

GENERAL SYNOD 2010

REPORT OF THE LITURGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Proposed by Revd Maria Jansson, Diocese of Cashel & Ossory

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Your Grace, Members of Synod,

I have just come back from Sweden where, near Kristiansand in a parish of 6,000 Lutherans about 16 worship every Sunday. Yet many come for the usual rites of passage - even if they never darken the door for worship. Christmas and Advent are big - but neither of these feasts is overburdened with the mess of Crucifixion or the explosive power of Easter. Religion is safe, irrelevant, self-serving and almost dead.

Is that our future? We really need to ask searching questions. Are people bored in church? Is church going becoming an esoteric activity for either the young and naïve or old and habituated? Has the language used in worship become banal? Are our churches miserable, damp places where light, heating and cleaning are in short supply? Do newcomers enter a mined zone of invisibly reserved pews and unfriendly backs? Do people even understand what is going on? Are children actively welcome to worship with us? Is the environment in which we gather enhancing the worship or working against it? Is the music awful? Is there a proper balance between word and stillness? Are people being introduced to reading the scriptures on a daily basis- or is this even an expectation? Is the gathering simply a matter of tribal consolidation or a love fest of the saved? Is that act of worship connecting with the lives of those who worship and the lives of those who will meet those worshippers?

How and why we worship is important. When we get it right, worship serves as a spiritual magnet that draws us deeper into discipleship of Christ, it graces our lives on a weekly basis, opens our hearts to God and others, matures, challenges and yet strengthens

us. We become increasingly attuned to the voice of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit in our personal and community lives. Scripture becomes part of our daily conversation with God and Holy Communion becomes just that - a communion with Holiness. We grow into a people that witness in prophetic ways in the community and country. Our faith then becomes edgy, acutely pertinent other-serving and alive – anything but safe.

The LAC strives to serve the worship of the church. I commend its report to the house.