

**GENERAL SYNOD 2007**

**CHURCH'S MINISTRY OF HEALING**

**Seconded by Revd Canon Dermot Dunne (Cashel & Ossory)**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Your Grace, members of the General Synod

I would like to second the report of the Church's Ministry of Healing in Ireland to this house. In doing so I wish to refer briefly to the life and ministry of this committee within the church of Ireland. I am a relative newcomer to the executive, appointed as a diocesan representative nearly two years ago. Prior to my appointment to the Executive I would have had the view of the Ministry of Healing as a small group within the church who gather on a regular basis to pray in a specific way for the Lord's healing to be present within the church and in particular with those people who are most in need of that healing. One could easily have the impression that this ministry is for interested parties only and that it appeals to a certain type of person within the church. Let me be clear that this image was and is in no way generated by the executive committee of the Ministry of Healing or any other person from that quarter.

Being part of the executive afforded me the space to reflect on the role of healing within the life and witness of the church and to conclude that far from being just an option the Ministry of Healing is and should be central to the life of the church. Conscious of the commission of Christ to his apostles to *heal the sick, bind up the wounded, help the lame to walk and restore sight to the blind*, I am particularly drawn to the letter of the apostle James where he says in chapter 5 verse 14: 'Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.'

The church of God receives that commission from Christ to pray for healing within the church and the world. As the people of God everything we do is centred on the healing ministry. In the liturgy of the church and every form of worship healing forms a central part. The Celebration of the Eucharist is the greatest and most efficacious healing prayer available to the church and is a prayer which we are encouraged to engage in as regularly as possible.

In my view the role of the Ministry of Healing is to constantly highlight and promote the healing ministry within the church. I realise that this may appear as an understatement but to many of us the role of healing within our ministry may get lost in the many and varied ministries to which we are called and in which we share with the priesthood of Christ.

Over seventy five years the Church's Ministry of Healing has developed the consciousness and awareness of this central role of healing within our church. Through constant prayer and the celebration of services throughout the country it is a beating heart in the life of our church and yet its modus is a quiet presence. I would like at this stage to commend the work of the present Executive Committee and the personal and untiring commitment of our director, the Rev'd Susan Watterson.

As with all our experiences the passing of time always brings change – as the report puts it '*change is inevitable.*' You will be aware that the Church's Ministry of Healing is undergoing a change of structure. This structure change focuses on a more diocesan based ministry while retaining a core executive. The details of this change of focus and structure have not been finalised and are in the process of development and therefore it would be inappropriate of me to elaborate more. I am delighted that The Rev'd Baden Stanley has been appointed as

chairperson of the executive committee. I know that Baden will give of his boundless energy in bringing the ministry of healing through this transition period.

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge that the Church's Ministry of Healing has a vital role to play within the life of the church. I wish it well in its process of change and renewal and I look forward to the new beginnings and the future of an even more effective ministry of healing within the life of the church.

Your grace I second the motion to adopt the report of the Church's Ministry of Haling to this Synod. Thank you.