



The General Synod of the Church of England has today given its final approval for women to become bishops in the Church of England.

The vote in the General Synod on the measure was carried by the required two-thirds majority in the three constituent parts of the Synod: the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity.

The voting results were as follows:

House of Bishops: Yes 37 No 2 Abstentions 1

House of Clergy: Yes 162 No 25 Abstentions 4

House of Laity: Yes 152 No 45 Abstentions 5

This means the first woman bishop could potentially be appointed by the end of the year.

Today's vote comes 18 months after the proposal was last voted upon in November 2012 when the proposal failed to achieve the required two thirds majority in the House of Laity.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said:

"Today is the completion of what was begun over 20 years with the ordination of women as priests. I am delighted with today's result. Today marks the start of a great adventure of seeking mutual flourishing while still, in some cases disagreeing.

The challenge for us will be for the church to model good disagreement and to continue to demonstrate love for those who disagree on theological grounds. Very few institutions achieve this, but if we manage this we will be living our more fully the call of Jesus Christ to love one another. As delighted as I am for the outcome of this vote I am also mindful of those within the Church for whom the result will be difficult and a cause of sorrow.

My aim, and I believe the aim of the whole church, should be to be able to offer a place of welcome and growth for all. Today is a time of blessing and gift from God and thus of generosity. It is not winner take all, but in love a time for the family to move on together."

The Archbishop of York, Dr. John Sentamu, said:

"This is a momentous day. Generations of women have served the Lord faithfully in the Church of England for centuries. It is a moment of joy today: the office of Bishop is open to them."

To those who ask "what took you so long?" my answer is that every decision has a cost and there will be those within our body who will be hurting as a result of this decision. Our answer to the hurting should not be "get over it" but rather "we will not let go until you have blessed us."

We move slowly because we move together. But in moving together we achieve not only what is just but also model what is right. As the African Proverb says: "Whoever walks fast, travels alone. Whoever walks far, walks in the company of others."

The Synod also approved an Amending Canon, together with an Act of Synod which will rescind the 1993 Act of Synod when the Canon is 'enacted' (ie formally made) by the Synod.

The Measure, Canon and Act of Synod are part of a package which also includes a Declaration made by the House of Bishops (which amongst other things sets out five 'guiding principles') and Regulations, to be made once the Canon is enacted, providing for a mandatory disputes resolution procedure.

Following today's vote the Measure will be submitted by the Synod's Legislative Committee to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament, which will produce a report on it. If it is to pass into law the Measure must subsequently be approved by both Houses of Parliament. If they approve it, it will receive the Royal Assent and be brought into force by the Archbishops.

The Canon can then be returned to the Synod, in November if the Parliamentary processes are completed sufficiently quickly, so that it can be formally enacted. It is at that point that the law will be changed, so as to allow women to be consecrated as bishops."

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Notes to Editors

Bishop of Rochester's speech on women bishops

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/2024982/>

women%20bishops%20final%20approval%20speech.pdf

Link to papers mentioned above

<http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/agendas-and-papers/july-2014-group-of-sessions.aspx>

House of Bishops Declaration on women bishops

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/2011184/gs%20misc%201076>

%20%20women%20in%20the%20episcopate%20house%20of%20

bishops%20declaration.pdf

House of Bishops Guidance Notes on women bishops

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/2011197/>

gs%20misc%201077%20-%20women%20in%20the%20

episcopate%20guidance%20note%20from%20the%20house

%20of%20bishops.pdf

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