

## **House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests**

### **Grievance from the PCC of St George's Headstone**

#### **Introduction**

1. On 31 October the Parochial Church Council of St George's Headstone in the Diocese of London passed a resolution authorising the bringing of a grievance against the Bishop of London under The Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Resolution of Disputes Procedure) Regulations 2014.
2. The resolution was passed in accordance with the Regulations. I have therefore carried out a review of the events leading up to it, as required by the Regulations.
3. A copy of the PCC's statement of grievance is attached at Annex A. A copy of a letter of 1 November from the Bishop of London to the PCC is attached at Annex B.
4. After receiving these papers I wrote to the PCC and the Bishop to confirm that I intended to embark on a review, which, under the Regulations, would normally need to be completed within two months, that is 31 December. I asked the Bishop for three points of clarification on matters raised in the papers but said to her and the PCC that I did not expect to need to trouble them with further extensive enquiries since the key facts seemed to be agreed and the documents helpfully charted the nature of the dispute that had arisen.

#### **Background**

5. In the 1990s the PCC of St George's Headstone passed Resolutions A and B under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 and also petitioned for episcopal duties to be carried out under the Act of Synod. In accordance with the London Plan the Bishop of London arranged for the Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry to the parish.
6. The 1993 Measure was repealed by the Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure 2014 and the Act of Synod was also rescinded. In May 2014 the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests set out a new procedure by which PCCs could, on grounds of theological conviction concerning the ordained ministry of women, request their diocesan bishop to make arrangements in accordance with the Declaration. Earlier resolutions and petitions under the Act of Synod were to be treated as remaining in force until 17 November 2016 as if they were resolutions under the Declaration.
7. On 13 July 2016 the PCC of St George's passed a resolution under the Declaration. It set out its theological conviction in a statement (attached at Annex C). The statement included the following:

*'Therefore we request that episcopal sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be entrusted*

- i. *to a male bishop who stands in the historic, Apostolic, and sacramental succession of bishops so ordained,*

- ii. *at whose consecration a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided,*
  - iii. *whose marital status conforms with Apostolic teaching and practice expressed in the historic teaching and practice of the Church of England, and*
  - iv. *who ordains only men to the priesthood.'*
- 8. The first and fourth of these requests are consistent with the model draft statement commended to Traditional Catholic parishes in Forward in Faith's advisory document to PCCs and parish priests '*Passing Resolutions under the House of Bishops' Declaration*' (second edition February 2016).
- 9. The second differs in one respect in specifying not only that the consecrating bishop should have been male (a standard request from such parishes) but also someone who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop. I shall return to the significance of that issue in the final paragraphs of this report.
- 10. It is the third request – also a departure from the model statement commended by Forward in Faith – that is at the heart of this grievance. In substance it constituted a request that the then Bishop of London should not invite the Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry to the parish since, after becoming a bishop, his marriage had broken down and he had remarried following divorce. According to the parish, the Bishop of Fulham had last been at St George's on 5 May 2013 (to baptise and confirm), before his second marriage.
- 11. On 1 August the then Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, replied:
 

*'As you know, it has always been my intention that every legitimate tradition within the Diocese of London should be free to flourish.*

*In view of the special stipulations contained in your request as set out in the PCC's Resolution and Statement of Theological Conviction, I have asked the Rt Revd Robert Ladds, as one of the Assistant Bishops in the diocese, to act as the Bishop with oversight and pastoral care for the parish of St George Headstone. This approach is consistent with the special arrangements we have made for conservative evangelical parishes in the Diocese of London.'*
- 12. The Vicar of St George's queried how this arrangement stood in relation to the requirement in paragraph 26 of the House of Bishops Declaration that any bishop chosen in response to a resolution should be a member of the House of Bishops in that or another diocesan synod; in other words that he be a serving not a retired bishop (Bishop Ladds, formerly Bishop of Whitby, has been in retirement since 2009).
- 13. The Bishop of Willesden replied on behalf of the Bishop of London on 4 August that:
 

*'The Bishop of London remains your Bishop for the purposes of oversight. Bishop Ladds has been asked to look after you in the day-to-day. Because of the particular circumstances of the request from the parish in relation to the marital status of your Bishop, the Bishop of London has sought to make provision that is generous to your requirements.... The London College of Bishops is quite aware that, with the forthcoming changes in the College of Bishops in London when Bishop*

*Richard retires, we shall have to revisit the arrangements in the Plan for all those parishes where the Bishop of London has direct oversight.'*

14. So matters rested from August 2016 until the arrival of Bishop Chartres' successor, Sarah Mullally. Her appointment was announced on 17 December 2017, she took up office on 8 March 2018 and was installed at St Paul's Cathedral on 12 May.
15. On 20 May the Vicar of St George's emailed the Bishop of Willesden (who had undertaken the duties of the Bishop of London during the vacancy in see and in whose area St George's is located) to say: *'Now that the diocese has a new Ordinary the time has come for the provision for St George's to be regularised in one way or another.'*
16. On 23 May the Bishop of Willesden replied that he had consulted the new Bishop of London: *'The Bishop of London has ... decided that episcopal ministry in your parish will be exercised by the Rt Revd Rod Thomas, the Bishop of Maidstone (who meets the criteria set out in your letter of request, and who is a member of a Diocesan Synod in another Diocese), and that he will continue the arrangement whereby the ministry you require is normally carried out by the Rt Revd Robert Ladds.'*
17. The Vicar of St George's replied by email the same day, noting that: *'The Bishop of London appears to have overlooked our request for a bishop at whose consecration a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided.'*
18. On 27 June the Vicar and the Bishop of London met. After the meeting the Bishop sent a letter on 8 August informing him of her decision to invite the Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry to the parish. She wrote: *'Whilst I have considered your theological concerns about the Bishop of Fulham, those are not theological concerns relating to the ordination of women as Bishops and Priests, and therefore do not fall within the scope of the House of Bishops' Declaration. If this is unacceptable to the PCC, I am willing to ask the Bishop of Maidstone as an alternative.'*
19. St George's PCC met in September and decided to invite the Bishop to reconsider her decision. She asked for a meeting with the PCC. The PCC resolved that the Vicar should represent it and he had a further meeting with the Bishop on 10 October. This did not lead to an agreed outcome and the Vicar indicated that the PCC would need to consider bringing a grievance. This they resolved to do on 31 October.
20. In the course of discussions with the Vicar the Bishop had made clear that her willingness for Bishop Ladds to continue to undertake episcopal duties in the parish still stood whether it was the Bishop of Fulham or Maidstone who was invited under the Declaration to provide episcopal ministry. This was not, however, accepted.

## **The issues**

21. The primary contested issue concerns the PCC's stipulation in relation to the marital status of the bishop chosen to provide episcopal ministry. The PCC's contention in its statement of grievance is that this stipulation is based on a theological conviction concerning ordained ministry, was accepted by the previous Bishop of London in 2016 and should be accepted by his successor.

22. The Bishop of London's contention is that questions of marital status are outside the scope of the 2014 Declaration and that it is therefore reasonable for her to ask the Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry to St George's, just as he does for other Traditional Catholic parishes in the diocese.
23. In addition there is a dispute over the Bishop's alternative offer that the Bishop of Maidstone could provide episcopal ministry with the PCC contending that, as a matter of conviction, they need a bishop '*at whose consecration a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided.*' By the time he presided at the consecration of Rod Thomas as the Bishop of Maidstone the Archbishop of Canterbury had presided at the consecrations of Sarah Mullally and Rachel Treweek. The PCC also believes that it would be inappropriate for a Conservative Evangelical bishop to provide ministry to St George's given its quite different tradition.

### **The clergy and remarriage after divorce**

24. Before addressing these competing views it may be helpful to say something by way of background about the Church of England's position on the relevance of marital status<sup>1</sup> to ordained ministry.
25. Since the Reformation the Church of England has not held marriage to be an obstacle to any of the three orders of ministry. Marriage to someone with a surviving spouse from a former marriage or remarriage following divorce in the lifetime of the former spouse was, however, until 1990, a canonical impediment to admission into holy orders. It sometimes occurred that clergy did remarry following divorce and they were not required to resign their posts but remarriage made it difficult for them to secure other appointments.
26. In 1990 Synod and Parliament approved legislation that made it possible for the Archbishop of the Province to grant a faculty permitting someone to be ordained deacon or priest notwithstanding the canonical impediment. The Archbishops subsequently put in place a process and a set of guidelines which diocesan bishops needed to follow in inquiring into the relevant circumstances before submitting an application for a faculty.
27. This legislation was silent in relation to the episcopate. For a while there was a lack of clarity over the eligibility for episcopal office of those who had married again and whose current and former spouses were still alive and also of those married to someone whose spouse from a former marriage was still alive. The House of Bishops clarified the position in a statement of June 2010 (published as GS Misc 960).<sup>2</sup>
28. The statement noted that the House had been advised that there was no legal prohibition to the consecration to the episcopate or appointment to episcopal office of such persons. It went on to set out a procedure for exploring the relevant circumstances where someone in this situation was being recommended for consideration to become a bishop.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report references to 'marriage' and 'marital status' are to be understood according to the Church of England's understanding of marriage as set out in its canons.

<sup>2</sup> See: [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gs%20misc%20960\\_Feb11.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gs%20misc%20960_Feb11.pdf)

29. Paragraph 11 of the statement reads: *‘The Church of England’s teaching is that it can be said of two living people that they were married and are no longer married. Nevertheless, the Church of England recognizes the sincerely held convictions of those who do not believe this because on theological grounds, they hold that marriage is indissoluble. It also respects the view of those who, while not holding an indissolubilist view, believe that further marriage after divorce is not an option for those in ordained ministry.’*
30. In addition paragraph 17 notes that, during an appointment process, the Crown Nominations process, or a diocesan bishop making a suffragan appointment, *‘are entitled to reach a judgement on whether marital history might prove an obstacle given the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of those to whom the person would be ministering.’*
31. This is, however, a judgement for those deciding whether someone should be appointed to a particular see. What the statement did not do was to create any kind of procedure for individual parishes to opt out of the ministry of particular bishops, once appointed, on the grounds of their marital status.
32. This was, no doubt, because of the historic understanding that, within an ordered church, parishes are expected to receive the ministry of those who have been duly appointed to minister to them; whatever reservations they may have about a particular bishop, whether on personal or theological grounds, they do not have the right to pick and choose or to substitute their own judgement for that of the wider church.
33. This historic understanding is underpinned by Article 26 of the 39 Articles concerning *‘the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacrament’*. In robust Tudor language it asserts that shortcomings on the part of an ordained minister, while they may require scrutiny under the church’s discipline procedures, do not in themselves mean that the minister’s ministry of word and sacrament cannot be received since such shortcomings do not take away *‘the effect of Christ’s ordinance’* or diminish *‘the grace of God’s gifts’*<sup>3</sup>.

### **The House of Bishops’ Declaration**

34. In 1992/3 and in 2014 the Church of England decided that, in consequence of the admission of women to, respectively, the priesthood and the episcopate, it would enable parishes to pass resolutions to the effect that they were unable to receive the ministry of women priests or bishops.

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ’s, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ’s ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God’s gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ’s institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men. Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.’

35. This arrangement was explicitly seen as a departure from the norm, justified by the fact that the Church of England's clear decision on ministry and gender was '*set within a process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God*' and that '*those unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion*' (numbers three and four of the guiding principles in the Declaration).
36. It is clear from the introduction to the Declaration that its purpose is to address the consequences for the Church of England of the '*opening of all orders of ministry equally to women and men*' (paragraph 3). In paragraph 22 the '*House recognises that the nature of the theological conviction on the ordained ministry of women which underlines a decision to pass such a resolution will vary according to the tradition of the parish concerned.*' Nevertheless it must, as paragraph 26 makes clear, be a theological conviction '*on this issue*' [that is 'the ordained ministry of women'] rather than on any other issue.
37. This is further underlined by paragraph 10 of the guidance note on the Declaration which the House agreed in May 2014 (GS Misc 1077). It states: '*It is important to note that the resolution should be founded on theological conviction in relation to gender and ordained ministry.*'
38. Where a resolution has been passed within the terms envisaged by the Declaration it is, under paragraph 26, for the diocesan bishop to choose a serving (not a retired) bishop to undertake ministry in respect of the parish '*with a view to avoiding conflict with the theological conviction on this issue underlying its resolution.*'

### **Inconsistent approaches?**

39. In its submission the PCC seeks to draw a contrast between what it sees as the sympathetic response of the then Bishop of London in 2016 and the subsequent decision of his successor. It asserts that: '*The legitimacy of the marital element of the Headstone PCC's theological conviction and request was recognised and provided for by the previous Bishop of London – a fourfold Doctor of Divinity.*'
40. In addition it argues that the current Bishop of London initially accepted the legitimacy of the request: '*the marital element in the Headstone PCC's Statement was considered within the scope of the House of Bishops' Declaration when St George's was first offered the Bishop of Maidstone on the grounds, stated in the Bishop of Willesden's email of 23rd May, that he "meets the requirements set out in your request"*'.
41. Both of these arguments seem to be based on a misunderstanding of the position and in particular confusion over the word 'legitimacy'. In his response Bishop Chartres said nothing about whether marital status was something that could properly be taken into account under the 2014 Declaration. His reference to '*every legitimate tradition*' was more in the way of a general affirmation of inclusiveness and also a reflection of the spirit of paragraph 11 of the House of Bishops' 2010 statement, which acknowledged that differing, sincerely held, convictions existed in the Church of England about divorce and the ordained ministry (see paragraph 26 above).

42. The substance of Bishop Chartres' offer, as elucidated by the Bishop of Willesden, was that he would himself be Bishop for the purpose of oversight (thus ensuring compliance with the Declaration), with Bishop Ladds looking after the parish 'in the day to day' (thus making a pragmatic and pastoral response to the parish's concerns). This arrangement was possible because Bishop Chartres did not ordain women to the priesthood. It is common ground that his successor could not continue the arrangement.
43. The present Bishop of London's response to the PCC's request reflects, in common with Bishop Chartres' approach, a willingness to respond pastorally to its acknowledged theological convictions about marital status and ordained ministry. She has not insisted that episcopal ministry be provided by the Bishop of Fulham, offering by way of alternative the Bishop of Maidstone, who, though not a Traditional Catholic, is someone who cannot, on grounds of theological conviction, receive the ministry of women priests or bishops and does not ordain women as priests. The Bishops of Fulham and Maidstone both provide episcopal ministry under the London Plan to parishes in the diocese who have passed resolutions.<sup>4</sup>

## Decision

44. I am required under Regulation 18 of the Regulations made under Canon C29 to decide whether a grievance is justified, partly justified or unjustified.
45. I am, for the reasons, set out above, satisfied that the resolution making procedure set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration concerns theological conviction in relation only to gender and ordained ministry. It does not extend to matters of marital status or indeed any other consideration. The PCC's grievance against the decision of the Bishop of London to invite the Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry to the parish is therefore unjustified.
46. I turn now to the element of the PCC's grievance which concerns the Bishop of London's willingness, as an alternative, to invite the Bishop of Maidstone to provide episcopal ministry to the parish. Since I have held that the Bishop of London is entitled, under the Declaration, to issue the invitation to the Bishop of Fulham – the normal choice for a Traditional Catholic parish under the London plan – it could be argued that the question of a possible alternative arrangement falls away. Nevertheless, given the parish's unhappiness with both of the Bishop of London's proposals I think it right, for the sake of completeness, to address them both.
47. The PCC explains its difficulties over the Bishop of Maidstone in two ways. One is that the Bishop of Maidstone was consecrated by the present Archbishop of Canterbury after the latter had consecrated women as bishops. The other is that the Bishop of Maidstone is a Conservative Evangelical. The PCC notes the significant theological differences between Traditional Catholics and Conservative Evangelicals and, in view of those, does not believe that his involvement in St. George's would be consistent with the principle of 'mutual flourishing' in the fifth of the guiding principles in the Declaration.

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<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.london.anglican.org/about/the-london-plan/>

48. The first of these difficulties derives from the particular stipulation by the PCC (see paragraphs 7 and 9 above) that the bishop should not merely be a man who ordains only males to the priesthood but should himself have been consecrated by someone who has not consecrated a woman as a bishop. The question this poses is whether it is a stipulation which is consistent with the Declaration.
49. Unlike the stipulation about marital status it undoubtedly derives from a theological conviction relating to gender and ordained ministry. But is the conviction one that, to use a phrase from the guiding principles, is *'within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion'*?
50. This, by its nature, is not an easy question to resolve definitively. Nevertheless, I note the following clear statement by the Council of Bishops of The Society under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda at paragraph 2.6 of *'Communion, Catholicity and a Catholic Life'*<sup>5</sup>:

*'We reject any so-called "theology of taint" whereby a bishop who ordains women to the episcopate or the priesthood thereby invalidates his own orders and renders invalid the orders of those whom he subsequently ordains. Men who have been ordained to the priesthood by a male bishop who stands in the historic apostolic succession of bishops at whose episcopal ordination a male bishop presided will be welcomed as Priests of The Society, irrespective of whether the ordaining bishop also ordained women to the episcopate and/or the priesthood.'*

51. While this refers to priests ordained by bishops it would seem clear that the same principle applies to bishops consecrated by archbishops who have consecrated women to the episcopate. The Bishop of Maidstone would, therefore, be eligible to be a member of the Society if he so wished, given that he *'stands in the historic, apostolic succession of bishops at whose ordination a male bishop presided'* and ordains only men to the priesthood.
52. In the light of that I am not satisfied that a PCC stipulation that ministry should be provided only by a bishop consecrated by a man who has not consecrated a woman as a bishop is one that a diocesan bishop needs to heed under the Declaration when making the choice of bishop under paragraph 26 of the Declaration to undertake ministry in relation to a parish.
53. It is a stipulation based on a theology which Traditional Catholic Bishops in the Church of England have firmly rejected. And it must be doubtful whether such a theology comes within the spectrum of Anglican teaching and tradition, even interpreted at its broadest. It cannot have been the intention of paragraph 26 to legitimise any and every conceivable theological conviction relating to gender and ministry and I do not believe that to be its effect.
54. As to the PCC's second objection to the Bishop of Maidstone, the Declaration does not make churchmanship a legitimate basis for a parish to object to the choice of bishop to provide episcopal ministry to it. Down the years large numbers of parishes

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<sup>5</sup> For full text see: [http://www.sswsh.com/uploads/A\\_Catholic\\_Life\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.sswsh.com/uploads/A_Catholic_Life_for_web.pdf)



have flourished despite significant differences of churchmanship between themselves and the bishops who have ministered to them.

55. I also, therefore, conclude that the part of the grievance relating to the offer of ministry from the Bishop of Maidstone is unjustified.
56. It is also, in conclusion, worth recording that the shared view of the Bishop of London and St George's PCC that Bishop Ladds, as a retired bishop, cannot be the bishop chosen under paragraph 26 of the Declaration to undertake episcopal ministry in respect of St George's is clearly correct. As noted in paragraph 20 above, however, the Bishop of London has confirmed that, once the Bishop of Fulham or Bishop of Maidstone is identified under paragraph 26 as the bishop undertaking ministry in respect of the parish, she will be willing to ask Bishop Ladds under letter to undertake duties in the parish on his behalf.
57. I recognise that my decision about the meaning of the Declaration and its application to their circumstances leaves the Vicar and PCC of St George's Headstone with an uncomfortable dilemma given the reservations that they have had, for differing reasons, about receiving ministry from the Bishops of Fulham and Maidstone. I hope, nevertheless, that the analysis set out above will be helpful as they seek to discern the next steps.

Sir William Fittall

Independent Reviewer

13 December 2018



**STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE IN RESPECT TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S OFFER OF EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT OF 8<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2018, AND THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS' DECLARATION ON THE MINISTRY OF BISHOPS AND PRIESTS.**

**A) BACKGROUND**

**Resolutions and Statement of Theological Conviction and Needs**

In 1997, following the PCC's passing of Resolutions A, B and C in connection with the legislation introducing female priests, St George's, Headstone, in the Willesden Area of the Diocese of London, was placed in the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham.

On 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 the PCC passed a Resolution and Statement of Theological Conviction and Needs in connection with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.

**Bishop Richard Chartres's response to the Resolution and Statement of Theological Conviction and Needs**

Bishop Richard Chartres responded to the PCC's Resolution and Statement on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016, writing

As you know, it has always been my intention that every legitimate tradition within the Diocese of London should be free to flourish.

In view of the special stipulations contained in your request as set out in the PCC's Resolution and Statement of Theological Conviction, I have asked the Rt Revd Robert Ladds, as one of the Assistant Bishops in the diocese, to act as the Bishop with oversight and pastoral care for the parish of St George Headstone. This approach is consistent with the special arrangements we have made for conservative evangelical parishes in the Diocese of London.

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2016, in response to a query from the Vicar of St George's regarding the requirement that a bishop appointed in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration be a member of a diocesan synod, the Bishop of Willesden (then also Deputy Bishop of London) replied

The Bishop of London remains your Bishop for the purposes of oversight. Bishop Ladds has been asked to look after you in the day-to-day.

Because of the particular circumstances of the request from the parish in relation to the marital status of your Bishop, the Bishop of London has sought to make provision that is generous to your requirements. ...

The London College of Bishops is quite aware that, with the forthcoming changes in the College of Bishops in London when Bishop Richard retires, we shall have to revisit the arrangements in the Plan for all those parishes where the Bishop of London has direct oversight.

### **Correspondence and discussion following the appointment of Bishop Sarah Mullally**

On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018 the Vicar of St George's emailed the Bishop of Willesden on the subject of the episcopal oversight of the parish:

Now that the diocese has a new Ordinary the time has come for the provision for St George's to be regularised in one way or another.

It is deeply regrettable that the present diocesan House of Bishops includes no one able to satisfy the criteria of our Statement of Theological Conviction and Needs. I understand that the inability of the current Bishop of Fulham to meet one such requirement resulted in the withdrawal of Rochester from the London Plan and also the termination of his membership of SSC. It should not be assumed, therefore, that other catholic parishes in London which have not formulated their theological statements in the same way as St George's do not share the same view and are content with present arrangements.

I look forward to a resolution of the matter.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May the Bishop of Willesden emailed in reply

I have spoken to the Bishop of London about the terms on which we fulfil our obligations under your letter of request.

As you know, Bishop Richard was previously your designated bishop and he delegated that episcopal ministry to Bishop Robert Ladds. This arrangement has worked very well. As you say, with Bishop Richard's departure, we need now to review the arrangement. ...

The Bishop of London has ... decided that episcopal ministry in your parish will be exercised by the Rt Revd Rod Thomas, the Bishop of Maidstone (who meets the criteria set out in your letter of request, and who is a member of a Diocesan Synod in another Diocese), and that he will continue the arrangement whereby the ministry you require is normally carried out by the Rt Revd Robert Ladds.

The Vicar of St George's replied by email the same day, pointing out that

The Bishop of London appears to have overlooked our request for a bishop at whose consecration a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided.

On 24<sup>th</sup> May the Bishop of Willesden emailed the Vicar of St George's asking him to make an appointment to meet with the Bishop of London to discuss the question of provision. The meeting took place on 27<sup>th</sup> June. The discussion proved wide-ranging but focussed little on the theology articulated in the Statement of Theological Conviction and Needs beyond the Bishop of London saying that she did not believe a bishop's marital status was relevant to the House of Bishops' Declaration, and noting the arrangements at the consecration of Philip North. When the Vicar of St George's was asked his reaction if she were to appoint the Bishop of Fulham, he answered that it was important to the future of the catholic movement within the Church of England to be sure of the provision ostensibly afforded by the House of Bishops' Declaration and that, if necessary, the matter would be referred to the Independent Reviewer. The day after the meeting the Vicar of St George's emailed the Bishop of London

It was a pleasure to meet you yesterday.

With regard to the theological statement and request of St George's, Headstone (attached), I would draw attention to para 10 of the guidance appended to the Five Guiding Principles:

*It is important to note that the resolution should be founded on theological conviction in relation to gender and ordained ministry.*

This, and not a vague appeal to 'scripture', 'tradition' or popularity, is the central focus of our submission.

## **B) PROVISION OFFERED BY BISHOP SARAH MULLALLY**

Bishop Sarah Mullally wrote to the Vicar of St George's on 8<sup>th</sup> August informing him of her decision to ask the Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry, and adding

Whilst I have considered your theological concerns about the Bishop of Fulham, those are not theological concerns relating to the ordination of women as Bishops and Priests, and therefore do not fall within the scope of the House of Bishops' Declaration.

If this is unacceptable to the PCC, I am willing to ask the Bishop of Maidstone as an alternative.

### **C) CORRESPONDENCE AND DISCUSSION FOLLOWING BISHOP SARAH MULLALLY'S DECISION**

The PCC discussed the Bishop of London's decision on 12<sup>th</sup> September. On the 13<sup>th</sup> September the Vicar of St George's emailed the Bishop of London asking her respectfully to reconsider her decision in the light of 15 reasons agreed by the PCC (copied in the Grounds of Grievance below).

The Bishop of London wrote to the Vicar and Churchwardens on 21<sup>st</sup> September asking to meet with the PCC. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September the Vicar responded by email

Further to your letter of 21st September, the decision as to how many of its members take part in conversations with the Diocesan Bishop lies with the PCC (para 13 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests).

I have called a meeting of St George's PCC on 3rd October to determine the extent of PCC representation at the meeting you have requested.

The Bishop of London replied by email on 24<sup>th</sup> September

Whilst I appreciate that para 13 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests rightly suggests that it is for the PCC to decide how many of its members take part in the conversation with the Diocesan Bishop I would appreciate it if they would consider that as many as are able join me.

I take seriously my role as outline in para 14 (of the same appendix) in deciding who should minister to a parish where a resolution is passed and as the PCC has submitted a Statement of Grievance asking me to reconsider my decision it seems sensible that I meet with as many members of the PCC as possible to aid this process.

An emergency meeting of the PCC was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October to discuss representation in further discussion with the Bishop of London. It was unanimously decided to appoint the Vicar to represent the PCC.

A further meeting between the Bishop of London and the Vicar of St George's took place on 10<sup>th</sup> October. The discussion focussed on the theology of the PCC's Statement of Theological Conviction and Needs, the nature of Bishop Richard Chartres's provision of 2016, and the geographical extent of the ministries of the bishops of Ebbsfleet and Richborough. The Vicar of St George's informed the Bishop of London that the PCC would next be meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October – timed to be within three months of her decision of 8<sup>th</sup> August – and, if necessary, would consider submitting a Grievance to the Independent

Reviewer. After the meeting, later in the day, the Vicar of St George's twice emailed the Bishop of London. Firstly

Two points of clarification further to our meeting earlier today.

1) Bishop Jonathan Baker last came to St George's on 5th May 2013 when he baptized and confirmed. This was before his second marriage.

2) Mention was made of a precedent factor regarding the future episcopal oversight of St George's. It is clear from the correspondence from Bishop Richard Chartres and Bishop Pete Broadbent in August 2016 that the precedent is already set.

Secondly

The Bishop of Willesden's email to me of 23rd May (copied to yourself) includes this paragraph:

*As you know, Bishop Richard was previously your designated bishop and he delegated that episcopal ministry to Bishop Robert Ladds. This arrangement has worked very well. As you say, with Bishop Richard's departure, we need now to review the arrangement.*

The PCC received no further communication from the Bishop of London by the time of its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October.

#### **D) GROUNDS OF GRIEVANCE**

- i. The Headstone PCC's Statement of Theological Conviction and Needs identifies the gender-specificity of the episcopate as intrinsic to, and its sacramental significance dependent upon, its marital status prescribed in Holy Scripture and the Ordinal appended to the Book of Common Prayer. This is in accord with paragraph 10 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration, which stipulates that 'the resolution should be founded on theological conviction in relation to gender and ordained ministry'.
- ii. The legitimacy of the marital element of the Headstone PCC's theological conviction and request was recognised and provided for by the previous Bishop of London – a fourfold Doctor of Divinity.
- iii. The marital element in the Headstone PCC's Statement was considered within the scope of the House of Bishops' Declaration when St George's was first offered the Bishop of Maidstone on the grounds, stated in the Bishop

of Willesden's email of 23<sup>rd</sup> May, that he 'meets the requirements set out in your request'.

- iv. The Headstone PCC's Statement does not mention the Bishop of Fulham.
- v. The current Bishop of Fulham, a remarried divorcee with a living first spouse, does not satisfy the criteria of the Headstone PCC's Statement.
- vi. The decision to ask the current Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry to St George's, Headstone is not in accord with paragraph 26 of the House of Bishops' Declaration, which requires a diocesan bishop to avoid conflict with a parish on the theological conviction underlying its resolution.
- vii. Following the previous Bishop of London's provision, the decision to ask the current Bishop of Fulham to provide episcopal ministry to St George's, Headstone is not in accord with paragraph 16 of House of Bishops' Declaration, which speaks of the commitment to 'comparable and consistent arrangements' ... 'notwithstanding differences in the culture and ethos of particular dioceses or the approach of the relevant diocesan bishop'.
- viii. The Headstone PCC's request for a bishop at whose consecration a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided is accommodated in paragraph 13 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration, which recognises that 'where the theological conviction reflects Traditional Catholic concerns there will be additional considerations'.
- ix. The Headstone PCC's Statement, containing extracts from the *Catholicity* Report of 1947, recognises in the apostolic succession of bishops both linear descent and the continuity in communion of catholic faith and practice.
- x. The Headstone PCC's request for a bishop at whose consecration a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided arises from a theology of communion. The 'less than full communion' within the Church of England, engendered by the ordination and consecration of women, was acknowledged by the Independent Reviewer in paragraph 38 of the Report on Chrism Masses, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2015.
- xi. A precedent for the continuation of a catholic episcopate consecrated by male bishops who do not consecrate women was made at the consecration of Philip North on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015.



- xii. The Bishop of Maidstone, consecrated by Archbishop Justin Welby after he began consecrating women, does not satisfy the criteria of the Headstone PCC's Statement.
- xiii. The offer of the Bishop of Maidstone to a catholic parish is not in accord with Paragraph 22 of the House of Bishops' Declaration, and paragraph 13 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration, which recognise the need for episcopal provision appropriate to the theological conviction of the PCC passing a resolution.
- xiv. The offer of the Bishop of Maidstone to a catholic parish is not in accord with paragraph 16 of the House of Bishops' Declaration, concerned with 'enabling parishes in one part of the country to receive broadly comparable and consistent arrangements to those provided in another'.
- xv. The offer of the Bishop of Maidstone to St George's, Headstone, as an alternative to the Bishop of Fulham, fails to recognise significant theological differences between catholic and conservative evangelical Anglicans and, in consequence, what is necessary for the 'mutual flourishing' envisaged in paragraph 14 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration.

Unanimously agreed by the Parochial Church Council of St George's,  
Headstone, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

Stephen Keeble

Chairman





ANNEX B

The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally  
Bishop of London  
St Michael Paternoster Royal  
College Hill  
London  
EC4R 2RL  
T/ 020 3837 5200  
bishop.london@london.anglican.org

1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

The Reverend Stephen Keeble, Incumbent  
Mrs Meg Pointer, Churchwarden, St George's Headstone  
Mrs Flow Lewis, Churchwarden, St George's Headstone  
(To be sent electronically)

Dear Stephen, Meg and Flow,

### **St George's Headstone**

I am sorry for the delay in my response following our meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> October and that my letter did not reach you prior to your PCC meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> October but I was unaware of the date of the PCC meeting. I am also sorry that the Churchwardens

were not able to join me and Stephen at our meeting to discuss the provision of pastoral and sacramental care to the parish of St George's Headstone. Whilst I know that Stephen is fully able to represent you I was keen to ensure that all the members of the PCC who wanted to had the opportunity to meet with me to discuss this important matter.

I outline below the points that I have taken into consideration in reflecting on your Statement of Grievance of the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and your request to reconsider my decision to ask the Bishop of Fulham, or alternatively the Bishop of Maidstone, to provide episcopal ministry.

### **Diocese of London**

One of the strengths of the Diocese of London is its diversity; part of this diversity is the breath of church tradition seen across London. Since my installation as Bishop of London, I have sought in the spirit of generosity to enable those who do not accept my ministry on the grounds of theological conviction to flourish. This relates not to just what we do, but how we do things.

The London Plan is a declaration made and signed by the Bishop of London and all the Area and Suffragan Bishops. It relates to the Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure 2014, the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests 2014 and its associated regulations made under Canon C29.

For over 20 years, the London Plan has set out how certain aspects of the Bishop of London's authority – such as the authority to ordain and license clergy – may be delegated to other bishops, in line, originally, with the provisions of the 1992 Measure and Act of Synod, and now in conformity with the 2014 legislation. It allows parochial church councils to petition the Bishop of London to make provision for pastoral and spiritual ministry in that parish to be exercised by a bishop other than the Diocesan or Area Bishop.

The London College of Bishops views the London Plan as vital to the life of the Diocese, permitting all parts of the Church to thrive, and to live and work together for the good of the Kingdom of God in mutual respect. The Plan encapsulates the House of Bishops' Five Guiding Principles.

The Plan provides a framework within which those who hold sharply defined differences about the ministerial priesthood can live together in simplicity, reciprocity and mutuality. We believe that the diversity of church tradition of the Diocese is part of our strength, and in it we find unity.

The Diocese of London has 413 parishes in five episcopal areas, the House of Bishops is made up of the parishes under the Diocesan Bishop, the Area Bishops of Kensington, Stepney, Willesden and Edmonton and the Suffragan Bishops of Fulham and Islington.

There are now 65 out of the 413 parishes for whom provision has been made under the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076) for pastoral and sacramental ministry in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing.

Pastoral and sacramental care for those parishes who have petitioned is variously provided by either the Bishop of Kensington, the Bishop of Edmonton, the Bishop of Fulham (Traditional catholic Parishes) or the Bishop of Maidstone (Conservative Evangelical Parishes).

In relation to episcopal ministry, (para 14 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests) it is for the diocesan bishop to decide who should minister to a parish where a resolution has been passed. Para 15 states that he or she will choose the bishop from among those who are members of the House of Bishops of one of the diocesan synods of the Church of England - in other words, from among serving rather than retired bishops.

**Bishop Richard Chartres' response to the original request from the parish**

Bishop Richard in 2016 remained your Bishop for the purposes of oversight and Bishop Ladds was asked to look after you in the day-to-day. While I am very grateful for the pastoral and sacramental ministry provided by Bishop Ladds, my

appointment to London made this no longer possible. Para 15 of the Guidance appended to the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests states that the Bishop will be from among those who are members of the House of Bishops of one of the diocesan synods of the Church of England. Bishop Ladds is not a member of the House of Bishops and with the size of the House of Bishops in London it would be inappropriate to increase it merely in order to offer provision to one parish.

### **Provision offered**

My decision to offer either the Bishop of Fulham or the Bishop of Maidstone was made in accordance with the principles set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration whereby the diocesan bishop seeks to ensure that pastoral and sacramental ministry is provided in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing.

While I appreciate that Bishop Richard sought to meet the concerns about Bishop Jonathan being divorced and remarried, this is not within the criteria set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration. The Bishop of Fulham's ministry is accepted in 61 parishes in 2 Dioceses, and his ministry in London is integrated into the life of the Diocese.

While the issue of divorce and remarry are not within the criteria set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration I would make one comment. While it is indeed held by some that 'a sacramental apprehension of gender is inherent in the Catholic conception of Holy Order,' the point is that as Christ is the bridegroom of the Church (drawing on the Ephesians 5), so the bishop is, by analogy, bridegroom to the local church or diocese, and therefore must be of the male gender for that sacramental symbolism to be authentic. It is not a metaphor or image which turns on the marital status of the bishop – if it did, it would seem to me to exclude the possibility of unmarried bishops altogether.

Following on the statement that the bishop should be 'the husband of one wife' is this context is to be understood as a statement addressing polygamy and not about further marriage.

The House of Bishops in May 2010 made the decision that divorce and remarriage should not exclude episcopal ministry.

The Bishop of Maidstone presently looks after 62 parishes, in the diocese of Birmingham, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Chester, Derby, Ely, Lichfield, London, Manchester, Norwich, Portsmouth, Rochester, Sheffield and Southwark and is a member of the House of Bishops in the Diocese of Southwark. The concern that he was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury after he consecrated women is not accepted by the Society as a reason to disqualify him from providing appropriate pastoral and sacramental oversight.

## Conclusion

I have sought to be generous across the Diocese and those Bishops I have offered to the parish meet the grounds under the House of Bishops' Declaration and are acceptable to those across the Church of England from Traditional Catholic parishes. Whilst being generous I also have a responsibility to support the House of Bishops' Declaration and to contribute to mutual flourishing of all, not just those for whom provision is made. I believe that we must resist moving towards an environment within which parishes create an expectation that they can select their own bishop. Such an innovation would, if accepted, undermine the Declaration and create a pattern of episcopal care which would undermine the integrity of the Diocese and the true catholicity we seek.

My response therefore continues to be to offer either the Bishop of Maidstone or the Bishop of Fulham. I appreciate this may not satisfy you and I am aware that you have made a grievance under the Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Resolution of Disputes Procedure) Regulations 2014.

With all good wishes.

*+ Sarah London*

The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally  
Bishop of London

## RESOLUTION AND STATEMENT OF THEOLOGICAL CONVICTION AND NEEDS APPROVED BY ST GEORGE'S PCC ON 13<sup>th</sup> JULY 2016

### RESOLUTION

This Parochial Church Council of St George's, Headstone requests, on grounds of theological conviction set out in the Statement appended to this Resolution, that arrangements be made for St George's, Headstone in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.

### STATEMENT OF THEOLOGICAL CONVICTION AND NEEDS

St George's stands in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, regarding Holy Order to be essential to the faith revealed in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This understanding of Holy Order was articulated in the 1947 Report *Catholicity: a Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West*, commissioned by Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, and prepared by a group comprising the Church of England's leading Anglo-Catholic scholars and churchmen:

The 'wholeness' of the visible Church manifests itself in its outward order. In more ways than one the apostolic theology indicates this. The modern tendency is to make a sharp distinction between the spiritual and the bodily: this is alien to Biblical thought. To receive the Spirit *is* to belong to the Body, whose several organs are a very part of it, representing diversities of office amongst its members. Further, the frequent emphasis laid by the apostolic writers upon the principle of subordination is significant: the mutual submission of the members of the Church one to another in respect of their diverse offices is a part of their submission to the rule of God in the pattern of the new Creation.

Among the diversities of office the apostolate is unique. The apostles were commissioned by our Lord, and had authority to rule, to teach and to ordain in the new Israel – representing Him who is King, Shepherd and High-priest. They were integral to the existence of the new Israel. They were the authorised eye-witnesses of the original events of the Gospel; but otherwise their functions remain in their successors – namely to teach, to rule, and to ordain in the name of Christ and of the whole Church. ...

Out of (the) complex of Christian life, *lived* and embodied in dogma, worship and institutions, proceeded the Scriptures of the New Testament, which presuppose and interpret the faith and 'the Way' from within which they are written. To abstract them from the setting

and life and belief which produced them (in other words, to oppose 'Scripture' and 'Tradition') is wholly artificial and arbitrary. ...

To be a Christian was to belong to the one Body, to hold the one apostolic faith, to share in the one visible series of sacramental rites, to be under the rule of one apostolate, to know the unity of the two covenants, and of God as Father, Saviour and Creator. The unity of the Church is a part of this greater 'wholeness', and cannot be understood apart from it. ...

Within the comprehensiveness laid down by the Elizabethan Settlement, the Church of England included those who learned their doctrine chiefly from the continental Reformers, those who gave greater value to the appeal to the 'Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops', and those whose outlook owed most to the learning of the Renaissance. ...

It is by a principle of constancy in Scriptures, Creeds, Sacraments and Apostolic Succession, that the Anglican Communion, for all the diversity within it, remains one. If this principle may be called, at the lowest, the historical condition of our unity in the Anglican Communion, we believe it to be at the highest the precondition of the task of theological synthesis to which the Anglican Communion is, in the Divine Providence, called. ...

Unfortunately the Quadrilateral has sometimes worn the aspect of four somewhat unrelated items or expedients. It is so used whenever the Episcopate is commended as an expedient ... which carries no necessary doctrinal meaning, although the Lambeth Report of 1930 gave the plain reminder: 'The Historic Episcopate, as we understand it, goes behind the perversions of history to the original *conception* of the Apostolic Ministry' (p. 115, italics ours).

Women have always exercised various ministries in the Church. However, those who are unable to receive the sacramental ministry of women as bishops and priests hold that neither Scripture, nor Apostolic tradition, nor the great majority of the Church throughout the world today endorse the ordination of women as bishops and priests.

Gender-specific language is necessary to a Catholic understanding of the economy of the Holy Trinity and the operation of divine grace within the life of the Church. This was succinctly expressed by C S Lewis ('Priestesses in the Church?' 1948):

Suppose the reformer ... says that we might just as well pray to 'Our Mother which art in heaven' as to 'Our Father'. Suppose he suggests that the Incarnation might just as well have taken a female as a male form, and the Second Person of the Trinity be as well called the Daughter as the Son. Suppose, finally, that the mystical marriage were reversed, that the Church were the Bridegroom and Christ the Bride. ... Now it is surely the case that if all these supposals were ever carried into effect we should be embarked on a different religion.

A sacramental apprehension of gender is inherent in the Catholic conception of Holy Order.



Thus *The Book of Common Prayer's* Form of the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony, quoting Holy Scripture, understands the relationship between loving husband (as head) and reverent wife (who is one flesh with her husband) to signify 'the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church'.

A gender-specific episcopacy is intrinsic to, and its sacramental significance dependent upon, its prescribed marital status. Just as the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is One, the Ordinal appended to *The Book of Common Prayer*, quoting Holy Scripture, specifies that a bishop must be 'the husband of (no more than) one wife'.

Consistent with this sacramental view, the Catholic tradition understands the bishop, in Apostolic succession, and in the celebration of the Liturgy, to act 'eis topon kai typon Christou' (in the place and as a type of Christ), 'in persona Christi' (in the person of Christ) and 'in persona Christi capitis' (in the person of Christ the head).

A significant proportion of the regular congregation of St George's, Headstone comprises those unable to accept, and those who doubt, that the roles of bishop or priest are, sacramentally speaking, roles that women can exercise. This Parochial Church Council believes that the episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry exercised in this parish should be such that it may be received with integrity by all who worship here.

We affirm our desire to flourish within the life and structures of the Church of England, in accordance with the Five Guiding Principles set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration, and our commitment to Christ's mission in the Diocese of London. However, we can only flourish if we are in full communion with a bishop and with all those whom that bishop ordains to the priesthood.

Therefore we request that episcopal sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be entrusted

- to a male bishop who stands in the historic, Apostolic, and sacramental succession of bishops so ordained,
- at whose consecration a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided,
- whose marital status conforms with Apostolic teaching and practice expressed in the historic teaching and practice of the Church of England, and
- who ordains only men to the priesthood.

We also ask that episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be exercised

- by male bishops who stand in the historic, Apostolic, and sacramental succession of bishops so ordained,
- at whose consecrations a male bishop who had not consecrated a woman as a bishop presided,
- whose marital status conforms with Apostolic teaching and practice expressed in the historic teaching and practice of the Church of England,
- who ordain only men to the priesthood, and
- by male priests ordained by such bishops.

We recognise the diocesan bishop and other bishops of this diocese as the true and lawful holders of their offices, and wish to maintain the highest degree of communion with them that is consistent with the theological convictions that underlie our Resolution.

Our Resolution contributes to the Church of England's 'wider commitment to sustaining diversity'.