



y like the pushmi-pullyu from Dr Doolittle; Facing the Diocese of Exeter

rtunities to meet with people across London.

Whilst my confirmation of election means I will formally, legally become Bishop of London, I still have duties to carry out in Devon over the coming weeks until my installation at St Pauls' Cathedral in May.

I have been very grateful for people's prayers and good wishes over the last few months and one constant theme from those who have been in contact with me is that 'God is Faithful'

On the inside of my episcopal ring is engraved Isaiah 43: 1-3 They are the verses which appear around the William Pye font at Salisbury Cathedral where I was Canon Treasurer

'But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.'

These verses remind me that God has called me by name and that he is faithful.

As I have begun to meet people in London the privilege of ministry that lies ahead of me has become clearer and the quality of the Bishop's Staff and the College of Bishops more apparent. Already, my colleagues have been a great help and support to me. London is full of wonderful people and I look forward to working with them and serving them.

I'm conscious that serving this vibrant Diocese will be a hugely challenging task, and there will be so much for me to learn in these coming weeks and months. There will be much to be done, both within and beyond London.

My position on the National Safeguarding Steering Group will continue, while the Archbishop of Canterbury is also placing increasing emphasis on the Bishop of London's role as Dean of the Southern Province – a sensible move to reflect the modern-day requirements of the Church of England. Plus, like my predecessors, I will sit in the House of Lords. Given all that, I'm thankful that Richard Chartres has agreed to remain as Dean of the Chapels Royal for the time being, to give me time to become accustomed to these various duties and responsibilities.

It has not passed me by that my Confirmation of Election is on 8th March 2018 which is also International Women's Day. As the first Bishop of London who is a woman I am reminded that as women we have many opportunities today because of the women of the past but there continues to be unequal treatment for women across the world – more progress is needed. #PressforProgress. I know that there are some that feel that my aspiration for women to fulfil their potential is in conflict with a Church for whom some cannot accept women as priests or bishops. Let's be clear that this is a theological position which relates to either the sacramental ministry of priests or the issue of headship leadership.

Women within these two segments of the church need to be able to flourish and within the rest of the church women need to be equally represented in leadership roles so that the church reflects the nature of God. With only 15% of priests being women in the Diocese of London we need to ensure that they and those from BAME groups are enabled to find their vocation.

The Confirmation of Election reminds us that bishops are called to lead in the serving and caring for the people of God and to work with them in the oversight of the Church – that bishops are to know their people and be known by them. I look forward to knowing and being known by the people of London.

**The next Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally**

## **A prayer from the Church of England on International Women's Day 2018:**

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