

Presentation by Pauline Payne on behalf of Leicester Deanery – The Church, a place of welcome.

Leicester Deanery believes that we are all made in the image of God and likeness. We believe that the church is a safe refuge for all, accommodating both the place for saints, sinners, the strong, weak, and vulnerable. As a result, the responses from the synodal questionnaires are hugely challenging and re-echo the need for the common good of all. In a vastly changing world, the emphasis on common humanity and the basic elements of human dignity must not be forgotten. We are a people of God, or so we should be.

Jesus welcomed sinners and fed a great multitude of people. Our church should be able to reflect that humanness taught by Jesus. Our dreams are many, yet it is our dream that the church extends huge open arms to peoples from all works of life and nationalities, the defenceless, the despised and the outcast. The Gospel of Jesus should be preached by our resolve to follow his paths. The Synodal discussions have opened up the yearnings of the people across the deanery. There are anticipations and some aspects of apprehensions. The voices of the school children are loud and clear. Amongst others, they wonder if there is a place for them in the church, non-least the youth. That the church needs to be a place where children are happy and welcomed.

Whilst respecting different cultures and nationalities, we must unite as one. Parishioners need to realise that the parish cannot run itself, it needs people to run various activities, attend meetings, help to achieve maintenance needs and be part of the sacramental life providing training for the lay faithful to help with the proper running of the church. Inclusivity is our catch phrase.