

**Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests
(Resolution of Disputes Procedure) Regulations 2014**

**Report of the Independent Reviewer for 2016
to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York**

- 1) This is my second report to Your Graces as required by Regulation 30 of the Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Resolution of Disputes Procedure) Regulations 2014 ('the Regulations'). I am delighted to say that it can be brief.

Grievances and Concerns received under the Regulations

- 2) In the course of 2016, I did not receive any Grievance brought by a Parochial Church Council (PCC) under Regulations 9 – 15 of the Regulations. Nor did I receive any expression of a Concern under Regulation 27.
- 3) I hope that this is a sign that dioceses are working out with increasing confidence and success how to implement the approach to living with differences of theological conviction on the subject of the consecration of women as bishops which the House of Bishops ('the House') embodied in its Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests. Of course, it has to be recognised that the transitional arrangements provided by paragraph 43 of the Declaration – under which parishes could request a continuation of the priestly or episcopal ministry of men by passing the resolution set out in paragraph 20 of the Declaration – expired only on 17 November 2016. It may therefore be that in a number of instances dioceses are still working out suitable arrangements in response to the passing of such resolutions. Nevertheless the absence of any expressions of a grievance or concern in 2016 can only be welcome.
- 4) To this point, information about how many parishes have passed the resolution provided for by paragraph 20 has not been collected centrally within the Church (although I understand that data as at 31 December 2016 is being collected and will in due course be published by the Statistics Unit in Church House). The Society of St Wilfred and St Hilda reported on 21 October 2016 that over 400 traditional anglo-catholic parishes had passed such a resolution.¹ In his Christmas Newsletter, the Bishop of Maidstone reported that the total number of churches which had passed resolutions on evangelical theological grounds had reached 71.²
- 5) However at this stage these can only be indicative rather than definitive figures. [I will continue to monitor developments with a view to giving a more comprehensive account of the position in my next annual report.]

Other Matters

- 6) In the belief that confidence and trust in the Resolution of Disputes Procedure will be strengthened by an open and transparent account of how it operates and of my part in it, I have continued to take what opportunities I can to explain the Procedure and my approach to my role. Accordingly, I:

¹ See <http://www.forwardinfaith.com/fullposts.php?id=236>

² Text at <http://www.bishopofmaidstone.org/newsletters>

- a) Met the then relatively newly elected Officers of the General Synod for a discussion on 18 May 2016;
 - b) Accepted an invitation to address the Forward in Faith National Assembly in November 2016, having made clear to all concerned that I would be equally ready to accept an invitation to address national conferences of other groups representing those with different convictions on this issue. My address to the Assembly was subsequently published on the Forward in Faith website³;
 - c) Met, also in November, the members of the national Archdeacons Forum in Sheffield to hear their experiences of how the implementation of the Declaration is proceeding in dioceses.
- 7) I do not intend to report separately on any of these meetings but rather to gather the experiences reported with a view to including the essence of it in my next report. I hope that doing this will contribute to that gathering and sharing of experience within the Church about the operation of the House's Declaration which I recommended at the end of my 2015 Report.

Sir Philip Mawer

February 2016

³ At <http://www.forwardinfaith.com/NationalAssemblies.php?id=206&year=2016>