

# Special Session of the 45<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Sydney to Elect an Archbishop

## Election of Archbishop Jensen

### Presidential Address

By Bishop Paul Barnett, Administrator of the Diocese of Sydney, Monday 4 June 2001.

#### INTRODUCTION

Welcome brothers and sisters in Christ to this Synod gathered to elect an archbishop for the Diocese of Sydney. All such synods are important occasions, though an election at the edge of a new century and millennium has its own symbolism.

You are privileged representatives of the wider Anglican community of Sydney. Each has a weighty and onerous responsibility for the sake of the spiritual health of our congregations and agencies. But more particularly you bear that responsibility in the sight of our Saviour and Judge to whom account must one day be given.

Let me repeat what I said in my letter to you all. This Synod is not merely for voting but, prior to that, for listening to your fellow Christians, and for praying, and only then for casting that vote in the presence of God.

May I exhort you to attend all the sessions and for their duration.

Let me focus my comments in three areas: (1) our general context at the beginning of the third millennium, (2) our mission needs in the diocese at this time, and (3) the qualities I see as needed for the Archbishop we will elect.

#### 1. OUR CONTEXT: THE THRESHOLD OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

##### Sydney Diocese and the Anglican world

One of the major issues for Sydney Anglicans in the days ahead will be our relationship with the Anglican Church of Australia. It is not quite forty years since the Constitution of this church was brought to birth. The gestation period was complex and occupied several decades.

At the time of this 'birth' the national church was a theological and ecclesiastical mix, diocese to diocese but also within the dioceses (especially the city-based dioceses). But there was and is nothing new about this. The Anglican Church of Australia like many national churches remains a hybrid of evangelical, conservative, traditional, liberal, revisionist and 'catholic' elements.

After much debate the Constitution of the National Church provided for an autonomy to each diocese that is not true of every province of world-wide Anglicanism. In many places the central body has the power to enforce its decisions upon the bishops and dioceses throughout the province. The general Convention of the Episcopal Church of the United States has the authority to depose a diocesan bishop.

By contrast the dioceses of Australia, Sydney included, are unusual for their autonomy. Sydney is doubly unusual for its reformed and evangelical character. Moreover, it is a large diocese, in its geographic spread and in the number of parishes. It is also well endowed materially and more importantly in its human resources of both clergy and laity. Where most other dioceses in the developed world have slipped back we have held our own or even grown a little. Where others are aging we have numbers of young families, children and youth.

Sydney could stand alone. But should Sydney stand alone? In broad terms I suggest that the wider Anglican world needs Sydney. But equally I believe Sydney needs the wider world of Anglicanism.

It is easy to focus on the elements of Anglicanism that many find uncongenial - departure from credal orthodoxy, a fascination with religious excitement, a preoccupation with ritual and ceremony. We easily have an 'Elijah' complex, that 'only we' are left as true believers.

And yet, as was evident at Lambeth 1998, almost 90 percent of Bishops voted conservatively on the sexuality issue. Had the issue been Christology, for example, the result would have been the same. Anglicans of Africa, Asia and the Southern Cone and significant minorities in the developed world remain committed to the centrality of Christ as Saviour and Lord based on the authority of the Bible and belief in the historic creeds. In many places church life may look different and sound different, that is, rather high church and somewhat charismatic. Dioceses tend to develop distinctive religious culture, as Sydney has, and these other Anglicans have. But beneath the religious expressions that are different to ours lies a residual orthodoxy and a love of Jesus.

Sydney has much to offer. Our diocese is characterised by youthful vigour arising from a strong tradition of theological education as well as a remarkable harvest of young adults in recent times. Over the years we have developed a depth of creativity in bringing the gospel to a multiplicity of groups, children, youth but also across the cultural divide. I hope we will increasingly connect with fellow Christians, including fellow-Anglicans world-wide. We have scholarship and ministry experience to share.

At the same time it would be unrealistic to think we had nothing to learn from others. Others have been steeled by persecution which we only read about. At Lambeth 1998 numbers of those present had lost wives and children violently abducted, tortured and killed in previous months. In contrast, for most of us discipleship is not overly costly. Who knows the blind spots or shortcomings that might be revealed were we subject to similar circumstances.

Also I suspect that because of our remoteness many of us are not forced to face the painful theological and ethical issues that fellow-Christians live with in North America, Britain and Europe. Secularized Bishops are often the source of pain to faithful clergy and laypeople within those dioceses. These are things of which we are only dimly aware or indeed of which we are blissfully unaware.

At Lambeth in 1998 the wider Anglican world sat up and took notice of this diocese in a new way. Harry Goodhew and his colleagues were effective ambassadors for Sydney so that we currently enjoy a solid reputation among conservative Anglicans. Those present had a new sense of global connectedness.

In the years since, globalization has accelerated dramatically. Email is now commonplace. No day passes for many present without several messages to and from people overseas. Our diocesan media website receives hundreds of 'visits' each day, many from overseas. Numbers of internet web agencies overseas automatically pick up and report on the latest events in Sydney.

The whole world is watching and listening to this diocese this week and to the outcome of the election.

The archbishop of this diocese needs to become a statesman on a world stage. A man of stature.

My plea is that we do not marginalise our diocese, whether in Australia or world-wide. We have a real contribution to make and much to lose if we become isolated. We need to stay in the wider anglican game.

At the same time I hope we will develop a nurturing role to various Anglican groups that are not currently included in the world-wide Lambeth fellowship. I am thinking of the Church of England in South Africa and various Anglican reformed groups in the United States. Historically these groups often arose due to their faithfulness to scriptural truth and have paid a high price for it. Sometimes reformed Anglican groups, including in North America, have ossified, and become discouraged and inwards looking in their conservatism.

My dream is that Sydney Diocese will assume a role of servant leadership on the world stage in connecting with and helping unite like-minded people within the communion but also beyond the rim of the communion. We have been given much and a stewardship has been entrusted to us. The time has come for us to think and act globally. Otherwise we, too, may ossify.

But we can only fulfill this role as we remain bona fide members of the Anglican Church of Australia with patterns of church life that are true in conscience to the historic trajectory of the English reformation.

### **Issues theological**

I pray that our diocese will stand firm on key doctrines and practices of the Reformation. The Church of England whose daughter we are is a Reformed Church. Our defining documents - the Book of Common Prayer, the ordinal and the XXXIX Articles - express deeply held Reformation convictions. According to Dr J I Packer, '...Anglicanism embodies the richest, truest, wisest heritage in Christendom.' Dr Packer is speaking about Anglicanism as set out in its formularies.

Our formularies, which all clergy including the archbishop we elect vow to uphold, commit this diocese to a number of core beliefs, values and practices.

We do not hold that the church, not even this diocese, is infallible. Churches have erred. Rather, we look to the Bible as our infallible authority in all matters relating to our knowledge of God. We are a Bible reading church, a Bible preaching Church.

Further, our church formularies recognise that critical truths of biblical revelation have been secured in the great creeds - the Apostles, the Nicene and the Athanasian. The Articles affirm the doctrines of the trinity and the incarnation and bodily resurrection of Christ, views which are 'catholic' in the true meaning of that word, that is, doctrines that have always been believed by all Christians in all places, as opposed to heretical or schismatic teachings. The creeds - the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian - are important as expressions of 'catholic' Christianity, to which 'historic' Anglicanism has committed itself.

At the same time 'historic' Anglicanism is reformed, articulating the great biblical insights of the teachers Luther and Calvin, that sinners, are righteous before God 'only for the merit of Christ the only sacrifice for sin,' not on account of their works.

We recognise two sacraments or effectual signs of grace - Baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which were ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ, both of which take their character from the gospel.

Ours is a liturgical church. We employ liturgy to several ends - to secure regular acknowledgment from the church that sinners are saved only in Christ, to express the congregation's adherence to the 'catholic' faith in the use of the historic creeds, to secure the systematic reading of the Bible in both testaments. We employ liturgy to provide for intercession which is carefully crafted theologically and which reflects international, national as well as local needs.

Liturgy is not used for art's sake (that is, aesthetically), but for truth's sake (that is, theologically), in order to retain the Bible, the catholic creeds and the reformed confessions at the centre of the church's faith and witness. And liturgy is used for the sake of the laity, to protect the congregation from the whims of the minister and to provide for the voice of the congregation to be heard articulating the faith, and not just the voice of the preacher.

Historically speaking, 'historic' Anglicanism has been of rational ethos. It has been prepared to engage in study and debate. Anglican evangelism has been associated with apologetics, rejecting manipulative or unworthy methods of bringing people to Christ. C S Lewis and J R W Stott come to mind in this regard, giving thousands in their generations and beyond a ground for hope in the intellectual and moral acceptability of the Christian faith.

Not least 'historic' and 'definitive' Anglicanism has affirmed laypersons, their role in marriage and the family and their civic vocation within society. Thus 'historic Anglicanism' is affirmative of both creation and society. It is concerned with the common good, for the 'welfare of the city', to use Jeremiah's words and its intercessions are directed to that end.

These are elements to be appreciated and valued, as a motivation for a free and uncoerced expression of ministry, both in church on Sunday, as well as during the week. With the passing of the years and the opportunity to experience other traditions I have come the more to value my own. In this regard, I do indeed echo and endorse Dr Packer's sentiment that, 'Anglicanism embodies the richest, truest, wisest heritage in Christendom.' I commend it to us as something to be valued and appreciated and out of which we exercise our ministries.

It goes without saying that many theological elements are under threat. An archbishop must be aware of and responsive to the challenges as they come. Some examples come to mind. Within Old Testament scholarship there is serious questioning whether there ever was a Moses, a David or a Solomon. A flood of literature continues to pour forth declaring that Jesus was 'nothing but' a prophet, a sage, a political subversive. 'Nothing buttery,' as this style of argument has been called, is not new but it does cumulatively erode Christian confidence. The Reformation understanding of Paul's teaching on 'justification by faith alone' and the believers' certitude of salvation in Christ is also being questioned. We must have an archbishop who is committed to our formularies and to the defence of historical and biblical Christianity.

### **Sydney Anglicans and Australian society**

When the First Fleet arrived in 1788 the established Church of England came too, that is, for the early years of the colony. Our church had a place of privilege from the beginning, though we did not remain the 'established church'. Nonetheless, we have enjoyed many advantages including Glebe and other land grants. More than

one person has observed that the lands granted to our church were previously occupied by local indigenous peoples.

Very significant has been the good reputation we have enjoyed in the eyes of community leaders.

Our special place has been eroded over the years, an erosion that has been accelerated progressively through secularization and the multi-culturalism in the years since the Second World War.

While our network of church properties remains more or less intact in the older areas of Sydney over the years we have not kept pace with the urban spread of greater Sydney and Wollongong despite the good efforts of Archbishops Robinson and Goodhew to inspire a 'vision' for growth. One encouraging development, however, has been the establishment of newer schools in addition to the more historic 'church schools'. The establishment of new churches in new areas is an urgent need.

In recent times other groups have arisen, in particular the assemblies of Pentecostal style whose growth has been remarkable. Other associations which earlier might previously have been regarded as sects are now emerging as 'mainstream', at least in the eyes of community leaders. In some schools more children attend classes of sectarian groups teaching 'another gospel' than those from churches of orthodox belief.

What is our standing in the 'city'? It remains prominent, though not without hard work by successive archbishops and deans. But our standing could quickly dissipate if we lose interest.

Is it worth maintaining? I believe so. Otherwise we might easily become a sect in the eyes of the community. This would be to the loss of society at large among whom we are to be salt and light. Attempts will continue to be made by special interest groups to weaken our moral and theological standards in churches, schools and care agencies, as for example in the recent draft anti-discrimination legislation. Having good lines of communication with government leaders helps in putting our case which we often do in concert with other mainline churches.

How do we maintain and strengthen our position in a society that is, to generalize, moving away from Christian beliefs and values?

I believe that one way is by the quality and consistency of our educational and our welfare agencies. Of course, any shortcoming or failure will be seized upon by the media. In the light of this there may be a temptation to vacate the educational and welfare fields altogether. In my view that would be a mistake and accelerate our marginalization.

Our welfare agencies, schools and university colleges must operate under first class professional and educational standards. Likewise the training of our clergy, youth workers and pastoral workers must be of the highest order.

'Infrastructure' is one of the keywords of governments at present. We too have begun to use this term, though there is some uncertainty as to its meaning. I think it is appropriate to regard the educational and welfare agencies of this diocese, along with our network of parishes with human resources of people and clergy, as 'infrastructure' whatever else may be understood by that term. It would be a mistake to neglect or minimize our institutions and their impact for good on New South Wales. It is worth being reminded that they are unique in their extent in the Anglican world.

I do not downplay the importance of the proclaimed gospel. But I sometimes think we say too little and think too little in this place and express insufficient appreciation of our institutions - our schools, our colleges and our agencies of care. Perhaps it is because we think too much about the eschatological 'there and then' and not enough about the creational 'here and now'.

Our institutions secure for us an enviable place in a secular society. They tell the world we are committed to education - theological education and general education - and to the welfare of the disadvantaged and the disabled. They are good background music for us to sing the sweet song of the gospel of God's love for the lost.

But these institutions need the advocacy, support, encouragement of the archbishop of the moment, and also his intervention in times of difficulty.

## **2. CURRENT MISSION NEEDS**

These are so great it is difficult to know where to begin or end.

Our diocese is located within a population of about 5 million. Yet on a given Sunday there might be only 50,000 of us in church. Of course this number tends to set a lower estimate of our numbers. Many Anglican Christians only make it to church 35 times in a given year. As well, many older members are 'shut in' at home or in retirement villages. Beyond that, I suspect there are many who continue to be nominal believers but who attend rarely or at all. In some ways the 50,000 can be thought of in a too pessimistic way. There are other Christians besides Anglicans; we are not alone. There is ground to be regained but it is not always 'mission impossible'. Often a fresh parish appointment expressed with energy and winsome dedication is attended by a rapid doubling or trebling of attendances. Sydney is a tough mission field but it may be counter-productive to exaggerate this.

A major part of our difficulty is that our human environment has changed more rapidly than our adjustment to it.

Our church plant and workers are concentrated in 'old Sydney', that is, the inner circles around 1950's Sydney, the eastern suburbs and the suburbs on the suburban rail links north, south and west. But the population centres of Sydney have taken large steps to the south, west, south west and north west. But, to generalise, we have not moved our church workers or plant infrastructure ahead of or in step with population movements.

In 'old Sydney' our churches are thick on the ground but missing in the new growth centres. Back in the seventies some of our churches gave up their property for the sake of others in the burgeoning west. The little branch church of St John's on Mowbray Road West Chatswood comes to mind. The people simply gave up their property for people in the west and moved holus bolus to another congregation. Something of that spirit of self-sacrifice is needed at this time in the smaller churches and branch churches in the well stocked older parts of Sydney.

A few years ago I visited Sabah. Before regional developments occur in new towns and cities the diocese acquires shop fronts for a church and locates a church planter there to build the church as the population begins to move in. Here is a simple, firmly intentional and pro-active strategy that is working well.

Another example of changing environment is multi-culturalism. In multi-cultural terms Sydney is unrecognisable compared with three decades ago. Whole tracts of Sydney, sometimes whole suburbs, have witnessed the cultural equivalent of a blood transfusion. We Sydney Anglicans have not been slow in identifying the changes and the new mission field in our midst. But a huge challenge lies ahead in reaching non Anglo-Celtic peoples in our city and establishing vigorous multi-cultural congregations. Jesus was not British. Thankfully today there are growing numbers of non Anglo-Celtic ministers serving in our diocese, including indigenous workers.

Again, the place of children and youth in church life has changed dramatically. In the fifties and sixties there were well-attended Sunday school picnics, large confirmation classes, and a Sunday afternoon youth fellowship in every parish. How different today. On Sundays the shops are crowded and families are out watching their children on the sports fields.

I am told that 7 out of 10 present church members 'received Christ' before turning twenty one. If children and youth are missing from our churches today, as - to generalise - they are, then it is clear that difficult days lie ahead for church membership. Again to generalize, mums and dads with their children and teenagers are missing and our people are aging. Sadly and tragically many children and teenagers are drawn into substance abuse, sexually promiscuous behaviour and there is an alarming level of psychiatric illness among young people. Australia has very high levels of youth suicide. We in the churches must not fail the young people in our society.

I could go on. The challenges confront us at every turn. We have human and material resources, but we need leadership and vision, determined will and sacrifice if we are going to bring the claims of Christ to the people of Sydney as we move into this millennium.

Historically Sydney Anglicans have been 'middle class' clustered in 'middle class' parts of Sydney. A former archbishop humorously described us as 'a harbourside sect'. He knew better than most how much of an exaggeration this was, whatever the painful kernel of truth. If it is true it is, indeed, painful and for the love of God it must not remain so. The gospel of Christ must be preached in churches throughout our diocese whether in rural areas, the inner city, the outer suburbs or the CBD, to people of all ages and to all people groups.

### **3. QUALITIES OF AN ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY**

You will expect the President of this Synod to outline some qualities for the Archbishop you will elect.

Nearly forty years in ministry has provided some opportunity to observe those who fulfill this office. I was ordained by Hugh Gough, served in Sydney under Marcus Loane and Donald Robinson (and in Adelaide under Thomas Reed and Keith Rayner). I have worked as assistant bishop in this diocese to Donald Robinson and Harry Goodhew. Each has been remarkable in his own way.

### **Biblical criteria**

Hear Paul's words to Titus where he equates the roles of presbyter and bishop.

'The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you.

A presbyter must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

Since a bishop is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless-not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.'

Effectiveness in raising Christian children. Morally blameless. Strong Christian character. Self-disciplined. Firmly holding to the 'trustworthy message'. An 'encourager of sound doctrine'. A stout defender of that doctrine in the wider society and among his ecclesiastical peers.

We look to our Archbishop to be a disciplined intercessor. A man of compassion, of large pastoral heart. A man who is a caring 'brother in Christ' to presbyters, deacons, layworkers and the people. A bishop and overseer to all.

Whatever criteria you have for an archbishop begin here.

### **Vision**

Look for a man of vision, someone who can rise above the rim of meetings and matters to see things as they are in the world and who can see where we should go.

We find examples of such leaders in the scriptures. Men like Moses, Joshua, David and Paul.

This is a man who sees quicker and further than others and who has a God-given capacity to lead the people of our churches and agencies and who will not rest content with our failures to anticipate and meet the changed environment of post-Christian Australia.

It needs to be a local vision, a vision of ministry to Sydney and to Australia. But it must also be a global vision. We are no longer remote and removed, the people who stay on the plane when others get off at Singapore. We are connected immediately by internet, fax and phone. We can get anywhere on the planet cheaply and within a few days.

Elect a man of vision and of determination and strong will.

### **A 'Big Picture' Anglican**

The fifth of Harry Goodhew's diocesan goals was that we should be 'dynamically Anglican'. This has been the subject of some mirth. How can Anglicanism - a four hundred year old thing - be 'dynamic'?

Perhaps the words 'dynamically Anglican' are a lost cause. Yet the idea surely should not be. The intention was good. I have tried to save the idea by the words 'Big Picture Anglican' though I have no illusions that it be any more successful than the other. Whatever the case the idea must somehow be preserved.

Our dilemma is that we are 'Anglican' but we must express our heritage within a real cultural context. Sydney 2001 is not London 1552.

Like other Anglican clergyman the archbishop has undertaken to conduct his ministry within the boundaries of the constitution, the ordinal and the Book of Common Prayer and its legalised variations. Quite apart from the question of law keeping and conscience I, for one, would be saddened if the rich insights of our heritage were lost.

But how to express that heritage in ways that are true to it while also being culturally relevant?

We in the Synod make or endorse rules that order our church life.

Our archbishop needs to be an exemplar of good practice. Should he just please himself he will diminish this office. He cannot make up his own rules but live within the rules we have enacted. Should he fail in this he must erode the moral basis for his relationship with other ministers within the diocese regarding the boundaries established by the Book of Common Prayer, the Articles and the Ordinal as qualified from time to time by our Synod.

This will not be an easy path to tread.

Elect an archbishop who is a 'Big Picture Anglican'.

### **Respect**

An archbishop is not without power. Some of this is negative power, for example, to withhold assent from an ordinance of Synod or Standing Committee. Another is the power to decline to invite a minister to accept a parish appointment. A qualified power is his nomination of an assistant bishop which, however, must have majority support in the Standing Committee. His major unfettered and positive power is the power to ordain and to make a small number of senior appointments.

At the same time others have a balancing power. Incumbents are tenured and in practice they can ignore the bishop in most things. The rights of parishioners over property are considerable. Our large diocesan agencies are large indeed, with considerable assets and high-powered governing councils. They, too, can effectively ignore the wishes of an archbishop. This diocese - its parishes, schools and agencies - can be likened to a series of fiefdoms each with their own baron, castle and moat.

In most areas relating to vision, our archbishop's power is one of moral authority and persuasion based on respect for his person and office.

It would be one thing to elect a visionary leader. But his vision will only become reality where he is respected. Given the vastness of the diocese and its complexity this is a tall order.

I think every Archbishop since Mowll has wrestled with this problem. It would be easy enough for an Archbishop of Sydney to give up on being a visionary leader and fall back to fulfilling routine duties. There are many road blocks and barriers to frustrate the fulfillment of goals.

Elect a man you will respect and who will be respected across the board.

### **Covering the bases**

One of the problems for the members of the Synod is that very few actually know what an archbishop does, or rather has to do - whether by constitution and ordinance or by the expectation of convention.

An Archbishop of Sydney is rather like an iceberg. The greater part of his working life you never see. Most only see the bit that sticks above the water - at Synod, or in our church on a Sunday or on television.

For a start he is 'Mr President' of every major body or agency. These include large bodies like the Synod, Standing Committee, the Diocesan Executive Board, Moore College, the Anglican Retirement Villages, Anglicare, the major 'church' schools and several University Colleges. Over many of these he is not only the president but also the working chairman. Over others as president he is called on as 'visitor' in times of crisis. In regard to others like the Glebe Administration Board or the Church Property Trust, whether or not he is the chairman, he must pay close attention to the proceedings of the meetings.

Skill in chairmanship is critical given the archbishop's role presiding at the meetings of so many bodies involving so many people. If we multiply the number of hours by the number of members of these various boards we see a huge potential for wasted time. Nothing is more precious in the work of the Kingdom of God than time available for ministry. Competence and fairness in the conduct of meetings is important.

For many years now the Archbishop of Sydney has been an energetic fund raiser for church development in new areas and welfare relief, whether in Australia or abroad. The Appeals Unit calls for his proactive support.

Our previous archbishop has lifted the profile of the diocese but more importantly of the gospel of Christ by his engagement with the media. Today an archbishop needs great skills in putting the case for Christ and for Christian values and practices to journalists and interviewers. Often these issues are difficult and complex, for example, same sex relationships, IVF, abortion, euthanasia, divorce and remarriage. Sound theology but also communication skills are indispensable today.

Then add to these his duties and responsibilities as the Metropolitan of the Province of NSW. There is Provincial Synod involving the dioceses of Armidale, Bathurst, Canberra-Goulburn, Grafton, Newcastle and Riverina. Retreats to conduct. Bishops to consecrate and install. Crises to resolve.

Further, consider his leadership of our representatives in the three yearly General Synod, his membership on the several meetings per year of its Standing Committee and the annual conference of the Australian bishops.

Historically, too, our archbishop has played a very active role in the Federal Council of the Church Missionary Society of which he is president. He has to be aware of the world-wide network of our missionaries serving in Australia and overseas.

In all of the above there is a large volume of reading to be mastered ahead of the meeting. It is one thing to 'wing' it arriving out of breath as a member of a committee, but the chairman has to be across every brief.

On a world scene the Archbishop of Sydney has played and will be expected to play a major role in relationship with the Province of South East Asia. This is a near neighbour with whom we have historic links through our missionaries who have served and are serving there.

Like the writer to the Hebrews time would fail me to mention other things like those very long speech days at schools, the innumerable folk who want to give their advice, the volume of phone calls or the daily pile of mail that awaits attention. Every letter and every reply is important.

By long custom the archbishop meets with the regional bishops and archdeacons once a week to pray for and attend to the pastoral administration of the parishes and agencies of the diocese. Arguably this is his core role. He is the Archbishop of Sydney, that is, the chief pastor of clergy and people of our churches. He exercises this pastoral role through those who have regional oversight. He pastors them and is pastored by them.

Our archbishop is expected to meet with civic leaders, attend civic functions, meet with heads of other churches and entertain visiting notables. He preaches week by week in the parishes and on special occasions at the Cathedral.

I haven't told the whole story because I don't know the whole story. But I know it better than most. There are a lot of bases to cover and probably not too many things he can delegate.

Elect a man who is well organised with lots of energy.

### **Archbishop for all**

Past archbishops have successfully held their own evangelical convictions while at the same time being respected by people of other traditions in the diocese. Even those who may have differed from him have been able to say of successive archbishops, 'He is my archbishop'. This is a mark of the deep respect with which our leaders have been held.

A large diocese like Sydney has factions and lobby groups. This is inevitable and in principle a healthy outlet for strongly held views.

But an archbishop cannot be a prisoner of any group. He must be and be seen to be principled, a-political, even-handed and fair-minded for all. He must be absolutely just in his administration of the ordinances of the diocese, including parish appointments and the investigation of complaints about clergy.

Any perception of bias or unfairness will quickly lose an archbishop that respect that is critical for his headship of the diocese.



But this has immediate implications for his relationships with old friends and supporters. These may feel that he is 'not the man he used to be'. Or that the office has 'affected' him.

Many of the decisions an archbishop makes, which are confidential and for which he takes sole responsibility, are painful and tend to leave one or other of the parties unhappy. 'Win win' is rare. It is rather a 'win' for one party and a 'loss' for another. One party is often unhappy, even angry. This may offend old friends. But this goes with the territory. The consequence is that the archbishop's life can be a lonely one.

Elect a man who is principled, generous and fair-minded.

#### **4. THE YEARS AHEAD**

We sit poised at the head of a new century and millennium. How different things were a century ago. Boosted by a post millennial eschatology and the optimism and the spirit of romanticism of those times Christian leaders foresaw a rapid winning of the nations for Christ. Furthermore, the evils of disease and illiteracy could be eliminated from the globe. Few today hold such rosy hopes. More than 100 million have been killed in the wars of the century just passed. Millions are held in deepening poverty and bad health through crushing debt.

Within our own society we are aware of generations of young people who have turned to drugs or who take their own lives. Many older Australians are bewildered by the pace of change and by the rapid effects of globalization and of changed taxing arrangements. In the meantime our indigenous Australians look for justice and apology for the loss of their land and culture. Many Australians long for reconciliation within the community. These are troubling times, more complex even than two decades ago.

Our diocese needs a leader of deep faith in God, who loves the people inside and outside our churches - of all ages and circumstances - and who bravely preaches and lives Christ, come what may.

#### **5. AFTER THE ELECTION**

Behind us lie weeks of uncertainty and of considerable activity. All this will soon be ended by the decision of the synod. In a few days one man will stand here and accept our decision electing him Archbishop of Sydney. We have said a lot about him tonight. Spare a thought, though, for those who will not be elected. They and their wives and children may easily feel rejected by us, their brothers and sisters in Christ. It is a brave thing to accept nomination and to face the possibility of negative comment and of not being elected.

Clearly these are circumstances our enemy will exploit. After this election I pray that a process of healing may occur if that is necessary. I pray that the person we elect and those we have not elected will enjoy unfettered fellowship in Christ. This will be up to both the elected and the non-elected and their supporters, but also to us as we pray for all parties and get back to the work of Christ. I am sure you will make your congratulations known to the man you elect. Might I suggest a word of thanks, too, be directed to the other brothers.

#### **6. THIS SYNOD**

May I conclude by making a few comments about your speeches about the candidates. I ask you to honour these men in your hearts both those you support and those you don't. Please thank God that each man was prepared to give us the blessing of choice.

In no way do I discourage plain speaking, including comments of a negative kind. But let me make some qualifications. Your negative observations should be restricted to matters that are more or less public. Second hand anecdotes, innuendoes or matters private to you and the candidate are unfair to articulate since they are unverifiable.

Likewise I urge care not to attribute motives or attitudes to someone, for example, the appearance of anger. The media are altogether too good at this. But we should follow the apostle's observation that 'no one knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man'. How do you know he was angry? His red face may have been sunburn or indigestion. If you are to say something negative a good test would be to say only those things you would be prepared for the man to hear and have the opportunity to correct. Be assured that he will, indeed, hear. It is likely, too, that the tone of your negatives may actually damage the case for the man you are supporting as well as unhelpfully raising the temperature.

One problem is that many of us have known one another for years. Often our circle of friends and family is coterminous with the diocesan family. If there are six degrees of separation in the world at large there are probably only two in the Diocese of Sydney. Many of us have been friends for decades and some are

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connected by family ties. Such connections may loom large in our thinking and voting and this is understandable. But we must rise above loyalties of friendship and family in electing an Archbishop of Sydney. I exhort objectivity. Elect the best man, the very best man for this position.

In conclusion let us be reminded that we do God's work God's way, not mans. God's way is the way of humility, openness, decency, truthfulness and kindness.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, listen carefully, vote prayerfully and let us all be loyal to the man whom together in fellowship we elect.

The Right Rev Paul Barnett  
**Administrator of the Diocese of Sydney**

4 June 2001