liberal elite' as bishops and clergy are often called, and it is always a balance as to when and how to try to make statements in the media on these matters. What is said is not always what is heard, and reality is not always the same as perception, especially with social media.