

# GENERAL SYNOD 2016

## **Report of the Select Committee on Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief Proposer: The Very Revd John Mann**

**Embargoed Against Delivery  
Check Against Delivery**

Your Grace, members of Synod, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly recall for you the work of the Select Committee over the course of the first two and a half years of its life, as well as give some indication as to where its last year and a half is likely to lead us.

Once formed, the Select Committee poured much of its effort over many regular meetings (and several residential sessions) into producing a *Guide* to the ongoing conversation in the Church of Ireland on the whole area of same-sex attraction and the valuing of human experience, creativity and above all, relationship, within the theological understanding of Anglicanism, and particularly in the Church of Ireland. This *Guide*, plus an executive summary were published in January 2016. Since the middle of last year, and in parallel with the last months of the assembling of the *Guide*, an important additional resource has been in production, and has now been printed, namely, a series of three modules for use in parish and other groups to further the exploration of this area of understanding within and for the Church of Ireland. This pack of material will be sent to all incumbents very shortly, with the hope that they may be used in the autumn. In each diocese a co-ordinator of this on-going work of broadening understanding has been appointed. It is hoped that in the early part of 2017 the Select Committee will receive feedback from the twelve diocesan co-ordinators, which may then be assembled and brought back to General Synod, so that this body may be presented with a paper next year reflecting the pattern of thought across our Church. It is at that point that the life of the Select Committee, at least with its current remit, is likely to cease.

In the meantime the Select Committee is seeking to address other matters of human sexuality in the context of Christian belief, whilst attempting to avoid areas being covered by other groups, organisations and committees in the Church of Ireland. The dangers of online access to sexual images, the regulation or otherwise of the same, the exploitation of children and other vulnerable people to sexualisation, and other related topics are our immediate concern. How what we learn will be presented has not yet been decided but the hope is that the Select Committee in the time of the diocesan and parish consideration of its work to date may find useful employment in these other areas of concern and potential abuse.